

A Testimony of Jesus Christ - Volume 2

A Commentary on the Book of Revelation

**Revelation 15-22
Related Topics
Reference Information**

*...for the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy
(Rev. 19:10)*

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Revision 2.1



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3.15 - Revelation 15

3.15.1 - Revelation 15:1

Revelation 12, 13, and 14 formed an interlude during which the scenes depicting the series of judgments being poured out by God upon the earth are interrupted to illustrate other important events associated with the Tribulation. Now at Revelation 15, the scene shifts back to the judgments—specifically the preparations for the final set of seven judgments to be poured out upon the *earth dwellers*^[5.2.18] and the kingdom of the *Beast*^[5.2.9]. This chapter describes the scene in heaven which initiates the final seven bowls of God’s wrath, to be poured forth in the next chapter (Rev. 16). The event which led to the scene before us now was the sounding of the seventh trumpet (Rev. 11:15). The sounding of the seventh trumpet was met with the announcement that the Lord’s kingdom would be underway as a result of the judgments under that trumpet. The bowl judgments introduced here are the final plagues from God which bring about the establishment of His kingdom on earth. See *Literary Structure*^[2.14].

The accomplishment of the Harvest and the Vintage [Rev. 14:14-20] brings to the end of this present world. The next in succession would be the setting up of the eternal Kingdom, and the evolution of the new heavens and earth. But the Harvest and the Vintage do not adequately set forth all that we need to know about these closing scenes. Further particulars included in this momentous period require to be shown in order to complete the picture. The fate of the internal Trinity,—the Dragon, the Beast, and the *False Prophet*^[5.2.20],—and what pertains to them, is to be more fully described before we come to the Millennium, the descent of the new Jerusalem, and the planting of God’s *Tabernacle*^[5.2.69] with men.¹

another sign in heaven, great

Another is ἄλλο [*allo*], *another of a similar kind*. This points back to the sign of the woman with the sun and moon, which was also said to be “great” (Rev. 12:1). The fiery red dragon was also seen as a sign in the heaven (Rev. 12:3).

marvelous

Θαυμαστόν [*Thaumaston*], “beyond human comprehension, wonderful, marvelous, remarkable.”² Not in the sense that the seven plagues are *wonderful*, but that the scene is one that inspires wonder.

seven angels having the seven last plagues

These are the seven angels which come out of the *Temple*^[5.2.73] and are given the seven bowls of wrath by the living creature (Rev. 15:6-7). These seven will pour forth their bowls in the next chapter (Rev. 16:1-17). Seven angels also initiated the seven trumpet judgments (Rev. 8:2, 6). The responsibility given to these angels reflects their great authority and intimate access to the throne. One of these seven angels subsequently shows John two women: the harlot (Rev. 17:1) and the bride, the Lamb’s wife (Rev. 21:9). “That these are the last plagues proves again that they are not mere reiterations of former plagues. The seals and trumpets and bowls are sequential, not parallel.”³

in them the wrath of God is complete

In these seven plagues under the sounding of the seventh trumpet, itself part of the opening of the seventh seal, the last of the three woes—the three last trumpets—will be completed (Rev. 8:13). “No announcement that the third woe has passed is in the offing, because by the time it has passed, human history will have reached its culmination.”⁴ At the pouring forth of the last of these seven bowls, a voice from the Temple announces, “It is done!” (Rev. 16:17). Then “the indignation is past” (Isa. 26:20) and the woman who fled to the wilderness will be free to leave her hiding place (Rev. 12:6) for her great persecutor, the Beast, will have been vanquished and her Shepherd will be in her midst.

This period of God’s wrath was already underway by the sixth seal judgment (Rev. 6:16-17). See commentary on *Revelation 6:17*^[3.6.17]. The church, which will not see the wrath of God (Rev. 3:10), has long before been taken in the *Rapture*^[4.14].

As the judgments progressed from the seals, to the trumpets, and now to the bowls, their level of

intensity has steadily increased. These are the final set of judgments which conclude with the Second Coming of Christ, when the “great winepress of the wrath of God” is “trampled outside the city” (Rev. 14:19-20). “He Himself treads the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God” (Rev. 19:15).

On the conclusion of the Vials, the wrath of the *Lamb*, even more terrible than the wrath of *God*, is openly expressed on the subjects of vengeance. “Commission to act is given to Christ as soon as the ministration of the Vials ends.” The secret, providential dealings of God are brought to an end with the Vials or Bowls of wrath, after which the Lamb in Person publicly assumes the government of the world. But as the nations at His Coming are in armed rebellion—apostate and wicked, moreover, beyond all human conception—the wrath of the Lamb burns in its fierceness. The wrath of God is finished in the Vials, to be succeeded by the wrath of the Lamb.⁵

Many years previously, an angel replied to the question of how long the final period would be: “It shall be for a time, times, and half a time; and when the power of the holy people [Israel] is completely shattered, all these things shall be finished” (Dan. 12:6). These plagues will complete the last half of the Tribulation. See *Events of the 70th Week of Daniel*^[2.13.5.4].

Preterist interpreters^[2.12.2] deny the finality of these judgments because they must find their fulfillment in the events of the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70:

There is no reason to assume that these must be the “last” plagues in an ultimate, absolute, and universal sense; rather, in terms of the specifically limited purpose and scope of the Book of Revelation, they comprise the final outpouring of God’s wrath, His great cosmic Judgment against Jerusalem, abolishing the Old Covenant world-order once and for all.⁶

How the final pouring forth of His wrath to the point of completion can be said to be obtained in a “great cosmic Judgment against Jerusalem,” which in fact was a relatively minor battle on the scale of global history is impossible to see. Much of the world had no notion of the overthrow of Jerusalem in A.D. 70. As significant an event as it was from the perspective of the Jews then living in Jerusalem, we dare not venture with Chilton in a vain attempt to find the events described here, the final outpouring of God’s wrath upon the earth dwellers, in such a relatively minor historical event! This is the same error as is made by the *historicist interpreters*^[2.12.4]:

Yet some gravely tell us that the first bowl is the French Revolution; the second bowl, the naval wars of that Revolution; the third bowl, the battles of Napoleon in Italy; the fourth bowl, the tyranny and military oppression of Napoleon; the fifth bowl, the calamities which befell the city of Rome and the Pope in consequence of the French Revolution; the sixth bowl, the wane of the Turkish power, the return of the Jews to Palestine, and the subtle influences of infidelity, Popery and Puseyism; and the seventh, some further war with Romanism and disaster to the city of Rome. But can it be possible that God Almighty from His everlasting seat, the temple in heaven, all angels and holy ones on high, should thus be in new and unexampled commotion, with the mightiest of all celestial demonstrations, over nothing but a few occurrences far less in meaning or moment than many others in other ages! According to such interpretation mankind have been living for the last 100 years amid the extreme terrors of “the great and terrible day of the Lord” without ever knowing it! yea, dreaming the while that we are happily gliding into the era of universal liberty and peace!⁷

3.15.2 - Revelation 15:2

a sea of glass

This sea of glass is under the throne of God and is analogous to the river of life. Ezekiel saw it above the heads of the cherubim, under the throne of God above (Eze. 1:22). It is clear as crystal (Ex. 24:9-10; Rev. 4:6; 22:1). The transparency of the glass is similar to that of the streets of pure gold in the New Jerusalem (Rev. 21:21). The clarity of the glass speaks of purity and perhaps washing (as in water). These have come through a time of intense tribulation and now stand upon the sea, reminiscent of the salvation of Israel from the Pharaoh of Egypt (Ex. 15).

Long before even that deliverance, there had occurred an event greater judgment and redemption by the waters of the sea, “when once the long-suffering of God waited in the days of Noah, . . . wherein few, that is, eight souls were saved by water” (1 Peter 3:20). The same waters which had destroyed all the ungodly world also saved the believing remnant from destruction by that world. It is interesting also that the waters of baptism, symbolizing death to sinfulness and resurrection unto holiness, are compared both

to the waters of the Red Sea (1 Corinthians 10:1, 2) and to the waters of the Great Flood (1 Peter 3:20, 21). Thus will the sea at the heavenly throne perpetually call to remembrance the waters of the Flood, the waters of the Red Sea, and the waters of baptism, all speaking both of God's judgment on the wickedness of rebellious men and His great salvation for those who trust Him and obey His Word. This last company of persecuted believers had experienced these also.⁸

See commentary on *Revelation 4:6*^[3.4.6] and *Revelation 21:1*^[3.21.1].

mingled with fire

Mingled is μεμιγμένην [*memigmenēn*], indicating a mingling together of two or more substances blended into one.⁹ Used to describe the “hail and fire . . . mingled with blood . . . thrown to the earth” (Rev. 8:7). The sea is clear like glass, but also sparkles or radiates brilliant light. *Fire* is πυρὶ [*pyri*]. A similar word elsewhere denotes “fiery red,” πυρρός [*pyrros*] (Rev. 6:3; 12:3). If red, it could reflect the purging and redemptive power of Christ's blood. Or, like the purity of the glass, the fire may speak of purity. Having come through the flames of adversity, those standing upon the sea of glass have been refined (1Pe. 1:7; 4:12). A more ominous possibility is that the fire denotes the redness, not of Christ's blood, but of the *martyrs themselves*, shed as part of their testimony:

When the believers of the Church period are removed at the beginning of the tribulation period their laver is seen as a sea of crystal [Rev. 4:6]. Some of them may have suffered martyrdom, but the maintenance of their fellowship was by the Word alone. In the tribulation period, the Lord has seen fit to demand, for His honor and glory, that they maintain their fellowship at the price of their sufferings. Their laver is crystal, mingled with fire. In the time immediately preceding the overthrow of the *Antichrist*^[5.2.3] and his power, there will be a sore trial of faith. . . . In sea mingled with fire the Lord recognizes these sufferings and commemorates the faithfulness of this martyr group in this beautiful way.¹⁰

Here the sea is “mingled with fire,” evidently referring to the fiery persecution under the *Beast*^[5.2.9]—a trial exceeding far in its combination of suffering anything hitherto experienced (Mark 13:19). The pagan persecutions of early times, and the still more exquisite and refined torments under papal Rome, come short of the horrors of the Great Tribulation.¹¹

There may also be an allusion to the Red Sea:

Allusion is made to the Israelites standing on the shore at the Red Sea, after having passed victoriously through it, and after the Lord had destroyed the Egyptian foe (type of Antichrist) in it. Moses and the Israelites' song of triumph (Ex. 15:1) has its antitype in the saints' “song of Moses and the Lamb” (Rev. 15:3).¹²

Perhaps *mingled with fire* does not speak of red, but of God's judgment—the “baptism with fire” (Mt. 4:11-12), about to be poured out upon the earth.¹³

those who have victory

τοὺς νικῶντας [*tous nikōntas*], *the overcoming ones*. These are the overcomers! The text does not say that they are martyrs, but this is almost certain. They appear in heaven prior to the end of the Tribulation (before the final seven bowls come forth from the *Temple*^[5.2.73]) and their victory involves refusing to worship the Beast which subjected them to the death penalty. “Physical death with eternal salvation or physical life with eternal damnation—that had been their bitter choice, and multitudes had opted for the brief continuation of their wretched lives on the earth, enduring all the judgements of God rather than the executioners appointed by the beast.”¹⁴ Like the church at Smyrna, these had been tested and remained true to the exhortation of The Overcomer (1Jn. 4:4; Rev. 3:21; 17:14). “You will have tribulation . . . Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life” (Rev. 2:10). They obtained their victory “by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, and they did not love their lives to the death” (Rev. 12:11).

victory over the Beast Ἐκ τοῦ θηρίου [*Ek tou thēriou*]: “The expression is peculiar. Literally, ‘conquered out of.’ The construction is unique in the New Testament. The phrase signifies, not as the King James Version, victory ‘over,’ but ‘coming triumphant out of.’”¹⁵ Although the Beast thought himself to be overcoming the saints and was granted authority to kill them (Rev. 6:2; 11:7; 13:7), they ultimately achieved the victory because their physical death proved to be their escape into God's

presence where they would forever enjoy Him. After the Beast and his minions outlive these upon the earth, their ultimate destiny is the Lake of Fire (Rev. 19:20; 20:15) so these have victory over him. They did not bow to his will, but did the will of the Father (John 4:34). These may be among those who came “out of the great tribulation” which John saw in Revelation 7:13-17. See commentary on *Revelation 12:11*^[3.12.11]. See *Who is the Overcomer?*^[4.15.1.3].

over the beast

They refused to worship the first beast which rises from the sea, the Antichrist (Rev. 13:3-4). See commentary on *Revelation 13:4*^[3.13.4]. See *The Beast*^[4.2], *#16 - Beast*^[4.3.2.16].

over his image

They also refused to worship the *image of the Beast*^[5.2.29] which the *False Prophet*^[5.2.20] caused the *earth dwellers*^[5.2.18] to make (Rev. 13:14-15). Because of their refusal to worship the image, the image had ordered their execution. See *#19 - Image of Beast*^[4.3.2.19]. See commentary on *Revelation 13:14*^[3.13.14].

over his mark

The *NU*^[5.2.49] and *MT*^[5.2.45] texts omit this phrase. These overcomers refused to take the mark of the Beast (Rev. 13:16-17). Not only were they at risk of losing their lives, but they were also completely cut off from the world’s system of commerce. See commentary on *Revelation 13:16*^[3.13.16].

over the number of his name

The mark relates to “the name of the beast, or the number of his name” (Rev. 13:17). By refusing his mark, they also refused the number of his name. See commentary on *Revelation 13:17*^[3.13.17]. These heard and responded to the warning given by the third angel in the previous chapter. They had not worshiped the beast or his image or received his mark (Rev. 14:9-11).

standing

Ἔστῶτας [*Estōtas*], perfect tense participle, they took their place prior to John seeing them. Although they had been slain, even beheaded (Rev. 20:4), they themselves were not overcome for now they stand erect in worship.

having harps of God

These harps were evidently given them by God. Like the twenty-four elders, they use their harps in worship of God (Rev. 4:8-9). Since this scene occurs prior to the end of the Tribulation, it probably precedes John’s vision of the Lamb and the 144,000 standing on Mount Zion (see commentary on *Revelation 14:1*^[3.14.1]). If so, these could be among those who play their harps in heaven which John heard “the sound of harpists playing their harps” (Rev. 14:2). Although these sing a different song, they are no doubt similar to the heavenly worshipers in that scene.¹⁶

3.15.3 - Revelation 15:3

they sing

ᾠδοῦσιν [*Adousin*], present tense, *they are singing*.

the song of Moses

Some take the song of Moses to commemorate the victory which God gave Israel at the crossing of the Red Sea when Pharaoh’s troops were destroyed in the sea (Ex. 15:1-18). The motivation for the song was the miraculous intervention of God on the singers’ behalf.

Then Moses and the children of Israel sang this song to the Lord, and spoke, saying: “I will sing to the Lord, for He has triumphed gloriously! The horse and its rider He has thrown into the sea! The Lord is my strength and song, and He has become my salvation; He is my God, and I will praise Him; My father’s God, and I will exalt Him.” (Ex. 15:1-2)

The song recognizes the *uniqueness* of God. “Who is like You, O Lord, among the gods? Who is like You, glorious in holiness, Fearful in praises, doing wonders?” (Ex. 15:11) and brings to mind the blasphemous parody of these words as attributed to the *Beast*^[5.2.9] (Rev. 13:4). The lyrics of the song

before us also recognize God's uniqueness: "For *You* alone *are* holy" (Rev. 15:4). Both songs indicate that God is to be revered and feared (Ex. 15:14-16 cf. Rev. 15:4).

There is another *song of Moses* which may also apply to the period currently underway. This is the song he wrote to the children of Israel prior to his death. For he knew they would not follow the LORD in his absence. "For I know that after my death you will become utterly corrupt, and turn aside from the way which I have commanded you. And evil will befall you **in the latter days**, because you will do evil in the sight of the LORD, to provoke Him to anger through the work of your hands" [emphasis added] (Deu. 31:29 cf. Rev. 9:20). Although that song was given to the children of Israel, it contains elements which apply to the global situation at the time of the end and are reflected by the lyrics found in this chapter. Moreover, the song is sung to all who would hear:

Give ear, O heavens, and I will speak; and hear, O earth, the words of my mouth (Deu. 32:1) . . . For I proclaim the name of the LORD: ascribe greatness to our God. *He is* the Rock. His work is perfect: for all His ways *are* justice, a God of truth and without injustice; righteous and upright is He (Deu. 32:3-4) . . . For their vine *is* of the vine of Sodom and of the fields of Gomorrah; their grapes *are* grapes of gall, their wine *is* the poison of serpents (Deu. 32:32 cf. Rev. 11:8; 14:18) . . . Vengeance is Mine, and recompense; their foot shall slip in *due* time; for the day of their calamity *is* at hand, and the things to come hasten upon them (Deu. 32:35) . . . Now see that I, *even* I, *am* He, and *there is* no God besides Me (Deu. 32:39) . . . Rejoice, O Gentiles, *with* His people; for he will avenge the blood of His servants, and render vengeance to His adversaries; He will provide atonement for His land *and* His people (Deu. 32:43).

We call your attention to the final verse of the song which distinguishes between *O Gentiles* versus *His people*. Furthermore, it states that He will provide atonement for *His land and His people*. In the context of the verse, *His people* can only be the Jewish nation. *His land* is the Promised Land. Thus, we see that the song of Moses in Deuteronomy 32 is intended to be heard more broadly than merely by the children of Israel. It spans a period of time which culminates with the restoration of the Promised Land to Israel: the *Millennial Kingdom*^[4.11].

The Deuteronomy song is not entirely unrelated to the events of the seven last plagues, in that the words "just and true" in Rev. 15:3 are part of the central theme of the song (cf. Deu. 32:3-4). It also predicts the ultimate subjugation of all nations to God (Deu. 31:1-8; 32:44-33:29), which is the hope of this song too. Specific points of similarity to the Deuteronomy song include Rev. 15:4a with Deu. 32:3; Rev. 15:3b with Deu. 32:4; Rev. 15:4b with Deu. 32:4b; the fire of God's anger with Deu. 32:33; and plagues of hunger, burning heat, pestilence, wild beasts, vermin, the sword with Deu. 32:23-27 (Ford).¹⁷

We see a pattern of application and extension throughout the book of Revelation. Principles which are illustrated by God's interaction with Israel in the *OT*^[5.2.51] are amplified and extended to apply more broadly to the population of the entire globe during the Tribulation.¹⁸

Although it seems as if elements from both of Moses' songs apply to this time of the end, the more immediate context speaks of victory and praise and most likely points to the song of victory upon escaping Egypt (Ex. 15:1-18) rather than the song of judgment. "There was also another song of Moses (Deuteronomy 31:30), now preserved as Deuteronomy 32:1-43, which might well also be sung appropriately by these tribulation martyrs. . . . However, the most appropriate [song] seems to be the actual song at the Red Sea, praising God for His great salvation."¹⁹

Commentator John Phillips compares and contrasts the two songs: "The song of Moses was sung at the Red Sea, the song of the Lamb is sung at the crystal sea; the song of Moses was a song of triumph over Egypt, the song of the Lamb is a song of triumph over Babylon; the song of Moses told how God brought His people out, the song of the Lamb tells how God brings His people in; the song of Moses was the first song in Scripture, the song of the Lamb is the last. The song of Moses commemorated the execution of the foe, the expectation of the saints, and the exaltation of the Lord; the song of the Lamb deals with the same three themes." (*Exploring Revelation*, rev. ed. [Chicago: Moody, 1987; reprint, Neptune, N.J.: Loizeaux, 1991], 187)²⁰

the servant of God

Although Moses was not allowed to enter the Promised Land, at his death he was recorded to be "the servant of the LORD" (Deu. 34:5 cf. 1Chr. 6:49; 2Chr. 24:6). Perhaps Moses' greatest service of God was the part he played in the giving of the Law, the *Law of Moses* (Ne. 9:14; Dan. 9:11; John 1:17; Heb. 3:5). The law given through Moses forms the *testimony* referred to in the "*tabernacle*"^[5.2.69] of the

testimony” which follows (Rev. 15:5).

the song of the Lamb

Since the lyrics recorded next do not match the Song of Moses nor do they explicitly mention the Lamb, it may be that these sing three different choruses: (1) the song of Moses (Ex. 15:1-18 or Deu. 32:1-43); (2) the song of the Lamb (Rev. 5:9-14); and the song recorded here which speaks of God the Father. The mention of Moses (and subsequently, the *tabernacle of the testimony*, Rev. 15:5) is an intentional allusion to the parallels between the liberation of the children of Israel under King Pharaoh and the release of all believers from the kingdom of the Beast (Rev. 13:2).

There is surely no conflict, as some have taught, between the *dispensations*^[5.2.15] of Moses and the Lamb. The written law was given by Moses, and grace and truth came through Jesus Christ (John 1:17); both are integral components of God’s will for man.²¹

Great and marvelous

Job wrote that God “does great things, and unsearchable, marvelous things without number” (Job 5:9), “God thunders marvelously with His voice; He does great things which we cannot comprehend” (Job 37:5). One of the marvelous things that God did was his division of the seas in the Exodus from Egypt (Ps. 78:12-13). Another is His creative work as manifest in marvels of the human body (Ps. 139:14-15). God told Israel, “Behold, I make a covenant. Before all your people I will do marvels such as have not been done in all the earth, nor in any nation; and all the people among whom you *are* shall see the work of the Lord” (Ex. 34:10). These marvel especially at their preservation through death from the midst of horrendous persecution of the saints upon the earth. See #20 - *Saints*^[4.3.2.20].

Almighty

Παντοκράτωρ [*Pantokratōr*], see commentary on *Revelation 1:8*^[3.1.8], *Revelation 4:8*^[3.4.8].

just and true *are* Your ways

These attributes are fundamental to the person of God:

For I proclaim the name of the LORD: ascribe greatness to our God. *He is* the Rock, His work *is* perfect; for all His ways *are* justice, a God of truth and without injustice; righteous and upright *is* He. (Deu. 32:3-4)

Mercy and truth have met together; righteousness and peace have kissed. Truth shall spring out of the earth, and righteousness shall look down from heaven. Yes, the LORD will give *what is* good; and our land will yield its increase. Righteousness will go before Him, and shall make His footsteps *our* pathway. (Ps. 85:10-13)

When God passed by Moses and proclaimed His character, He said, “The LORD, the LORD God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abounding in goodness and truth” (Ex. 34:6). Since all His ways are just and true, it is not possible for God to lie (Num. 23:19; Rom. 3:4; Heb. 6:18; Tit. 1:2). This is why Jesus could claim His self-witness was true: “Jesus answered and said to them, ‘Even if I bear witness of Myself, My witness is true, for I know where I came from and where I am going; but you do not know where I come from and where I am going’ ” (John 8:14). Even unbelieving Gentiles witness to the truth of God:

Pilate therefore said to Him, “Are You a king then?” Jesus answered, “You say *rightly* that I am a king. For this cause I was born, and for this cause I have come into the world, that I should bear witness to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth hears My voice.” Pilate said to Him, “What is truth?” And when he had said this, he went out again to the Jews, and said to them, “I find no fault in Him at all.” (John 18:37-38)

King of the saints!

The *NU*^[5.2.49] and *MT*^[5.2.45] texts have *King of the nations*.²² Both are true. “Who would not fear You, O King of the nations? For this is Your rightful due” (Jer. 10:7a). The Lamb is said to be “Lord of lords and King of kings” (Rev. 17:14 cf. Rev. 19:16). Another textual variant has “King of the ages” (cf. Jer. 10:10; 1Ti. 1:17).²³

3.15.4 - Revelation 15:4

Who shall not fear

Not is emphasized by the double-negation, οὐ μή [*ou mē*], followed by the subjunctive aorist φοβηθῆναι [*phobēthē*], *he should fear*.²⁴ The fear and reverence given to God applies to *all*, even His own saints (Ps. 89:7-8). It is His rightful due (Jer. 10:7). Fear of the LORD is called the “beginning of wisdom” (Ps. 111:10) because, along with love, it is a vital motivator leading to the obedience of those who seek to please Him.

glorify Your name

These who stand on the sea of glass responded to the warning of the first angel in the previous chapter who cried, “Fear God and give glory to Him” (Rev. 14:7). The response to God’s mighty works often involves fear and results in glory being given to Him. This was the response of those within Jerusalem in response to the great earthquake at the resurrection of the two witnesses (Rev. 11:13).

All nations whom You have made shall come and worship before You, O Lord, and shall glorify Your name. For You *are* great, and do wondrous things; You alone *are* God. (Ps. 86:9-10)

If Israel refused to glorify His name, they would live under a curse (Mal. 2:2). To attribute glory to His *name* is to recognize His holy *character*, for His many names describe His glorious character. Each name is like another facet of a gem, reflecting a unique aspect of Who He is. His name is above all names (Php. 2:9) because His character alone is holy.

You alone are holy

Holy is ὅσιος [*hosios*], a term which speaks “of the inherent nature of God and Christ *holy* (Heb. 7:26).”²⁵ Thus, Isaiah’s seraphim cry with John’s cherubim, “Holy, holy, holy” (Isa. 6:3 cf. Rev. 4:8). He is “the High and Lofty One Who inhabits eternity, whose name *is* Holy” (Isa. 57:15).

Although the term *holy* denotes purity, it also speaks of uniqueness. Holiness is that which is uniquely God’s, which sets Him apart. It is an attribute which only the Creator truly has. All other creatures which are said to be *holy*, derived their holiness from their association with God and His righteousness. It is a reflected, secondary holiness, but not essential to their nature apart from God. Another way to express this phrase might be, “You are *matchless, incomparable, peerless, unequalled, unparalleled, unrivaled!*” There is no other like God because *He alone is Creator*, all else is *creature*. “So Jesus said to him, ‘Why do you call Me good? No one *is* good but One, *that is, God*’ ” (Luke 18:19).

What would this world be like if God had been a capricious and evil personage who took pleasure in wickedness and loved iniquity? We are immensely blessed that He is otherwise (Ps. 5:4)!

all nations shall come and worship before You

Although their declaration is certain, it awaits the future for fulfillment. Then many passages which speak of the entire world acknowledging God and worshiping before Him will be consummated. “I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth!” (Ps. 46:10). “All nations whom You have made shall come and worship before You, O Lord, and shall glorify Your name” (Ps. 86:9). Aspects of such worship are already underway—He receives worship from *many* in every nation of the earth today, who offer up prayer as incense before him:

“For from the rising of the sun, even to its going down, My name *shall be* great among the Gentiles; in every place incense *shall be* offered to My name, and a pure offering; for My name shall be great among the nations,” says the LORD of hosts. (Mal. 1:11)

But the complete fulfillment awaits Christ’s physical return to rule upon the throne of David.

The conversion of *all nations*, therefore, shall be when Christ shall come, and not till then; and the first moving cause will be Christ’s *manifested judgments* preparing all hearts for receiving Christ’s mercy. He shall effect by His presence what we have in vain tried to effect in His absence. The present preaching of the Gospel is gathering out the elect remnant; meanwhile “the mystery of iniquity” is at work, and will at last come to its crisis; then shall judgment descend on the apostates at the *harvest-end of this age* (Greek, Mtt. 13:39, 40) when the tares shall be cleared out of the earth, which thenceforward becomes Messiah’s kingdom.²⁶

Their declaration is in agreement with the heavenly chorus which attends the sounding of the seventh trumpet: “The kingdoms of this world have become *the kingdoms* of our Lord and His Christ, and He

shall reign forever and ever!” (Rev. 11:15). Although the kingdoms are legally His now, the nations will not willingly bow and worship Him until after His Second Coming. This global worship is finally His at the *Millennial Kingdom*^[5.2.39]. Global worship will be centered in Jerusalem at a time when Israel has been restored to prominence among the nations in her relationship to God:

Thus says the LORD of hosts: ‘Peoples shall yet come, inhabitants of many cities; the inhabitants of one city shall go to another, saying, “Let us continue to go and pray before the LORD, and seek the LORD of hosts. I myself will go also.” Yes, many peoples and strong nations shall come to seek the LORD of hosts in Jerusalem, and to pray before the LORD.’ Thus says the LORD of hosts: ‘In those days ten men from every language of the nations shall grasp the sleeve of a Jewish man, saying, “Let us go with you, for we have heard that God is with you.”’ (Zec. 8:20-23)

Then, His house will be called “a house of prayer for all nations” (Isa. 56:7; Mark 11:17). Ultimately, in the eternal state “they shall bring the glory and honor of the nations into it” (Rev. 21:26). See *The Arrival of God’s Kingdom*^[2.4.3].

For Your judgments have been manifested

These judgments have two results. *First*, every individual who refuses to turn to God in faith will be removed from the earth. *Second*, the remainder who see His power and glory manifested in the judgments will respond in faith and be saved. These are the intended results of the Tribulation period when God’s wrath is poured out in the most visible series of judgments ever known to history. “For when Your judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness” (Isa. 26:9).

3.15.5 - Revelation 15:5

After these things

Μετὰ ταῦτα [*Meta tauta*], the standard phrase John uses to demarcate sections of his vision (Rev. 1:19; 4:1; 7:1, 9; 9:12; 15:5; 18:1; 19:1). The worshipers upon the sea of glass are seen *after* the *Beast*^[5.2.9] has initiated his mark, but *before* the pouring forth of the final seven bowls of wrath. If the worship of the Beast and institution of his mark occur at the mid-point of *The 70th Week of Daniel*^[2.13.5], this indicates that the bowls of wrath are poured forth as part of the last half of the Tribulation. See *Events of the 70th Week of Daniel*^[2.13.5.4].

the temple of the tabernacle of the testimony in heaven

Tabernacle^[5.2.69] is σκηνῆς [*skēnēs*], which denotes God’s *dwelling place*. *Of the testimony* is τοῦ μαρτυρίου [*tou martyriou*], which can also be translated *of the witness* (Num. 18:2). The term *testimony* or *witness* referred primarily to the tablets of the Ten Commandments which stood as a witness of the Mosaic Covenant and the entire body of Mosaic Law which Israel came under at Mount Sinai. “And you shall put into the ark the Testimony which I will give you” (Ex. 25:16). This testimony set forth God’s law, especially as embodied by the Ten Commandments, and now stands as a *witness* against the immoral actions of the nations in their rejection of God.

The “tabernacle of the Testimony” (Ex. 38:21) was the meeting place, also called “the tabernacle of meeting” (Ex. 30:26), where God would meet with the children of Israel. It contained “the ark of the Testimony” (Ex. 30:26; 21:7) from which it derived the name *tabernacle of the Testimony*. The Levites were entrusted with the service of the tabernacle of the Testimony, to transport and attend to it (Num. 1:50). God’s presence dwelt between the cherubim over the mercy seat of the ark within the tabernacle. The earthly tabernacle was patterned after the temple of the tabernacle of the testimony in heaven. See *A Heavenly Pattern*^[4.16.4]. See *The Abiding Presence of God*^[4.16.2]. See *Tabernacle in the Wilderness*^[4.16.5.2].

When the heavenly temple was last opened, the ark of His covenant (the “testimony”) was seen together with manifestations of judgment (Rev. 11:19). The same idea is present here. Whatever is about to come forth from the temple is a manifestation of God’s judgment for those who fall short of the testimony (witness) of the law and who have not sought Christ for refuge from God’s wrath. The righteous requirement of the law judges those who are guilty and under judgment of God’s wrath (Rom. 2:12; 3:19-20). For “the law brings about wrath” (Rom. 4:15). Believers will not be subject to

the written requirements which were taken away in Christ (Rom. 7:6; Col. 2:14). See commentary on *Revelation 11:19*^[3.11.19].

3.15.6 - Revelation 15:6

out of the temple

Temple^[5.2.73] is ναός [*naos*], generally used of the innermost portion of the temple, the holy of holies. These angels come forth directly from God's presence. Whatever attends their mission has the utmost authority behind it. Like the two angels who come out of the temple and initiate the two harvests of the previous chapter (Rev. 14:15, 17), their work has divine mandate. This is also seen in God's response from within the Temple when the last of these angels pours forth his golden bowl: "It is done!" (Rev. 16:17).

seven angels having the seven plagues

These are the final judgments in the series of seals, trumpets, and bowls. See *Sequential Events*^[2.14.2]. See *Seven: Perfection, Completeness*^[2.7.5.3.6].

clothed in pure white linen

Pure white is καθαρὸν και λαμπρὸν [*katharon kai lampron*], *clean and shining*. Λαμπρὸν [*Lampron*], from which we get our English word *lamp*, is used to describe heavenly bodies, the sun, and the morning star (Rev. 22:16). Here, it means "a brightly shining garment."²⁷ These wear similar garments to the angels seen at the empty tomb (Luke 24:4) and the angel which visited Cornelius (Acts 10:30). The garments of the wife of the Lamb at the marriage of the Lamb are also "clean and bright," λαμπρὸν καθαρὸν [*lampron katharon*] (Rev. 19:7-8). "The righteous character of their mission is signified by the pure and bright linen in which they are clothed."²⁸

A few manuscripts have "stone," λίθον [*lithon*], in place of "linen," λίνον [*linon*]. Some have noted a similarity between this textual variant and the passage which describes the covering of Satan in the garden of God: "Every precious stone *was* your covering" (Eze. 28:13). If this textual variant were legitimate, it could conceivably relate to the difficult promise of Jesus concerning the white stone given to the overcomer. See commentary on *Revelation 2:17*^[3.2.17]. However, this variant is probably best explained as a transcriptional error.²⁹

girded with golden bands

Bands is ζώνας [*zōnas*], elsewhere translated as *belt* (Mtt. 3:4). The same girding which John saw Jesus wear (Rev. 1:13).

3.15.7 - Revelation 15:7

four living creatures

These are four cherubim which attend the throne. See commentary on *Revelation 4:6*^[3.4.6].

seven golden bowls

Bowls is φιάλας [*phialas*]: "A bowl used in offerings."³⁰ Considered the equivalent of a מִזְרָאֵה [*mizraqh*], the bowl used for sprinkling the altar (*basins*, Ex. 27:3; 38:3) or a bowl used for drinking wine (Amos 6:6). Here, we are to understand a parallel between these golden bowls of wrath and the "golden bowls of incense, which are the prayers of the saints" (Rev. 5:8). The wrath contained in these bowls represents God's response to the mountains of prayers over the ages by the saints of God to avenge the blood of the martyrs (Rev. 6:10) and to bring His kingdom to earth (Mtt. 6:10; Luke 18:7-8).

These seven most severe plagues are reminiscent of God's promise to Israel if she refused to heed his prior judgments designed to turn her back to Him. "And after all this, if you do not obey Me, but walk contrary to Me, then I also will walk contrary to you in fury; and I, even I, will chastise you **seven times** for your sins" [emphasis added] (Lev. 26:27-28). See *Seven: Perfection, Completeness*^[2.7.5.3.6].

The seven bowls are poured forth in the next chapter (Rev. 16:2, 3, 4, 8, 10, 12, 17). In the pouring

forth of these bowls, God will administer His *wine of wrath* upon those who worship the *Beast*^[5.2.9]. See commentary on *Revelation 14:10*^[3.14.10].

of the wrath of God

These represent the culmination of God's wrath poured out during the Tribulation. His wrath is associated with the entire Tribulation. See commentary on *Revelation 6:17*^[3.6.17] and *Revelation 15:1*^[3.15.1].

who lives forever and ever

Τοῦ ζῶντος εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας τῶν αἰώνων [*Tou zōntos eis tous aiōnas tōn aiōnōn*], *the living one into the ages of the ages*. Jesus described Himself with an almost identical phrase, see commentary on *Revelation 1:18*^[3.1.18].

3.15.8 - Revelation 15:8

the temple was filled with smoke from the glory of God

Although God has been within the *Temple*^[5.2.73], His *shekinah glory*^[5.2.67] now manifests itself. Such manifestations of His presence typically attend moments of great import and significance. His glory filled the *Tabernacle in the Wilderness*^[4.16.5.2] indicating His approval and presence among the children of Israel:

Then the cloud covered the *tabernacle*^[5.2.69] of meeting, and the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle. And Moses was not able to enter the tabernacle of meeting, because the cloud rested above it, and the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle. (Ex. 40:34-35)

His presence also filled *Solomon's Temple*^[4.16.5.3] at its dedication:

And it came to pass, when the priests came out of the holy *place*, that the cloud filled the house of the LORD, so that the priests could not continue ministering because of the cloud; for the glory of the LORD filled the house of the LORD. (1K. 8:10-11)

The same glory was seen by Isaiah in the heavenly Temple:

In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord sitting on a throne, high and lifted up, and the train of His *robe* filled the temple. Above it stood seraphim; each one had six wings: with two he covered his face, with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew. And one cried to another and said: "Holy, holy, holy *is* the LORD of hosts; the whole earth *is* full of His glory!" And the posts of the door were shaken by the voice of him who cried out, and the house was filled with smoke. (Isa. 6:1-4)

See *The Abiding Presence of God*^[4.16.2].

no one was able to enter the temple till the seven plagues of the seven angels were completed

Here we have perhaps one of the most mysterious and wondrous verses in all of Scripture. It surely must indicate a period of great privacy and intensity in the mind of God attending the final outpouring of His wrath. It probably indicates an unwillingness to allow for even the possibility of distraction until what has been initiated finds its completion and likely signifies the holiness of the moment, as when Moses could not enter the tabernacle when the glory fell upon it (Ex. 40:35) and the priests could not minister in Solomon's Temple (1K. 8:11). Perhaps the idea is that of the finality of the action: "Even if Moses and Samuel stood before Me, My mind *would not be* favorable toward this people. Cast *them* out of My sight . . . Such as *are* for death, to death" (Jer. 15:1-2).

It may suggest that God will, at this point in history, seal the doors of Heaven, making it impossible for any who have not hitherto accepted Jesus as Savior to do so. In other words, from this time forth until God has executed the human race, no additional souls will be saved. This is reminiscent of the previous great judgment, for, in the age before the flood, God said, "My Spirit will not strive with man forever" (Gen. 6:3). What a fearsome prospect: God closeted in His sanctuary until His wrath is satisfied, and no one able to approach Him. Sin will cause this; sin is never a light matter.³¹

Perhaps there is also great sadness in knowing that nothing further can be done, no more will turn (2Pe. 3:9). All that remains is the hand of judgment. Perhaps there is anguish on the part of the Father like that of the Son on the cross (Mtt. 27:46; Mark 15:34)?

What insight we should have here of the holiness of God, and may we not be allowed to think that

behind this hiding smoke the heart of God is weeping, even as the Lord Jesus wept over Jerusalem, as He acknowledged that all the efforts of His mercy has been in vain, and that the city refused all of His offers of pardon and love? And as we shall be in Heaven at that moment, yet outside of the presence of God, shall we not know that he suffers alone for the horror of the sin that separates men forever from Himself and forces Him to send them away to outer darkness forever?³²

To speculate further is to go where angels fear to tread. God has covered Himself with a cloud of darkness and we do well to respect His privacy in this matter (Lam. 3:44; Rom. 11:33).

Such intense judgment to come! Such grief on the part of the Creator for the creature which refuses to acknowledge Him. Yet He *must* judge for His very holiness and justice require it! Every person born will drink from one or the other of two cups. Either they will drink the cup of salvation:

Then He [Jesus] took the cup, and gave thanks, and said, "Take this and divide *it* among yourselves; for I say to you, I will not drink of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes." And He took bread, gave thanks and broke *it*, and gave *it* to them, saying, "This is My body which is given for you; do this in remembrance of Me." Likewise He also *took* the cup after supper, saying, "This cup *is* the new covenant in My blood, which is shed for you." (Luke 22:17-20)

Or they will drink the cup of the wrath of God (Rev. 14:10):

He who believes in the Son has everlasting life; and he who does not believe the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him. (John. 3:36)

Today, if you will hear His voice, do not harden your heart (Heb. 3:15), for *now* is the day of salvation (2Cor. 6:2).

Notes

- ¹ J. A. Seiss, *The Apocalypse: Lectures on the Book of Revelation* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1966), 367.
- ² Timothy Friberg, Barbara Friberg, and Neva F. Miller, *Analytical Lexicon of the Greek New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2000), 195.
- ³ Henry Morris, *The Revelation Record* (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 1983), Rev. 15:1.
- ⁴ Robert L. Thomas, *Revelation 8-22* (Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 1995), Rev. 15:1.
- ⁵ Walter Scott, *Exposition of The Revelation* (London, England: Pickering & Inglis, n.d.), Rev. 15:1.
- ⁶ David Chilton, *The Days of Vengeance* (Tyler, TX: Dominion Press, 1987), Rev. 15:1.
- ⁷ Seiss, *The Apocalypse: Lectures on the Book of Revelation*, 370-371.
- ⁸ Morris, *The Revelation Record*, Rev. 15:3.
- ⁹ Friberg, *Analytical Lexicon of the Greek New Testament*, 253.
- ¹⁰ Donald Grey Barnhouse, *Revelation* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1971), 284.
- ¹¹ Scott, *Exposition of The Revelation*, Rev. 15:2.
- ¹² A. R. Fausset, "The Revelation of St. John the Divine," in Robert Jamieson, A. R. Fausset, and David Brown, *A Commentary, Critical and Explanatory, on the Old and New Testaments* (Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc., 1997, 1877), Rev. 15:2.
- ¹³ "The crystal sea, speaking of a past watery judgment and deliverance, is also 'mingled with fire,' speaking of the impending fiery judgment and deliverance."—Morris, *The Revelation Record*, Rev. 15:3.
- ¹⁴ Morris, *The Revelation Record*, Rev. 15:2.
- ¹⁵ M. R. Vincent, *Vincent's Word Studies* (Escondido, CA: Ephesians Four Group, 2002), Rev. 15:2.
- ¹⁶ "They are the harpers which we saw harping and singing in Rev. 14:2-3. They are the martyred company worshipping in glory."—Arno C. Gaebelien, *The Revelation* (Neptune, NJ: Loizeaux Brothers, 1961), Rev. 15:2.
- ¹⁷ Thomas, *Revelation 8-22*, Rev. 15:3.
- ¹⁸ This is one reason that *preterist interpreters*^[2.12.2] tend to see everything in the book of Revelation in light of

God judging *Israel*. They fail to see the distinctions between the time of the end and the overthrow of Jerusalem in A.D. 70 and the extension of God's principles relating to Israel's rebellion being applied wholesale to a rebellious world.

- 19 Morris, *The Revelation Record*, Rev. 15:3.
- 20 John MacArthur, *Revelation 12-22 : The MacArthur New Testament Commentary* (Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 2000), Rev. 15:3-4.
- 21 Morris, *The Revelation Record*, Rev. 15:3.
- 22 “The reading of the Textus Receptus (ἁγίων [*hagiōn*]), which has only the slenderest support in Greek witnesses (296 2049, neither of which was available when the Textus Receptus was formed), appears to have arisen from confusion of the Latin compendia for *sanctorum* (*sctorum*) and *saeculorum* (*sclorum* [=αἰώνων [*aiōnōn*]]); ‘saint’ is also read by several Latin writers, including Victorinus-Pettau, Tyconius, Apringius, and Cassiodorus.”—Bruce M. Metzger, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament* (Stuttgart, Germany: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1994), Rev. 15:3.
- 23 P⁴⁷, ⚭*, and C have *King of the ages*.
- 24 “Emphatic negation is indicated by οὐ μή [*ou mē*] plus the *aorist subjunctive* or, less frequently, οὐ μή [*ou mē*] plus the future indicative (e.g., Mtt. 26:35; Mark 13:31; John 4:14; 6:35). This is the strongest way to negate something in Greek.”—Daniel B. Wallace, *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics - Exegetical Syntax of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House and Galaxie Software, 1999, 2002), 466.
- 25 Friberg, *Analytical Lexicon of the Greek New Testament*, 286.
- 26 Fausset, “*The Revelation of St. John the Divine*,” Rev. 15:4.
- 27 Frederick William Danker, and Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 465.
- 28 Scott, *Exposition of The Revelation*, Rev. 15:6.
- 29 “Although the reading λίθον [*lithon*] is strongly attested (A C 2053 vg. *al*) and was widely circulated at an early date, in the opinion of the Committee it is a transcriptional error that, despite a superficial parallel with Eze. 28:13, makes no sense; it is particularly inapposite with the adjective καθαρὸν [*katharon*], which, on the contrary, is altogether appropriate with λίνον [*linon*].”—Metzger, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament*, Rev. 15:6.
- 30 Danker, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 858.
- 31 Monty S. Mills, *Revelations: An Exegetical Study of the Revelation to John* (Dallas, TX: 3E Ministries, 1987), Rev. 15:5.
- 32 Barnhouse, *Revelation*, 287.

3.16 - Revelation 16

3.16.1 - Revelation 16:1

In the previous chapter, John saw the seven angels having the seven last plagues wherein the wrath of God is complete (Rev. 15:1). He was also shown those who had *overcome*^[4.15.1.3] the *Beast*^[5.2.9] and had refused to worship him or take his mark. These were undoubtedly martyred, filling up the cup of God's wrath even further. The angels have been given the seven bowls of the wrath of God, and God has shut Himself within the *Temple*^[5.2.73] to be alone, undisturbed during the pouring forth of the bowls.

Now the scene depicts the actual pouring forth of the seven bowls upon the earth below. As each bowl is poured out, those on the earth receive a plague. Since the wrath of God is complete in these seven bowls, they span the remainder of the Tribulation period up until its end, when Christ returns and overthrows the enemies of God in the *Campaign of Armageddon*^[4.5]. Even though this chapter concludes with the pouring forth of the seventh bowl, at which the work of God's wrath is complete, John's vision will not be complete. For three more chapters (Revelation 17, 18, and 19) remain within which John is shown details attending the judgments associated with these bowls culminating in the Second Coming of Christ and the binding of Satan prior to the *Millennial Kingdom*^[5.2.39] (Rev. 20:1-3).

The primary purposes of the seven bowl judgments are: (1) to pour out God's righteous wrath in judgment of the *earth dwellers*^[5.2.18]; (2) to graphically demonstrate the unrepentant nature of the earth dwellers who are already doomed by the mark they have taken (Rev. 14:9-11). Whereas the trumpet judgments were partial and intended to produce repentance, the bowl judgments are completely punitive, the earth dwellers having passed the point of possible return.

a loud voice from the temple

Temple is ναοῦ [*naou*], which generally describes the inner sanctuary. See commentary on *Revelation 11:1*^[3.11.1]. In the previous verse, the *shekinah glory*^[4.16.2] of God filled the Temple and no one could enter until the plagues were completed (Rev. 15:8). Thus, this voice can only be that of God Himself. His voice is also heard announcing, "It is done!" at the completion of the pouring forth of the seven bowls (Rev. 16:17). The angels had previously received their instructions from God's throne within the Temple (Rev. 15:5 cf. Rev. 16:17). Now he gives the command to carry through with their assignment.

saying to the seven angels

These are the seven angels which were given seven bowls containing God's wrath by the living creature. See commentary on *Revelation 15:1*^[3.15.1].

go and pour out

Υπάγετε και ἐκξέετε [*Hypagete kai ekxeete*], an imperative command, *You all go and pour out!* Numerous passages describe God's judgment in terms of *pouring out* His indignation, fury, and wrath. This is no accident, for He has known all along that the *bowl* judgments would be the final in the sequence of judgments at the time of the end.

The psalmist decries the overthrow of Jerusalem by the nations, and asks God to *pour out* His wrath on the nations who do not know Him nor call upon His name:

O God, the nations have come into Your inheritance; Your holy temple they have defiled; they have laid Jerusalem in heaps. The dead bodies of Your servants they have given *as* food for the birds of the heavens, the flesh of Your saints to the beasts of the earth. Their blood they have shed like water all around Jerusalem, and *there was* no one to bury *them*. We have become a reproach to our neighbors, a scorn and derision to those who are around us. How long, LORD? Will You be angry forever? Will Your jealousy burn like fire? **Pour out** Your wrath on the nations that do not know You, and on the kingdoms that do not call on Your name. For they have devoured Jacob, and laid waste his dwelling place. (Ps. 79:1-7) [emphasis added]

"While Jerusalem more than once has experienced such desolations (under the Babylonians, Greeks, and Romans), these calamities in their prophetic aspect still point to that final and cataclysmic disaster that is yet to fall upon the city (Dan. 9:27; Zec. 14:12; Mtt. 24:15; 2Th. 2:4; Rev. 11:1-3; 13:11-18)."¹

Jeremiah records a similar request:

Pour out Your fury on the Gentiles, who do not know You, and on the families who do not call on Your name; for they have eaten up Jacob, devoured him and consumed him, and made his dwelling place desolate. (Jer. 10:25) [emphasis added]

As in the Babylonian and Roman desolations of Jerusalem in history past, so shall desolation occur at the time of the end, in the middle of *Daniel's 70th Week*^[2.13.5]. The “desolating one,”² the *Antichrist*^[5.2.3], shall have judgment poured out upon him:³

Then he shall confirm a covenant with many for one week; but in the middle of the week He shall bring an end to sacrifice and offering. And on the wing of abominations shall be one who makes desolate, even until the consummation, which is determined, is **poured out** on the desolate. (Dan. 9:27) [emphasis added]

Zephaniah spoke concerning Israel's lack of fear of God indicating a future time when God would *pour* His indignation upon the nations—thus gaining Israel's attention and respect at the time of the end.

“Therefore wait for Me,” says the Lord, “Until the day I rise up for plunder; My determination is to gather the nations to My assembly of kingdoms, to **pour** on them My indignation, all My fierce anger; all the earth shall be devoured with the fire of My jealousy. For then I will restore to the peoples a pure language, that they all may call on the name of the Lord, to serve Him with one accord.” (Zep. 3:8-9) [emphasis added]

bowls of the wrath of God

These final seven judgments are especially severe and represent the final pouring forth of God's wrath. The prime recipient of God's wrath are those who worship the Beast (Rev. 14:10 cf. Rev. 16:2, 10). See commentary on *Revelation 15*:¹[3.15.1].

The mills of God grind slowly, but they grind exceeding fine, and the last of the grist is now to go through. The machinery of judgment has been set in motion, and the Creator Himself has said that it shall not be arrested until the last plagues of His wrath are finished.⁴

Because the bowl judgments, representing the final outpouring of God's wrath prior to the Millennial Kingdom, are so severe, many have been unwilling to take them as describing literal events. As we have observed elsewhere, when one cuts the tether of literal interpretation, all manner of strange understandings result and it is nearly impossible for the actual text to adequately constrain the imagination of the interpreter. Also, it becomes impossible for God to describe cataclysmic judgments even if He wanted to, for interpreters would be forever reinterpreting them as symbolism or allegory. We believe the details given in the descriptions of the judgments point strongly in the direction of a literal interpretation:

These seven Vials and their effects we take to be literal; . . . They belong to no figures of speech. The language is clear and precise. There is nothing beyond our faith, though there may be beyond our reason. True, they are supernatural, but not unnatural. In the plagues of Egypt, which all take to be literal, we have many judgments exactly similar. Indeed, six out of the seven Vials are just the same as the plagues of Egypt, and God has again and again declared that their final judgments should be like, yea, should be worse than those (Ex. 34:10). . . . In the face of this, is it not strange that these Vials should ever be taken to mean: The first, the French Revolution; and the “sores” its infidelity, etc. The second, the naval wars of the French Revolution; The third, Napoleon's campaign in Italy; The fourth, Napoleon's military tyranny, etc., etc.? It is a waste of precious time and space even to chronicle such interpretations.⁵

So far as the naval battles of the French Revolution affected the sea [at the pouring of the second bowl], they killed nothing of the living things therein, but fattened them, and scarcely stained a single wave; so far were they from turning all the ocean's waters into bloody clots.⁶

on the earth

Like previous judgments in the series of seals, trumpets, bowls, these target those living upon the earth at the time of the end, the *Earth Dwellers*^[3.3.10.1]. “Behold, the day of the Lord comes, Cruel, with both wrath and fierce anger, To lay the land desolate; And He will destroy its sinners from it” (Isa. 13:9).

3.16.2 - Revelation 16:2

foul and loathsome sore

Ἑλκος κακὸν καὶ πονηρὸν [*Helkos kakon kai ponēron*]. *Sore*, is ἔλκος [*helkos*] meaning: “Strictly *wound*; by metonymy *ulcer, ulcerated sore, abscess*.”⁷ *Foul* is κακὸν [*kakon*], which in this context means “dangerous, pernicious . . . harmful.”⁸ *Loathsome* is πονηρὸν [*ponēron*], meaning “painful, virulent, serious.”⁹ Thus, God strikes them with *dangerous and pernicious, painful and virulent wound-like ulcers or abscesses*. The *Beast*^[5.2.9] worshipers experience a similar condition to that of Job when he was struck with boils by Satan (Job 2:7). The plague which strikes the Beast worshipers is like that which Aaron and Moses caused upon the men and beasts of Egypt (Ex. 9:8-11). God promised to strike Israel with similar boils if they continued in disobedience toward Him (Deu. 28:27, 35), but also to strike their enemies if they returned and were obedient to Him (Deu. 7:15). God describes the similar plague with which He struck Egypt: “Tumors, with the scab, and with the itch, from which you cannot be healed” (Deu. 28:27). The sores will not only be painful, but they will be extremely irritating because of their itch and refusal to heal. “Lilje comments that those who once bore the mark of the beast are now visited by ‘marks’ of God.”¹⁰ See *The Plagues of Egypt and the Tribulation*^[2.13.7].

came upon the men who had the mark of the beast and those who worshiped his image

Not two categories of people, but two ways of describing the same group. They are the enemies of God during the Tribulation, much as Egypt was the enemy of Israel (and God) during the Exodus. Their worship of the Beast and his image violates the second commandment, written on stone—the “testimony” in the ark of the covenant in the *tabernacle*^[5.2.69] which was mentioned just a few verses before (Rev. 15:5): “You shall not make for yourself a carved image . . . you shall not bow down to them nor serve them” (Ex. 20:4). See commentary on *Revelation 13:15*^[3.13.15], *Revelation 13:16*^[3.13.16], and *Revelation 14:9*^[3.14.9].

3.16.3 - Revelation 16:3

blood as of a dead man

Αἷμα ὡς νεκροῦ [*Haima hōs nekrou*], *blood as (a) dead (one)*. In the judgment of the second trumpet, a third of the sea became blood and a third of the living creatures in the sea died. See commentary on *Revelation 8:8*^[3.8.8]. Now, the remainder of the sea becomes blood, but not just blood, *lifeless blood*. Scripture indicates that the “life of the flesh is in the blood” (Lev. 17:11). Blood “banks” and “bloodmobiles” in our own day attest to this truth recorded by Scripture long before the medical discoveries of our time. The blood is the essential system by which nutrients arrive and waste is removed.

every living creature in the sea died

Now, the essential life-supporting mechanisms within the sea, the basis of the food chain, are destroyed. As in Egypt, the animal life within the water dies (Ex. 7:18, 21; Ps. 105:29). See *The Plagues of Egypt and the Tribulation*^[2.13.7]. “Imagine the chaos: all the dead marine life lying feet deep on the shores of the world and rotting there. The loss of marine life as a food source will be devastating after the destruction of vegetation that will occur as a result of Rev. 8:7.”¹¹

3.16.4 - Revelation 16:4

they became blood

In the judgment of the third trumpet, a third of the rivers and springs of water became wormwood. See commentary on *Revelation 8:10*^[3.8.10]. The parallels between the second and third trumpet judgments and the second and third bowl judgments are striking. Nevertheless, they are different both in quantity (one-third versus all) and quality (blood versus wormwood). Similarity does not make identity. The bowl judgments do not recapitulate the trumpet judgements.

Overly subtle interpretations in the interest of recapitulation overlook the distinct differences between the two series. Among the more important are: (1) the trumpet-plagues are partial in their effect (one-third of the earth is burned, Rev. 8:7; one-third of the sea becomes blood, Rev. 8:8; see also Rev. 8:9-12)

while the bowls are universal (“every living soul died,” Rev. 16:3; “every island fled away,” Rev. 16:20) and final; (2) the trumpets are to a certain extent a call to repentance while the bowls are the pouring out of divine wrath; and (3) man is affected indirectly by the first four trumpets but is directly attacked from the outset by the bowls. It should also be noticed that the bowls are poured out in rapid succession with the customary interlude between the sixth and seventh elements of the sequence missing.¹²

See *Literary Structure*^[2.14].

There is a close similarity between this judgment and that which afflicted Egypt prior to the Exodus when the rivers and streams of Egypt were turned to blood (Ex. 7:20). See *The Plagues of Egypt and the Tribulation*^[2.13.7].

That, then, which has always been the symbol of salvation in the midst of life, becomes the symbol of condemnation in the midst of death. But now, the seas are turned to blood; the fish die; the winds of God blow death over all the earth. They had refused the salvation that would have come to them from the blood of the One who is Life; they now receive condemnation from the blood that symbolizes death.¹³

The destruction of what is left of the earth’s fresh water will cause unthinkable hardship and suffering. There will be no water to drink; no clean water to wash the oozing sores caused by the first bowl judgment; no water to bring cooling relief from the scorching heat that the fourth bowl judgment will shortly bring. The scene is so unimaginably horrible that people will wonder how a God of compassion, mercy, and grace could send such a judgment. And so there is a brief interlude in the pouring out of the judgments while an angel speaks in God’s defense.¹⁴

3.16.5 - Revelation 16:5

the angel of the waters

The angel who had poured forth the third bowl in the previous verse.¹⁵

You are righteous, O Lord . . . because You have judged

The angel proclaims God’s righteousness because He has judged. God is righteous because He alone possesses the perfect balance between grace and judgment. “The LORD *is* righteous in all His ways, gracious in all His works” (Ps. 145:17). “Righteous *are* You, O LORD, and upright *are* Your judgments” (Ps. 119:137). Because God is not willing that any should perish, He extends His patience and grace while horrible sin continues to abound on the earth. Because God is righteous, there will come a day when He *must* act against sin and bring judgment. We often confuse the relative calm of our own day for meekness and mildness on the part of God. In truth, God never changes and the strength which He acts against sin at the time of the end reflects the intensity He holds *even now* toward that which we often have a cavalier attitude toward.

who is and who was and who is to be

Ὁ ὢν καὶ ὁ ἦν, καὶ ἐσόμενος [*Ho ὄn kai ho ēn, kai esomenos*], *the one who is and the “he was,” and the one to be*. This unusual construction is likely a Hebraism. For a discussion of a closely-related grammatical phrase, see commentary on *Revelation 1:4*^[3.1.4]. Here, the future tense participle is based on the verb εἶμι [*eimi*], “to be,” whereas in Revelation 1:4 it is based on the verb ἐρχομαι [*erchomai*], “to come.” There, the emphasis is on His impending arrival. Here, upon his eternality. Most other manuscripts, including the majority of those in the *MT*^[5.2.45] text family and the *NT*^[5.2.49] text, have ὁ ὀσιος [*ho hosios*], “the holy,” instead of ἐσόμενος [*esomenos*], “the one to be.”

3.16.6 - Revelation 16:6

they have shed the blood of saints and prophets

Those who had shed the blood of saints and prophets are the “peoples, multitudes, nations, and tongues” upon which the *Harlot*^[5.2.25] sits (Rev. 17:15) for she is “drunk with the blood of the saints and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus” (Rev. 17:6). The godless have shed the blood of saints and prophets throughout history (1K. 18:4; 19:4; 2K. 24:4; 2Chr. 24:21; Ps. 79:1-4; Jer. 2:30; Jer. 26:23; Lam. 4:13). At the First Coming of Christ, Israel was especially guilty of shedding the blood of her own righteous (Mtt. 21:35-36; 23:35; Luke 11:49-53). Since the rejection of Messiah Jesus and the going forth of the gospel to the whole world, over 1900 years have transpired and the toll of the shed

blood of the saints has escalated dramatically. It has been said in our own century that more have died for the cause of Christ than any previous century. Yet the persecutions of history will pale in comparison with that which befalls the saints in the Tribulation when the *Beast*^[5.2.9] (Dan. 7:21, 25; Rev. 13:7, 10), his image (Rev. 13:15), and the Harlot (Rev. 17:6; 19:2) all slaughter the saints during Satan's final attempt to overthrow the plan of God (Rev. 12:17). This is why the book of Revelation has always been precious to the persecuted Church, for its pages are sprinkled with the blood of martyrs (Rev. 6:9-10; 7:14; 11:7; 12:11, 17; 15:2; 20:4). See #20 - *Saints*^[4.3.2.20].

You have given them blood to drink

Because they have shed the blood of the saints and prophets, in a wry twist of God's hand of judgment, He gives them literal blood to drink. This is similar to how He stones those who are guilty of blasphemy. See commentary on *Revelation 16:21*^[3.16.21].

I will feed those who oppress you with their own flesh, and they shall be drunk with their own blood as with sweet wine. All flesh shall know that I, the LORD, *am* your Savior, and your Redeemer, the Mighty One of Jacob. (Isa. 49:26) [emphasis added]

For it is their just due

Ἄξιτοι γὰρ εἶσι [Axioi gar eisi], *For worthy they are.* By their [works], they have demonstrated their worthiness of this righteous punishment.

3.16.7 - Revelation 16:7

I heard another from the altar saying

Probably the angel which officiated at the altar and offered the prayers of the saints (Rev. 8:3-4 cf. Rev. 14:18) including those of the martyrs John saw under the altar following the opening of the fifth seal (Rev. 6:9). He is in agreement with giving the *earth dwellers*^[5.2.18] blood to drink, for he attends the altar where the martyrs cry for vengeance. They are among those whose blood was shed. The *NU*^[5.2.49] and *MT*^[5.2.45] texts omit *another*. "The Altar is either personified (for the prayers of the saints are upon it; and the martyrs are beneath it); or the words '[the angel of] the Altar' must be supplied."¹⁶

Almighty

Παντοκράτωρ [*Pantokratōr*], see commentary on *Revelation 1:8*^[3.1.8].

true and righteous are Your judgments

God's righteous judgment is seen in His patient interaction with Abraham prior to the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah where Abraham questioned God. "Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?" (Gen. 18:25). Rather than being a blasphemous questioning of God's inscrutable will, the passage serves as an intentional illustration of His just nature and righteous judgment. Not only are the Father's judgments true and righteous during the pouring forth of the seven bowls, but upon the commencement of the *Millennial Kingdom*^[5.2.39], the Son's rule will be the same:

Of the increase of *His* government and peace *There will be* no end, upon the throne of David and over His kingdom, to order it and establish it with judgment and justice from that time forward, even forever. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this. (Isa. 9:7)

The righteous nature of God's judgment is taken up by Paul in his argument defending the sovereignty of God in election (Rom. 9:14-24). In fact, God's judgment is *required* by His righteousness (2Th. 1:6), for if He were to forever delay judgment, then He would be in violation of His own righteous nature. For God to forego judgment when it is due is as impossible as it is for the Holy One to lie.

3.16.8 - Revelation 16:8

the fourth angel poured out his bowl on the sun

Again, we see similarities between the bowl and trumpet judgments. In the fourth trumpet judgment "a third of the sun was struck" (Rev. 8:12). But the fourth trumpet also targeted the moon and stars, whereas the fourth bowl only affects the sun. This alternation in the sun's normal operation will serve as one of many "signs in the sun, in the moon, and in the stars" during the time of the end (Luke 21:25). See commentary on *Revelation 6:12*^[3.6.12].

to scorch men with fire

To scorch is καυματίσαι [kaumatisai], to “be burned, be scorched of plants withering in the heat (Mtt. 13:6).”¹⁷ The intense heat they endure is an indication of judgment (Rev. 14:18). Those John saw coming out of the Great Tribulation “shall neither hunger anymore nor thirst anymore; the sun shall not strike them, nor any heat” (Rev. 7:16). Although this may refer to tribulation in general, the possibility exists that it may also speak about the relief provided to those saints who lived on the earth at the time of the sun’s increased intensity prior to their martyrdom.¹⁸ See commentary on *Revelation 7:16*^[3.7.16].

One purpose in God striking the sun is found in the ages-long idolatry of men where they have worshiped the sun, moon, and stars rather than acknowledging their Creator. Thus, that which men have worshiped now becomes the source of their curse.¹⁹ “Men are to be taught that the very things in which they have trusted or to which they have given their worship are to be the sources of their most terrible punishments.”²⁰

Another serious consequence of the sun’s intense heat will be the melting of the polar ice caps. The resulting rise in the oceans’ water level will inundate coastal regions, flooding areas miles inland with the noxious waters of the dead oceans. Widespread damage and loss of life will accompany that flooding, adding further to the unspeakable misery of the devastated planet. Transportation by sea will become impossible.²¹

3.16.9 - Revelation 16:9

and men were scorched with great heat

Isaiah was given a glimpse of this time upon the earth:

Behold, the LORD makes the earth empty and makes it waste, distorts its surface and scatters abroad its inhabitants. And it shall be: as with the people, so with the priest; as with the servant, so with his master; as with the maid, so with her mistress; as with the buyer, so with the seller; as with the lender, so with the borrower; as with the creditor, so with the debtor. The land shall be entirely emptied and utterly plundered, for the LORD has spoken this word. The earth mourns *and* fades away, the world languishes *and* fades away; the haughty people of the earth languish. The earth is also defiled under its inhabitants, because they have transgressed the laws, changed the ordinance, broken the everlasting covenant.

Therefore the curse has devoured the earth, and those who dwell in it are desolate. **Therefore the inhabitants of the earth are burned, and few men are left.** The new wine fails, the vine languishes, all the merry-hearted sigh. The mirth of the tambourine ceases, the noise of the jubilant ends, the joy of the harp ceases. They shall not drink wine with a song; strong drink is bitter to those who drink it. The city of confusion is broken down; every house is shut up, so that none may go in. *There is* a cry for wine in the streets, all joy is darkened, the mirth of the land is gone. In the city desolation is left, and the gate is stricken with destruction. When it shall be thus in the midst of the land among the people, *it shall be* like the shaking of an olive tree, **Like the gleaning of grapes when the vintage is done.** (Isa. 24:1-13 cf. Mal. 4:1) [emphasis added]

The conditions experienced by those beneath the bowl judgments is uniform. Position and status will be no refuge from desolate conditions. Although “burned” in these passages may refer to God’s consuming wrath,²² given the context of the time of the end, it may also refer to the effects of the great heat upon agriculture: “The new wine fails, the vine languishes.”

they blasphemed the name of God . . . and they did not repent

Here again is recorded the unrepentant nature of the *earth dwellers*^[5.2.18] of the time of the end. Even in the face of overwhelming evidence of the reality and power of God, their hearts are so set against Him in hatred that all they can do is continue their pattern of cursing in response to His intervention in their lives (Rev. 16:9, 11, 21). Those who have taken the mark are irredeemable (Rev. 14:9-11) for God knows that they, like *Jezebel*^[5.2.35] in the church of Thyatira (Rev. 2:21) will not repent (Rev. 9:20-21). Instead, they follow in the ways of the one whom they worship (Rev. 13:5-6; 17:3).

God’s testing is not always to elicit a repentant response. When those being tested have passed the point of return, God continues to test them to provide abundant witness of their unwillingness and inability to return (Rom. 1:26, 28). This is one purpose for this “hour of trial which shall come upon the whole world, to test those who dwell on the earth” (Rev. 3:10). In the same way the Holy Spirit led Jesus into the wilderness to *show Who He was*, so now God tests those who have already taken the

mark and are beyond redemption (Rev. 14:9-10). Like Pharaoh, their consistent response is not to *change their mind* but to *harden their heart* (Ex. 8:15; 9:34-35). Each time they respond in blasphemy, they unwittingly underwrite and testify of the justice of God's judgment. See *Beast Worshipers are Unique*^[4.4.3.4].

Long ago, an angel described these at the time of the end:

And he said, "Go *your way*, Daniel, for the words *are* closed up and sealed till the time of the end. Many shall be purified, made white, and refined, **but the wicked shall do wickedly; and none of the wicked shall understand**, but the wise shall understand." (Dan. 12:9-10) [emphasis added]

A similar theme is expressed to John by an angel at the end of this book. "He who is unjust, let him be unjust still; he who is filthy, let him be filthy still" (Rev. 22:11). God's judgments will not result in repentance for these: "Though you grind a fool in a mortar with a pestle along with crushed grain, *yet* his foolishness will not depart from him" (Pr. 27:22).

3.16.10 - Revelation 16:10

on the throne of the beast

Like the first bowl, the fifth bowl specifically targets those within the kingdom of the *Beast*^[5.2.9]. Unlike the first bowl which affects all men who took his mark, this bowl is designated for the *throne* of the Beast, and his *kingdom* becomes full of darkness. This may imply a focus upon the leadership of his kingdom—the Beast himself and those in the higher echelons of his realm. Or it could mean all those under his mark. His throne was obtained from Satan. See commentary on *Revelation 13:2*^[3.13.2]. He is both a ruler, the *little horn*^[4.3.2.25] (Dan. 7:8) and *Eighth Head*^[4.3.2.16] (Rev. 17:11), and a kingdom, the *Terrible Beast*^[4.3.2.12] (Dan. 7:7; Rev. 13:2). See *Beasts, Heads, and Horns*^[4.3]. "If the literal Babylon is to be rebuilt, it may already have become the place of the throne of Satan by the time that is in view here under the fifth bowl."²³ "The Beast is a man (Rev. 13:18); therefore his throne is in a definite place: rebuilt Babylon on the Euphrates, we believe,—Satan's ancient capital, in the 'land of Shinar,' where 'wickedness' is to be set on its base in the end-time (Zec. 5:5-10)."²⁴

his kingdom became full of darkness

Now the kingdom of the Beast is struck with a plague reminiscent of that which struck Pharaoh at the hand of Moses:

Then the LORD said to Moses, "Stretch out your hand toward heaven, that there may be darkness over the land of Egypt, darkness *which* may even be felt." So Moses stretched out his hand toward heaven, and there was thick darkness in all the land of Egypt three days. They did not see one another; nor did anyone rise from his place for three days. But all the children of Israel had light in their dwellings. (Ex. 10:21-23)

"The transition from the fourth to the fifth bowls is most striking. The one had been the fiery, scorching, blinding brightness of the sun; the next is an impenetrable darkness."²⁵ Although the throne of the Beast is empowered by Lucifer,²⁶ the *shining one, the son of the dawn* (הֵלֵל בֶּן־שָׁחַר [hēlēl Ben-shachar], Isa. 14:12), he is helpless to illumine the God-imposed darkness. See *The Plagues of Egypt and the Tribulation*^[2.13.7].

they gnawed their tongues because of the pain

Pain is πόνου [ponou] which includes "affliction, anguish."²⁷ The darkness with which they are afflicted is more than just lack of light as in the Egyptian plague, but also seems to involve other means of affliction which result in intense pain, perhaps similar to that experienced at the hand of the demonic locusts, although that judgment was broader than upon the Beast's throne and kingdom (Rev. 9:5-6). "They meditate revenge and are unable to effect it; hence their frenzy [Grotius]. Those in anguish, mental and bodily, bite their lips and tongues."²⁸ "The people who suffer these plagues bit their tongues, chew them, gnaw them, as their best diversion from their misery. Their tongues have spoken blasphemies, and they themselves thus punish them."²⁹

3.16.11 - Revelation 16:11

They blasphemed the God of heaven

Again they fail an opportunity to repent. With the same tongues they gnaw, they continue to blaspheme God. See commentary on *Revelation 16:9*^[3.16.9]. Because they are guilty of blasphemy, God will stone them. See commentary on *Revelation 16:21*^[3.16.21].

their pains and their sores

The pains were inflicted by the fifth bowl (Rev. 16:10) and the sores by the first bowl (Rev. 16:2).

did not repent of their deeds

See commentary on *Revelation 9:21*^[3.9.21].

3.16.12 - Revelation 16:12

the great river Euphrates and its water was dried up

At the sounding of the sixth trumpet, the second woe, four angels were released who had previous been bound at “the great river Euphrates.” Because both this and the sixth trumpet are the sixth in a series of seven judgments, and because they both are associated with the river Euphrates, some have suggested a correspondence, as if the sixth bowl *recapitulates*^[2.14.1] the sixth trumpet. Although there are similarities, there are also significant differences. The release of the four angels during the sixth trumpet lead to the attack by the myriads of demonic horsemen which killed one-third of mankind. No such effect is mentioned here. Instead, the Euphrates is dried up so that kings from the east may cross to the west. Their movement is associated with the *Campaign of Armageddon*^[4.5] and, unlike the demonic horsemen of the sixth trumpet, their intent is not the slaughter of mankind in general. Moreover, the sounding of the sixth trumpet (Rev. 9:13) preceded the sounding of the seventh trumpet (Rev. 11:15), under which these bowl judgments subsequently come forth. Therefore, the two events are also separated in time. See commentary on *Revelation 9:14*^[3.9.14]. See *Sequential Events*^[2.14.2].

The Euphrates is one of the oldest rivers of history, being one of the four rivers which was fed from Eden in the pre-flood world (Gen. 2:10).³⁰ The Euphrates was one of the boundaries of the Promised Land which God gave to Abraham and his descendants (Gen. 15:18; Deu. 1:7; Jos. 1:4). According to Herodotus, Babylon was overthrown when Cyrus diverted the Euphrates allowing the Persians to wade into the city unexpected.³¹ This may be the near-term reference of Jeremiah: “A drought is against her waters, and they will be dried up” (Jer. 50:38), which may also speak of the ultimate *Day of the Lord*^[5.2.14] drying up of the Euphrates described here. The Euphrates is mentioned because the events of the Tribulation involve the literal city of Babylon on its banks.

Its flood plain was the site of the first human city (Babel) after the great Flood and it was the site of Nebuchadnezzar’s magnificent capital city Babylon in the days of Daniel the prophet. On its shores will apparently be erected the even more magnificent New Babylon to serve as the capital of the beast in his brief but unprecedented worldwide reign in the great tribulation.³²

See *The Identity of Babylon*^[4.1.3].

Isaiah saw this event:

He will set up a banner for the nations, and will assemble the outcasts of Israel, and gather together the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth. Also the envy of Ephraim shall depart, and the adversaries of Judah shall be cut off; Ephraim shall not envy Judah, and Judah shall not harass Ephraim. But they shall fly down upon the shoulder of the Philistines toward the west; together they shall plunder the people of the East; they shall lay their hand on Edom and Moab; and the people of Ammon shall obey them. The LORD will utterly destroy the tongue of the Sea of Egypt; with His mighty wind He will shake His fist over the River, and strike it in the seven streams, and make *men* cross over dry-shod. There will be a highway for the remnant of His people who will be left from Assyria, as it was for Israel in the day that he came up from the land of Egypt. (Isa. 11:12-16)

The restoration from Babylon can scarcely be a fulfillment, because of four things: (1) There is the Kingdom-age context of this prophecy. (2) There is its accomplishment by direct, miraculous, and divine intervention—“the Lord shall set his hand” . . . like the Egyptian deliverance. . . . (3) There is the express inclusion of all the twelve tribes. At the return from Babylon, only Judah was restored with

some few from the twelve tribes. (4) There is the fact that the regathering is the final one, eventuating in *millennial Kingdom*^[5.2.39] blessing.³³

Zechariah contains a similar passage (Zec. 10:8-12), which some attribute to the Nile,³⁴ but may be more readily explained as the Euphrates.³⁵

The parting of the Red Sea at the Exodus allowed God's people to *flee from* destruction. Now, the waters of the Euphrates are dried so that God's enemies can *gather to* their destruction. God dried up the Jordan for Israel to cross into her inheritance, the Promised Land (Jos. 3:15-17; 4:22). Now He dries up the Euphrates to gather the kings into His inheritance, for which they will be judged (Ps. 79:1). See *The Plagues of Egypt and the Tribulation*^[2.13.7].

kings from the east

From the east is τῶν ἀπὸ ἀνατολῆς ἡλίου [*tōn apo anadolēs hēliou*], *from the rising of the sun*. Previously, God had called Cyrus of Persia “a bird of prey from the east, the man who executes My counsel, from a far country” (Isa. 46:11). The wise men also came *from the rising of the sun* (Mtt. 2:1). The movement of these kings probably contributes to the “news from the east and the north” which disturbs the *Antichrist*^[5.2.3] (Dan. 11:44). See *Campaign of Armageddon*^[4.5].

Although numerous commentators connect these kings with the 200 million horsemen of the sixth trumpet judgment, they are not related:

The “two hundred million” [Rev. 9:16] are in a Trumpet Judgment, whereas *the kings of the east* are in a Bowl judgment. Furthermore, . . . it was shown that the two hundred million are demons and not men. . . . Everywhere else in the Scriptures, the east always refers to Mesopotamia (Assyria and Babylonia). Consistency demands that this, too, would be a reference to Mesopotamia and not to China (e.g., Mtt. 2:1).³⁶

Some suggest these to be kings from the Orient, but this is not required by the text. All that is indicated is that they are kings representing nations east of the Euphrates. “East and West are to be reckoned from the standpoint of the prophecy, and not from that of the reader. Here, that standpoint is God's Land and City.”³⁷ “Through the centuries, commentators particularly of the *postmillennial*^[5.2.56] and the historical schools have guessed at the identity of the kings of the East and as many as fifty different interpretations have been advanced. The very number of these interpretations is their refutation.”³⁸

3.16.13 - Revelation 16:13

three unclean spirits

These are “spirits of demons.” See commentary on *Revelation 16:14*^[3.16.14]. See *Three: Life, Resurrection, Completeness, the Trinity*^[2.7.5.3.2].

like frogs

Their comparison with frogs alludes to their uncleanness, being aquatic animals lacking scales (Lev. 11:9-12; Deu. 14:9-10). They also recall the plague of frogs in Egypt (Ex. 8:2-13; Ps. 78:45; 105:30). See *The Plagues of Egypt and the Tribulation*^[2.13.7].

They are the elect agents to awaken the world to the attempt to abolish God from the earth; and they are frog-like in that they come forth out of the pestiferous quagmires of the universe, do their work amid the world's evening shadows, and creep, and croak, and defile, and fill the ears of the nations with their noisy demonstrations, till they set all the kings and armies of the whole earth in enthusiastic commotion for the final crushing out of the Lamb and all His powers.³⁹

coming out of the mouth

The mouth is the organ which reflects the will as evidenced by one's words. Fire of judgment came out of the mouths of the two witnesses (Rev. 11:5) and a sword comes out of the mouth of Jesus (Rev. 1:16; 19:15), the latter undoubtedly a reference to the Word of God (see commentary on *Revelation 1:16*^[3.1.16]). That which comes forth from these mouths is empowered, influenced, and promulgated by the unclean spirits. “The unclean spirits proceed from the *mouths* of the unholy triumvirate, suggesting the persuasive and deceptive propaganda which in the last days will lead men to an unconditional

commitment to the cause of evil.⁴⁰

of the dragon . . . of the beast . . . of the false prophet

The three spirits correspond to the three personages of the “antitrinity” : the *dragon*^[4.3.2.15], the *Beast*^[4.3.2.16], and the *False Prophet*^[4.3.2.18]. All three work together with a unified goal of drawing the nations to battle.

The dragon is *Satan* and the *devil*, both names which indicate his slanderous accusations (Rev. 12:9). “When he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own *resources*, for he is a liar and the father of it” (John 8:44). The *Beast*^[5.2.9] is known for his blasphemous mouth (Dan. 7:8, 11, 20, 25; 11:36; Rev. 13:6) and the *False Prophet*^[5.2.20], although appearing like a lamb, speaks like a dragon—He *tells* those who dwell on the earth to make an image to the beast (Rev. 13:11). Each of these would be highly influential on their own, but aided by unclean spirits, their deception is especially effective. See commentary on *Revelation 13:14*^[3.13.14].

3.16.14 - Revelation 16:14

spirits of demons

These are among the angels which fell from heaven and joined forces with Satan (Rev. 12:4). Although they are “unclean” and in Satan’s domain, they have been used throughout history to affect God’s purposes. It is a deep mystery how in rebellion the creature has less freedom than in obedience. And so it is with Satan and the demons. Although they believe they are independent, in the end their rebellion is used by God for His purpose and glory. Although these demons evidently do the bidding of Satan to gather the kings, it is God Who ultimately allows their effectiveness to draw His prey to the slaughter.

Scripture records a lengthy pattern of “service” by evil spirits to God. God sent a “spirit of ill will” between Abimelech and the men of Shechem (Jdg. 9:23). A “distressing spirit from the LORD” was sent upon Saul (1S. 16:14; 18:10; 19:9). In response to Hezekiah’s prayer for help, God sent a spirit upon Sennacherib, the king of Assyria, so that he would hear a rumor and return to his own land (2K. 19:7).⁴¹ A lying spirit, in the *mouth* of Ahab’s prophets *persuaded* Ahab “to go up, that he may fall at Ramoth Gilead” (1K. 22:10-23; 2Chr. 18:21-22). Most frightening of all, Paul records that *God will send strong delusion so they should believe the lie* (2Th. 2:11). God, who is not the author of evil, *utilizes evil*, turning and manipulating it so that in its rebellion it ultimately brings about that which is sovereignly His will. This fact of Scripture is both impossible to avoid and impossible to fully apprehend.

Unclean spirits play a major role in the events recorded in the gospels. The blasphemy of the Holy Spirit was attributing an unclean spirit to Jesus (Mark 3:30). Jesus healed a man in a synagogue who had an unclean spirit (Mark 1:23-27). Legion of the country of the Gadarenes had many unclean spirits which Jesus cast out into a herd of pigs (Mark 5:2-13). When Jesus sent his disciples out two-by-two, He gave them power over unclean spirits (Mark 6:7, 12). Many other events recorded in the gospels indicate the reality of the demonic realm.⁴²

The major role of demons in the time of the end is to serve as deceiving powers to influence men away from the faith:

Now the Spirit expressly says that in latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons, speaking lies in hypocrisy, having their own conscience seared with a hot iron. (1Ti. 4:1-2)

This is seen in our own day in the abundance of earthly wisdom which elevates the fallen understanding of man above the *inerrant*^[5.2.32] revealed word of God. Such wisdom, according to James, is sensual and earthly—demonic in origin (Jas. 3:15).

During the *Millennial Kingdom*^[5.2.39], it appears that demons will be concentrated in the inhabitable wasteland which was at one time the city of Babylon. Then it will be “a dwelling place of demons, a prison for every foul spirit, and a cage for every unclean and hated bird!” (Rev. 18:2).

performing signs

Jesus predicted “false christs and false prophets will rise and show great signs and wonders to deceive,

if possible, even the elect. See I have told you beforehand” (Mtt. 24:24 cf. Mark 13:22). This is the “unrighteous deception among those who perish” which Paul wrote of (2Th. 2:10). The *False Prophet*^[5.2.20] performed great signs in order to *deceive* (Rev. 13:13-14; 19:20). Signs themselves may be legitimate miracles, but this is *immaterial* if they do not witness to God and His truth (Deu. 13:1-5). See commentary on *Revelation 13:13*^[3.13.13].

This deception is so powerful that it is irresistible by those who lack God’s protection by way of regeneration. No amount of sophistry, education, power, or wisdom will prove adequate to resist. The manipulation of the kings will be so complete that they themselves will think they are following their own will, but it is the demons who drag them forward. Even then, every step has been determined by God.

to the kings of the earth and of the whole world

World, is οἰκουμένης [*oikoumenēs*]: “The inhabited earth.”⁴³ The same word describes this time of testing which shall come upon the *whole world* (Rev. 3:10). It is the inhabited world over which the gospel is preached by the first angel (Mtt. 24:14 cf. Rev. 14:6). The demons gather kings from nations all around the globe. This includes the *ten kings*^[4.3.2.22] who are allied with the *Beast*^[5.2.9] and go to war against the Lamb (Rev. 17:12-14). In a similar way to how God leads Gog to come against Israel to his own doom, so too these unclean spirits will influence the kings in such a way that they do not realize their self-inflicted folly:

“I will turn you around, put hooks into your jaws, and lead you out, with all your army, horses, and horsemen” . . . Thus says the Lord GOD: “On that day it shall come to pass *that* thoughts will arise in your mind, and you will make an evil plan. . . . It will be in the latter days that I will bring you against My land.” (Eze. 38:4, 10, 16)

The *MT*^[5.2.45] and *NU*^[5.2.49] texts omit *of the earth*.

gather them to the battle of that great day of God

The place where they are gathered is “Armageddon.” The *great day of God* is none other than *The Day of the Lord*^[2.13.3]. See commentary on *Revelation 6:17*^[3.6.17]. While the kings are being gathered by unclean spirits (“unclean and hated birds,” Rev. 18:2), an angel gathers wild birds in readiness for their feast on the kings (Rev. 19:17). *Battle* is πόλεμον [*polemon*], which more correctly denotes an extended engagement rather than a single battle. “The difference between *polemos* and *mache* is the same as that between the English words *war* and *battle*: *ho polemos Pelopannesiakos* is ‘the Peloponnesian War’; *he en Marathoni mache* is ‘the battle of Marathon.’”⁴⁴ See *Campaign of Armageddon*^[4.5].

Almighty

Παντοκράτορος [*Pantokratoros*], see commentary on *Revelation 1:8*^[3.1.8].

3.16.15 - Revelation 16:15

I am coming

Ἔρχομαι [*Erchomai*], present tense, *I am presently coming*. His arrival is so *imminent*^[4.8] we are to think of Him as being already on His way. See commentary on *Revelation 1:1*^[3.1.1].

There are two main interpretations regarding the interjection of these words of Christ at this point.

One interpretation understands the words as spoken to those believers who remain on earth during this time of awful turmoil and destruction. He is telling them to watch, remain faithful, and be ready for His Second Coming. Yet there seem to be some problems with such a premise. (1) The timing of the events attending the Tribulation, and especially the latter half, is not subject to uncertainty. We have seen numerous time-indicators in the text concerning a precise number of days following the abomination of desolation until the end—the Second Coming of Christ (Dan. 7:25; 9:27; 12:7; Rev. 11:2-3; 12:6, 14; 13:5). (2) It seems very unlikely that believers that remain during this time—having survived the most politically and physically dangerous period of history—are at all likely to be found “napping!” They are risking *everything* to hold true to their faith in Christ and the conditions are such that they can only be constantly longing for His arrival. These reasons argue against the notion that

Christ is speaking here of His Second Coming in judgment.

Another interpretation understands the words as an *interjection for the readers* of the vision which John was to “write in a book and send it to the *seven churches*”^[5.2.66] (Rev. 1:11). The vision is given both for the seven churches *and for the saints of all ages to follow*, as is seen from the repeated phrase: “He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches” (Rev. 2:7, 11, 17, 29; 3:6, 13, 22). It is to *these* saints, upon which *The Day of the Lord*^[2.13.3] may come, that Jesus repeats His warning to watch (Rev. 3:3). “It is not necessary to relate this warning only to the end time as in the context, since the appeal for steadfast loyalty of Christians is relevant at any time.”⁴⁵ During the time between His ascension and His return for the Church, a long age rolls on. His departure is far behind while His return in the *Rapture*^[4.14] remains in the unforeseen future. This is the “sleepy time” when the status quo of the world distracts the saints and “all things continue as *they were* from the beginning of creation” (2Pe. 3:4).

Seiss suggests a third alternative: the words are in fact for the believers of this time of the end, but do not denote His Second Coming in judgment—an event whose timing is not subject to uncertainty once the Tribulation begins:

Somewhere about this time, then, Christ comes for this last band of children of the resurrection, whether dead or yet living. Of course, it is a coming of the same kind and character as his coming for those saints who were taken earlier; for it is the completion of that one coming for his people which is everywhere set forth. Here also, as in all other cases, nothing but a state of watchful readiness when the call comes can secure a share in the blessing.⁴⁶

In Seiss’ scenario, Christ comes for believers at a point in time prior to His actually setting foot on the earth in final judgment. He seems to suggest that a “*mini-rapture*”^[5.2.62] of sorts takes place at an unknown time prior to Christ’s physical coming. Perhaps this is to be connected with His promises to gather the elect by angels? One obstacle to this view is that the passages which stipulate the gathering of the elect follow immediately upon the global sign of the Son of Man’s return (Mtt. 24:30-31; Mark 13:26-27).

If the warning is an encouragement to the persecuted remnant under the beast, Christ’s promised coming is the one in Rev. 19:11-16, which by the time of the sixth bowl follows almost immediately (Alford). If the warning is to people in the churches, it returns to the theme of chapters 2-3, the *imminence*^[5.2.30] of the hour of trial as an incentive for the book’s recipients to make their calling and election sure so they can escape this coming dreaded period. The close similarity to Rev. 3:3, 18 and the parenthetical nature of the announcement favor the latter alternative. . . . The other possibility of this being an encouragement to the faithful to persevere could serve no useful purpose at this point. . . . Therefore this announcement is a repetition of excerpts from the two earlier messages to Sardis and Laodicea: it is a call to genuineness of faith.⁴⁷

as a thief

He only comes as a thief upon those who are not watching. Jesus told the church at Sardis, “Be watchful, . . . if you will not watch, I will come upon you as a thief, and you will not know what hour I will come upon you” (Rev. 3:3b). See commentary on *Revelation 3:3*^[3.3.3].

Those who are in Christ are to be constantly on the lookout for *His* arrival, not that of *Antichrist*^[5.2.3]:

Watch therefore, for you do not know what hour your Lord is coming. But know this, that if the master of the house had known what hour the thief would come, he would have watched and not allowed his house to be broken into. Therefore, you also be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect. (Mtt. 24:42-44)

Take heed, watch and pray; for you do not know when the time is. It is like a man going to a far country, who left his house and gave authority to his servants, and to each his work, and commanded the doorkeeper to watch. Watch therefore, for you do not know when the master of the house is coming—in the evening, at midnight, at the crowing of the rooster, or in the morning—lest, coming suddenly, he find you sleeping. And what I say to you, I say to all: “Watch!” (Mark 13:33-37)

Let your waist be girded and *your* lamps burning; and you yourselves be like men who wait for their master, when he will return from the wedding, that when he comes and knocks they may open to him immediately. Blessed *are* those servants whom the master, when he comes, will find watching. Assuredly, I say to you that he will gird himself and have them sit down *to eat*, and will come and serve

them. And if he should come in the second watch, or come in the third watch, and find *them* so, blessed are those servants. But know this, that if the master of the house had known what hour the thief would come, he would have watched and not allowed his house to be broken into. Therefore you also be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect. (Luke 12:35-40)

Jesus indicated that a day was coming which would arrive unexpectedly as a snare to the *earth dwellers*^[5.2.18], but by vigilance and prayer, the watchful believer could *escape* the things that were coming to pass:

But take heed to yourselves, lest your hearts be weighed down with carousing, drunkenness, and cares of this life, and that Day come on you unexpectedly. For it will come as a snare on all those who dwell on the face of the whole earth. Watch therefore, and pray always that you may be counted worthy to escape all these things that will come to pass, and to stand before the Son of Man. (Luke 21:34-36)

The *day* which He spoke of was *The Day of the Lord*^[2.13.3] which professing but unbelieving “Christians,” who miss the *Rapture*^[4.14], will endure along with those dwelling upon the earth. For them, the beginning of the end comes as a surprise since they are not expecting it. It arrives, as a thief:

But concerning the times and the seasons, brethren, you have no need that I should write to you. For you yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so comes as a thief in the night. For when they say, “Peace and safety!” then sudden destruction comes upon them, as labor pains upon a pregnant woman. And they shall not escape. But you, brethren, are not in darkness, so that this Day should overtake you as a thief. You are all sons of light and sons of the day. We are not of the night nor of darkness. Therefore let us not sleep, as others *do*, but let us watch and be sober. For those who sleep, sleep at night, and those who get drunk are drunk at night. But let us who are of the day be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love, and *as* a helmet the hope of salvation. For God did not appoint us to wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ. (1Th. 5:1-9)

Jesus comes for those who are watching in the *Rapture*^[4.14] of the Church prior to this time (Luke 21:34-36; John 14:1-3). He comes as a *thief in the night* in the judgments which usher in *The Day of the Lord*^[2.13.3], culminating with His personal arrival in judgment at the Second Coming to conclude the *Campaign of Armageddon*^[4.5]. See *When Does the Day of the Lord Dawn?*^[2.13.3.1]

blesed is he who watches

He who watches is ὁ γρηγορῶν [*ho grēgorōn*], present tense participle, *the one presently, continually watching*.⁴⁸ See commentary on *Revelation 1:3*^[3.1.3]. He is blessed because his nakedness is not seen. In his watchfulness, he evidences true faith.⁴⁹

and keeps his garments

Keeping one’s garments refers to the avoidance of sinful behavior and the continuance in the faith with confession in the event of sin (1Jn. 1:9). Christ told the church at Sardis, “You have a few names even in Sardis who have not defiled their garments; and they shall walk with me in white, for they are worthy. He who overcomes shall be clothed in white garments” (Rev. 3:4-5a). See commentary on *Revelation 3:4*^[3.3.4].

lest he walk naked and they see his shame

Shame is ἀσχημοσύνη [*aschēmosynē*]: “As being without proper clothing to cover private body parts *nakedness, shame*; metaphorically in Rev. 16:15 for spiritual unpreparedness.”⁵⁰ Christ told the lukewarm church at Laodicea to “buy from me gold refined in the fire, that you may be rich; and white garments, that you may be clothed, *that* the shame of your nakedness may not be revealed” (Rev. 3:18). This speaks of the internal reality of a person’s walk being exposed for all to see (Isa. 47:1-3; Nah. 3:5). See commentary on *Revelation 3:18*^[3.3.18].

Those who fail to watch were never true believers (Mtt. 24:42, 51). They are ones who will not “be counted worthy to escape all these things that will come to pass” (Luke 21:36), they will not participate in the *Rapture*^[4.14]. Like *Jezebel*^[5.2.35] in the church at Thyatira who is a type of apostate believers of the end (Rev. 2:22), they will find themselves in the Great Tribulation. Having proclaimed faith in Christ prior to the Rapture yet remaining on earth, their hypocrisy will be revealed for they will not be among those who are taken to the Father’s house (Rev. 14:1-3).

Either this warning is meant parenthetically for readers prior to the time of the bowl judgments (the

Church, to be taken at the Rapture before the wrath begins) or, if meant for believers on the earth at this time of the end, it may speak of the gathering of the elect shortly before the Second Coming—although clear indications of a separate coming for the Tribulation saints ahead of His physical Second Coming are difficult to establish.⁵¹

See commentary on *Revelation 16:15*.

3.16.16 - Revelation 16:16

And they gathered them

That is, the spirits of demons (Rev. 16:13) gathered the kings of the earth (Rev. 16:14).

to the place called in Hebrew, Armageddon

Ἀρμαγεδών [*Harmagedōn*]: “A Hebrew place-name meaning *Mount* or *Hill of Megiddo* and generally identified as the fortress overlooking a pass through the Carmel Range into Galilee.”⁵² From a combination of Hebrew הַר [*hār*], *mountain*, and מְגִדּוֹן [*mēgiddōn*] (*Zec. 12:11*), *Megiddo*. “Megiddo probably means a *place of troops* (from גַּד [*gad*], a *troop* (*Gen. 49:19*); and the verb גָּדַד [*gādd*]), to *cut to pieces*.”⁵³ Strong gives the meaning as “place of crowds.”⁵⁴

*Megiddo From the South*⁵⁵



“Since there is no specific mountain by that name, and Har can refer to hill country, it is probably a reference to the hill country surrounding the Plain of Megiddo, some sixty miles north of Jerusalem. More than two hundred battles have been fought in that region.”⁵⁶

Some find a reference to the hill country near Megiddo unconvincing and look for an alternative understanding:

Har-Magedon would mean “the Mountain of Megiddo,” but here a difficulty arises: there is no Mount Megiddo. None of the solutions offered is especially persuasive. It is possible that Har-Magedon could be a reference to the hill country near Megiddo or perhaps a reference to Megiddo and Mount Carmel in the same breath (Farrer, p. 178). In John’s day the tell or mount upon which Megiddo was built was about seventy feet in height, hardly enough to justify the designation Mount. One frequent suggestion is that the Apocalypticist began with Ezekiel’s prophecy of a great eschatological slaughter of the nations on “the mountains of Israel” (Eze. 38:8-21; 39:2, 4, 17) and then made the reference more specific by adding the name Megiddo as the place where so often in Israel’s history the enemies of God were destroyed (Beckwith, p. 685). Still others interpret the term in reference to some ancient myth in which an army of demons assault the holy mountain of the gods. If one reads Armageddon (instead of Har-Magedon), the reference could be to the city of Megiddo rather than to a mountain. Others interpret Har-Magedon without reference to Megiddo. Bruce (p. 657), following C. C. Torrey, mentions *har moed*,

the mount of assembly (Isa. 14:13). Or it could be a corruption in the Hebrew text for “his fruitful mountain” or the “desirable city” (*i.e.*, Jerusalem). . . . Yet another suggestion is that Megiddo could be derived from a root meaning “to cut, attack, or maraud.” In this case Mount Megiddo would mean “the marauding mountain” (a variant to Jeremiah’s “destroying mountain,” Jer. 51:25) and indicate that John expected the battle not in northern Palestine but at Rome [Mounce takes Babylon to be Rome] (Caird, p. 207; cf. Kiddle, pp. 329-31). As in the case of the number of the beast (Rev. 13:18), the cryptic nature of the reference has thus far defeated all attempts at a final answer.⁵⁷

It is our view that the phrase probably denotes the hill country near Megiddo, at the edge of the Jezreel Valley which is an optimum place to access the Promised Land by sea and to serve as a staging area for vast armies. The drying up of the Euphrates river, a real geographical location, so that kings from the east can be gathered to Armageddon argues that Armageddon itself is a real geographical location west of the Euphrates rather than to be taken as a spiritual concept. See *Megiddo*^[4.5.3.1]

3.16.17 - Revelation 16:17

the seventh angel poured out his bowl into the air

The bowl is poured out into the *air*, ἄερα [*aira*]. Elsewhere, Scripture gives Satan the title “prince of the power of the air (ἄερος [*aeros*])” (Eph. 2:2). Paul explains that believers wrestle against “hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places” (Eph. 6:12), a reference to Satan and the angels which joined him in his rebellion (Rev. 12:4). Having been cast to the earth (Rev. 12:9), they no longer have access to the third heaven (the throne of God) or perhaps even the second heaven (starry space), but now are constrained to the earth and its immediate atmosphere, the “air.” At the Second Coming of Christ, the *Beast*^[5.2.9] and the *False Prophet*^[5.2.20] are captured and cast alive into the Lake of Fire (Rev. 19:20), but no mention is made of the fate of Satan until afterwards. It is at the pouring forth of this seventh bowl, that Satan’s realm is judged. The pouring forth of this bowl corresponds to the binding and sealing of Satan in the abyss (Rev. 20:1-3) and the confinement of the demons to the region of the wasteland that was previously Babylon (Rev. 18:2). See commentary on *Revelation 18:2*^[3.18.2] and *Revelation 20:1*^[3.20.1].

a loud voice came out of the temple

Temple^[5.2.73] is ναοῦ [*naou*], which generally describes the inner sanctuary. See commentary on *Revelation 11:1*^[3.11.1]. The Temple was filled with God’s shekinah presence and then closed for the duration of the seven bowls (Rev. 15:8). The voice must be that of God the Father Who was alone in the Temple during this time. Thus, the declaration which follows gives the divine perspective on the results of the bowl judgments.

it is done!

It is done is Γέγονεν [*Gegonen*], perfect tense, *it has come to be*. In the seventh bowl, the wrath has been poured out and the present condition of things at the time of the pronouncement reflects the destruction brought about by that wrath. This agrees with what John was told: that in these seven last plagues, the wrath of God is complete (Rev. 15:1).

Here is more evidence against the idea that the bowl judgments are a *recapitulation*^[2.14.1] of previous seal or trumpet judgments, merely providing additional detail. For there is no indication at the opening of the seventh seal (Rev. 7:8) or in the sounding of the seventh trumpet (Rev. 11:15) that judgment has been completed, as here.⁵⁸ The impossibility of a recapitulation is also seen in the closure of the heavenly Temple for the duration of the bowl judgments (Rev. 15:8), whereas during the seal and trumpet judgments, the heavenly Temple is not so sealed (Rev. 7:15; 11:19; 14:15, 17; 15:6). See *Sequential Events*^[2.14.2].

This may be the declaration of which Isaiah wrote :

The sound of noise from the city! A voice from the temple! The voice of the LORD, Who fully repays His enemies! “Before she was in labor, she gave birth; before her pain came, she delivered a male child. Who has heard such a thing? Who has seen such things? Shall the earth be made to give birth in one day? Or shall a nation be born at once? For as soon as Zion was in labor, she gave birth to her children. Shall I bring to the time of birth, and not cause delivery?” says the LORD. “Shall I who cause delivery shut up *the womb*?” says your God. “Rejoice with Jerusalem, and be glad with her, all you who love her;

rejoice for joy with her, all you who mourn for her; that you may feed and be satisfied with the consolation of her bosom, that you may drink deeply and be delighted with the abundance of her glory.” (Isa. 66:6-11)

The voice of the LORD is heard. The context is the *full* repayment of His enemies, as here. The woman in labor is the same woman we saw in Revelation 12. There, she struggled in a protracted labor. Here, she gives birth as soon as her labor pains began. There, her labor spoke of the age-long struggle to bring forth the promised Redeemer (Gen. 3:15). Here, her labor speaks of her time of *Jacob’s Trouble*^[2.13.4] which, although intense, is relatively short (7 years) in comparison with the thousands of years during which she labored to produce Messiah (Rev. 9:5). Of those seven, the last half were especially difficult, the “time, times, and half a *time*; and when the power of the holy people has been completely shattered, all these *things* shall be finished” (Dan. 12:7). At this birth, those who love Jerusalem are to rejoice with her for the long standing promise of Isaiah 62 will have found fulfillment in the ushering in of the *Millennial Kingdom*^[5.2.39]. See commentary on *Revelation 12:2*^[3.12.2].

Even in the finality of the statement by God attending the pouring forth of the seventh bowl, the full effects of the judgment have yet to play out and will not be finally behind until we reach Revelation 20:4. Even then, after the Millennial Kingdom, some cleanup operations remain. Satan will be loosed to lead the unfaithful in one last rebellion (Rev. 20:7-10) which will be put down by God. The unbelieving dead will be resurrected, judged, and undergo the second death (Rev. 20:11-15). The millennial heaven and earth will flee away (Rev. 20:11) to be recreated (Rev. 21:1) and *then* God will repeat this pronouncement in its absolute final sense—when death is no more and sin has been forever vanquished. “It is done!” (Rev. 21:6). The eternal state has then begun.

Some may object to the interpretation of a statement of such finality found here by God as being other than that which ushers in the eternal state. Yet Scripture is clear that there are numerous “finishings” of God, depending on the task at hand: “So when Jesus has received the sour wine, He said, ‘It is finished!’ And bowing His head, He gave up His spirit” (John 19:30).

3.16.18 - Revelation 16:18

there were noises and thunderings and lightnings

Noises is φωναὶ [*phōnai*] which could also be translated as “voices.” Initially, these sounds of judgment and power were manifested in heaven (Rev. 4:5). There, they were a warning of what has now finally come to the earth. See commentary on *Revelation 4:5*^[3.4.5]. In the prelude to the seven trumpet judgments, the angel of the altar threw his censer full of fire to the earth with similar results (Rev. 8:5). Together with the earthquake and the great hail, these manifestations of judgment point to the ark of the covenant containing the Ten Commandments (the “testimony”) by which the godless behavior of the *earth dwellers*^[5.2.18] is rightfully judged. See commentary on *Revelation 16:21*^[3.16.21].

there was a great earthquake

There are numerous earthquakes associated with the time of the end.

1. Jesus taught that earthquakes were an indicator of “the beginning of sorrows” (Mtt. 24:8).
2. A tremendous earthquake results from the opening of the sixth seal, attended by cosmic signs (Rev. 6:12).
3. There was an earthquake after the seventh seal, but before the first trumpet, when the angel of the altar took the censer, filled it with fire, and threw it to the earth (Rev. 8:7-10).
4. At the ascension of the two witnesses a great earthquake leveled one tenth of Jerusalem contributing to the conversion of those who remained alive (Rev. 11:13).

This earthquake surpasses them all.

Haggai prophesied of a great shaking which would involve all nations prior to their recognition of Christ and the return of the *shekinah glory*^[5.2.67] of God to the *Millennial Temple*^{[5.2.73]/[5.2.40]}:

For thus says the LORD of hosts: ‘Once more (it is a little while) I will shake heaven and earth, the sea and dry land; and I will shake all nations, and they shall come to the Desire of All Nations, and I will fill this temple with glory,’ says the LORD of hosts. (Hag. 2:6-7)

as had not occurred since men were on the earth

This earthquake is the most powerful earthquake since the sixth day when Adam and Eve were created. Although some tie it to the earthquake which attends Gog's attack upon Israel, it is not the same earthquake. The *attack by Gog*^[4.5.6] upon Israel (Eze. 38, 39) is not part of the Tribulation events associated with the *Campaign of Armageddon*^[4.5]. Also, that earthquake, although felt all around the world, is localized in its immediate effects to the "land of Israel" (Eze. 38:19). The mountains that are thrown down, in the context, are the mountains of Israel where Gog will be defeated (Eze. 39:2). This may be the earthquake which attends the pressure of Messiah's foot upon the Mount of Olives and results in its being split in two (Zec. 14:4).

3.16.19 - Revelation 16:19

Now the great city was divided into three parts

Great city probably refers to Jerusalem,⁵⁹ as it is contrasted with the cities of the nations ("Gentiles") and Babylon. Although the same phrase elsewhere refers to Babylon (Rev. 14:8; 17:18; 18:10, 16, 18, 21), it is not exclusively hers. It is also used of Jerusalem (Rev. 11:8) and of the heavenly Jerusalem (Rev. 21:10). The division into three parts would more naturally speak of Jerusalem, for we know that the Mount of Olives will divide in *two* when Messiah returns (Zec. 14:4). Perhaps this causes a three-way division (north, south, and west) within Jerusalem itself.⁶⁰ "First of all, the effects of the earthquake upon the great city, Jerusalem, are seen. It is not mentioned by name, but it is so clearly distinguished from 'the cities of the nations,' that there can be no doubt. Here is the moment of the fulfillment of several prophecies concerning geographical changes in Jerusalem."⁶¹ The destruction which is prophesied for Babylon is far more severe than a mere division into three parts, but involves an overwhelming devastation resulting in her complete unfitness for further habitation. See *The Destruction of Babylon*^[4.1.2].

Thus, the purpose of the earthquake as it relates to Jerusalem is not to judge the city, but to enhance it. Jerusalem was judged earlier in the Tribulation by an earthquake, which led to the salvation of those who were not killed (Rev. 11:13). Thus, there is no need for further judgment on that city.⁶²

Jerusalem alone, of all the great cities of the earth, is thus to be spared destruction by the earthquake at the end of the tribulation. It is the one eternal city, and will survive as long as the earth endures in its present form, finally being replaced as the new Jerusalem, in the new earth.⁶³

and the cities of the nations fell

Nations is ἔθνη [ethnōn], translated elsewhere as "Gentiles," (Mt. 4:15; 6:32; 10:5; 12:18; 20:19; Rev. 11:2; etc.). This refers to all the cities other than Jerusalem, including that center of ungodliness, Babylon itself. The cities of the nations fall because they are aligned implacably against God and have supported the *Harlot*^[5.2.25] (Rev. 17:13). Moreover, they are drunk with the "wine of the wrath of her fornication" (Rev. 14:8). Having participated in her fornication, they now suffer God's wrath. See commentary on *Revelation 14:8*^[3.14.8].

Man has a proverb that God made the country and man made the town. Truly these great cities of the earth are heartless and cruel, and those who have lived close enough to their hearts to hear their poisonous beats, know how much evil is hid behind the great lights of the world's great agglomerations. They are all to fall. . . . We believe, beyond any shadow of a doubt, that this prophecy covers Peking and Philadelphia, Moscow and Melbourne, Berlin and Buenos Aires, Cairo and the Cape, Bombay and Boston, Istanbul and Chicago, Naples and New York. In short, all the cities shall be destroyed. It cannot be otherwise.⁶⁴

And great Babylon was remembered before God

The phrase *great Babylon* alludes to Nebuchadnezzar's boastful statement made immediately before he was struck with an affliction by God, living like a beast for seven years (Dan. 4:30).⁶⁵ Both Jerusalem and Babylon are "great" cities, and are affected by this mighty earthquake. But they are affected differently based on God's different purposes for their future. Jerusalem is to be restored (Isa. 62) to be the home of *The Abiding Presence of God*^[4.16.2] (Isa. 60:3; Eze. 43:2-4) and serve as the capital of the *Millennial Kingdom*^[5.2.39]. Babylon is to be *completely destroyed*, permanently uninhabitable, and

become a prison for unclean spirits (Isa. 13:21-22; Rev. 18:2). See commentary on *Revelation 14:8*^[3.14.8]. See *The Destruction of Babylon*^[4.1.2].

It should be noticed that there is a gradation in the judgments here meted out to the cities of the world. Just as the Lord announced that some would be beaten with few stripes and some with many, so there is a progress in the devastation that falls upon the habitations of men. Two parts of Jerusalem seem to be destroyed, all of the Gentile cities, but the greatest of all judgments is kept for Babylon, seat of Satan's power.⁶⁶

the cup of the wine of the fierceness of His wrath

Fierceness is θυμοῦ [*thymou*], translated as *wrath* in Rev. 14:10. *Wrath* is ὀργῆς [*orgēs*], translated as *indignation* in Rev. 14:10. Of the two, θυμοῦ [*thymou*] (here translated fierceness) is the more intense and shorter lasting. See commentary on *Revelation 14:10*^[3.14.10]. Concerning God's wrath, see commentary on *Revelation 16:17*^[3.16.17].

The same cup with which she intoxicated the nations will now be used to serve her the wine of God's wrath. "Render to her just as she rendered to you, and repay her double according to her works; in the cup which she has mixed, mix double for her" (Rev. 14:6).

3.16.20 - Revelation 16:20

every island fled away and the mountains were not found

Unlike the earthquake attending the opening of the sixth seal in which "every mountain and island was moved out of its place" (Rev. 6:12-14), now every island flees away and the mountains are no longer found.

Scientists cannot laugh at this idea because they, themselves, teach most earnestly that the mountains once rose to their present heights, and furnish us with abundance of geological data to prove their points. We agree, although we believe it was done, not by any slow process of evolution, but . . . just as God pours out his final wrath upon this earth.⁶⁷

Such geographic alteration of the earth's surface would seem to be attended by massive loss of life. And so Scripture attests by Jeremiah:

I beheld the earth, and indeed *it was* without form, and void; and the heavens, they *had* no light. I beheld the mountains, and indeed they trembled, and all the hills moved back and forth. I beheld, and indeed *there was* no man, and all the birds of the heavens had fled. I beheld, and indeed the fruitful land *was* a wilderness, and all its cities were broken down at the presence of the LORD, by His fierce anger. For thus says the LORD: "The whole land shall be desolate; yet I will not make a full end. For this shall the earth mourn, and the heavens above be black, because I have spoken. I have purposed and will not relent, nor will I turn back from it." (Jer. 4:23-28)

The scope of the vision, like so many prophetic glimpses of Old Testament prophets, transcends the then-impending application [the destruction of Judah wrought by the Babylonian armies] and envisions the worldwide woe of Israel in the "time of Jacob's trouble" (Jer. 30:5-7) preceding Kingdom blessing (Rev. 6:1-19:21).⁶⁸

Those saints yet living on the earth during this time will understand Psalm 46 in a completely literal way: "God *is* our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore we will not fear, even though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea . . . The nations raged, the kingdoms were moved, He uttered His voice, the earth melted" (Ps. 46:1-2, 6).

The earth is essentially a ruin by the Second Coming of Christ. All of man's environmental efforts and their pagan foundations will be for naught. For appeal to *mother earth* (Gaia) for shelter and sustenance will be of no avail when she herself is judged by *Father God* Who created the earth.

In a similar way to how God will create a new heavens and a new earth after the final judgment (Rev. 21:1), He will regenerate the earth prior to the *Millennial Kingdom*^[5.2.39]. Jesus promised his disciples, "In the regeneration (παλιγγενεσία [*palingenesia*], *again Genesis*), when the Son of Man sits on the throne of His glory, you who have followed Me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel" (Mtt. 19:28). Isaiah also saw a "new heavens and a new earth," but which is followed by childbirth, sin, and death (Isa. 65:17, 20, 23).⁶⁹ It is by this regeneration that Jerusalem is lifted up

above the surrounding lands (Zec. 14:10) to form the mountain of the Lord's house from which will flow the river of life during the Millennium (Isa. 2:2; 27:13; 30:29; 56:7; Eze. 17:24; 20:40; 40:2; Mic. 4:1).

Then Isaiah's prophecy will become a literal reality:

The voice of one crying in the wilderness: "Prepare the way of the LORD; make straight in the desert a highway for our God. Every valley shall be exalted and every mountain and hill brought low; the crooked places shall be made straight and the rough places smooth; the glory of the LORD shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see *it* together; for the mouth of the LORD has spoken." (Isa. 40:3-5)

3.16.21 - Revelation 16:21

great hail

This recalls the plague of hail which struck Egypt prior to the Exodus:

And the LORD rained hail on the land of Egypt. So there was hail, and fire mingled with the hail, so very heavy that there was none like it in all the land of Egypt since it became a nation. And the hail struck throughout the whole land of Egypt, all that *was* in the field, both man and beast; and the hail struck every herb of the field and broke every tree of the field. (Ex. 9:23b-25).

In Joshua's long day, God stoned the Amorites with huge hailstones. "*There were* more who died from the hailstones than the children of Israel killed with the sword" (Jos. 10:11). This is the "treasury of hail which I have reserved for the time of trouble, for the day of battle and war" (Job 38:22). In his time, Gog is to suffer a similar fate upon the mountains of Israel (Eze. 38:22).⁷⁰

Bullinger mentions an interesting historical record which shows that large hail occurs even in the absence of God's supernatural hand as in this time of the end:

"Hail is of frequent occurrence in these unhappy districts, and the dimensions of the hailstones are generally enormous. We have seen some that weighted twelve pounds. One moment sometimes suffices to exterminate whole flocks. In 1843, during one of these storms, there was heard in the air a sound as of a rushing wind, and therewith fell in a field near a house, a mass of ice larger than an ordinary millstone. It was broken to pieces with hatchets; yet though the sun burned fiercely, three days elapsed before these pieces entirely melted." [*Travels in Tartary*, by M. Huc, vol. i., p. 12. "National Illustrated Library"]⁷¹

The *earth dwellers*^[5.2.18] are being stoned for blasphemy and rebellion against the righteous commands of God, the "testimony" in the "*tabernacle*"^[5.2.69] of the testimony," from which the angels having the last seven plagues came forth (Rev. 15:6). The "testimony" which witnesses against them is the tablets of stone stored within the ark of the covenant upon which God wrote the Ten Commandments in his own hand. Similar manifestations of judgment as these attended John's vision of the ark following the sounding of the seventh trumpet prior to the pouring forth of the seven bowls of God's wrath (Rev. 11:19). These manifestations included lightnings, noises, thunderings, an earthquake, and great hail—all of which have now been delivered to the blasphemers in the pouring of the last bowl. See commentary on *Revelation 11:19*^[3.11.19]. See *The Plagues of Egypt and the Tribulation*^[2.13.7].

about the weight of a talent

Ῥς τάλαντιαία [*Hōs talantiaia*], *as a talent*. "A measure of weight varying in size from about 58 to 80 lb. (26 to 36 kg)."⁷²

Just as there are long and short tons of differing weights, so there are various talents. That with which the Jews weighed silver was about 120 pounds Troy, or 96 pounds avoirdupois. That for weighing other materials was about 135 pounds. The Babylonian talent was even heavier while the Greek talent was about 86 pounds. The lightest of all was the Attic talent which weighted 57.7 pounds. In biblical usage, it would be the silver talent of 96 pounds that would almost certainly be designated. However, even if we take the smaller Attic talent, we have a weight that is considerable.⁷³

These are no ordinary hailstones, but the supernatural work of God. "A point of similarity between Joshua 10:11 and Revelation 16:21 is found in the fact that both passages describe the hailstones as large in size. . . . Clearly Joshua 10:11 describes a supernatural event."⁷⁴

True to form, the *preterist interpreters*^[2.12.2] attempt to find fulfillment of this obviously supernatural drama in the relatively puny machinations of Rome's siege of Jerusalem (remember that for many

preterists^[5.2.59], “Babylon” = “Jerusalem”). They make much ado about a passage in Josephus which mentions the weight and color of the stones thrown by the Roman “engines” [catapults] in the siege of Jerusalem:

The engines, that all the legions had ready prepared for them, were admirably contrived; but still more extraordinary ones belonged to the tenth legion: those that threw darts and those that threw stones, were more forcible and larger than the rest, by which they not only repelled the excursions of the Jews, but drove those away that were upon the walls also. (270) Now, **the stones that were cast were of the weight of a talent**, and were carried two furlongs and farther. The blow they gave was no way to be sustained, not only by those that stood first in the way, but by those that were beyond them for a great space. (271) As for the Jews, they at first watched the coming of the stone, for **it was of a white color**, and could therefore not only be perceived by the great noise it made, but could be seen also before it came by its brightness. [emphasis added]⁷⁵

Notice the priority inversion typical of *preterist interpretation*^{[2.12.2].76} They attach great importance to small details which happen to match the text (e.g., the stones were *white*, they weighed *a talent*), but then ignore the many details from the wider context which completely preclude their conclusion. In the A.D. 70 destruction of Jerusalem:

1. Jerusalem was destroyed, not Babylon.
2. The Euphrates was not dried up.
3. No kings from the east participated.
4. No significant gathering of troops occurred at Megiddo.
5. No cataclysmic earthquake took place.
6. The cities of the nations remained standing.

How puzzling that major inconsistencies like these don't seem to impede the dedicated preterist who is committed to finding fulfillment in the “newspapers” of the past.

Men blasphemed God

They are being stoned for earlier blasphemies, as per the penalty recorded in the “testimony” (Rev. 15:5):

Take outside the camp him who has cursed; then let all who heard *him* lay their hands on his head, and let all the congregation stone him. Then you shall speak to the children of Israel, saying: ‘Whoever curses his God shall bear his sin. ‘And whoever blasphemes the name of the LORD shall surely be put to death. All the congregation shall certainly stone him, the stranger as well as him who is born in the land. When he blasphemes the name of *the LORD*, he shall be put to death. (Lev. 24:14-16)

Since the law of God provided that blasphemers should be stoned with stones until they died, so we see in the last moments of earth's civilization, God Himself upholds His law and stones blasphemers with hailstones.⁷⁷

By now there is no possibility of repentance, their doom is sealed: those that remain alive continue in their blasphemous cursing.

that plague was exceedingly great

Μεγάλη ἐστὶν ἡ πληγὴ αὐτῆς σφόδρα [*Megalē estin hē plēgē autēs sphodra*], *great it is the plague of it extremely*. In case the reader is tempted to take the passage as *hyperbole*^[5.2.27], the Spirit reemphasizes the supernatural aspect of the judgment of hail. Consider the devastation wrought, not only by the huge earthquake, but by such large hailstones striking the earth at one hundred and eighty miles an hour.⁷⁸ *Exceedingly great* may be an understatement!

When God's word guarantees such a stark day of doom, why do many continue in their rejection of Him? Indeed, looking back, *why did I myself reject God for some 34 years?* Oh that their eyes would be opened to the truth of His abundant mercy and great patience while there is yet the possibility of turning to Him! A time is coming upon the earth when it will no longer be possible to repent. Then, their fate will be sealed. But today, there is still time to reconsider and come into the saving faith of Jesus Christ.

God's eschatological and eternal wrath is inevitable; no one can prevent or hinder it from coming (Isa. 43:13). But there is a way to escape it, because "there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus" (Rom. 8:1). Those who by faith trust in Christ alone for salvation will escape both God's eschatological wrath (Rev. 3:10) and His eternal wrath (1Th. 1:10). They will not face judgment, because their sins were judged when Jesus died in their place on the cross (2Cor. 5:21; 1Pe. 2:24). In light of the inevitable judgment to come, the warning to all unrepentant sinners is "Today if you hear His voice, do not harden your hearts" (Heb. 4:7).⁷⁹

Has your conscience never smitten you, and made your sleep uneasy, and tinged your thinking with bitterness, for the sort of life you have been leading? Is there not some conscious shame and sense of wretchedness going along with the indulgence even of those darling lusts and dislike of sacred things which you allow to have place in your heart? And what is all this but the premonitory drops of that wrath of God which must presently come in great deluging showers? O child of man, give heed, and turn, and fly, before the threatening avalanche of the Almighty's judgments comes!⁸⁰

Notes

- ¹ Merrill F. Unger, *Unger's Commentary on the Old Testament* (Chattanooga, TN: AMG Publishers, 2002), Ps. 78:2-3.
- ² "This verse continues by saying the Lord has 'decreed' the following: (1) the atrocities will not go on forever (cf. Luke 21:24) but will have an end, and (2) 'the desolating one' (שׁוֹמֵם [shōmēm], a Qal active participle alluding to the antichrist) will be judged. 'The desolating one' or 'one who makes desolate' is preferred to 'make [something] desolate' because שׁוֹמֵם [shōmēm] is intransitive."—Charles H. Ray, "A Study of Daniel 9:24-17, Part IV," in *The Conservative Theological Journal*, vol. 6 no. 18 (Fort Worth, TX: Tyndale Theological Seminary, August 2002), 212. Thus: "even until a complete destruction, one that is decreed, is poured out on the one who makes desolate" (NASB95).
- ³ "The choice of 'is poured out' (ַׁׁׁׁ [Tittak], a Qal imperfect) as the verb reminds the reader of 'flood' in v. 26. It can be used figuratively (Job 10:10) or literally (Ex. 9:33). Students of prophecy also look to Revelation 16 where bowls of God's wrath are poured out during the end times."—Ray, "A Study of Daniel 9:24-17, Part IV," 212.
- ⁴ Donald Grey Barnhouse, *Revelation* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1971), 288.
- ⁵ E. W. Bullinger, *Commentary On Revelation* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 1984, 1935), Rev. 16:1.
- ⁶ J. A. Seiss, *The Apocalypse: Lectures on the Book of Revelation* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1966), 871.
- ⁷ Timothy Friberg, Barbara Friberg, and Neva F. Miller, *Analytical Lexicon of the Greek New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2000), 144.
- ⁸ Frederick William Danker, and Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 397.
- ⁹ Danker, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 690.
- ¹⁰ Robert H. Mounce, *The Book of Revelation* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1977), Rev. 16:1.
- ¹¹ Monty S. Mills, *Revelations: An Exegetical Study of the Revelation to John* (Dallas, TX: 3E Ministries, 1987), Rev. 16:3.
- ¹² Mounce, *The Book of Revelation*, 291.
- ¹³ Barnhouse, *Revelation*, 291.
- ¹⁴ John MacArthur, *Revelation 12-22 : The MacArthur New Testament Commentary* (Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 2000), Rev. 16:4.
- ¹⁵ No reference is intended to the angel which "went down at a certain time into the pool and stirred up the water" (John 5:4). Nor is this meant to indicate some sort of special angel: "He is undoubtedly a creature of the order of angels, and it is interesting to note that he has a title that would indicate that he had been placed in charge of the flowing waters of earth. Here we have an angel who is master of the waters."—Barnhouse, *Revelation*, 292. We disagree—the most natural meaning is merely a reference to the angel in the previous verse who poured forth the bowl upon the water. "There is some merit in the suggestion that the 'angel of the

- waters' is simply the angel of the previous verse who poured out his bowl upon 'the waters' (Lenski, p. 469).”—Mounce, *The Book of Revelation*, Rev. 16:5.
- 16 Bullinger, *Commentary On Revelation*, Rev. 16:7.
- 17 Danker, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 425.
- 18 “This plague will apparently affect the whole of mankind, including the saints alive at the time (Rev. 7:16).”—Mills, *Revelations: An Exegetical Study of the Revelation to John*, Rev. 16:8.
- 19 Concerning worship of heavenly bodies: Gen. 11:4; Deu. 4:19; 17:3; 2K. 17:16; 23:5, 11; 2Chr. 33:3; Job 31:26-28; Isa. 47:13; Jer. 8:2; 10:2; 19:13; Acts 7:42; Rom. 1:25; Rev. 8:12.
- 20 Barnhouse, *Revelation*, 296.
- 21 MacArthur, *Revelation 12-22 : The MacArthur New Testament Commentary*, Rev. 16:8.
- 22 Unger, *Unger's Commentary on the Old Testament*, Isa. 24:6.
- 23 Barnhouse, *Revelation*, 297.
- 24 William R. Newell, *Revelation: Chapter by Chapter* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 1994,c1935), Rev. 16:10.
- 25 Barnhouse, *Revelation*, 298.
- 26 From *lux*, “light,” and *fero*, “to bear, bring, carry.”
- 27 Friberg, *Analytical Lexicon of the Greek New Testament*, 322.
- 28 A. R. Fausset, “*The Revelation of St. John the Divine*,” in Robert Jamieson, A. R. Fausset, and David Brown, *A Commentary, Critical and Explanatory, on the Old and New Testaments* (Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc., 1997, 1877), Rev. 16:10.
- 29 Seiss, *The Apocalypse: Lectures on the Book of Revelation*, 374.
- 30 It is likely that its *name* is among the oldest names of rivers, but that its modern source and location probably do not match that of the pre-flood Euphrates due to the great changes in geography which almost certainly attended the break up of the fountains of the deep at the Flood.
- 31 Herodotus, *History of the Persian Wars*, 1:190-191 cited by [John F. Walvoord, *Daniel: The Key to Prophetic Revelation* (Chicago, IL: Moody Bible Institute, 1971), 129-130].
- 32 Henry Morris, *The Revelation Record* (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 1983), Rev. 16:12.
- 33 Unger, *Unger's Commentary on the Old Testament*, Isa. 11:12.
- 34 “Only the floods of the Nile . . . are mentioned, because the allusion to the slavery of Israel in Egypt predominates, and the redemption of the Israelites out of all the lands of the nations is represented as bringing out of the slave-house of Egypt. The drying up of the flood-depths of the Nile is therefore a figure denoting the casting down of the imperial power in all its historical forms.”—Carl Friedrich Keil, and Franz Delitzsch, *Commentary on the Old Testament* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2002), Zec. 10:11.
- 35 “Thus the Red Sea and the Euphrates in the former part of the verse answer to ‘Assyria’ and ‘Egypt’ in the latter.”—Fausset, “*The Revelation of St. John the Divine*,” Zec. 10:11.
- 36 Arnold G. Fruchtenbaum, *The Footsteps of Messiah*, rev ed. (Tustin, CA: Ariel Ministries, 2003), 316.
- 37 Bullinger, *Commentary On Revelation*, Rev. 16:12.
- 38 John F. Walvoord, *The Revelation of Jesus Christ* (Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 1966), Rev. 16:12.
- 39 Seiss, *The Apocalypse: Lectures on the Book of Revelation*, 378.
- 40 Mounce, *The Book of Revelation*, Rev. 16:13.
- 41 The spirit provided a rumor, an untruth. Hence we can conclude that it was not the spirit of an elect angel. Moreover, elect angels are not portrayed as disembodied spirits.
- 42 Concerning demons as unclean spirits: Mtt. 8:16; 10:1; 12:43; Mark 1:23, 26, 27; 5:2, 8, 13; 6:7. 7:25. 9:25; Luke 4:33, 36; 6:18; 8:29; 9:42; 11:24; Acts 5:16; 8:7; Rev. 16:13; 18:2.
- 43 Danker, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 561.

- 44 Richard Chenevix Trench, *Commentary on the Epistles to the Seven Churches in Asia* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 1861), 337.
- 45 Alan F. Johnson, *Revelation: The Expositor's Bible Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1966), Rev. 16:15.
- 46 Seiss, *The Apocalypse: Lectures on the Book of Revelation*, 379.
- 47 Robert L. Thomas, *Revelation 8-22* (Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 1995), Rev. 16:15.
- 48 The Gregorian chant is named after St. Gregory, the *watching one*.
- 49 Concerning the need for watchfulness: Mtt. 24:42; 25:13; Mark 13:33, 35, 37; Luke 12:36-40; 21:36; 1Cor. 1:7; 16:13; Php. 3:20; 1Th. 1:10; 5:6; 2Ti. 4:8; Tit. 2:13; Heb. 9:28; 2Pe. 3:12; Rev. 3:2-3; Rev. 16:15.
- 50 Friberg, *Analytical Lexicon of the Greek New Testament*, 80.
- 51 The scenarios which involve *one will be taken and the other left* (e.g., Mtt. 24:40-44; Luke 17:34-37) appear to speak of being taken in judgment at the time of His second advent.
- 52 Friberg, *Analytical Lexicon of the Greek New Testament*, 74.
- 53 Bullinger, *Commentary On Revelation*, Rev. 16:16.
- 54 James Strong, *The Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible* (Ontario: Woodside Bible Fellowship, 1996), H4023.
- 55 Copyright ©003 www.BiblePlaces.com. This image appears by *special permission*^[1.3] and may not be duplicated for use in derivative works.
- 56 MacArthur, *Revelation 12-22 : The MacArthur New Testament Commentary*, Rev. 16:18.
- 57 Mounce, *The Book of Revelation*, Rev. 16:16.
- 58 At the sounding of the seventh trumpet, declaration is made of the eventual result of the completion of judgments, but the final judgments themselves remain future.
- 59 Several interpreters take “great city” here to refer to Babylon: [Bullinger, *Commentary On Revelation*], [Fausset, “*The Revelation of St. John the Divine*”].
- 60 *Preterist interpreters*^[2.12.2] see mention of three parts as an application of the judgment to befall Jerusalem in the days of Ezekiel. “It is an echo of Ezekiel 5:1-12, where the prophet was required to shave his hair from his head, divide it into three parts, and conduct a symbolic action upon each part. He was told by God ‘This is Jerusalem’ (Eze. 5:5). One third of the hair was burned, another third was to be chopped up with a sword, and the remaining third was to be scattered into the wind. This symbolized the fate of the inhabitants of Jerusalem in 586 B.C.: some were to be burned inside the city, some would be slain by the swords of the Babylonians, and the rest would be scattered among the nations. That which happened in 586 B.C. happened again in A.D. 70. The dividing of the city into three parts symbolizes that fact.”—Steve Gregg, *Revelation Four Views: A Parallel Commentary* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 1997), 392. No statistics from the A.D. 70 destruction are given in support of this claim.
- 61 Barnhouse, *Revelation*, 307.
- 62 MacArthur, *Revelation 12-22 : The MacArthur New Testament Commentary*, Rev. 16:19.
- 63 Morris, *The Revelation Record*, Rev. 16:19.
- 64 Barnhouse, *Revelation*, 308.
- 65 As we noted elsewhere, a striking parallel to the 70th Week of Daniel during which another *Beast*^[5.2.9] prevails.
- 66 Barnhouse, *Revelation*, 308-309.
- 67 Barnhouse, *Revelation*, 309.
- 68 Unger, *Unger's Commentary on the Old Testament*, Jer. 4:23.
- 69 Either Isaiah saw the *regeneration* prior to the Millennium, or the text of Isaiah 65 is not strictly sequential—a characteristic not unknown in prophetic passages.
- 70 Concerning hailstones from God: Ex. 9:23-25; Jos. 10:11; Job 38:22; Ps. 18:12; 78:47; 105:32; 147:17; 148:8; Isa. 28:2, 17; 30:30; 32:19; Eze. 13:11; 38:22; Hag. 2:17; Rev. 8:7; 11:19; 16:21.

- 71 Bullinger, *Commentary On Revelation*, Rev. 16:21.
- 72 Danker, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 803.
- 73 Barnhouse, *Revelation*, 309.
- 74 Larry Spargimino, "How Preterists Misuse History to Advance their View of Prophecy," in Tim LaHaye, and Thomas Ice, eds., *The End Times Controversy* (Eugene, OR: Harvest House Publishers, 2003), 217.
- 75 Flavius Josephus, *The Complete Works of Josephus* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 1981), s.v. "Wars V, vi, 3."
- 76 [Gregg, *Revelation Four Views: A Parallel Commentary*, 394], [David Chilton, *The Days of Vengeance* (Tyler, TX: Dominion Press, 1987), 417].
- 77 Barnhouse, *Revelation*, 310.
- 78 The terminal velocity of ice. [Mills, *Revelations: An Exegetical Study of the Revelation to John*, Rev. 16:18]
- 79 MacArthur, *Revelation 12-22 : The MacArthur New Testament Commentary*, Rev. 16:21.
- 80 Seiss, *The Apocalypse: Lectures on the Book of Revelation*, 375.

3.17 - Revelation 17

3.17.1 - Revelation 17:1

In the previous chapter, John is shown the seven angels having the seven last plagues—the seven bowl judgments. He sees the seven bowls poured forth, including the last bowl wherein a voice from the *Temple*^[5.2.73] declares “It is done!” The effects of the previous chapter, at the pouring forth of all the bowls, include all aspects of God’s wrath being poured out on the earth reaching to the beginning of the *Millennial Kingdom*^[4.11] (Rev. 20:4). All of these events are future to the time of John’s writing.

Now, one of the angels of the previous chapter shows John a perspective which precedes the events he saw in the previous chapter. This includes additional information concerning the destruction of Babylon and the final consummation of the wrath that John saw prophetically poured forth. Beginning with Revelation 17 and continuing through Revelation 20:3, John is shown additional detail concerning aspects of the bowl judgments and their recipients. This includes the destruction of Babylon (Rev. 17:16-18, 18:1-24, 19:1-3), the *Beast*^[5.2.9] and his armies (Rev. 19:11-21), and the binding of Satan (Rev. 20:1-3).

one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls

This is one of the seven angels which John saw earlier as a “great and marvelous” sign (Rev. 15:1) which were given “seven golden bowls of the wrath of God” (Rev. 15:7). These bowls were poured out in the previous chapter. Since this angel shows John the woman, Babylon (Rev. 17:18), perhaps this is the angel who poured out the seventh bowl during which Babylon was destroyed (Rev. 16:17-19).

Come, I will show you

The same phrase is used later, probably by the same angel, when John is shown the Lamb’s wife: “Come, I will show you the bride, the Lamb’s wife” (Rev. 21:9). The Great *Harlot*^[5.2.25] of this chapter is to be contrasted with both the Lamb’s wife and the woman of Revelation 12. See *A Virgin and a Harlot*^[3.12.1.1] and *Babylon and the New Jerusalem*^[3.17.18.1].

the judgment

The Great Harlot is associated with Babylon (Rev. 17:5, 18; 18:21 ; 19:2). The prophets foretold the judgment which would come against Babylon. Both Isaiah and Jeremiah devote major passages to this topic which are essential background to an understanding of this chapter (Isa. 13, 14, 47; Jer. 50, 51). As we have seen before, prophecies in the *OT*^[5.2.51] often contain a mix of near-term and far-future predictions. In the case of the prophesied destruction of Babylon, the near-term aspects were fulfilled in the capture of Babylon by Cyrus (Dan. 5:30-31), but the city of Babylon has never been destroyed as predicted by the far-future aspects of Isaiah’s and Jeremiah’s prophecies. See *The Destruction of Babylon*^[4.1.2]. She is to be judged because she has corrupted the earth with her fornication and shed the blood of God’s servants (Rev. 17:6; 19:2).

the great harlot

She is “great” in the sense of having a dominant role in spiritual idolatry throughout history. In her is found the origin of all other “daughter harlots” (Rev. 17:5), for she predated them and begot (influenced) them. Her harlotry speaks of her abominable practices and spiritual idolatry. See *The Great Harlot*^[4.1.4].

who sits on many waters

The description of the woman shown John includes many aspects which are similar to that of Babylon at the time of Isaiah and Jeremiah. Jeremiah says concerning Babylon: “O you who dwell by many waters, abundant in treasures, your end has come” (Jer. 51:13a). Yet there are also differences. During the time of Jeremiah, Babylon resided *by* numerous waters: “Babylon was surrounded by the Euphrates, which divided to form many islands, and a large lake was nearby.”¹ “Nebuchadrezzar’s Babylon was the largest city in the world, covering 2,500 acres (1,000 hectares). The Euphrates, which has since shifted its course, flowed through it, the older part of the city being on the east bank.”²

The Great Harlot now sits *on* (ἐπι [epi]) many waters which are “peoples, multitudes, nations, and

tongues” (Rev. 17:15). This speaks of both her influence and support, no longer restricted to the plain of Shinar (Gen. 10:10; 11:2; Dan. 1:2; Zec. 5:11), but now extending throughout the world. The Great Harlot seen by John influences a much wider realm than *Babylon of Old*^[4.1.1]. Her influence was scattered worldwide with the introduction of languages in the judgment of Babel (Gen. 11:9). The waters upon which she sits are the waters from which the first Beast arose (Rev. 13:1).

3.17.2 - Revelation 17:2

with whom the kings of the earth committed fornication

The kings of the earth committed fornication with the *Harlot*^[5.2.25] both because of the allure of her harlotries, but also because she “reigns over the kings of the earth.” Throughout history, she has wielded powerful influence over various rulers of nations beyond Babylon. *Fornication* is ἐπόρνευσαν [*eporneusan*], meaning to prostitute, practice prostitution or sexual immorality generally, but also used figuratively to denote the practice of idolatry (Hos. 9:1; Jer. 3:6; Eze. 23:19; 1Chr. 5:25).³

To prostitute something is to take that which has a proper use and to turn it into an improper use. A prostitute takes sex, which has a proper use, and perverts it with an improper use, turning it into something illicit, causing fornication. In this case, the harlot represents “religion,” which has a proper use (Jas. 1:26-27), but here has been prostituted for improper use. Rather than serving, it rules. The false use of religion causes spiritual fornication. The word *fornication* is used both of physical unfaithfulness and also of spiritual unfaithfulness, as in Hosea 1-2; Jeremiah 2:20; 3:1-9; Ezekiel 16:15-41; 23:5-44, etc. It is with this woman that the kings of the earth commit fornication (Rev. 17:2), showing this to be a unity of religion and state.⁴

This aspect of the Harlot is identical with that of the city Babylon: “She has made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication” (Rev. 14:8); Those who fornicated with her were also deceived by her sorcery (Rev. 18:23). Some believe she differs from Babylon itself, but we believe the Scriptural evidence points in the direction of identity. The woman is “that great city which reigns over the kings of the earth” (Rev. 17:18)—Babylon. See *One or Two Babylons?*^[4.1.4.2.2]

Like Tyre of Isaiah’s day, the Harlot has both commercial and spiritual aspects which are opposed to God: “And it shall be, at the end of seventy years, that the LORD will visit Tyre. She will return to her hire, and commit fornication with all the kingdoms of the world on the face of the earth” (Isa. 23:17).

and the inhabitants of the earth

As went the leaders, so went the people. Not only kings, but an entire global populace was influenced by her. Although she influenced the inhabitants throughout history, it is the *earth dwellers*^[5.2.18] of the time of the end which are her final drinking partners. See *Earth Dwellers*^[3.3.10.1].

made drunk with the wine of her fornication

They were made drunk from the wine she served up (Rev. 14:8). Because neither she nor the inhabitants of the earth chose to respond to the light which all men are given concerning God (Rom. 1:18-21), God used her rebellion to make all the nations commit even further to their errant path. “Babylon was a golden cup in the LORD’S hand, That made all the earth drunk. The nations drank her wine; Therefore the nations are deranged” (Jer. 51:7). In the same way that the three unclean spirits go forth to draw the kings of the earth to God’s supper (Rev. 16:13-14 cf. Rev. 19:17), so too Babylon was a golden cup *in the LORD’S hand*. It was her who first made them drunk, but in their consistent rejection of God and their drunken stupor they returned for more which God allowed her to continue serving up.

3.17.3 - Revelation 17:3

So he carried me away in the Spirit into the wilderness

It was the Holy Spirit Who carried John while the angel accompanied him. In the same way that John was transported to heaven to see the vision of the throne (Rev. 4:2), so now he is transported to the wilderness, the vantage point for viewing the *Harlot*^[5.2.25]. See commentary on *Revelation 4:2*^[3.4.2]. His previous vision of the *Beast*^[5.2.9] rising from the sea was seen while he stood on the sand of the sea (Rev. 13:1). Later, John will be carried away “in the Spirit to a great and high mountain” where he is

shown the New Jerusalem (Rev. 21:10).

I saw a woman

John sees this woman in the *wilderness*, whereas he saw the woman of Revelation 12 as a great sign in *heaven*. The woman is *The Great Harlot*^[4.1.4] which the angel was to show John (Rev. 17:1). Later, she is specifically identified: “And the woman whom you saw is that great city which reigns over the kings of the earth” (Rev. 17:18). In this case, “great city,” is Babylon (Rev. 14:8; 18:10, 16, 18-21; 19:21).

sitting on a scarlet beast

Scarlet is κόκκινον [*kokkinon*]: “*Scarlet cloth*, dyed with κόκκος [*kokkos*], a scarlet ‘berry,’ actually the female of a scale insect that clings to oak leaves, dried and crushed to prepare a red dye.”⁵ The beast is scarlet, because it is closely related to the fiery red dragon which empowers it (Rev. 12:3 cf. Rev. 13:2). Her sitting on the beast may speak less of influence and more of support. “The Woman seated on the Beast does not signify that she will rule over him, but intimates that he will support her.”⁶

Because the Beast represents a series of kings and kingdoms stretching through history, there is a tendency among many expositors to take the Harlot as an exclusively religious figure. The fact that she is seen riding upon the Beast is thought to necessitate her identification as exclusively religious, but not political:

The fact that the woman is riding the beast and is not the beast itself signifies that she represents ecclesiastical power as distinct from the beast which is political power. Her position, that of riding the beast, indicates on the one hand that she is supported by the political power of the beast, and on the other that she is in a dominant role and at least outwardly controls and directs the beast.⁷

While we do not deny the significant religious role assigned to the Harlot, taking her to be an ecclesiastical *system* contradicts what Scripture records—that she is a *city* (Rev. 17:18; 18:21-19:2). There is no reason why she must be an ecclesiastical system when Scripture says she is a city. Moreover, she is also associated with wealth and excess (Rev. 17:4)—these may speak equally of both politics and religion.

The Beast represents the historic development of kingdoms empowered by the dragon (Rev. 12:3; 13:1) and its ultimate manifestation at the time of the end. The Harlot is the city Babylon in all its aspects—combining commercial, political, and religious influence. She has ridden the beast throughout history.

full of names of blasphemy

The Beast which arose from the sea had a blasphemous name (Rev. 13:1; *names*, *MT*^[5.2.45] and *NU*^[5.2.49] texts). The blasphemous names reflect the blasphemous mouth which speaks great things against God (Rev. 13:5). See commentary on *Revelation 13:5*^[3.13.5].

having seven heads and ten horns

The Great Harlot rides upon the same Beast which arose from the sea (Rev. 13:1) which also had *seven heads*^[4.3.2.4] and *ten horns*^[4.3.2.22] (Rev. 13:1). These same heads and horns were seen upon the great red dragon who empowers the Beast (Rev. 12:3). The seven heads are seven mountains and seven kings (Rev. 17:9-10). The ten horns are ten kings (Rev. 17:12 cf. Dan. 7:7, 20, 24). See commentary on *Revelation 12:3*^[3.12.3] and *Revelation 13:1*^[3.13.1]. In order to understand what this chapter reveals concerning the Beast, the seven heads, and its ten horns, see *Beasts, Heads, and Horns*^[4.3].

A Woman Rides the Beast⁸



3.17.4 - Revelation 17:4

arrayed in purple and scarlet

Her purple and scarlet clothing is called “fine linen” (Rev. 18:12). *Fine* is βύσσινον [*byssinon*], which is used of “fine linen goods”⁹ and speaks of her external finery and wealth (Est. 8:15; Lam. 4:5; Luke 7:25; 16:19). Her attire reflects her commercialism: “Merchandise of gold and silver, and precious stones and pearls, fine linen and purple, silk and scarlet” (Rev. 18:12, 16). Purple and scarlet were also the colors of royal vestment (Jdg. 8:26; Est. 1:6; Mtt. 27:28). The scarlet may reflect her identification with the *Beast*^[5.2.9] who carries her, who is also scarlet. The color of her garments contrast with the fine *white* linen of the overcomers, the saints (Rev. 3:5, 18; 19:8, 14).

Those who attempt to make the *Harlot*^[5.2.25] Jerusalem note the similarities between aspects of the harlot and what is said concerning apostate Israel and her leaders:

Gentry points out that the color and adornment of the harlot in Revelation 17:4 reflects the Jewish priestly colors of scarlet, purple, and gold (Ex. 28:33). These same colors were also found in the tapestry of the temple. Beale notes that the combination of the words in the Greek that describe the harlot’s garb is identical to the *LXX*^[5.2.38] description of the Jewish high priest’s garments. According to Beagley, the

outward beauty of the cup and its inward impurity is reminiscent of Christ's denunciation of the Pharisees in Matthew 23:35. In addition, the woman's title of harlot written across her forehead in Revelation 17:5 is a direct reference to Jeremiah 3:3 where God told apostate Judah that she had a harlot's forehead.¹⁰

While such parallels are interesting, it is important to note that the Harlot is closely identified with Babylon and there are many reasons we can be certain that Babylon cannot be Jerusalem. See *Babylon is Jerusalem?*^[4.1.3.4]

adorned with gold and precious stones and pearls

The woman not only practices spiritual harlotry (idolatry), she is also consumed with materialism and wealth.

In the measure that she glorified herself and lived luxuriously, in the same measure give her torment and sorrow; for she says in her heart, 'I sit as queen, and am no widow, and will not see sorrow.' Therefore her plagues will come in one day-death and mourning and famine. And she will be utterly burned with fire, for strong is the Lord God who judges her. (Rev. 18:7-8)

She shares this characteristic with the Beast she rides who disregards all gods, exalts himself above them, and in their place shall honor another god with gold, silver, and precious stones (Dan. 11:38). The Harlot wears *identical attire* as the city. "That great city that was clothed in fine linen, purple, and scarlet, and adorned with gold and precious stones and pearls" (Rev. 18:16). This indicates that the Harlot and the city are one and the same (Rev. 17:18). See *One or Two Babylons?*^[4.1.4.2.2]

a golden cup

This is the cup which she herself drinks and wherein she has mixed what she proffers to the nations (Jer. 51:7; Rev. 14:8; 18:6). Like the Pharisees of Jesus' day, the outside of the cup is lustrous and beautiful, but inside it is "full of extortion and self-indulgence" (Mtt. 23:25-26).

full of abominations

Abominations is βδελυγμάτων [*bdelygmatōn*]: "Anything that must not be brought before God because it arouses his wrath."¹¹ "Anything connected with idolatry."¹² God warned Israel through Moses:

When you come into the land which the LORD your God is giving you, you shall not learn to follow the abominations of those nations. There shall not be found among you *anyone* who makes his son or his daughter pass through the fire, *or one* who practices witchcraft, *or a soothsayer*, or one who interprets omens, or a sorcerer, or one who conjures spells, or a medium, or a spiritist, or one who calls up the dead. For all who do these things *are* an abomination to the LORD, and because of these abominations the LORD your God drives them out from before you. (Deu. 18:9-12)

She is the mother of harlots and of abominations of the earth (Rev. 17:5). Thus, she birthed the abominations which are found in the cup which she serves. From this, we know that the woman is not just a figure of the time of the end, but has her roots stretching back to early history. Thus, both the Harlot and the *Seven Heads*^[4.3.2.4] on the Beast which she rides stretch back to early history. See *Five Fallen Kings*^[4.3.2.5]. See *Babylon of Old*^[4.1.1].

Those who confuse the Harlot with Jerusalem fail to consider important aspects of the *OT*^[5.2.51] record which preclude such an identity:

1. The abominations which Israel practiced were *learned from the surrounding nations* (1K. 14:24) "When you come into the land which the LORD your God is giving you, you shall not learn to follow the abominations of those nations" (Deu. 18:9 cf. 1K. 14:24; 2K. 16:3; 21:2; 2Chr. 28:3; 33:2; 36:14; Eze. 20:7-8). Thus, neither Israel nor Jerusalem can be the *mother* of these practices.
2. The city of Jerusalem is first mentioned in the book of Joshua (Jos. 10:1).¹³ As a city associated with harlotry and abomination, Jerusalem lacks the necessary significance in early history necessary to fulfill all of what is said of the Harlot.
3. The Great Harlot is associated with Babylon, not Jerusalem. See *Babylon is Jerusalem?*^[4.1.3.4].

The cup is *full* indicating her readiness for God's judgment.

and the filthiness of her fornication

Filthiness is ἀκάθαρτα [*akatharta*], meaning that which is “impure, unclean.”¹⁴ Her fornication results in defilement, for she is *unclean*. This describes that which is morally indecent as well as ritually not acceptable.¹⁵ In the previous chapter, the same term described the “three unclean (ἀκάθαρτα [*akatharta*]) spirits” (Rev. 16:13). Her idolatrous practices and abominations led to impurity and defiled the land: “The land which you are entering to possess is an unclean land, with the uncleanness of the peoples of the lands, with their abominations which have filled it from one end to another with their impurity” (Ezra 9:11b). Her own fornication was promoted to foreign nations across the globe (Rev. 14:8). The *MT*^[5.2.45] text has *the fornication of the earth*.

3.17.5 - Revelation 17:5

on her forehead

Like the sealed of Israel (Rev. 7:3; 14:1) and the *Beast*^[5.2.9] worshipers (Rev. 13:16), the woman is also identified on her forehead. She has a harlot’s forehead and refuses to be ashamed (Jer. 3:3). The label on her forehead as the mother of harlots is to be contrasted with the engraved golden plate on the turban of the high priest which read, “HOLINESS TO THE LORD” (Ex. 28:36-37). He is set apart to God, she is set against God. See *A Virgin and a Harlot*^[3.12.1.1] and *Babylon and the New Jerusalem*^[3.17.18.1].

a name was written

Was written is γεγραμμένον [*gegrammenon*], perfect tense participle, *having been written*. The name was written in the past and she remains so labeled.

MYSTERY

Mystery is μυστήριον [*mystērion*], indicating something unknowable by man unless and until revealed by God. The antidote for *mystery* is not investigation or discovery, but *revelation*. See commentary on *Revelation 1:20*^[3.1.20]. The mystery relates to her identity and relationship to the seven-headed beast with ten horns (Rev. 17:7). Fortunately, the angel provides additional information to reveal aspects of her mystery (Rev. 17:7). It is unfortunate that “MYSTERY” appears in capitals as if it is a part of her title:

We believe that the English translators have misled many by printing (on their own authority) the word ‘mystery’ in large capital letters, thus making it appear that this was a part of ‘the woman’s name.’ This we are assured is a mistake. That the ‘mystery’ is connected with the ‘Woman’ herself and not with her ‘name’ is clear from Rev. 17:7, where the angel says unto John, ‘I will tell thee the mystery of the Woman, and of the Beast which carrieth her.’¹⁶

A better translation would be, “And on her forehead a name *was* written, a mystery, ‘BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND OF THE ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH’” (Rev. 17:5, NASB95). Her true title lacks the term “MYSTERY,” but is merely “Babylon the great” (Rev. 18:2). The incorporation of “MYSTERY” as her title has led many to identify *two Babylons*, one commercial and one spiritual. Yet aspects of the *Harlot*^[5.2.25] and the city Babylon are virtually identical—both involving a merger of both spiritual and commercial. See *Mystery Babylon*?^[4.1.4.2]

BABYLON

The woman is not said merely to be *Babylon*, but there is a *mystery* connected with her identification as such. She is not *Mystery Babylon*^[4.1.4.2], but *Babylon*. However, aspects of who she is are unknown until God reveals them. Here, John is shown that the Harlot is to be identified with Babylon. See *Babylon and the Harlot*^[4.1].

mother of harlots and of the abominations of the earth

She corrupted the earth with her fornication (Rev. 19:2) and was the source of harlots and abominations, not one of the recipients. Her daughters were polluted by her: “But come here, you sons of the sorceress, you offspring of the adulterer and the harlot!” (Isa. 57:3). Once again we see the impossibility of taking the Harlot to be Jerusalem. Speaking of the harlotry of Jerusalem, Ezekiel relates:

Thus says the LORD God to Jerusalem, . . . “Indeed everyone who quotes proverbs will use this proverb against you: ‘Like mother, like daughter!’ **You are your mother’s daughter**, loathing husband and children; and you are the sister of your sisters, who loathed their husbands and children; your mother was a Hittite and your father an Amorite.’ ” (Eze. 16:3, 44-45) [emphasis added]

Jerusalem is said to have the Hittites as a mother and the Amorites as a father. She herself is a *daughter*. Since Israel did not even exist as a nation until the time of Jacob, it is obvious that she cannot be the *mother* or *originator* of harlots and of the abominations of the earth. This dubious distinction must go to an older empire: Babylon in the sense of its origination under Nimrod as Babel (Gen. 10:8-10). See *Babylon is Jerusalem?*^[4.1.3.4] See *Babylon of Old*^[4.1.1].

Neither does the ever-popular interpretation of the Harlot as Roman Catholicism meet the description of this verse:

The name was the name, not of a woman, but of a city, “that great city,” even Babylon. But it signified not merely the material city as such, but the vast system of idolatry connected with it. That is why the explanation of the secret sign follows “the mother of the harlots and of the abominations of the earth.” Not merely of Rome, or even Babylon (as a city), but “of the earth” : *i.e.*, the mother, or fountain head of all the systems of idolatry which have since flooded “the earth” from that one great source; and of which Romanism is only a part. This is the *secret* or “mystery of iniquity” referred to in 2 Thessalonians 2:7. Babylon was the fountain-head of all idolatry.¹⁷

To say that [the Harlot] is either Rome or the Roman Catholic Church is to grossly underestimate the age-long global impact of this great mystery. Babylon the Great. Babylon is the mother of all harlots and abominations of the earth. From her have come ancient paganism, Chinese Confucianism, Asian Buddhism, Indian Hinduism, Shamanism, Taoism, Shintoism, animism, astrology, witchcraft, spiritism, Sikhism, and all the world’s vast complex of “gods many, and lords many” (1 Corinthians 8:5). Of more direct concern in twentieth-century America is the direct descent of modern scientism and evolutionary humanism from this ancient mother of harlots. As noted before, modern evolutionism is in no way scientific, being contradicted by all true facts of science, but is merely a revival of ancient Greek (and ultimately Babylonian) evolutionary pantheism.¹⁸

See *The Great Harlot*^[4.1.4]

3.17.6 - Revelation 17:6

drunk

Drunk is μεθύουσαν [*methyousan*], present tense participle. The woman was drunk while John saw her.

with the blood of the saints and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus

When Babylon is destroyed, the holy apostles and prophets are said to have been avenged (Rev. 18:19). Thus, the *Harlot*^[5.2.25] is not some other entity, but is to be identified with the city. See *Mystery Babylon*^[4.1.4.2]. This also explains the close association between the Harlot and the *Beast*^[5.2.9] upon which she rides. For the Beast is given authority to overcome the saints (Rev. 13:7), and his image commands that those who refuse to worship the image be put to death (Rev. 13:15). Since the woman sits upon peoples, multitudes, nations, and tongues, all the world at the time of the end participates in the destruction of the godly. The *earth dwellers*^[5.2.18] are given blood to drink because “they have shed the blood of saints and prophets” (Rev. 16:6).

Throughout the book of Revelation, John is shown numerous martyrs of Jesus. Antipas in the church of Pergamos was a faithful martyr (Rev. 2:13). At the opening of the fifth seal, John sees “the souls of those who had been slain for the word of God and for the testimony which they held” (Rev. 6:9). God’s two witnesses, empowered to prophesy, are martyred as a witness (Rev. 11:7). John sees those who had overcome the Beast and his mark—probably martyrs—standing on the sea of glass (Rev. 15:2 cf. Rev. 12:11). At the initiation of the *Millennial Kingdom*^[5.2.39], John sees “the souls of those who had been beheaded for their witness to Jesus and for the word of God, who had not worshiped the beast or his image, and had not received *his* mark on their foreheads or on their hands” (Rev. 20:4). Her blood-guiltiness extends throughout history, for “in her was found the blood of prophets and saints, and of all who were slain on the earth” (Rev. 18:24). See #20 - *Saints*^[4.3.2.20].

Being drunk with *blood* would be particularly offensive to John who, being a Jew, had a keen appreciation for the prohibition against eating blood (Gen. 9:4; Lev. 3:17; 7:26; 17:10-13).¹⁹

when I saw her, I marveled with great amazement

At the end of Daniel's vision of the four beasts and the Son of Man, his thoughts greatly troubled him (Dan. 7:28). Subsequent to Daniel's vision concerning Antiochus Epiphanes IV, and aspects of the time of the end, he fainted and was sick for days and continued to be astonished by the vision (Dan. 8:27). John is similarly affected by the magnitude of what he is being shown: her support by the hideous beast, her great wealth, her extreme sinfulness, and her scope both historically and geographically.

3.17.7 - Revelation 17:7

I will tell you the mystery of the woman and of the beast

The angel provides revelation concerning aspects of the woman (Rev. 17:15-18) and the beast with the seven heads and ten horns (Rev. 17:8-14, 16-17). The remainder of the chapter is devoted to these two topics.

carries her

Carries is βαστάζοντος [*bastazontos*], indicating that the beast *supports* or *bears* her, used "of animals used for riding,"²⁰ but also used figuratively: "Of anything burdensome or difficult *bear*, *endure*, *put up with* (Mtt. 20:12)."²¹ Although the *Beast*^[5.2.9] carries her for a season, ultimately he and his ten kings turn upon her and consume her (Rev. 17:16-17) bringing about God's judgment upon her. Perhaps her ride upon the Beast is eventually seen to be too burdensome so he throws her off. She may ultimately prove to be a liability and a competition in his eventual bid for all attention and worship (2Th. 2:4).

seven heads and ten horns

See commentary on *Revelation 17:3*^[3.17.3].

3.17.8 - Revelation 17:8

The beast that you saw

In the explanation which follows, it is important to remember that the *Beast*^[5.2.9] is both a *king* and a *kingdom*. This characteristic is evident from a study of various passages concerning the Beast, for example: "I watched then because of the sound of the pompous words which the horn [*an individual*] was speaking; I watched till the beast [*the fourth terrible kingdom*] was slain, and its body destroyed and given to the burning flame" (Dan. 7:11). See commentary on *Revelation 13:1*^[3.13.1]. See *The Beast*^[4.2]. See #16 - *Beast*^[4.3.2.16].

was and is not and will ascend . . . go to perdition

This is an important verse because it gives us information concerning the four phases of the life of *The Beast*^[4.2] who eventually rules the seventh head at the time of the end:

1. **was** - His original political appearance and rise (Dan. 9:26-27).
2. **is not** - His death by a mortal wound (Zec. 11:17?; Rev. 13:3).
3. **will ascend** - His miraculous recovery (Rev. 13:3).
4. **to perdition** - His destruction at the hands of Christ at the Second Coming (Dan. 7:11; 11:45; Rev. 19:19).

At his ascent, he overthrows the two witnesses (Rev. 11:7). His victory over them and his miraculous restoration result in his global worship (Rev. 13:3-4). This occurs at the midpoint of *The 70th Week of Daniel*^[2.13.5]. See *Events of the 70th Week of Daniel*^[2.13.5.4]. See *The Timing of His Ascent*^[4.2.7.1].

out of the bottomless pit

Bottomless pit is ἀβύσσου [*abyssou*], the *abyss*, a compartment deep within the earth which serves as

a holding place for demons. See commentary on *Revelation 9:1*^[3.9.1]. His ascent from the abyss is yet future to the time of John's vision and denotes his revival from the dead and possibly his demonic possession (cf. Luke 22:3; John 13:27). See *Supernatural Origin?*^[4.2.7] When the Beast ascends out of the abyss, he will overcome the two witnesses (Rev. 11:7). The destruction of these two powerful prophets together with his return from the dead will seal his worship by the *earth dwellers*^[5.2.18]. This probably occurs at the midpoint of *The 70th Week of Daniel*^[2.13.5] when he proclaims himself as God. See *Events of the 70th Week of Daniel*^[2.13.5.4].

Roughly speaking the *mortal* stage [before his deadly wound] would fill the first half of the last of “the seventy weeks” (*i.e.*, the first 3 1/2 years of Dan. 9:27); and the *superhuman* stage [after his revival and ascent from the abyss] would occupy the last half. But there is nothing to show us what length of time will run between his *rise* and his *assassination*. Neither can we say exactly how long the time will be between his death-stroke and his reappearance.²²

See commentary on *Revelation 11:7*^[3.11.7]. See commentary on *Revelation 13:3*^[3.13.3].

go to perdition

Perdition is ἀπόλειαν [*apōleian*]: “destruction . . . annihilation . . . ruin . . . of eternal destruction as punishment for the wicked (Mtt. 7:13).”²³ The *Antichrist*^[5.2.3] is said to be “the son of perdition (ὁ υἱὸς τῆς ἀπωλείας [*ho huios tēs apōleias*])” (2Th. 2:3). His title reflects his final destiny: “into destruction (εἰς ἀπόλειαν [*eis apōleian*])” (Rev. 17:11). His destruction follows upon his origin, death, and revival. See commentary on *Revelation 17:11*^[3.17.11]. In Daniel's vision of the *four beasts*^[4.3.2.8] and the *little horn*^[5.2.37], the fourth beast “was slain, and its body destroyed and given to the burning flame” (Dan. 7:11). “He shall come to his end, and no one will help him” (Dan. 11:45b). He is destroyed (cast into the Lake of Fire, but not annihilated) at the Second Coming of Christ (Rev. 19:20). Because his destiny is destruction, he is “the son of perdition” (2Th. 2:3).

Both the Beast and the *False Prophet*^[5.2.20] are denied judgment at the Great White Throne (Rev. 20:11-15). Unlike other nonbelievers who die (or are killed, Rev. 19:21) and subsequently resurrected to stand judgment before being cast into the Lake of Fire, these two are “cast alive into the lake of fire burning with brimstone” (Rev. 19:20). Their destruction is unique in that they are the *first inhabitants* of the Lake of Fire—spending one thousand years there before being joined by Satan (Rev. 20:10). Thus, the “antitrinity” are the first to suffer in hell. The rest of the ungodly dead are in *Hades* until their time of judgment (Rev. 20:12-13).

those who dwell on the earth will marvel

Will marvel is θαυμασθήσονται [*thaumasthēsontai*], future passive indicative, *they will be marvelling*. This is the same Beast which John saw earlier which “all the world marveled and followed” (Rev. 13:4). There, he was shown the future rise of Antichrist. Now, the angel shows him his place of origin (from the abyss) and his relationship to the woman. Those who marvel are the *Earth Dwellers*^[3.3.10.1]. They marvel over his recovery from his deadly wound (Rev. 13:3, 14; Rev. 17:11). See commentary on *Revelation 13:3*^[3.13.3].

whose names are not written in the Book of Life

names are not written is οὐ γέγραπται τὸ ὄνομα [*ou gegraptai to onoma*], perfect tense passive verb, *not it has been written, the name*. The text is not saying that their names are not *presently* found in the book, as if they were at one time but were later blotted out. In the foreknowledge and election of God, their names were *never* recorded there (Rev. 13:8). Since their names have not been written in the *Book of Life*^[5.2.10], they are guaranteed eventually to be cast into the Lake of Fire because “anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire” (Rev. 20:12). Only those who are written in the Lamb's Book of Life find entry into the New Jerusalem (Rev. 21:27). See *Book of Life*^[4.4]. See *Beast Worshipers are Unique*^[4.4.3.4].

Previously, John wrote that their names had not been written in *the Book of Life of the Lamb* (Rev. 13:8). Here, the same book is referred to as simply *the Book of Life*. See commentary on *Revelation 13:8*^[3.13.8].

from the foundation of the world

From the foundation (καταβολῆς [*katabolēs*], *throwing down*) of the world, their names have been absent from the book. In the foreknowledge and election of God, it was known that the Beast worshipers would reject God. Even before their death, they are irredeemable once they worship the Beast and take his mark (Rev. 14:9-11). See *From the Foundation of the World*^[3.13.8.1].

when they see

βλεπόντων [*blepontōn*], present tense participle, *while presently seeing*. They will marvel at the time they see the beast. His *appearance* results in their response. This speaks of his deadly wound which was healed which causes the earth dwellers to worship him (Rev. 13:3). It is the miraculous death and recovery of a *person* witnessed by people who have seen both the wounding and the healing, not the ages-long restoration of a historical kingdom or country such as Rome. The wounding and miraculous recovery of the Beast is a part of the deceptive testing during this unique hour of testing which is to come upon the world (Rev. 3:10). Their response is to believe the deception (2Th. 2:11-12) which results in their worship of the beast (Rev. 13:4) and in their taking his mark which seals their doom (Rev. 14:9-11). The deception is not the miraculous revival, but the falsehood which it points to. See commentary on *Revelation 13:13*^[3.13.13].

that was, and is not, and yet is

Τι ἦν, καὶ οὐκ ἔστι, καὶ περ ἔστιν [*Ti ēn, kai ouk esti, kai per estin*], *who he was, and not he is, and although he is* (TR^[5.2.79] text). Ὅτι ἦν καὶ οὐκ ἔστιν καὶ παρέσται [*Hoti ēn kai ouk estin kai parestai*], *that he was and not he is, and he will be present* (MT^[5.2.45], NU^[5.2.49] text).

This phrase describes the initial appearance, death, and subsequent ascent of the Beast from the abyss (Rev. 11:7). The point of reference for the phrases *was*, *is not*, and *yet is*, is the period in which the earth dwellers live—all of which is yet future to John. Thus, the fact that the Beast *was* should not be taken as an indication that the Beast had already walked the planet and perished prior to John's day.

The phrase found here alludes to the similar phrase which describes Jesus' eternal nature and true victory over death: "I *am* He who lives, and was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore" (Rev. 1:18). In his return from the dead, the Beast, as Antichrist, mimics the true Christ who forever achieved victory over death. See *Master Imitator*^[4.2.5]. See *Supernatural Origin?*^[4.2.7] See commentary on *Revelation 1:18*^[3.1.18]. Some believe John's statement reflects his inclusion of a myth which developed some time after the death of the Roman emperor *Nero*^[5.2.46] that he would return from the dead. This is extremely unlikely. See *Revival Myth*^[4.12.1].

3.17.9 - Revelation 17:9

Here is the mind which has wisdom

As was the case for calculating the number of the *Beast*^[5.2.9] (Rev. 13:18), wisdom is required to understand the next portion of the mystery revealed by the angel.

the seven heads are seven mountains

As Woods observes, if the seven mountains are to be taken as the seven hills of Rome, then it is difficult to see why special wisdom is said to be required in order to understand the revelation provided by the angel:

It seems odd that the seven hills should be equated with the well-known topography of Rome because Revelation 17: indicates that the identification of the hills calls for special wisdom. Why should such a well-known geographical locale to John's first century audience require special theological and symbolic insight for proper identification?²⁴

As we shall see in the next verse, the *seven heads*^[4.3.2.4] are seven kings. Here they are said to be seven mountains. The relationship between kings and mountains is well-established in Scripture—mountains represent the power of kingdoms and their individual kings (Jer. 51:25; Dan. 2:35; Zec. 4:7). These seven mountains, together with the eighth (Rev. 17:11), will eventually be destroyed by the stone which is Christ, the Messianic King (Rev. 20:4). His kingdom is destined to become "a great mountain" and fill the whole earth (Dan. 2:35).

This symbolic understanding of the seven mountains seems buttressed by the fact that the harlot sits on or beside seven mountains (Rev. 17:9) just as she sits on or beside the many waters (Rev. 17:1). Since the waters are symbolic of peoples, multitudes, nations, and tongues (Rev. 17:15), consistency seems to dictate that the seven mountains are symbolic as well.²⁵

See #4 - *Seven Heads/Kings*^[4.3.2.4].

on which the woman sits

That which she sits upon supports her and she controls it. It is difficult to know which side of this symbiotic relationship is more important, although Scripture seems to indicate her corrupting influence is what God especially opposes. Some interpret her *sitting* as denoting her *location*. That she is located upon seven hills which are then said to be the hills of Rome. But this is not the predominant meaning of her sitting which speaks more of support and control than locale:

The reference to the seven mountains (Rev. 17:9) which are seven heads (Rev. 17:8) actually belong to the beast (Rev. 17:3, 7; 13:1) and not the woman named Babylon. Thus, these seven heads or mountains really have nothing to do with the entity Babylon at all. It is possible to argue that the woman is still associated with the seven hills because she is sitting on them. However, it is better to see this as referring to the woman's control rather than her location. The other references to the woman sitting also refer to her control. Revelation 17:1 portrays the woman sitting on many waters. Revelation 17:15 explains that the waters represent peoples, multitudes, nations, and tongues. Thus, Revelation 17:1, 15 show the harlot's control over the entire world. Furthermore, Revelation 17:3 depicts the woman as sitting on the beast, which again indicates control rather than location. Thus, if the harlot's sitting indicates control rather than location twice in Revelation 17, then consistency would seem to dictate that the harlot sitting on the seven hills in Revelation 17:9 would also indicate control rather than location.²⁶

See *Babylon is Rome?*^[4.1.3.3].

3.17.10 - Revelation 17:10

There are also seven kings

This phrase should read "And they are seven kings" (NASB95). The KJV and NKJV translations are misleading here. The KJV begins the verse with, "And there are seven kings." The NKJV says, "There are also seven kings." All the Greek texts, although differing in word order, include the following words, Καὶ βασιλεῖς εἰσὶν ἑπτὰ [*Kai basileis eisin hepta*], and *kings they are seven*.²⁷ The words "there" and "also" in the KJV and NKJV translations are questionable. The first is inaccurate: εἰσὶν [*eisin*] is 3rd-person plural of εἰμι [*eimi*], *I am*, which should be rendered, *they are*. The second: *also*, is not the best rendering of καὶ [*kai*] here in that it implies the seven kings are an *additional* subject. These translations give the incorrect impression that the kings are different from the heads and mountains upon which the woman sits. When describing the ten horns a few verses later, a similar phrase occurs: δέκα βασιλεῖς εἰσὶν [*deka basileis eisin*]: "ten kings they are" (Rev. 17:12). There, the KJV and NKJV translate the phrase correctly, without substituting *there* for *they* as is done here.

We need not conjecture upon the significance of the seven mountains for the angel has pierced this aspect of the mystery for us:

This at once disposes of the popular interpretation which regards these seven mountains as referring to the seven hills on which the city of Rome was built. The Holy Spirit expressly tells us that the seven mountains are (represent) seven kings.²⁸

The punctuation of the *AV*^[5.2.8] in this verse is very faulty. Verse 9 should end with the word "wisdom," and the remainder of the verse should form part of the tenth verse. The explanation of the angel would not then have been cut in two, and interpreted separately as is commonly the case; and the "seven mountains" would not have been treated independently of the clause which goes on to further explain what they signify. The "seven mountains" are, according to this, "seven kings." It does not say that "there are seven kings" over and above, and beside the "seven mountains;" but that the "seven mountains are (*i.e.*, represent) seven kings." . . . These mountains, then, are no mere heaps of earth or rocks, but "kings." . . . For interpreters to take these *literally* as "mountains," in the midst of a context which the same interpreters take to be *symbolic*; and in the face of the *interpretation* actually given by the angel that "they are seven kings," is to play fast and loose with the word of prophecy.²⁹

Rather than identifying these seven kings (which are seven heads) with *seven historic kingdoms*^[4.3.2.4], some aspire to find fulfillment of John's vision in the events of first-century Rome. Most frequently, *preterist interpreters*^[2.12.2] attempt to pick kings in such a way that *Nero*^[4.12] can be said to fulfill the predictions concerning *The Beast*^[4.2]. In doing so, they overlook inconsistencies in counting kings:

To be sure there have been many attempts to fit the date of Revelation . . . into the emperor lists of the first century. . . . But immediately there are admitted problems. Where do we begin—with Julius Caesar or Caesar Augustus? Are we to exclude Galba, Otho, and Vitellius who had short, rival reigns? If so, how can they be excluded except on a completely arbitrary basis? A careful examination of the historic materials yields no satisfactory solution. If Revelation were written under *Nero*^[5.2.46], there would be too few emperors; if under Domitian, too many. The original readers would have had no more information on these emperor successions than we do, and possibly even less. How many Americans can immediately name the last seven presidents? Furthermore, how could the eighth emperor who is identified as the beast also be one of the seven (Rev. 17:11)?³⁰

For a more in-depth discussion of the problems of correlating these kings with early Rome, see Beale.³¹

five have fallen

Fallen is ἔπεσαν [*epesan*], “The word is always used of violent death, when speaking of individuals, or violence when referring to kingdoms. Jdg. 3:25. 5:27. 2S. 1:19, 25. Isa. 21:9. Jer. 50:15. 51:8. Eze. 29:5. 30:6.”³² The angel is no longer discussing the *Beast*^[5.2.9] (who was, is, and is to come) and is now describing the seven heads which are seven mountains and seven kings. Most *futurist interpreters*^[2.12.5] take these to be five world empires of greatest significance to Israel in the plan of God. These are five which fell *before* the time of John. See #5 - *Five Fallen Kings*^[4.3.2.5].

Johnson complains of the seemingly arbitrary nature of the futurist identification of kingdoms:

Seiss (followed recently by Ladd and Walvoord) has suggested an interpretation that takes the five-one-one to refer to successive world kingdoms that have oppressed the people of God: Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, Persia, Greece (five fallen), Rome (one is), and a future world kingdom. While this solves some of the emperor succession problems and fits nicely, it too must admit arbitrary omissions, such as the devastating persecution of the people of God under the Seleucids of Syria, especially Antiochus IV, Epiphanes.³³

However, it is not the *futurist* who is arbitrarily neglecting the Seleucids, but the *night vision of Daniel* (Dan. 7) which guides the identification of these kingdoms. Daniel's four beasts are widely held to be Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, and Rome. Since the initial stage of the fourth beast, Rome, is already underway (“one is,” see below) at the time of John, this provides identification of the previous three: Babylon, Medo-Persia, and Greece. It is apparent that the Seleucid empire—an outgrowth of the disintegration of the Greek empire under Alexander, is largely subsumed into the third *leopard beast*^[4.3.2.11]. Although it is probably recognized in the four heads on the leopard beast (Dan. 7:6) and the four notable horns on the he-goat in another of Daniel's visions (Dan. 8:8), it is not given the same prominence as the other kingdoms. This is not an arbitrary decision by the futurist, but the plan and purpose of the Holy Spirit Who provided Daniel with the visions. Since only three of Daniel's four kingdoms have fallen by the time of John, another two kingdoms must be found to form a total of five. The only arbitrariness attributable to the futurist is in the identification of these previous two kingdoms: whether they be Egypt and Assyria or extend further back to include Babel.

It is our view that the historic scope of the seven-headed beast ridden by the *Harlot*^[5.2.25] and her identification with Babylon points in the direction of Babel as the first kingdom. But there is still the problem of knowing whether to include Egypt or Assyria as the second. If the issue is to be decided by volume of passages pertaining to either kingdom, it would seem that Egypt would garner the most votes resulting in the five fallen kingdoms of: Babel, Egypt, Babylon, Medo-Persia, and Greece.

one is

Although five kings (mountains representing their kingdoms) have fallen by the time of John, one is currently reigning. This would seem most naturally to be Rome—the initial stage of Daniel's *terrible*

beast^[4.3.2.12]. *Preterists*^[5.2.59] who desire to find fulfillment in *Nero*^[4.12] attempt to make him the king which “is,” but they can only do so by ignoring inconsistencies in the line up of “kings”:

[Gentry’s] conclusion that Nero is the sixth or “the one [who] is” also faces serious obstacles. The greatest obstacle is his need to begin counting “kings” with Julius Caesar. He tries to defend this by citing several ancient sources, but the fact is that Rome was a Republic, ruled by the First Triumvirate, in the days of Julius Caesar and became a Principate under Augustus and the emperors that followed him. Neither does Gentry attempt to explain the thirteen-year gap between Julius Caesar’s death and the beginning of Augustus’ reign. They were not consecutive rulers as he makes them out to be.³⁴

and the other has not yet come

This is the kingdom which follows upon Rome in John’s day. Here we enter upon a conundrum with at least two aspects:

1. **Daniel’s Night Vision** - The fall of Rome after John’s day did not fulfill the prediction of the rapid and dramatic destruction of the *terrible beast*^[4.3.2.12] which Daniel saw in his night vision (Dan. 7). Nor did its fall usher in the *Messianic Kingdom*^[5.2.39] as the vision predicted. Therefore, the fall of Rome after John’s time does not fulfill aspects of Daniel’s night vision which remain yet future.
2. **Nebuchadnezzar’s Dream** - The fall of Rome after John’s day is depicted by the image of Nebuchadnezzar’s dream concerning the “feet and toes, partly of potter’s clay and partly of iron” (Dan. 2:41) which speak of a period of division and lack of cohesiveness prior to the Messianic Kingdom (Dan. 2:44). The break up of Rome and subsequent history of the westernized nations has more similarity to Nebuchadnezzar’s dream.

This forces the interpreter to the conclusion that the Roman empire at the time of John constituted the first phase of a two-phase participation in the prophecies of the time of the end. This same two-stage division can be seen in the key passage concerning *the 70 weeks of Daniel*^[2.13.5] (Dan. 9:24-27). In that passage, Messiah is cut off after the 69th week and prior to the 70th week. He is cut off when Rome is in power. It is also said that after the 69th week and before the 70th week “the people of the prince who is to come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary” (Dan. 9:26). This we know to be fulfilled in the A.D. 70 destruction of Jerusalem and the *Second Temple*^[4.16.5.4] by Rome. Thus, Gabriel leaves hanging a yet future “prince” associated with Rome who follows upon the destruction of the city in A.D. 70—and who, by means of a covenant, initiates the final week (Dan. 9:27).

Scripture records two phases to Roman participation in the prophecies concerning the end. In its first phase, historic Rome existed in the era of the crucifixion, the destruction of the *Temple*^[5.2.73], and John’s writing from Patmos. But now the angel tells John of its second, future phase which “has not yet come.” This is the phase represented by the ten horns of Daniel’s night vision (Dan. 7:7, 20) and the ten toes of the image of Nebuchadnezzar’s dream (Dan. 2:42). See *Nebuchadnezzar’s Dream and Daniel’s Vision*^[4.3.1]. See #12 - *Terrible Beast*^[4.3.2.12].

and when he comes, he must continue a short time

Grammatically, “he” refers to the seventh head-mountain-king which represents the seventh kingdom. The reign of the last kingdom is said to be relatively short. A few verses later, we are told that the ten horns, all on the last head, “receive authority for one hour as kings with the beast” (Rev. 17:12 cf. Dan. 7:24). So the primary reference is to the *duration of the last kingdom prior to the rise of the beast* who’s rise eventually eclipses the seventh kingdom.

The seventh kingdom is connected with the “beast that was” who is counted as an eighth king, but also said to be “of the seven”—he is the historic culmination of all the previous heads and his political origin is out of the seventh kingdom. We also know that his reign will be short-lived.

The angel tells John that the Beast to arise in the future (Rev. 13:1) will have a relatively short (and terrible) reign. He is prominent for only a very short time on the stage of world history—for at least seven years. He becomes prominent sometime before *The 70th Week of Daniel*^[2.13.5] so that he is a key participant in the covenant with Israel which initiates the final seven years. Thereafter, he only rules for another seven years during which only the last half he prevails over the saints (Rev. 13:5). In historical terms, this is indeed a “short time.” Unlike the initial phase of Rome, when his reign ends it

will usher in the Messianic Kingdom on earth. See *Events of the 70th Week of Daniel*^[2.13.5.4].

3.17.11 - Revelation 17:11

The beast that was, and is not, is himself also the eighth

Now the angel is speaking of the individual who will be the ruler of the kingdom yet to come. This phrase refers to the period of the reign of the *Beast*^[5.2.9] following his revival from his deadly wound. If his revival occurs near the midpoint of *The 70th Week of Daniel*^[2.13.5], then this would refer to the last half of the week, the three and one-half years during which he is given authority: “he was given authority to continue for forty-two months” (Rev. 13:5). This period is one of great turmoil since the Beast receives his power, throne, and authority from the dragon (Rev. 13:2) and the dragon has great wrath “because he knows that he has a short time” (Rev. 12:12). See *Prophetic Year*^[2.13.5.2]. See *Events of the 70th Week of Daniel*^[2.13.5.4]. See commentary on *Revelation 17:8*^[3.17.8].

He is an eighth kingdom in the sense that the seventh kingdom originally arrives as a global empire which shall “devour the whole earth.” Out of this seventh kingdom “ten horns . . . shall arise” (Dan. 7:23-24). The Beast himself “shall rise after them” (Dan. 7:25). After his revival, the ten horns give their authority to the Beast (Rev. 17:12-13) and he reigns supreme and uncontested (Rev. 13:3). In the final form of Gentile dominion, the self-rule of the Beast, he is an eighth king, but only hinted at as an eighth head here.³⁵

If we look upon the Roman dictator as being the seventh, he becomes the eighth, the Antichrist at the time of the Satanic incarnation, and thereby becomes an eighth, who is thus out of the seven, since Satan is the cause of all of the others.³⁶

In his *mortal* stage he is the *seventh* head; but in his *superhuman* stage he is the *eighth* king.³⁷

See #16 - *Beast*^[4.3.2.16].

he is of the seven

He is “of the seven” in that his origin, both as a *head* and a *horn* (see below) is from among the other heads and horns: “He is an eighth contemporary king ruling over the other seven kings who have submitted to his authority. Yet he is *of the seven*, for he is the seventh head of the chronological ruling governments. The term “seven” refers to the *heads*, while the term ‘eight’ refers to the *horns*.”³⁸ “And though he is ‘an eighth’ king, there are not really eight, but only seven, for the *seventh* and the *eighth* are the same personage; therefore, it is said that the eighth is ‘of the seven.’ ”³⁹ See #13 - *Seventh King*^[4.3.2.13].

is going to perdition

See commentary on *Revelation 17:8*^[3.17.8].

3.17.12 - Revelation 17:12

the ten horns which you saw are ten kings

These are the same *ten horns*^[4.3.2.22] which Daniel saw in his night vision (Dan. 7:7-8, 20, 24). The ten horns correspond to the ten toes of Nebuchadnezzar’s image (Dan. 2:40-43). See *Nebuchadnezzar’s Dream and Daniel’s Vision*^[4.3.1].

who have received no kingdom as yet

These *ten horns*^[4.3.2.22] are all on the *seventh head*^[4.3.2.13] which corresponds to the final historic stage of the *terrible beast*^[4.3.2.12] which Daniel saw (Dan. 7:7, 19-20). Like the ten toes of Nebuchadnezzar’s image, which extend forth from the feet during the final kingdom, these horns from the seventh head do not arise until the time of the end. An angel gave Daniel the same interpretation: “The ten horns *are* ten kings *who* shall arise from this [terrible beastly] kingdom” (Dan. 7:24).

they receive authority for one hour as kings with the beast

The association between the ten horns and the seventh head is made explicit. Unlike the kingdom of God which cannot be shaken (Heb. 12:28), the ten kings will only have authority for a short period of

time, and then only to direct it toward the *Beast*^[5.2.9] when he rises in ultimate prominence. The Beast rises up as an eleventh horn (Dan. 7:20) and eventually overthrows *three horns*^[4.3.2.24] leaving *eight horns*^[4.3.2.26], seven plus himself.

The phrase *one hour* indicates a historically short period of time. The Tribulation period (lasting seven years) is called “the hour of trial which shall come upon the whole world” (Rev. 3:10). When Babylon is destroyed, her judgment comes in “one hour” (Rev. 18:10, 17, 19). The phrase differs in meaning from “the hour” which indicates the time when a pending action has finally come (Rev. 14:7, 15).

3.17.13 - Revelation 17:13

These are of one mind, and they give their power and authority to the beast.

In the time of the end, amidst much turmoil and political upheaval, such unity of thought and purpose would be unexpected if it were not for their ultimate control by God. “For God has put it into their hearts to fulfill His purpose, to be of one mind, and to give their kingdom to the beast, until the words of God are fulfilled” (Rev. 17:17). They give their power and authority to the beast so that he can become “all in all,” being the sole focus both in political and religious realms. Because the *Beast*^[5.2.9] accepted the offer from Satan which Jesus refused (Luke 4:6), he is given ultimate authority above all else on earth—even claiming to be God (2Th. 2:4). For this to occur requires that all other authorities submit to his rule. Although all ten give their power and authority to the beast, for some unspecified reason the Beast eventually destroys *three of the ten horns*^[4.3.2.24] (Dan. 7:20).

3.17.14 - Revelation 17:14

these will make war

Πολεμῆσουσιν [*Polemēsousin*], which indicates a protracted engagement rather than a single battle. The same word is translated, somewhat misleadingly, as “battle” in Revelation 16:14. See commentary on *Revelation 16:14*^[3.16.14].

with the Lamb

This is not speaking of the ages-long opposition between the spiritual forces of darkness and the spiritual forces of the Lamb (although such ongoing opposition is a fact of Scripture), but speaks of the final *physical* conflict of the armies of the world as they attempt to thwart the installation of Messiah upon the throne of David in His Millennial Reign. The *Beast*^[5.2.9], his kings, and kings from all around the world (Rev. 16:14) will eventually gather to war against God at the *Campaign of Armageddon*^[4.5]. See commentary on *Revelation 16:16*^[3.16.16]. See commentary on *Revelation 19:20*^[3.19.20]. The Lamb which they fight with is Jesus Christ, the “Lamb as though it had been slain” which took the scroll from the right hand of God before initiating the first seven judgments by opening the seven seals (Rev. 5:6-7). They war against the Lamb in a doomed attempt to forestall His taking back that which is rightfully His, as documented by the scroll. See commentary on *Revelation 5:1*^[3.5.1].

In the previous chapter, the war was described with reference to God the Father: “The battle of that great day of God Almighty.” Here, we are told they will make war with *the Lamb*. Later, the same conflict will be described as a gathering to “make war against Him who sat on the horse and against His army” (Rev. 19:19). The text provides another indication of the deity of Christ and the essential identity of the Lamb and the Father.

the Lamb will overcome them

He shall overcome is νικήσει [*nikēsei*]: the Lamb is The Overcomer. From the perspective of earth, the Beast is the overcomer (Rev. 6:2). But he only overcomes while he is temporarily given authority to do so (Rev. 13:7). Ultimately, it is the Lamb Who is the true overcomer (John 16:33; 1Jn. 4:4; Rev. 3:21). See *Who is the Overcomer?*^[4.15.1.3]

In a vision of Daniel which many believe is not entirely fulfilled in the events of Antiochus Epiphanes IV, Daniel sees a fierce king who “shall even rise against the Prince of princes; but he shall be broken without *human* means” (Dan. 8:25). If the *Prince of princes* refers to the Lamb, then Daniel’s vision prophesied this same conflict.⁴⁰

The kings participate in the ultimate fulfillment of Psalm 2: “The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the LORD and against His Anointed [Messiah = Christ], saying, ‘Let us break Their bonds in pieces and cast away Their cords from us.’” (Ps. 2:2-3).

At that time, the long wait of the Son at the right hand of the Father will come to an end:

The LORD said to my Lord, “Sit at My right hand, till I make Your enemies Your footstool.” The LORD shall send the rod of Your strength out of Zion. Rule in the midst of Your enemies! Your people *shall be* volunteers in the day of Your power; in the beauties of holiness, from the womb of the morning, You have the dew of Your youth. The LORD has sworn and will not relent, “You *are* a priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek.” The Lord *is* at Your right hand; **He shall execute kings in the day of His wrath.** He shall judge among the nations, He shall fill *the places* with dead bodies, **He shall execute the heads of many countries.** He shall drink of the brook by the wayside; therefore He shall lift up the head. (Ps. 110:1-7) [emphasis added]

Isaiah spoke of this time:

Behold, the LORD makes the earth empty and makes it waste . . . The earth mourns *and* fades away . . . Therefore the inhabitants of the earth are burned and few men *are* left. . . . And the foundations of the earth are shaken. . . . The earth shall reel to and fro like a drunkard, and shall totter like a hut; . . . It shall come to pass in that day *that* the LORD will punish on high the host of exalted ones, and on the earth the kings of the earth. They will be gathered together, *as* prisoners are gathered in the pit, and will be shut up in the prison; after many days they will be punished. (Isa. 24:1-23)

The context is *The Day of the Lord*^[2.13.3] where conditions are so extreme that relatively few are left alive. The kings who rebelled (Psalm 2) will be gathered together and shut up in the prison and then punished—possibly a reference to their entry into *Hades* after being killed by the Lamb (Rev. 19:21) followed by their ultimate punishment upon being subsequently cast into the Lake of Fire (Rev. 20:15).

for He is Lord of lords and King of kings

He will overcome them *because* He is Lord over all other lords. He is “the ruler over the kings of the earth” (Rev. 1:5), even though at present most kings do not recognize His rule. At His Second Coming, His legal status as King of kings and the factual reality of earthly rule will be united for His kingdom will then be on earth where He physically rules over lords.

The Lamb is given a title which is uniquely that of the Father in the *OT*^[5.2.51]. “For the LORD your God *is* God of gods and Lord of lords, the great God, mighty and awesome, who shows no partiality nor takes a bribe” (Deu. 10:7). Ascribing the title *Lord of lords* to the Lamb is no small matter . . . *unless* He is God! And indeed He is. Paul describes Jesus in similar divine terms: “the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings and Lord of lords, who alone has immortality, dwelling in unapproachable light, whom no man has seen or can see” (1Ti. 6:15-16). See commentary on *Revelation 1:18*^[3.1.18].

those who are with Him

Although all the saints are with Christ in the sense of their spiritual unity and membership in His Kingdom, the reference here is primarily to those who are with Him *at the time of His Second Coming*. In the same way that the angels accompanied the Father in His descent upon Mount Sinai (Deu. 33:2), so too shall Jesus bring “the armies in heaven” with Him (Rev. 19:14, 19):

Now Enoch, the seventh from Adam, prophesied about these men [the dreamers who reject authority] also, saying, “Behold, the Lord comes **with ten thousands of His saints**, to execute judgment on all.” (Jude. 1:14-15a) [emphasis added]

Proclaim this among the nations: “Prepare for war! Wake up the mighty men, let all the men of war draw near, let them come up. Beat your plowshares into swords and your pruning hooks into spears; let the weak say, ‘I *am* strong.’” Assemble and come, all you nations, and gather together all around. **Cause Your mighty ones to go down there, O LORD.** Let the nations be wakened, and come up to the Valley of Jehoshaphat; for there I will sit to judge all the surrounding nations. Put in the sickle, for the harvest is ripe. Come, go down; for the winepress is full, the vats overflow—For their wickedness *is* great. Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision! For the day of the LORD *is* near in the valley of decision. (Joel 3:9-14) [emphasis added]

And in that day His feet will stand on the Mount of Olives, which faces Jerusalem on the east. And the Mount of Olives shall be split in two, from east to west, *making* a very large valley; half of the mountain shall move toward the north and half of it toward the south. Then you shall flee *through* My mountain valley, for the mountain valley shall reach to Azal. Yes, you shall flee as you fled from the earthquake in

the days of Uzziah king of Judah. Thus the LORD my God will come, **And all the saints with You.** (Zec. 14:4-5) [emphasis added]

The saints (ἅγιοις [*hagiais*]) which attend Jesus' return are "holy ones." They are set apart for the service of God. This term is used of both the faithful (e.g., Ps. 16:3; 34:9 ; Acts 9:13) and angels (e.g., Dan. 8:13). We know from other passages that angels will come with Him:

For the Son of Man will come in the glory of His Father **with His angels**, and then He will reward each according to His works. (Mtt. 16:27) [emphasis added]

When the Son of Man comes in His glory, and **all the holy angels with Him**, then He will sit on the throne of His glory. (Mtt. 25:31) [emphasis added]

Since it is a righteous thing with God to repay with tribulation those who trouble you, and to give you who are troubled rest with us when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven **with His mighty angels**, in flaming fire taking vengeance on those who do not know God, and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. (2Th. 1:6-8) [emphasis added]

are called, chosen, and faithful

Called is κλητοὶ [*klētoi*], *chosen* is ἐκλεκτοὶ [*eklektōi*]. The same terms are used when Jesus says, "Many are called (κλητοὶ [*klētoi*], but few are chosen (ἐκλεκτοὶ [*eklektōi*])" (Mtt. 20:16; 22:14). Peter uses the same terms when writing to predominantly Jewish believers. "But you **are a chosen** generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who **called** you out of darkness into His marvelous light" [emphasis added] (1Pe. 2:9 cf. 1Pe. 1:1).

The angels which did not follow Satan in his rebellion (Rev. 12:4) are also said to be "chosen": "The elect angels" is τῶν ἐκλεκτῶν ἀγγέλων [*tōn eklektōn angelōn*]. But being *called* speaks of a time prior to having come to the faith—something the elect angels do not experience for they have never been lost, but remained continually faithful. Calling is unique to those saints who at one time were not saints, that is, *human beings* rather than angels (Rom. 1:6; Rom. 8:28-30; 2Ti. 2:9).⁴¹ "These epithets called, chosen, and faithful, can only strictly apply to saints [not angels]."⁴² Those who are both *called* and *chosen* are "His own elect who cry out day and night to Him" (Luke 18:7). They did not choose Him, but He chose them (John 15:16). This speaks of human beings, not just angels, who will return with Christ at His Second Coming. They do not remain in heaven, but return to participate in the *Millennial Kingdom*^[5.2.39] which follows (Rev. 20:4-6). They are said to be *faithful* because they are human beings, born among those who were fallen, but who then exercised faith to salvation.

At the time of Christ's Second Coming, there are three categories of believers in heaven:

1. **Pre-Church Saints** - Believers who died prior to the formation of the Church on the Day of Pentecost. Since the Spirit did not begin baptizing believers into the body of Christ until then (John 7:38-39; Acts 2; 1Cor. 12:13), they were never part of the body of Christ. At death, their souls and spirits entered paradise in Abraham's bosom (Luke 16:22) until they ascended when paradise relocated to heaven following the crucifixion (Luke 23:43).
2. **Church Saints** - Believers who lived after the giving of the Spirit on the Day of Pentecost (John 7:38-39; Acts 2) and were baptized into the body of Christ by the Holy Spirit (1Cor. 12:13). The spirit and soul of those who died prior to the *Rapture*^[4.14] ascended to heaven at death (2Cor. 5:6; Php. 1:23) Being *in Christ*, they were physically resurrected (or translated if alive) at the *Rapture*^[4.14] of the Church prior to the Tribulation (John 14:1-3; 1Th. 4:13-18).
3. **Post-Church Saints** - Believers who come to faith after the *Rapture*^[4.14] of the Church—the removal of the body of Christ. They died a natural death or were martyred (Rev. 2:10, 13; 12:11; 15:2) and their spirit and soul ascended to heaven at death (2Cor. 5:6; Php. 1:23; Rev. 7:14).

Only one of these three categories of saints is resurrected prior to the Second Coming: the Church Saints—those who were baptized by the Holy Spirit into the Church: the body of Christ in His absence. When Christ returns at the Second Coming, His spiritual body (the Church) returns with Him. During the Second Coming, Christ's army will include both angels (Joel 3:11; Mtt. 25:31) and Church saints (Col. 3:4).

Saints who have not yet been resurrected seem unlikely to participate in the Second Coming (Rev. 19:14). They receive their resurrected bodies after the Second Coming, prior to the Millennial Kingdom (Dan. 12:2; Rev. 20:4). See commentary on *Revelation 20:4*^[3.20.4].

3.17.15 - Revelation 17:15

The waters which you saw, where the harlot sits

Having described the mystery of the beast with the seven heads and ten horns, the angel now tells John the mystery of the woman (Rev. 17:7). Earlier, the angel identified the woman as “the great harlot who sits on many waters” (Rev. 17:1). See commentary on *Revelation 17:1*^[3.17.1]. See *The Great Harlot*^[4.1.4]. These same waters form the sea out of which the first *Beast*^[5.2.9] arose (Rev. 13:1). See commentary on *Revelation 13:1*^[3.13.1].

are peoples, multitudes, nations, and tongues

The common fourfold designation within the book of Revelation denoting a worldwide population (Rev. 7:9). In some instances, *tribes* or *kings* appears for *multitudes* (Rev. 5:9; 10:11; 11:9; 14:6). See *Four: the Entire World, the Earth*^[2.7.5.3.3]. These are the peoples, nations, tongues, and kings about which John was told he must prophesy (Rev. 10:11). He is now fulfilling that assignment.

Although the woman is said to be a “city” (Rev. 17:18), her influence—and possibly her support—is global in scope. Her influence was scattered worldwide with the introduction of languages in the judgment of Babel when all mankind dispersed from a central location having already imbibed of her corrupting wine (Gen. 11:9). We believe she spans both geography *and history*, for the Beast with *seven heads*^[4.3.2.4] is empowered by the dragon (Rev. 13:1 cf. Rev. 12:3) who is Satan and assumed dominion over the world as early as the Fall of Adam and Eve (Mtt. 4:8; Luke 4:6; John 12:31; 14:30; 2Cor. 4:4; 1Jn. 5:19). If the seven heads represent seven world kingdoms of special significance in the plan of God, then the woman’s global influence extends from the earliest of those empires through the time of the Second Coming of Christ and the establishment of the *Millennial Kingdom*^[5.2.39]. See #4 - *Seven Heads/Kings*^[4.3.2.4]. See *Babylon of Old*^[4.1.1].

3.17.16 - Revelation 17:16

the ten horns which you saw on the beast

The *TR*^[5.2.79] stands alone in having the ten horns *on* the beast. Both *MT*^[5.2.45] and *NU*^[5.2.49] texts say “the ten horns which you saw **and** (καὶ [*kai*]) the beast.” [emphasis added]

hate the harlot

Many expositors seem to downplay or overlook the angel’s identification of *The Great Harlot*^[4.1.4] with the city of Babylon (Rev. 17:18) and interpret her as denoting a separate ecclesiastical system. Thus, they see *two* separate destructions set forth in chapters 17 and 18. This destruction they relate to the *Harlot*^[5.2.25], whereas the destruction in the next chapter they relate to the literal city: “These graphic words clearly portray the downfall of the apostate world church of the future.”⁴³ We disagree with interpretations which divide the unity of the larger passage at the chapter boundary. The Harlot is said to be a city (Rev. 17:18) and the city is said to be the Harlot (Rev. 18:21-19:2). She is the object of destruction both here and in the next chapter. See *Mystery Babylon*^[4.1.4.2].

Because the city Babylon involves both spiritual and commercial aspects (both aspects are seen in Revelation 17 and Revelation 18), there is no reason to separate the Harlot from the city as an independent ecclesiastical system of the end. The motivation of the *Beast*^[5.2.9] to destroy the city could simply be to throw off her control (or the need to support her) which has become burdensome. Or, it could involve his belief that her idolatrous system ultimately provides an unwanted alternative to his own global worship (2Th. 2:4; Rev. 13:15). However, *it is important to recognize that Scripture does not give the specific reason why the kings hate her and destroy her*. It could just as easily be commercial, political, or religious. Scripture doesn’t say. In any event, she experiences what Jeremiah described long before: regardless of her ornaments and attraction, her lovers eventually despise her and seek her life (Jer. 4:30).

Fruchtenbaum believes the Beast is the king of Babylon who is away at war and reacts with alarm to the news of her destruction (Jer. 50:43; 51:31-32).⁴⁴ If the king of Babylon is the Beast and he reacts with alarm to the destruction of his capital, how could it be said that the Beast (along with the ten kings) hates the city and participates in its destruction? There are several possible solutions to this puzzle:⁴⁵

1. The TR text is correct and the Beast is not to be included among those who hate the Harlot and come against her. Perhaps the ten kings, although allied with the Beast for a season, eventually betray him and attack the seat of his throne during an opportune moment when he is distracted elsewhere.⁴⁶
2. The Beast may not be the king of Babylon at the time of its destruction. “He shall plant the tents of his palace between the seas and the glorious holy mountain” (Dan. 11:45a). Perhaps he relocates his seat of authority to the Holy Land to be near his image in the *Temple*^[5.2.73] (Mtt. 24:15; 2Th. 2:4; Rev. 13:14-15) after which he and his kings turn against Babylon.
3. The Harlot is a separate entity from the city of Babylon. The Harlot is destroyed by the Beast and his kings, but the city is destroyed by God directly. Although this view is held by many, it minimizes or overlooks passages which identify the Harlot as the city (e.g., Rev. 17:18).⁴⁷

See *One or Two Babylons?*^[4.1.4.2.2]

We believe a separate ecclesiastical system is neither called for nor explicitly warranted from a simple reading of both Revelation 17 and 18 which relates a single city with both commercial and spiritual aspects opposed to God. See *An End-Time Religious System?*^[4.1.4.2.3]

make her ... eat her ... burn her

The repetition of the pronoun “her” provides emphasis. Her destruction is determined, violent, and comprehensive.

make her desolate

Desolate is ἡρημωμένην [*ērēmōmenēn*], used “of a kingdom be brought to ruin, become desolate, be desolated (Mtt. 12:25).”⁴⁸ At its destruction, Babylon comes “to nothing (ἡρημώθη [*ērēmōthē*])” (Rev. 18:17), for “in one hour she is made desolate ἡρημώθη [*ērēmōthē*])” (Rev. 18:19).

and naked

Originally clothed in expensive finery (Rev. 17:4), she will be stripped of her commercial splendor: “Alas, alas, that great city that was clothed in fine linen, purple, and scarlet, and adorned with gold and precious stones and pearls! For in one hour such great riches came to nothing.” (Rev. 18:16-17a). In her destruction and the stripping of her riches, onlookers will recognize her nakedness (cf. Eze. 16:37-39; 23:29).

eat her flesh

They shall eat is φάγονται [*phagontai*]: “Figuratively . . . consume, destroy as if by rust or fire (Heb. 10:27).”⁴⁹ Similar phrases describe the intended harm of an enemy (Ps. 27:1-3; Jer. 51:35; Mic. 3:1-3) or the conquest of a kingdom (Dan. 7:5). The destruction of Babylon’s flesh will fulfill the desire of the inhabitants of Zion: “‘Let the violence *done* to me and my flesh *be* upon Babylon,’ the inhabitant of Zion will say” (Jer. 51:35).

burn her with fire

They shall burn her is κατακαύσουσιν [*katakousousin*], to “destroy by fire, burn (up), consume by fire,”⁵⁰ used of “being burned at the stake as a martyr.”⁵¹ Used to describe the burning of the third of the earth with its trees and grass (Rev. 8:7). This provides further evidence of the identity of the woman as Babylon (Rev. 17:18), for what is said of the Harlot is said of Babylon. Babylon is to be “utterly burned with fire” (Rev. 18:8). The “smoke of her burning” is visible from a great distance (Rev. 18:17-18).

Thus says the Lord of hosts: “The broad walls of Babylon shall be utterly broken, and her high gates shall be burned with fire; the people will labor in vain, and the nations, because of the fire; and they

shall be weary.” (Jer. 51:58)

Although Babylon fell to Persia in 539 B.C., it was never destroyed as predicted by Scripture. See *The Destruction of Babylon*^[4.1.2].

3.17.17 - Revelation 17:17

For God has put it into their hearts to fulfill His purpose

God’s sovereign control of the affairs of history is a constant theme behind the events of the book of Revelation. *Everything* that transpires occurs by His sovereign permission. From the riding forth of the first horsemen who was *given* a crown, to rising of the *Beast*^[5.2.9] from the sea who is *given* authority to continue forty-two months (Rev. 13:5) and who was previously restrained (2Th. 2:6-8), God is ultimately in full control. God turns the hearts of kings according to His purposes—whether they know Him or not (Deu. 2:30; Ezra 7:27; Ps. 105:25; Pr. 21:1; Isa. 10:5-7; 14:27; 66:4; Acts 4:28). God determined that Pharaoh would not heed Moses so that Egypt might be judged (Ex. 7:4). He named and brought forth Cyrus to rebuild Jerusalem, although Cyrus did not know Him (Isa. 44:26-45:4; 46:11). It was God who gave Nebuchadnezzar his kingdom and power, although for much of his reign, Nebuchadnezzar did not know God (Dan. 2:37).

Remember the former things of old, for *I am* God, and *there is* no other; *I am* God, and *there is* none like Me, declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times *things* that are not *yet* done, saying, ‘My counsel shall stand, and I will do all My pleasure,’ Calling a bird of prey from the east, the man who executes My counsel, from a far country. Indeed I have spoken *it*; I will also bring it to pass. I have purposed *it*; I will also do it. (Isa. 46:9-11)

The tension between divine sovereignty and human responsibility runs throughout Scripture and is impossible to escape. Emphasizing either one at the expense of the other results in a distortion of Scripture. Although it was God’s “determined purpose and foreknowledge” to deliver Jesus to the cross, those who crucified Him are fully responsible for their “lawless hands” (Acts 2:23-24 cf. Rom. 9:19-22; Jas. 1:13-17). “But behold, the hand of My betrayer is with Me on the table. And truly the Son of Man goes as it has been determined, but woe to that man by whom He is betrayed!” (Luke 22:21-22) See commentary on *Revelation 6:2*^[3.6.2]. See commentary on *Revelation 16:14*^[3.16.14].

until the words of God are fulfilled

Fulfilled is τελεσθήσονται [*telesthēsontai*], *they shall be completed*. The word includes more than just the idea of *fulfillment*, but also bringing to an end, finishing, completing.⁵²

For as the rain comes down, and the snow from heaven, and do not return there, but water the earth, and make it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower and bread to the eater, so shall My word be that goes forth from My mouth; it shall not return to Me void, but it shall accomplish what I please, and it shall prosper *in the thing* for which I sent it. (Isa. 55:10-11)

His word is already settled in heaven (Ps. 119:89), but has yet to work out on the earth below. Scripture cannot be broken (John 10:35) because God stands ever ready to perform His word (Jer. 1:12).

The words of God in relation to the Beast, the ten horns, and the *Harlot*^[5.2.25], will be fulfilled when the “mystery of God would be finished” in the judgments associated with the sounding of the seventh trumpet (Rev. 10:7). When the seven bowls of God’s wrath are completed, “It is done!” (Rev. 16:17). The next several chapters provide additional detail concerning the fulfillment of God’s words which eventually result in the return of the King and the establishment of the *Millennial Kingdom*^[4.11] (Rev. 20:4).

3.17.18 - Revelation 17:18

that great city

Although this phrase is also used of Jerusalem (Rev. 11:8) and of the heavenly Jerusalem (Rev. 21:10), here it is to be identified with Babylon (Rev. 14:8; 17:18; 18:10, 16, 18, 21). This is evident from numerous close parallels between what is said of the *Harlot*^[5.2.25] in this chapter and the city Babylon in the next chapter. The primary piece of evidence that “the great city,” in this instance, is to be taken

to describe Babylon is the earlier name which was seen written upon the Harlot and clearly associates her with *Babylon* (Rev. 17:5).

Some argue for identifying the phrase “that great city” here with Jerusalem:

One of the stronger arguments used by Jerusalem proponents involves the identification of the phrase “the great city” as used in Revelation 17:18. Jerusalem advocates contend that the only way to properly identify this city is to observe how the phrase “the great city” appears earlier in Revelation. There are only two references to “the great city” prior to Revelation 17:18. These references include Revelation 11:8 and Revelation 16:19. Jerusalem advocates believe that both are unmistakable references to Jerusalem. Thus, Revelation 17:18 must refer to Jerusalem as well.⁵³

But such an identification ignores extensive and close ties between the woman and the city of Babylon. When one considers that chapter divisions are not part of the original *inspired*^[5.2.33] text and takes chapters 17 and 18 as one unified passage, the similarities between the woman and the city are compelling. Add to this the fact that Jerusalem is destined to be restored (Isa. 62) and serve as the capital of the *Millennial Kingdom*^[5.2.39], whereas Babylon is never to be inhabited again, and the idea that the phrase “that great city” describes Jerusalem is untenable. See *Babylon is Jerusalem?*^[4.1.3.4].

The Great Harlot is identified as the “great city” Babylon much as the Lamb’s wife is identified as the “holy Jerusalem”:

The Chaste Woman of the Apocalypse is also indissolubly united to a city. In Rev. 21:9 we read that one of the seven angels said to John, ‘Come hither, I will show thee the bride, the Lamb’s Wife.’ And immediately following we read, ‘And he carried me away in the spirit to a great and high mountain, and showed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God.’⁵⁴

reigns over the kings

Βασιλείαν ἐπὶ Βασιλέων [*Basileian epi Basileōn*]. She exercises royal power or rule over the kings. Again, we see the impossibility of assigning Jerusalem as the Harlot. How can Jerusalem, of all cities the most trampled and occupied, with the least political influence and material resources, be said to have historically reigned over the kings of the earth? Others suggest Rome as a candidate for “the great city.” Although we recognize the unmatched influence over kings of the earth that Rome has had in more recent history, she provides neither the necessary historic scope nor proper fulfillment for the many *OT*^[5.2.51] passages which speak literally to Babylon. As old as we may consider Rome to be, she is a relative upstart on the stage of Biblical history which spans back to the tower of Babel (Gen. 10, 11). Rome is merely one of Babylon’s most prominent daughters. See *Babylon is Rome?*^[4.1.3.3].

Some may object that it is difficult to see how literal Babylon could be considered as reigning over the kings of the earth when she is so insignificant in our time. Yet, as we have seen, the woman is identified with a specific historical city of prominence in the past, and we believe will be of prominence again in the future. Between her initial rebellion as Babel and her final flowering of godless humanism as the rebuilt Babylon, the site of her former splendour lies largely forgotten. But her influence, as the mother of harlotry and abomination, is as active today upon the *peoples, multitudes, nations, and tongues* as ever. Her humanism, idolatry, and fornication are alive and well, having been disseminated among the kingdoms of the earth. We believe a time is coming when “Wickedness!” will be carried back to the place of its original manifestation after the flood “to build a house for it in the land of Shinar; when it is ready, *the basket* will be set there on its base” (Zec. 5:11). See *Back to Shinar*^[4.1.3.5.3].

3.17.18.1 - Babylon and the New Jerusalem

Two of the women who play key roles in the Book of Revelation are *cities*: Babylon and the New Jerusalem. This is no accident as one is the *city of man* whereas the other is the *city of God*.

City of Man vs. City of God

Babylon	New Jerusalem
Built by Man (Gen. 10:10; 11:4; Rev. 17:18; 18:23).	Built by God (Ps. 46:4; Ps. 87:3; Isa. 60:14; Gal. 4:26; Heb. 11:10; 12:22; 13:14; Rev. 3:12; 21:2, 10).
Shown by Angel with Bowl (Rev. 17:1).	Shown by Angel with Bowl (Rev. 21:9).
Seen from wilderness (Rev. 17:3).	Seen from high mountain (Rev. 21:10).
Great City (Rev. 17:1).	Great City (Rev. 21:10) ⁵⁵ .
Fornicator (Rev. 17:2).	Holy (Rev. 21:2, 10).
A harlot (Rev. 17:1).	A bride, wife (Rev. 21:2, 9).
Adorned with precious stones (Rev. 17:4).	Adorned with precious stones (Rev. 21:18-20).
Adorned with pearls (Rev. 17:4).	Adorned with pearls (Rev. 21:21).
Clothed with purple and scarlet (Rev. 17:4; 18:16).	Clothed with light (Rev. 21:11, 18, 23-24).
Believer's blood in her (Rev. 17:6; 18:24; 19:2).	Believers in her (Rev. 3:12; 14:2; 21:24, 27).
Demons in her (Rev. 18:2).	Saints in her (Rev. 3:12; 14:2; 21:24, 27).
Foundation has names of blasphemy (Rev. 17:3).	Foundation has names of apostles (Rev. 21:14).
Contains abominations (Rev. 17:4; 18:2).	Contains no abomination (Rev. 21:27).
King's fornicate with (Rev. 17:2; 18:3).	King's honor (Rev. 18:3).
Destroyed (Rev. 14:8; 16:19; 17:16; 18:17, 19).	Eternal (Heb. 13:14; Rev. 22:5).

Notes

- ¹ Merrill F. Unger, *Unger's Commentary on the Old Testament* (Chattanooga, TN: AMG Publishers, 2002), Jer. 51:13.
- ² *Britannica CD 99 Multimedia Edition*, s.v. "Babylon."
- ³ Frederick William Danker, and Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 693.
- ⁴ Arnold G. Fruchtenbaum, *The Footsteps of Messiah*, rev ed. (Tustin, CA: Ariel Ministries, 2003), 236-237.
- ⁵ Timothy Friberg, Barbara Friberg, and Neva F. Miller, *Analytical Lexicon of the Greek New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2000), 233.
- ⁶ Arthur Walkington Pink, *The Antichrist* (Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, 1999, 1923), s.v. "Antichrist and Babylon."
- ⁷ John F. Walvoord, *The Revelation of Jesus Christ* (Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 1966), Rev. 17:3-4.
- ⁸ Albrecht Durer (1471 - 1528). Image courtesy of the *Connecticut College* (<http://www.conncoll.edu/visual/Durer-prints/index.html>) *Wetmore Print Collection* (<http://www.conncoll.edu/visual/wetmore.html>).
- ⁹ Friberg, *Analytical Lexicon of the Greek New Testament*, 94.
- ¹⁰ Andy Woods, *What is the Identity of Babylon In Revelation 17-18?*.
- ¹¹ Danker, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 137.
- ¹² Friberg, *Analytical Lexicon of the Greek New Testament*, 89.

- 13 Although some point to mention of Melchizedek as king of *Salem*.
- 14 Danker, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 29.
- 15 Friberg, *Analytical Lexicon of the Greek New Testament*, 39.
- 16 Pink, *The Antichrist*, s.v. “Antichrist and Babylon.”
- 17 E. W. Bullinger, *Commentary On Revelation* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 1984, 1935), Rev. 17:5.
- 18 Henry Morris, *The Revelation Record* (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 1983), Rev. 17:5.
- 19 Regarding Mtt. 23:24, the Pharisees would force themselves to vomit if they accidentally swallowed a gnat which was seen as a violation of the prohibition against eating blood.
- 20 Danker, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 137.
- 21 Friberg, *Analytical Lexicon of the Greek New Testament*, 89.
- 22 Bullinger, *Commentary On Revelation*, Rev. 17:12.
- 23 Danker, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 103.
- 24 Woods, *What is the Identity of Babylon In Revelation 17-18?*.
- 25 Woods, *What is the Identity of Babylon In Revelation 17-18?*.
- 26 Woods, *What is the Identity of Babylon In Revelation 17-18?*.
- 27 The NU^[5.2.49] text associates this phrase with the end of the previous verse.
- 28 Pink, *The Antichrist*, s.v. “Antichrist and Babylon.”
- 29 Bullinger, *Commentary On Revelation*, Rev. 17:10.
- 30 Alan F. Johnson, *Revelation: The Expositor's Bible Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1966), Rev. 17:10.
- 31 Gregory K. Beale, *The Book of Revelation: A Commentary on the Greek Text* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1999), 21-24.
- 32 Jerome Smith, *The New Treasury of Scripture Knowledge* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1992), Rev. 17:10.
- 33 Johnson, *Revelation: The Expositor's Bible Commentary*, Rev. 17:10.
- 34 Robert L. Thomas, “*Theonomy and the Dating of Revelation*,” in Richard L. Mayhue, ed., *The Master's Seminary Journal*, vol. 5 (Sun Valley, CA: The Master's Seminary, 1994), 194-195.
- 35 Fruchtenbaum sees mention of his eighth as pertaining to his relationship among the *horns*: “In what way is he an eighth? . . . The ten horns represent the ten kingdoms that come out of the One World Government [Dan. 7:23]. . . . These ten kings are contemporary and rule together. But as was seen from Daniel seven, when the *Antichrist*^[5.2.3] begins to take control, he uproots three of the ten horns. He kills three of the ten kings, leaving seven for the remainder of the Tribulation period. The Antichrist is contemporary with these seven, making him an *eighth*.”—Fruchtenbaum, *The Footsteps of Messiah*, 43. While he is indeed an eighth horn, the context of Revelation 17:11 is discussing *heads* which are *mountains* which are *kings*. The ten horns do not yet enter the context until the next verse.
- 36 Donald Grey Barnhouse, *Revelation* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1971), 330.
- 37 Bullinger, *Commentary On Revelation*, Rev. 17:8.
- 38 Fruchtenbaum, *The Footsteps of Messiah*, 43.
- 39 Bullinger, *Commentary On Revelation*, Rev. 17:11.
- 40 “It may be concluded that this difficult passage apparently goes beyond that which is historically fulfilled in Antiochus Epiphanes to foreshadow a future personage often identified as the world ruler of the end time. . . . He indeed will be ‘broken without hand’ at the time of the second advent of Jesus Christ.”—John F. Walvoord, *Daniel: The Key to Prophetic Revelation* (Chicago, IL: Moody Bible Institute, 1971), Dan. 8:26.
- 41 Concerning the choosing or election of believers: Ps. 65:4; Eze. 3:17; Mtt. 24:24, 31; Mark 13:20; Luke 18:7; John 1:13; 6:37, 44, 65; 13:18; 15:16, 19; 17:2-11, 24; Acts 13:48; Rom. 1:7; 8:28-31, 33; Rom. 9:15-16, 23;

10:20; 11:5, 7; 1Cor. 1:2, 21, 26, 30; Eph. 1:4; 4:1; 1Th. 1:4; 2Th. 2:13; 1Ti. 6:12; 2Ti. 1:9; 2Ti. 2:10; Tit. 1:1; Heb. 9:15; 1Pe. 1:2; 2:9; 5:13; 2Pe. 1:3; Jude 1:1; Rev. 17:14.

- 42 Walter Scott, *Exposition of The Revelation* (London, England: Pickering & Inglis, n.d.), Rev. 17:14.
- 43 Walvoord, *The Revelation of Jesus Christ*, Rev. 17:16.
- 44 Fruchtenbaum, *The Footsteps of Messiah*, 327.
- 45 Bullinger suggests an additional solution: the city is burned by the ten kings in a preliminary judgment which is followed later by the final judgment by God. [Bullinger, *Commentary On Revelation*, Rev. 18:3]
- 46 Two weaknesses of this view are: (1) The TR text stands alone in having the ten horns *on* (instead of *and*) the beast in Revelation 17:16; (2) The ten kings are found in alliance with the Beast against the Lamb at the Second Coming of Christ (Rev. 17:14). The second weakness could possibly be explained as the unified response of all the kings of the earth, regardless of political intrigue, when faced with their ultimate enemy: Christ.
- 47 “The distinction between the two chapters is that between two systems or networks that have the same geographical headquarters. In chapter 17 it is a religious system that operates independently of and in opposition to the true God, but in chapter 18 it is an economic system that does the same. . . . The two chapters tell how two aspects of the city’s function will come to a dramatic end and how this will affect other world entities at the time. Whether they fall simultaneously or consecutively is yet to be determined, but they both will mark the internal deterioration of the beast’s empire prior to the defeat of his political structure by the returning warrior-king (Rev. 19:11-21).”—Robert L. Thomas, *Revelation 8-22* (Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 1995), Rev. 18:1.
- 48 Friberg, *Analytical Lexicon of the Greek New Testament*, 172.
- 49 Friberg, *Analytical Lexicon of the Greek New Testament*, 174.
- 50 Friberg, *Analytical Lexicon of the Greek New Testament*, 218.
- 51 Danker, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 411.
- 52 *Great* is in the TR^[5.2.79], but not the NU^[5.2.49] or MT^[5.2.45] text.
- 52 Danker, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 810.
- 53 Woods, *What is the Identity of Babylon In Revelation 17-18?*.
- 54 Pink, *The Antichrist*, s.v. “Antichrist and Babylon.”

3.18 - Revelation 18

3.18.1 - Revelation 18:1

In the previous chapter, John was shown *The Great Harlot*^[4.1.4] who sits on many waters (Rev. 17:1). She was identified as *Babylon the Great* (Rev. 17:5) and *that great city which reigns over the kings of the earth* (Rev. 17:18). The angel describes her relationship to the *Beast*^[5.2.9] with *seven heads*^[4.3.2.4] and *ten horns*^[4.3.2.22] upon which she rides. John is told that the Beast and the horns will hate her and be used of God to destroy her (Rev. 17:16).

Having identified her relationship with the Beast and declared her impending demise, now John is shown her dramatic overthrow and complete destruction. The suddenness and completeness of her destruction is illustrated by the threefold lamentation of those who profited from her commercial luxury: kings of the earth (Rev. 18:9-10), merchants of the earth (Rev. 18:11-17), and seafarers (Rev. 18:17-19). In contrast to their wailing over the loss of the city, heaven rejoices (Rev. 18:20).

The *Kings* of the earth make this lament. The *Merchants* make it (Rev. 18:16) : and the *Mariners* make it (Rev. 18:19). In the first, the verbs introducing it are in the *Future* tense (Rev. 18:9): in the second, in the *Present* (Rev. 18:11), and in the third, the *Past* tense (Rev. 18:17). It is as though a moving scene is passing before the eyes, while the interpreting angel explains it.¹

The destruction of Babylon described in this chapter bears much in common with the predicted destruction of Tyre in Ezekiel's day (Eze. 26-28). Both cities are called harlots and known for their commercial splendor, shipping, and ungodly influence upon the surrounding nations. At their destruction, merchants who benefited from commercial contact with the city are grieved. The destruction of Tyre which Ezekiel predicted was initiated by Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon (the city destroyed in this chapter) and completed by Alexander the Great in 332 B.C.² An important commonality between the two cities is the empowerment of their respective kings by Satan (Isa. 14:4, 12; Eze. 28:2, 13-14; Rev. 13:2).

It is important to grasp the essential unity between Revelation 17 and 18. Many interpreters are quick to identify the *Harlot*^[5.2.25] as a separate entity from the city while overlooking the many indications that a single Babylon is in view:

The last verse of chapter 17 closed it by giving the interpretation of the woman as being "that great city." Though the woman is the first thing mentioned in that chapter, yet her interpretation is left till the end, so that the mention of the city may lead on to the account of its destruction, which is the subject of chapter 18.³

Chapter 18 contains the description of the previously announced "judgment" of the prostitute (Rev. 17:1). It is important not to separate this chapter from the portrayal of the prostitute in chapter 17, for there is no warrant for making the prostitute in chapter 17 different from the city in chapter 18 (cf. Rev. 17:18).⁴

See *One or Two Babylons?*^[4.1.4.2.2]

After these things

Μετα ταῦτα [*Meta tauta*], the frequently-encountered phrase which separates sections of John's revelation. In a similar way that John was shown the bowls of wrath (Rev. 15) prior to their pouring forth (Rev. 16), he was shown the impending destruction of the Harlot Babylon in the previous chapter (Rev. 17) prior to her actual destruction here (Rev. 18).

another angel coming down from heaven

A different angel than the one who showed John the great harlot who is about to be judged (Rev. 17:1). He comes on a mission from heaven, much like the mighty angel who came down from heaven with the little book and who stood on the sea and on the land to declare God's intention to retake dominion of the earth (Rev. 10:1). "Interpreters seem as anxious to make this, and other of the angels, to be the Lord Jesus, as they are to make all else to be the church. There is no occasion to go beyond the simple understanding of the words. This is no ordinary angel; for he was invested with great power and glory."⁵ See commentary on *Revelation 10:1*^[3.10.1].

the earth was illuminated with his glory

The glory of the mighty angel was so great that it shone down upon the earth. His brightness is an indication of his authority and high rank (Luke 2:9; Acts 12:7). It is a reflection of the glory of God Who appointed him to this task (Hab. 3:3-4; Rev. 21:23). When the angel descends, the earth is full of moral darkness. The illumination of the earth by his glory presages the destruction of darkness and the introduction of light which will be the overthrow of Babylon and the introduction of the *Millennial Kingdom*^[5.2.39] (Isa. 60:1-3).

3.18.2 - Revelation 18:2

he cried mightily with a loud voice

The angel serves as a divine herald, announcing that which is about to take place. He signals that an event of great importance is about to transpire (Rev. 5:2; 10:3; 14:15).

Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen

The word order is reversed in the Greek to emphasis her fall: *It is fallen, it is fallen, Babylon the great*. The time has finally arrived for the predicted *destruction of Babylon*^[4.1.2] to find fulfillment. Although aspects of Isaiah's and Jeremiah's prophecies concerning her destruction relate to the *overthrow of Babylon by Persia*^[4.1.2.1] in 539 B.C., her catastrophic and permanent destruction had not occurred until now. See *Babylon's Predicted Destruction*^[4.1.2.2].

Perhaps this is the same angel which flew forth earlier to declare Babylon's destruction (Rev. 14:8 cf. Isa. 21:9). Like the declaration of that angel, *is fallen* is ἔπεσεν [*epesen*], prophetic aorist tense. The city's fall is so certain and *imminent*^[5.2.30] it is described as if it has already been accomplished. See commentary on *Revelation 14:8*^[3.14.8]. Her destruction takes place as a result of the pouring forth of the seventh bowl of God's wrath (Rev. 16:19).

The city and the *Harlot*^[5.2.25] are given the same title: "Babylon the Great" (Rev. 17:4). The Harlot is not some separate entity, but the city itself (Rev. 17:18). See *One or Two Babylons?*^[4.1.4.2.2] She is called *great* because of her power and commercial splendor, but also because she thought herself to be great. She was built on *pride* (Isa. 13:19; Jer. 50:29; Dan. 4:30).

has become a dwelling place of demons, a prison for every foul spirit, and a cage for every unclean and hated bird

Has become is ἐγένετο [*egeneto*], aorist tense. The angel describes her condition *after* her fall.⁶ Although foul spirits no doubt frequented Babylon prior to her destruction, this speaks of the incarceration of demons *in prison* as a result of the judgment.⁷ *Dwelling place* is κατοικητήριον [*katoikētērion*], used to describe the corporate church as a dwelling place of God, a holy temple (Eph. 2:22). It indicates a place where residents settle down with the idea of a protracted residence.⁸ *Foul and unclean* are ἀκαθάρτου [*akathartou*], meaning *unclean*—matching the character of the *filthiness* of the fornication of the Harlot (Rev. 17:2) and the three *unclean* spirits which gathered the kings of the earth to the *Campaign of Armageddon*^[4.5] (Rev. 16:13). Concerning *foul spirit*, see commentary on *Revelation 16:13*^[3.16.13].

Certain birds were considered unclean according to the Mosaic Law (Lev. 11:13-19). In Scripture, birds—and especially unclean birds—often denote evil (Isa. 13:21; Zec. 5:9; Mtt. 13:4, 19).

Prison and *cage* are φυλακή [*phylakē*]: "The place of guarding, prison. . . . The fallen city of Babylon becomes a φυλακή [*phylakē*] *haunt* for all kinds of unclean spirits and birds."⁹ The same term describes the *prison* which Satan is released from at the end of the *Millennial Kingdom*^[5.2.39] (Rev. 20:7). During the thousand years that Satan is bound in the abyss, he is unable to escape from his location. Thus, this speaks of a place of *involuntary confinement*, not merely a "haunt, den, [or] refuge."¹⁰

In various passages concerning the ultimate destruction of Babylon, she is said to become a devastated wilderness (Isa. 13:21-22; 14:23; Jer. 50:39; 51:37). These passages make mention of various animals of the wilderness as an indication that she will remain uninhabited. Now, John is told at her destruction

Babylon *has become a dwelling place of demons, a prison for every foul [unclean] spirit*. The declaration of the angel makes explicit that which was only hinted at in the OT^[5.2.51] use of certain terms describing the animals attending her destruction:

Therefore the **wild desert beasts** shall dwell *there* with the jackals, and the ostriches shall dwell in it. It shall be inhabited no more forever, nor shall it be dwelt in from generation to generation. (Jer. 50:39 cf. Jer. 51:37) [emphasis added]

Wild desert beasts (Jer. 50:39) is צִיִּים [tsîyîm]: “A wild desert creature . . . specific identification is not known . . . some of these contexts may be a desert demon . . . a supernatural class of being that haunts the desert (Ps. 74:14).”¹¹

But wild beasts of the desert will lie there, and their houses will be full of owls; ostriches will dwell there, and **wild goats** will caper there. The hyenas will howl in their citadels, and jackals in their pleasant palaces. Her time *is* near to come, and her days will not be prolonged. (Isa. 13:21-22 cf. Isa. 14:23) [emphasis added]

Wild goats (Isa. 13:21) is שְׂעִירִים [sêîrîm]: “Satyr, may refer to a demon possessed goat like the swine of Gadara (Mtt. 8:30-32).”¹² “Satyr, i.e., a spirit being that inhabits desolate areas (Isa. 13:21; 34:14).”¹³

The Hebrew word *sair* primarily meant a he-goat. In lower Egypt the goat was worshipped with abominable rites. The word is rendered “satyr” in two passages, Isaiah 13:21 and 34:14 (R.V. margin “hegoat”). In both places the *Septuagint*^[5.2.65] translates it *daimonia*, demons, and this gives the true indication of the evil spirits which *inspired*^[5.2.33] the particular worship carried on by the idolaters: “the things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to demons and not to God” (1Cor. 10:20). The word is translated “devils” (that is, demons) in KJV Leviticus 17:7 “they shall no more offer their sacrifices unto devils, after whom they have gone a whoring” . . . that is, to the evil spirits.¹⁴

It appears that both Babylon and Edom (Isa. 34:8-17) will be dwelling places for demons during the Millennial Kingdom:¹⁵

It is obvious that the animal inhabitants, as we know them, mentioned in Isa. 13:20-22 and Jer. 50:39-40, cannot live in a place of continual burning pitch and brimstone and so there cannot be literal animals. . . . This place of continual burning and smoke will be a place of confinement for many demons during the Kingdom period. . . . In fact, the Hebrew word translated *wild goats* refers to demons in goat form.¹⁶

Hated is μισημένης [memisēmenou], a perfect tense passive participle, *while having been hated*. These demon spirits were hated in the past, but will now be confined to the region of Babylon. Thus, in the same way that Satan is bound so he is unable to interfere with the Millennial Kingdom, his fallen angels will also be incarcerated during the thousand-year reign of Messiah on earth.

Some Greek manuscripts include, *and every unclean beast*.¹⁷

3.18.3 - Revelation 18:3

For all nations have drunk

The conjunction *for*, ὅτι [hoti], indicates that the reason for her destruction is that which follows—her pollution of the global populace. Her pollution spans all aspects of culture: political, commercial, and religious. The first kingdom on earth was Babel under Nimrod. At that time, all people on earth spoke one language. With the introduction of languages, the people dispersed from Babel to form all the nations of the earth. In their dispersal, they carried forth the abominable practices of Babel. Since that time, all nations have been drinking her potion. See *Babylon of Old*^[4.1.1]. See commentary on *Revelation 14:8*^[3.14.8].

the wine of the wrath of her fornication

Fornication is ἐπόρνευσαν [eporneusan], which is related to πόρνης [pornēs]: *harlot*. The *Harlot*^[5.2.25] served the kings and inhabitants of the earth “wine of her fornication” (Rev. 17:2). She made “all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication” (Rev. 14:8). See commentary on *Revelation 14:8*^[3.14.8].

the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her

The same was said of the Harlot (Rev. 17:2). Her influence spans the full breadth *and height* of culture. The kings of the earth are singled out because of their great responsibility and influence over those they rule. She knew that by polluting the leaders, her influence over the people would be greatest. The city polluted the political realm.

the merchants of the earth

Merchants is ἔμποροι [*emporoi*]: “One who travels about for trading . . . wholesale dealer in contrast to a retailer.”¹⁸ The word emphasizes those who travel in merchandizing and is also used of a passenger on shipboard.¹⁹ It is derived from πορος [*poros*], a journey.

The merchants are “the great men of the earth” (Rev. 18:23), powerful magnates who use their great wealth to influence the affairs of the world to further their own power and interests. The city polluted the commercial realm. Throughout history, the boundary between kings and powerful merchants has been blurred. In our own day, perhaps more than in previous eras, wealthy heads of powerful *multinational* corporations may have greater influence over the affairs of the world than their publicly elected *national* counterparts (Isa. 23:8). While kings wield *political* power, merchants wield great *financial* power. With rare exception, world leadership has generally been immersed in a tangled web of political, religious, and commercial interests which are impossible to isolate from one another.

Such international magnates and financiers constitute, more often than not, the power behind the throne. Kings and presidents often attain and keep their authority by sufferance of those who finance their undertakings. In turn, these great men of the earth receive land grants and trade monopolies and tax loopholes and innumerable other favors from those whom they establish in political power, all to enrich themselves still further.²⁰

It has become an axiom that “corporations have no souls,” and upon this all great moneyed corporations act, though the men who constitute them will find out a different doctrine when they come to the day of judgment. And when it comes to these great and ever magnifying commercial compacts and interests, there is not a law of God or man which is not compelled to yield if found in the way. . . . If the question were ever pressed in these circles, *What is truth?* it would be hooted and laughed to scorn. The cry would be, “What have we to do with that? Let every one quietly enjoy his own opinions.” . . . Church is nothing, State is nothing, creed is nothing, Bible is nothing, Sunday is nothing, religious scruples are nothing, conscience is nothing, everything is practically nothing, except as it can be turned or used to the one great end of accumulation and wealth.²¹

have become rich

“Not only is Babylon to become the world political capital, it is also to become the world economic capital. This fact is portrayed in the vision of Zechariah 5:5-11.”²² See *Back to Shinar*.^[4.1.3.5.3] As with the city of Tyre, the merchants played a key role in her global influence because it was through the distribution of her merchandise that her affluence and power grew:

In their wailing for you they will take up a lamentation, and lament for you: ‘What *city is* like Tyre, destroyed in the midst of the sea?’ When your wares went out by sea, you satisfied many people; you enriched the kings of the earth with your many luxury goods and your merchandise. But you are broken by the seas in the depths of the waters; your merchandise and the entire company will fall in your midst. (Eze. 27:32-34)

the abundance of her luxury

Abundance is δυνάμειος [*dynamēōs*], literally *strengths* of her luxury. *Luxury* is στρήνους [*strēnous*], which indicates a luxurious and sensuous way of life characterized by headstrong pride. She has a harlot’s forehead and refuses to be ashamed (Jer. 3:3 cf. Rev. 17:5).

3.18.4 - Revelation 18:4

Come out of her my people

In the rebellion of Israel against the authority of Moses, Moses and Aaron were told by God to “separate yourselves from among this congregation, that I may consume them in a moment” (Num. 16:21). The congregation of Israel was commanded to separate from the tents of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram before the earth opened up to swallow their families (Num. 16:26-34). Like Lot and his family

who fled Sodom prior to its destruction (Gen. 19:12-15), the saints of the Tribulation period are urged to flee the city so as to avoid her physical judgment.

Go forth from Babylon! Flee from the Chaldeans! With a voice of singing, declare, proclaim this, utter it to the end of the earth; say, “The LORD has redeemed His servant Jacob!” (Isa. 48:20)

Move from the midst of Babylon, go out of the land of the Chaldeans; and be like the rams before the flocks. (Jer. 50:8)

Flee from the midst of Babylon, and every one save his life! Do not be cut off in her iniquity, for this is the time of the LORD’S vengeance; He shall recompense her. (Jer. 51:6)

We would have healed Babylon, but she is not healed. Forsake her, and let us go everyone to his own country; for her judgment reaches to heaven and is lifted up to the skies. (Jer. 51:9)

My people, go out of the midst of her! And let everyone deliver himself from the fierce anger of the LORD. (Jer. 51:45)

You who have escaped the sword, get away! Do not stand still! Remember the LORD afar off, and let Jerusalem come to your mind. (Jer. 51:50)

“Up, up! Flee from the land of the north,” says the Lord; “for I have spread you abroad like the four winds of heaven,” says the Lord. “Up, Zion! Escape, you who dwell with the daughter of Babylon.” (Zec. 2:6-7)²³

If the call to God’s people to come out of Babylon immediately precedes the time of destruction under the seventh bowl (Rev. 16:19), then the requirement to take the mark of the *Beast*^[5.2.9] for commercial participation has already been imposed (cf. Rev. 16:2). Since it is impossible to take the mark and be among the elect of God (Rev. 14:9-11; 17:8), those saints which are in Babylon at this time are “underground.” They will be unable to obtain support except by the black market and must remain in hiding because they lack the mark (Rev. 13:15).²⁴

If the warning occurs before the pouring forth of the first bowl (Rev. 16:2), then the mark of the Beast may not have been instituted yet and the saints in the city have probably been drawn there to participate in the city’s commercial prosperity. Like Lot at the gates of Sodom, they unwisely linger and dabble in their ungodly surroundings.

This should not be interpreted as a general command for believers to physically separate from all who practice sin:

I wrote to you in my epistle not to keep company with sexually immoral people. Yet *I* certainly *did* not *mean* with the sexually immoral people of this world, or with the covetous, or extortioners, or idolaters, since then you would need to go out of the world. But now I have written to you not to keep company with anyone named a brother, who is sexually immoral, or covetous, or an idolater, or a reviler, or a drunkard, or an extortioner—not even to eat with such a person. (1Cor. 5:9-11)

This verse is readily abused in the hands of legalistic shepherds who use it as a tool to manipulate their flock in an attempt to control every aspect of their lives. This illustrates one of the dangers of taking passages out of context and spiritualizing their meaning. This verse concerns the Tribulation period and the *physical* destruction of the literal city of Babylon. It does not concern a legalistic separation of the believer today from all forms of commercial involvement.

While these words have a real application to the believer to come forth to Jesus outside the spiritual Babylon—ecclesiasticism, Nicolaitanism and the false promises of “mystery” Babylon in its various forms; yet the particular *interpretation* of the words is not to the saints, who will have been raptured before this call goes forth. The call to “come forth” from this great commercial Sodom of the last days—rebuilt Babylon, is evidently issued to those individuals living in or doing business in that capital of the *Antichrist*^[5.2.3] in the last days.²⁵

lest you share in her sins

Lest you share is συγκαινωνήσητε [*synkoinōnēsēte*], *lest you all take part in or take a sympathetic interest in*.²⁶ The same term is used when Paul writes to the Ephesian church not to have *fellowship* with the unfruitful works of darkness (Eph. 5:11) and when he commends the Philippian church because they *shared* in his distress (Php. 4:14). It is a compound word combining the concepts of *fellowship* and *together with*.

The saints are not to isolate themselves from the world (1Cor. 5:9-11). For how else can evangelization

take place? Yet, while being *in* the world, they are not to be *of* the world—joining themselves with those who practice lawlessness:

Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers. For what fellowship has righteousness with lawlessness? And what communion has light with darkness? And what accord has Christ with Belial? Or what part has a believer with an unbeliever? And what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For you are the temple of the living God. As God has said: “I will dwell in them and walk among them. I will be their God, and they shall be My people.” (2Cor. 6:14-16)

The saints who are in Babylon at the time of the end are at great risk of taking part in or having sympathetic interest in her sins.²⁷

lest you receive of her plagues

The plagues she is to receive are primarily her burning and destruction as related in this chapter.

3.18.5 - Revelation 18:5

her sins have reached to heaven

Although each and every evil deed of history is known to God, there comes a time where the number and magnitude of sins reaches a point where God is forced, by His righteous character, to intervene. When this occurs, sin is said to gain His attention in a special way. The voice of Abel’s blood cried out to God from the ground (Gen. 4:10). The outcry against Sodom and Gomorrah reached up to God (Gen. 18:20-21; 19:13). Nineveh’s wickedness *came up* before the LORD (Jonah 1:2). Particularly heinous acts are said to *reach up to heaven* (2Chr. 28:9). As guilt compounds, it is said to *grow up to the heavens* (Ezra 9:6).

In the establishment of *Babel*^[4.1.1], the people had attempted to make themselves a name by constructing a tower which reached to heaven (Gen. 11:4). Instead, they had been dispersed. Now they have built a new tower reaching to heaven—a tower of sin. As her sin is so great it reaches to heaven, so is her judgment: “We would have healed Babylon, but she is not healed. Forsake her, and let us go everyone to his own country; for her judgment reaches to heaven and is lifted up to the skies” (Jer. 51:9).

God has remembered her iniquities

Not that God could forget a single one of her iniquities, but that He now considers the sum total of their weight and the need to respond in righteous judgment. As the iniquity of the Amorites finally reached its full height (Gen. 15:16), the guilt of Babylon now requires God’s intervention in order to be true to His righteous character. “And great Babylon was remembered before God, to give her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of His wrath” (Rev. 16:19). Babylon had thought her wickedness would not be taken into account: “You have said, ‘No one sees me’ ” (Isa. 47:10).

3.18.6 - Revelation 18:6

Render to her just as she rendered to you

Render is ἀπόδοτε [*apodote*], plural imperative, *you all give back to her!* Who is this command given to?

According to Rev. 17:16-17, it is the false Christ and his allies who will destroy Babylon in compliance with the overarching purpose of God. Further confirmation of this conclusion surfaces in noting that the result of the judgment is the same in both chapters: the burning of the city (Rev. 17:16; 18:8, 9, 18). . . . God puts into the hearts of these enemies to do what they do, so it appears wisest to connect the city’s burning in chapter 18 with that in chapter 17.²⁸

The *NU*^[5.2.49] text and several *MT*^[5.2.45] manuscripts omit *to you*. The unnamed recipients of what she rendered is probably the whole earth. This is supported by the realization that she has rendered to her enemies throughout history (Rev. 18:24). See commentary on *Revelation 17:16*^[3.17.16].

She rendered, is αὐτῇ ἀπέδωκεν [*autē apedōken*], *she, she gave out*. The addition of the pronoun in addition to the implicit pronoun found in the verb form emphasizes her bad behavior. Her judgment is based on the law of retribution, not undertaken by the saints, but by God. “O daughter of Babylon, who are to be destroyed, happy the one who repays you as you have served us!” (Ps. 137:8). “Take

vengeance on her. As she has done, so do to her” (Jer. 50:15b). “Repay her according to her work; according to all she has done, do to her” (Jer. 50:29b). “As Babylon *has caused* the slain of Israel to fall, so at Babylon the slain of all the earth shall fall” (Jer. 51:49).

repay her double according to her works

Under the Law of Moses, restitution of thievery involved interest of 100%—the thief was required to pay double what was stolen (Ex. 22:4). Even Jerusalem received double for all her sins from the LORD’s hand in judgment (Isa. 61:7; Jer. 16:18). When Jeremiah prayed for judgment of his enemies, he asked God to “bring on them the day of doom, and destroy them with double destruction!” (Jer. 17:18).

Jeremiah calls Babylon, מַרְתָּיִם [m^erātayim], meaning *double rebellion* (Jer. 50:21):

This word, which is formed by the prophet in a manner analogous to *Mizraim*, and perhaps also *Aram Naharaim*, means “double rebellion,” or “double obstinacy.” It comes from the root מָרָה [mārāh], “to be rebellious” against Jahveh and His commandments.²⁹

in the cup which she has mixed, mix double for her

Having served her cup to the nations, she will now drink from her own cup and suffer derangement at her own hand. “**Your wisdom and your knowledge have warped you . . . You are wearied in the multitude of your counsels**; let now the astrologers, the stargazers, and the monthly prognosticators stand up and save you from what shall come upon you” [emphasis added] (Isa. 47:10-12). See commentary on *Revelation 14:10*^[3.14.10]. See commentary on *Revelation 17:4*^[3.17.4].

3.18.7 - Revelation 18:7

she glorified herself and lived luxuriously

She boasted in her own glory, saying “I shall be a lady forever” (Isa. 47:7) and “I *am* and *there is* no one else besides me” (Isa. 47:8, 10). God calls her “O most haughty one!” (Jer. 50:31). Her pride was also the sin of Nineveh (Zep. 2:15). *She lived luxuriously* is ἐστρηνίασεν [estrēniasen], *she luxuriated, lived sensually*. The term has been used of bulls running wild³⁰ and includes the idea of revelry.³¹ “Having thrown off any semblance of self-control or self-restraint, sinners will indulge in a wild materialistic orgy. Like those in ancient Babylon, they will be partying when their city is destroyed (cf. Dan. 5:1-30).”³² Her excess contributed to her delusion of independence from God (Ps. 73:3; Luke 9:25). She mistook her abundance as an indication of blessing (Jer. 44:17-18).

Throughout history the petty kingdoms and empires built by proud, arrogant, God-rejecting rebels have come and gone. The spirit of humanism first expressed at Babel has permeated human history ever since. Unshakably optimistic despite centuries of war, slaughter, injustice, and cruelty, people still seek a utopia, to be brought about by humanity’s upward scientific progress. Having taken control (so they think) of their own destiny through science, sinners have no use for God and haughtily replace Him as self-styled gods devoted to their own sovereignty.³³

I sit as queen

Sit is κάθημαι [kathēmai], present tense, *I am presently seated* as queen. She believes she is queen because she reigns over the kings of the earth (Rev. 17:18). She sits on the *Beast*^[5.2.9] with *seven heads*^[4.3.2.4] and *ten horns*^[4.3.2.22] (Rev. 17:3).

Come down and sit in the dust, O virgin daughter of Babylon; sit on the ground without a throne, O daughter of the Chaldeans! For you shall no more be called tender and delicate. Take the millstones and grind meal. Remove your veil, take off the skirt, uncover the thigh, pass through the rivers. Your nakedness shall be uncovered, yes, your shame will be seen; I will take vengeance, and I will not arbitrate with a man. *As for* our Redeemer, the LORD of hosts *is* His name, The Holy One of Israel. Sit in silence, and go into darkness, O daughter of the Chaldeans; for you shall no longer be called The Lady of Kingdoms. (Isa. 47:1-5)

am no widow and will not see sorrow

Her haughty boastfulness is so great that she believes herself to be immune from God’s judgment. *Not* is the double negative, οὐ μὴ [ou mē], the strongest negation possible. She is absolutely convinced she

will not see sorrow for her ways. She believes she is secure:

Therefore hear this now, *you who are* given to pleasures, who dwell securely, who say in your heart, ‘I am, and *there is* no one else beside me; I shall not sit *as* a widow, nor shall I know the loss of children’; but these two *things* shall come to you in a moment, in one day: the loss of children, and widowhood. (Isa. 47:8-9a)

The loss of her children may refer to the judgment of her daughter harlots (Rev. 17:5) when the cities of the nations fall as part of the seventh bowl judgment under which she herself is destroyed (Rev. 16:19).

3.18.8 - Revelation 18:8

her plagues will come in one day

When her judgment finally comes, it will be swift and decisive (Isa. 47:9, 11; Rev. 18:9, 10, 17, 19). See *Babylon’s Predicted Destruction*^[4.1.2.2].

The suddenness and completeness of Babylon’s judgment and *disappearance from the face of the earth* is the one prominent feature of this prophecy: and it effectually proves that it has not yet taken place. For Jehovah’s prophecies are far too accurate and particular for this suddenness and completeness to be fulfilled by the gradual decay of old Babylon, the site and ruins and remains of which are still to be seen in the land of Shinar.³⁴

“She shall be burned with fire” (ἐν πυρὶ κατακαυθήσεται [en pyri katakauthēsetai]) corresponds closely to the κατακάουσιν ἐν πυρὶ [katakausousin en pyri] of Rev. 17:16 and must be the same destruction.³⁵

she will be utterly burned with fire

Like Sodom and Gomorrah, Babylon will be destroyed by fire (Isa. 13:19-20; 47:14; Jer. 50:40; 51:58; Rev. 18:9). Her burning is complete and final: “Her smoke rises up forever and ever!” (Rev. 19:3). The *Beast*^[5.2.9] and the ten kings of the end will assist in her destruction (Rev. 17:16). See *The Destruction of Babylon*^[4.1.2].

for strong is the Lord God who judges her

Thus says the LORD of hosts: “The children of Israel *were* oppressed, along with the children of Judah; all who took them captive have held them fast; they have refused to let them go. **Their Redeemer is strong; the LORD of hosts is His name.** He will thoroughly plead their case, that He may give rest to the land, and disquiet the inhabitants of Babylon.” (Jer. 50:33-34) [emphasis added]

3.18.9 - Revelation 18:9

the kings of the earth who committed fornication and lived luxuriously with her will weep and lament

Will lament is κόψονται [kopsontai], *they themselves will beat their breasts in anguish and mourning.*

Interpreters who take *The Great Harlot*^[4.1.4] as being different from the city Babylon take the destruction of the city described here as a separate destruction from that of the *Harlot*^[5.2.25] in the previous chapter (Rev. 17:16). They understand the remorse of the kings of the earth described here as denoting the kings who give their authority to the *Beast*^[5.2.9]:

These are the seven kings who have co-reigned with the *Antichrist*^[5.2.3] and submitted their authority to the Antichrist, the king of Babylon. Whatever power or authority they held, was held by the grace of Babylon. Seeing their authority waning with Babylon’s destruction, they will lament the swiftness of the judgment. They will be able to see the smoke of Babylon *afar off*, for they will see it from the Valley of Jezreel in Israel.³⁶

We believe the distinction between *The Great Harlot*^[4.1.4] and the city to be arbitrary and that the text identifies the Harlot as the city. See *One or Two Babylons?*^[4.1.4.2.2]. Since Scripture records that the city will be hated and made desolate by the Beast and his kings (Rev. 17:16-18), the kings who bemoan

her destruction are not those allied with the beast, but other *kings of the earth* which Scripture mentions at the time of the end (Rev. 16:12-14; 17:2; 18:3, 7; 19:18-19).³⁷

We have before noted that “the ten kings” are never seen apart from the Beast; and “the kings of the earth” are never seen apart from Babylon. It is the former who hate and burn Babylon; it is the latter who weep and wail over her. In both chapters (Rev. 17 and 18) the city is called “Babylon the great.” God and man both so call her. This great city cannot be separated from her own corrupt religion. They must be connected together, just as chapters 17 and 18 are connected; and yet distinguished as they are there distinguished.³⁸

See commentary on *Revelation 17:16*^[3.17.16].

when they see the smoke of her burning

Since they will weep and lament at the time of her destruction, these are kings which exist at the time of the end (see above). Her destruction is permanent: “Her smoke rises up forever and ever!” (Rev. 19:3 cf. Isa. 34:10; Jer. 51:32).

3.18.10 - Revelation 18:10

standing at a distance

Her burning will be visible by her kings, merchants, and shipmasters who stand off at a distance (Rev. 18:10, 15, 17).

Alas, alas

“The English word ‘alas’ only partly conveys the feeling in the Greek *ouai*, the very sound of which bespeaks grief and terror. It is the same word translated ‘woe’ elsewhere (as in Revelation 8:13).”³⁹ Her luxurious wealth and position as a center of trade had made them rich, but now it was all gone (Rev. 18:16, 19). Their lamentation reflects their sorrow over the loss of their own self-interests rather than the city itself.

that great city Babylon, that mighty city!

The depth of her destruction is magnified by the height which she appeared to have attained prior to her fall. See commentary on *Revelation 18:2*^[3.18.2].

For in one hour your judgment has come

The conjunction *for*, ὅτι [*hoti*], indicates the reason for their outburst: her destruction was so sudden and complete. She had appeared to be so mighty, virtually unassailable, yet now she had been suddenly devastated and brought down to nothing. See *Babylon’s Predicted Destruction*^[4.1.2.2].

3.18.11 - Revelation 18:11

the merchants of the earth will weep and mourn

Both verbs are present tense, *they are weeping and they are mourning*, as if John is seeing them as they weep.

for no one buys their merchandise

Merchandise is γόμων [*gomon*], indicating a *cargo* or “freight load of goods.”⁴⁰ Not only was Babylon a great consumer of luxury goods, she also served as a center of trade. Commercialism is a key contributor to the materialism and godlessness which characterize the city at the end. Although material goods are not inherently evil, an abundance of material wealth often contributes to covetousness and idolatry. As people turn their attention increasingly towards making money and obtaining goods, they neglect the more important things of God. In her destruction, God will destroy the idols of commercialism and materialism. Tyre had suffered a similar judgment (Eze. 27:27).

The merchants are like the church at Laodicea, whom the Lord threatened to vomit out of His mouth “because you say, ‘I am rich and have become wealthy, and have need of nothing’—and do not know that you are wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked” (Rev. 3:17). See commentary on *Revelation 3:17*^[3.3.17].

Happy is the man *who* finds wisdom, and the man *who* gains understanding; for her proceeds *are* better

than the profits of silver, and her gain than fine gold. She *is* more precious than rubies, and all the things you may desire cannot compare with her. Length of days *is* in her right hand, in her left hand riches and honor. Her ways *are* ways of pleasantness, and all her paths *are* peace. She *is* a tree of life to those who take hold of her, and happy *are all* who retain her. (Pr. 3:13-18)

3.18.12 - Revelation 18:12

merchandise of gold and silver, precious stones and pearls, fine linen and purple, silk and scarlet

The *Harlot*^[5.2.25] wears the same merchandise found in the city, she is “arrayed in purple and scarlet, and adorned with gold and precious stones and pearls” (Rev. 17:4). The city is said to be clothed with this merchandise. She wears the attire of the Harlot: “clothed in fine linen, purple, and scarlet, and adorned with gold and precious stones and pearls” (Rev. 18:16). Babylon is perhaps the most wealthy city of the world at this time. See commentary on *Revelation 17:4*^[3.17.4].

The articles divide themselves into seven categories: (1) precious wares (gold, silver, precious stones, pearls); (2) materials of rich attire (fine linen, purple, silk, scarlet); (3) materials for costly furniture (all thyne wood, every vessel of ivory, of most precious wood, brass, iron, marble); (4) precious spices (cinnamon, spice, incense, ointment, frankincense); (5) articles of food (wine, oil, fine flour, wheat); (6) merchandise for agricultural and domestic uses (cattle, sheep, horses, chariots); (7) traffic in men (bodies, the souls of men) (Lee). John drew the list from items known in his day, not from the future time depicted in the prophecy (Alford).⁴¹

3.18.13 - Revelation 18:13

chariots

Chariots is ῥεδῶν [hredōn]: “Chariot, carriage, wagon, a four-wheeled carriage for traveling.”⁴²

wine and oil

These two items were singled out for protection in the famine attending the opening of the third seal. See *Revelation 6:6*^[3.6.6].

bodies and souls of men

Bodies and souls of men is σωμαίων καὶ ψυχῶν ἀνθρώπων [sōmatōn kai psychas anthrōpōn]. This undoubtedly refers to the age-old practice of slavery which will not be abolished until the *Millennial Kingdom*^[5.2.39] (Ex. 21:16; Deu. 24:7; 28:68; Ne. 5:4-8; 1Ti. 1:10).⁴³ “ ‘Bodies’ (*somata*) is a Greek idiom for slaves (cf. *LXX*^[5.2.38] of Gen. 36:6), while ‘souls of men’ (*psychas*) means essentially the same as bodies (slaves). Thus the whole expression means ‘slaves, that is, human beings.’ ”⁴⁴ “The καὶ [kai] separating the two expressions is ascensive, meaning ‘even,’ as frequently in this book, and the second expression is a restatement of *somaton*.”⁴⁵ Tyre had also traded in slaves: “Javan, Tubal, and Meshech *were* your traders. They bartered human lives and vessels of bronze for your merchandise” (Eze. 27:13). Such traffic could include related practices such as prostitution, where men and women “barter their bodies and souls for some trifle, something that at best can afford but a momentary satisfaction.”⁴⁶

The international traffic in forced prostitution, both of men and women, is a tragic but financially lucrative business of modern times and will undoubtedly become even bigger in the evil days ahead. These vice barons are particularly venomous “great men” of the earth, not only amassing great wealth for themselves, but destroying both the “bodies and souls” of the hapless girls and boys who come under their control.⁴⁷

3.18.14 - Revelation 18:14

The fruit that your soul longed for

Literally, *the fruit of the lust of the soul of you*. They had coveted commercial goods which God had now destroyed.

Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that *is* in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—is not of the Father but is of the world. And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the

will of God abides forever (1Jn. 2:15-17).

the things which are rich and splendid

Things which are rich is λιπαρά [*lipara*], oily, fat luxurious things. *Things which are splendid* is λαμπρά [*lampra*], bright, shining, glittering things. These items indicate great emphasis upon *self-gratification* and *sensual living* which feeds the flesh:

But know this, that in the last days perilous times will come: for men will be **lovers of themselves**, lovers of money, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, unloving, unforgiving, slanderers, **without self-control**, brutal, despisers of good, traitors, headstrong, haughty, **lovers of pleasure** rather than lovers of God. (2Ti. 3:1-4) [emphasis added]

you shall find them no more at all

οὐκέτι οὐ μὴ αὐτὰ εὐρήσουσιν [*ouketi ou mē auta heurēsousin*], *no longer, no not they shall be found*. The double-negative, οὐ μὴ [*ou mē*], combined with *no longer* (οὐκέτι [*ouketi*]) strongly emphasizes the impossibility of ever finding these commercial items in her any more. This hints at the manner of her destruction which is permanent and irreversible.

3.18.15 - Revelation 18:15

The merchants of these things, who became rich by her

Her lusting after luxuries provided the stream of revenue by which the merchants became rich (Rev. 18:3, 11).

will stand at a distance for fear of her torment, weeping and wailing

The merchants have no heartfelt pity over the city and her destruction. Their concern and lamentation derives entirely from their own self-interest. Their self-preservation explains both their standing at a distance and their lamentation. For it is their loss of revenue and commercial exchange which causes their sorrow, not the countless lives or devastation associated with the fall of the city. “Your merchants from your youth; they shall wander each one to his quarter. No one shall save you” (Isa. 47:15).

3.18.16 - Revelation 18:16

that great city

See commentary on *Revelation 18:2*^[3.18.2].

that was clothed

Babylon was called “the golden city” (Isa. 14:4) and was the head of gold on the image in Nebuchadnezzar’s dream (Dan. 2:38). See *Nebuchadnezzar’s Dream and Daniel’s Vision*^[4.3.1]. The *Harlot*^[5.2.25] wears the same clothing (Rev. 17:4) and bears the same title (Rev. 17:18). See commentary on *Revelation 17:4*^[3.17.4]. See *One or Two Babylons?*^[4.1.4.2.2].

3.18.17 - Revelation 18:17

in one hour

The merchants repeat the same lamentation as the kings concerning the suddenness of her destruction. See commentary on *Revelation 18:10*^[3.18.10].

came to nothing

Came to nothing is ἠρημώθη [*ērēmōthē*]: “Be brought to ruin, become desolate, be devastated.”⁴⁸ The same word is translated, *desolate* in Revelation 18:19. The manner of her destruction matches that of the *Harlot*^[5.2.25] (Rev. 17:16). She will be destroyed in such a way as to be eternally uninhabitable. See *Babylon’s Predicted Destruction*^[4.1.2.2].

Every shipmaster

Like the ships of Tarshish at the loss of Tyre, those who make their living by the sea will wail over Babylon’s destruction (Isa. 23:14; Eze. 27:27-36). Like the kings (Rev. 18:10) and the merchants (Rev. 18:15), the mariners will keep their distance from the destruction of the city which is visible at a

distance.

Although Babylon on the Euphrates is not directly on the coast, the Euphrates is navigable for many miles:⁴⁹

Rawlinson [Herodotus, i. 512] speaks of the Euphrates as being navigable for ships for some 500 miles from its mouth. And with little effort could be made available for ships of large size.⁵⁰

Today these two streams [the Tigris and the Euphrates] are joined together and flow as one river, the *Shatt el-Arab*, 190 km (120 mi) to the gulf, where the water is deep enough for warships.⁵¹

There are a number of possible ways that commercial shipping could reach a rebuilt Babylon:

- **Improvements to the Euphrates** - Sections of the Euphrates are dredged and otherwise improved so that ships from the gulf can directly navigate the approximately 370 miles upriver to Babylon.
- **Shuttle from the Gulf** - Large ships anchor in the Persian gulf where cargo is transferred to shallow-draft barges which transport goods upriver to Babylon.
- **Land Transport** - Ships make port at the seacoast and their cargo is transported by rail to Babylon. The port itself serves a strictly secondary role to the magnificent city upriver. The nautical emphasis in this chapter seems against this suggestion, although it must be noted that all the text requires is that Babylon be a major center of shipping. It does not require that ships make their way to dockside in downtown Babylon.

The prominence given to shipping in this passage provides evidence against identifying Babylon as Rome:⁵²

Rome was not a major seaport or trading city. Rome was never a great city of commerce described in Revelation 18. Revelation 18:17 actually fits Babylon better than Rome because Rome had no seaport. . . . Revelation 18:17-18 which describes those who make their living from the sea standing a far off and wailing at the sight of Babylon's destruction, fits well with the geography of Babylon on the Euphrates. In ancient times, the Euphrates was navigable for ships for some 500 miles from its mouth.⁵³

It is perfectly well known that Rome was never either "great" or commercial. It is no Port; and no "shipmaster" goes thither. . . . if Rome be the city, Rome must yet become the great political and religious centre; with port and harbour. And it is quite as difficult to believe in this revival of Rome, as to believe in the revival of Babylon.⁵⁴

See *Babylon is Rome?*^[4.1.3.3]

3.18.18 - Revelation 18:18

the smoke of her burning

See commentary on *Revelation 18:8*^[3.18.8].

this great city

See commentary on *Revelation 18:10*^[3.18.10].

3.18.19 - Revelation 18:19

they threw dust on their heads

An action indicating great mourning and grief over loss (Jos. 7:6; 1S. 4:12; Lam. 2:10; Eze. 27:30). Here, the loss is their commercial market.

that great city

See commentary on *Revelation 18:10*^[3.18.10].

in which all who had ships on the sea became rich by her wealth

Like the kings who had lived luxuriously with her (Rev. 18:9) and the merchants who had become

wealthy by her (Rev. 18:15), those who made a living by shipping had become wealthy. She is a great center of commerce and a major destination for shipping. See commentary on *Revelation 18:17*^[3.18.17].

in one hour

The mariners repeat the same lamentation as the kings (Rev. 18:10) and the merchants (Rev. 18:17) concerning the suddenness of her destruction. See commentary on *Revelation 18:10*^[3.18.10]. This threefold pattern of lamentation is intended to indicate the completeness of her destruction. See *Three: Life, Resurrection, Completeness, the Trinity*^[2.7.5.3.2].

she is made desolate

See commentary on *Revelation 18:17*^[3.18.17]. See *Babylon's Predicted Destruction*^[4.1.2.2].

3.18.20 - Revelation 18:20

Rejoice over her, O heaven and you holy apostles and prophets

Rejoice is εὐφραίνου [euphrainou], an imperative command, *you all be glad!* Heaven rejoiced when the devil and his angels were cast out (Rev. 12:12). Jeremiah prophesied that in the day that God destroyed Babylon “the heavens and the earth and all that is in them shall sing joyously over Babylon” (Jer. 51:48). The *MT*^[5.2.45] and *NU*^[5.2.49] texts have *saints and apostles* instead of *holy apostles*.

The apostles and prophets, leaders of the saints of all ages, who have, themselves, borne the brunt of the world's hatred, are given special prominence in the rejoicing. . . . Take Paul for an example. He pointed out that he and the other apostles had been chosen by God for special sufferings [1Cor. 4:9-13].⁵⁵

God has avenged you on her

Has avenged you on her is ἔκρινεν ὁ θεὸς τὸ κρίμα ὑμῶν ἐξ αὐτῆς [ekrinen ho theos to krima hymōn ex autēs], *God has judged the judgment of you against her*. “God has pronounced on her the judgment she wished to impose on you.”⁵⁶ A great multitude in heaven rejoices at the destruction of *The Great Harlot*^[4.1.4] which is said to be God's vengeance of “the blood of His servants shed by her” (Rev. 19:2). She is “drunk with the blood of the saints and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus” (Rev. 17:6) because “in her was found the blood of prophets and saints, and of all who were slain on the earth” (Rev. 18:24). This is God's answer to the prayers of the martyrs revealed at the opening of the fifth seal (Rev. 6:10) and the prayers offered upon the altar of incense prior to the trumpet judgments (Rev. 8:3-4).

The song which Moses taught Israel prior to crossing into the Promised Land ends with the promise of God's vengeance concerning the spilled blood of His servants: “Rejoice, O Gentiles, *with His people*; for He will avenge the blood of His servants, and render vengeance to His adversaries; He will provide atonement for His land *and His people*” (Deu. 32:43). As Jesus said in his *parable*^[5.2.54] of the unjust judge, “And shall God not avenge His own elect who cry out day and night to Him, though He bears long with them? I tell you that He will avenge them speedily” (Luke 18:7-8a).

3.18.21 - Revelation 18:21

a mighty angel

The appearance of a mighty angel indicates an important declarative action is to follow. A strong angel asked who was worthy to open the scroll (Rev. 5:2). A mighty angel stood upon the sea and the land to proclaim the dominion of God in retaking the earth (Rev. 10:1).

took up a great millstone and threw it into the sea

The angel now reenacts the declaration which Jeremiah told Seraiah to speak over the city thousands of years before:

So Jeremiah wrote in a book all the evil that would come upon Babylon, all these words that are written against Babylon. And Jeremiah said to Seraiah, “**When you arrive in Babylon and see it, and read all these words**, then you shall say, ‘O LORD, **You have spoken against this place** to cut it off, so that none shall remain in it, neither man nor beast, but it shall be desolate forever.’ Now it shall be, when you have finished reading this book, *that* you shall tie a stone to it and throw it out into the **Euphrates**. Then you shall say, ‘Thus Babylon shall sink and not rise from the catastrophe that I will bring upon her. And

they shall be weary.’ ” Thus far *are* the words of Jeremiah. (Jer. 51:60-64) [emphasis added]

Jeremiah’s declaration is another evidence which points to Babylon of the end being the literal city reconstructed on the banks of the Euphrates. For Seraiah was sent to the literal city in order to declare a literal judgment over her. The judgment he read has never been fulfilled in history (see *Babylon’s Historic Fall*^[4.1.2.1]). At the time of the end, the words of God regarding the city, as written by Jeremiah and declared by Seraiah, will find their ultimate fulfillment in the destruction of the rebuilt city of old. See *Babylon is Babylon!*^[4.1.3.5].

Every word is employed to impress us with its suddenness and completeness. And inasmuch as all other fulfilled prophecies have been fulfilled *to the very letter*; and Babylon, though fallen gradually, and very low, has never suffered such a destruction. There is only one conclusion . . . it will be revived, and exceed all its former magnificence.⁵⁷

Jesus alluded to Jeremiah’s predicted destruction of Babylon when he taught about the gravity of “causing one of these little ones who believe in Me to sin” (Mtt. 18:6; Mark 9:42; Luke 17:2).

Thus with violence

The angel’s actions demonstrate the severity and finality of Babylon’s destruction.

the great city

The angel parodies her boastful title when announcing her destruction. She considered herself *great*, nevertheless she will be completely overthrown. See commentary on *Revelation 18:10*^[3.18.10].

shall not be found anymore

Shall not be found anymore is οὐ μὴ εὐρεθῆι ἔτι [ou mē heurethē eti], *no not it should be found still*.

The double-negative emphasizes her utter and permanent destruction. A similar prediction attended the destruction of Tyre (Eze. 26:18).

3.18.22 - Revelation 18:22

The sound of harpists . . .

Various occupations within the city are listed together with an indication that they will no longer be found. This harmonizes with *Babylon’s Predicted Destruction*^[4.1.2.2] which indicates she will be perpetually uninhabited. The diversity of occupations also indicates the impossibility of escape—the destruction will fall on all classes of people alike (cf. Isa. 24:1-2). Thus, the saints are instructed to escape the city to avoid her plagues (Rev. 18:4). Musicians may be listed first as an intentional contrast to the resounding praise from heaven over her destruction. The tumultuous praise in heaven correlates with the deathly silence in Babylon below (Rev. 19:1-4). Similar results attend the destruction of Tyre (Eze. 26:13).

No craftsman . . . and the sound of a millstone

Not only will there be no entertainment or rejoicing, there will be no more industry. *Craftsman* is τεχνίτης [technitēs], related to our word *technician*: “A skilled workman *craftsman, artisan . . . architect*.”⁵⁸

shall not be heard, shall not be found

In each of these phrases, the double negative, οὐ μὴ [ou mē], emphasizes the certainty of the declaration.

3.18.23 - Revelation 18:23

the voice of bridegroom and bride

The voice of bridegroom and bride attends normalcy and stability (Mtt. 24:38). There would be nothing approaching normalcy nor any future for Babylon.

shall not shine, shall not be heard

In each of these phrases, the double negative, οὐ μὴ [ou mē], appears emphasizing the permanence of the declarations.

your merchants were the great men of the earth

See commentary on *Revelation 18:3*^[3.18.3].

for by your sorcery all the nations were deceived

Sorcery is φαρμακεία [*pharmakeia*]. This term describes “sorcery, magic, . . . magic arts”⁵⁹ and includes “the use of drugs of any kind for magical effect.”⁶⁰ Isaiah lists her sorceries: *enchantments, astrology, star-gazing, and monthly prognostication* (Isa. 47:12-13).⁶¹ It is because of the multitude of her sorceries that her destruction has come (Isa. 47:9 cf. Nineveh, Nah. 3:3).⁶² Her magical arts were employed in the deception of the nations at the direction of the master deceiver, Satan (Rev. 12:9). He empowered the beast upon which she rode (Rev. 13:2; Rev. 17:3). The city is like *Jezebel*^[5.2.35]: having known “the depths of Satan” (Rev. 2:24 cf. 2K. 9:22).⁶³ Those who practice sorcery “have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone” (Rev. 21:8) and never enter the New Jerusalem (Rev. 22:15).⁶⁴ See commentary on *Revelation 9:2*^[3.9.21].

3.18.24 - Revelation 18:24**in her was found the blood of prophets and saints and of all who were slain on the earth**

Who were slain is ἐσφαγμένων [*esphagmenōn*], perfect passive participle, *ones having been violently murdered*.⁶⁵ The city is guilty of great religious persecution. She is identical to the *Harlot*^[5.2.25], who drinks the blood of the saints (Rev. 17:6). See *One or Two Babylons?*^[4.1.4.2.2] Since she is the mother of all harlots (Rev. 17:5), the blood of the godly shed by all her daughter harlots is put to her account. One such daughter harlot was Jerusalem in the days of Jesus (Luke 11:47-51; Acts 7:52; 1Th. 2:15). Many other daughter harlots have been birthed from her. At the bottom of her cup (Rev. 17:6) is the blood of Abel (Gen. 4:10). Her cup continues to fill this very hour. See commentary on *Revelation 17:6*^[3.17.6].

So far as this present world is concerned, the general verdict of mankind, sustained by the great current of human history for 6,000 years is against the faith and testimonies of the saints, apostles, and prophets of God. To the general population of the earth their profession stands branded as mere hallucination and lies. But at last their vindication comes. When the vaunted wisdom, and progress, and experiments of unregenerate man are consummated, and there is nothing to show from it but a valley of burning cinders and desolation, with the whole earth from highest kings to meanest subjects howling in helpless lamentations, terror, and despair, history will have added its seal to all that the saints, apostles, and prophets have said and maintained. Then will their judgment have been judged out of that world which despised and persecuted them, and spurned their hated *pessimism* for more flattering philosophies.⁶⁶

Notes

- ¹ E. W. Bullinger, *Commentary On Revelation* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 1984, 1935), Rev. 18:10.
- ² Charles Feinberg, *The Prophecy of Ezekiel: The Glory of the Lord* (Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 1969), 150.
- ³ Bullinger, *Commentary On Revelation*, Rev. 18:1.
- ⁴ Alan F. Johnson, *Revelation: The Expositor's Bible Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1966), Rev. 18:1.
- ⁵ Bullinger, *Commentary On Revelation*, Rev. 18:1.
- ⁶ Many commentators miss the importance of the aorist tense here: “One has only to walk down the main streets of a great city like New York or London to see the aptness of such a description. Lust is unbridled and tens of thousands of girls each year go on their way to prostitution.”—Donald Grey Barnhouse, *Revelation* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1971), 337. Similarly: “The first cause given for Babylon’s destruction is that she has become a dwelling place of demons and a prison of every unclean spirit.”—John MacArthur, *Revelation 12-22 : The MacArthur New Testament Commentary* (Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 2000), Rev. 18:1. Yet the angel is not describing the condition of the city *before* its fall, but *afterwards*, as is made plain by the parallel passages in Isaiah and Jeremiah which describe her demonized condition as the *result* of her destruction (Isa. 13:21-22; 14:23; Jer. 50:39; 51:37). Although demons undoubtedly frequent

- major cities, they are not *imprisoned* there as this verse describes. “Evidence of the city’s fall is its transition into ‘the habitation of demons.’”—Robert L. Thomas, *Revelation 8-22* (Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 1995), Rev. 18:2.
- 7 “With its destruction, Babylon is to become a habitation of demons. This will be the dwelling place of demonic abode and confinement during the Messianic Age.”—Arnold G. Fruchtenbaum, *The Footsteps of Messiah*, rev ed. (Tustin, CA: Ariel Ministries, 2003), 330.
- 8 Timothy Friberg, Barbara Friberg, and Neva F. Miller, *Analytical Lexicon of the Greek New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2000), 226.
- 9 Frederick William Danker, and Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 867.
- 10 Friberg, *Analytical Lexicon of the Greek New Testament*, 403.
- 11 James Swanson, *Dictionary of Biblical Languages With Semantic Domains : Hebrew (Old Testament)*, electronic ed. (Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, 1997), H6716.
- 12 James Strong, *The Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible* (Ontario: Woodside Bible Fellowship, 1996), H8162.
- 13 Swanson, *Dictionary of Biblical Languages With Semantic Domains : Hebrew (Old Testament)*, H8163.
- 14 W. E. Vine, *Vine’s Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words* (Nashville, IL: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1996), H8163.
- 15 “The city of Babylon on the Euphrates during the millennium will be a jail of demons. Compare Isaiah 24:21-23; which is millennial also, and the judgment upon Edom, in Isaiah 34:13-15; also millennial. (Of course these conditions give way to the last judgment—when the earth is destroyed, in Rev. 20:11-15, and all lost beings are finally sentenced.)”—William R. Newell, *Revelation: Chapter by Chapter* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 1994,c1935), 286.
- 16 Fruchtenbaum, *The Footsteps of Messiah*, 512-513.
- 17 “The Committee was of the opinion that all three elements (each of which involves an allusion to Isa. 13:21; 34:11) probably belonged to the original text of Revelation; since, however, καὶ φυλακὴ παντὸς θηρίου ἀκαθάρτου [*kai phylakē pantos thēriou akathartou*] is absent from such important witnesses as 2053 & 2080 vg al, it was decided to enclose these words within square brackets.”—Bruce M. Metzger, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament* (Stuttgart, Germany: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1994), Rev. 18:2.
- 18 Friberg, *Analytical Lexicon of the Greek New Testament*, 147.
- 19 Vine, *Vine’s Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words*, G1713.
- 20 Henry Morris, *The Revelation Record* (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 1983), Rev. 18:11.
- 21 J. A. Seiss, *The Apocalypse: Lectures on the Book of Revelation* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1966), 418.
- 22 Fruchtenbaum, *The Footsteps of Messiah*, 319.
- 23 “They were warned to *flee from the land of the north*, that is, from Babylon, so called because armies and trading caravans from that land entered Palestine from that direction due to the desert on the east and southeast (Jer. 1:13-14).”—Merrill F. Unger, *Unger’s Commentary on the Old Testament* (Chattanooga, TN: AMG Publishers, 2002), Zec. 2:6. The context is immediately prior to the *Millennial Kingdom*^[5.2.39]: “Many nations shall be joined to the LORD in that day, and they shall become My people. And I will dwell in your midst. And the LORD will take possession of Judah as His inheritance in the Holy Land, and will again choose Jerusalem.” (Zec. 2:11-12).
- 24 Morris suggests the call comes earlier, before the mark has been imposed. [Morris, *The Revelation Record*, Rev. 18:4] But this seems unlikely given the immediacy of the warning and impending judgment and that the mark is in place by the time of the first bowl (Rev. 16:2) whereas the destruction occurs at the seventh bowl (Rev. 16:19).
- 25 Newell, *Revelation: Chapter by Chapter*, 287.
- 26 Danker, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 774.
- 27 How many believers in our own day deny Biblical teachings out of sympathy with the ungodly culture? Bullinger suggests a figure of speech which puts the *sins* for *judgment*: “The word ‘sins’ is put by *Metonymy*

- for the *judgment* brought about by her sins. (Compare Jer. 51:9.) It is because God's people will not have fellowship in her sins that this gracious call to 'Come out' from her judgments is given."—Bullinger, *Commentary On Revelation*, Rev. 18:4.
- 28 Thomas, *Revelation 8-22*, Rev. 18:6.
- 29 Carl Friedrich Keil, and Franz Delitzsch, *Commentary on the Old Testament* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2002), Jer. 50:21.
- 30 Danker, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 771.
- 31 Friberg, *Analytical Lexicon of the Greek New Testament*, 358.
- 32 MacArthur, *Revelation 12-22 : The MacArthur New Testament Commentary*, Rev. 18:3.
- 33 MacArthur, *Revelation 12-22 : The MacArthur New Testament Commentary*, Rev. 18:1.
- 34 Bullinger, *Commentary On Revelation*, Rev. 18:8.
- 35 Thomas, *Revelation 8-22*, Rev. 18:8.
- 36 Fruchtenbaum, *The Footsteps of Messiah*, 331.
- 37 Morris holds to the two-destructions view: "The kings of the earth had burned Mystery Babylon, the harlot religious system, with fire, but these same kings mourn the burning of commercial Babylon (Rev. 17:16; 18:9), so obviously these are not the same burnings."—Morris, *The Revelation Record*, Rev. 18:8. His premise is incorrect. It is not the *kings of the earth* who destroy the harlot, but the *ten kings* with the Beast (Rev. 17:16). Therefore, the mourning of the kings of the earth over the destruction of Babylon does not provide evidence for a different destruction of the city subsequent to that of the Harlot.
- 38 Bullinger, *Commentary On Revelation*, Rev. 18:9.
- 39 Morris, *The Revelation Record*, Rev. 18:10.
- 40 James Swanson, *Dictionary of Biblical Languages With Semantic Domains : Greek (New Testament)*, electronic ed. (Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, 1997), G1117.
- 41 Thomas, *Revelation 8-22*, Rev. 18:11.
- 42 Friberg, *Analytical Lexicon of the Greek New Testament*, 342.
- 43 Fausset attempts to find fulfillment in Roman Catholicism: "Popery has derived its greatest gains from the sale of masses for *the souls of men* after death, and of indulgences purchased from the Papal chancery by rich merchants in various countries, to be retailed at a profit [Mosheim, III, 95, 96]."—A. R. Fausset, "*The Revelation of St. John the Divine*," in Robert Jamieson, A. R. Fausset, and David Brown, *A Commentary, Critical and Explanatory, on the Old and New Testaments* (Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc., 1997, 1877), Rev. 18:13.
- 44 Johnson, *Revelation: The Expositor's Bible Commentary*, Rev. 18:9-19.
- 45 Thomas, *Revelation 8-22*, Rev. 18:13.
- 46 Barnhouse, *Revelation*, 341.
- 47 Morris, *The Revelation Record*, Rev. 18:13.
- 48 Friberg, *Analytical Lexicon of the Greek New Testament*, 172.
- 49 "The Euphrates is about 2,890 kilometers (1,780 miles) long and is navigable for smaller vessels for about 1,950 kilometers (1,200 miles)."—Ronald F. Youngblood, and R. K. Harrison, eds., *Nelson's New Illustrated Bible Dictionary* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 1997, c1995), s.v. "Euphrates." "The entire course is 1780 miles, and of this distance more than two-thirds (1200 miles is navigable for boats)."—William Smith, *Smith's Bible Dictionary* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 1997), s.v. "Euphrates."
- 50 Bullinger, *Commentary On Revelation*, Rev. 18:17.
- 51 C. E. Harrington, and W. S. Lasor, "Euphrates," in Geoffrey W. Bromiley, ed., *International Standard Bible Encyclopedia* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1979, 1915), 2:203.
- 52 Some recognize the unsuitability of Rome, but are so set in their identification of Babylon as Rome, they attempt to circumvent Rome's failure in fulfillment by spiritualizing the commerce: "Rome was not a commercial city, and is not likely from her position to be so. The merchandise must therefore be spiritual,

even as the harlot is not literal, but spiritual.”—Fausset, “*The Revelation of St. John the Divine*,” Rev. 18:10.

- 53 Andy Woods, *What is the Identity of Babylon In Revelation 17-18?*.
- 54 Bullinger, *Commentary On Revelation*, Rev. 18:1.
- 55 Barnhouse, *Revelation*, 344.
- 56 Danker, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 450.
- 57 Bullinger, *Commentary On Revelation*, Rev. 17:21-23.
- 58 Friberg, *Analytical Lexicon of the Greek New Testament*, 379.
- 59 Danker, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 854.
- 60 Friberg, *Analytical Lexicon of the Greek New Testament*, 397.
- 61 Several of which are available at most supermarket checkout stands in our own country.
- 62 “We can be certain that, in the wicked and terrifying days of the tribulation, ungodly men will turn to intoxicants and drugs far more than ever in history. . . . The great demand for intoxicants and drugs in these coming days will surely be further stimulated by the ungodly and covetous merchants who profit so greatly from them.”—Morris, *The Revelation Record*, Rev. 18:13.
- 63 This is one of many reasons why Satan will be confined during the *Millennial Kingdom*^[5.2.39], so that he shall no longer *deceive* the nations (Rev. 20:3).
- 64 Concerning prohibitions against witchcraft and sorcery: Ex. 22:18; Lev. 19:26, 31; Deu. 18:10; 2Chr. 33:6; Isa. 8:19; 19:3; 44:25; Acts 16:16; Gal. 5:20; Rev. 18:23; 21:8; 22:15.
- 65 Danker, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 796.
- 66 Seiss, *The Apocalypse: Lectures on the Book of Revelation*, 418.

3.19 - Revelation 19

3.19.1 - Revelation 19:1

In Revelation 16, John was shown the pouring forth of the final seven bowls which contained God's wrath. At the pouring of the seventh bowl, God's voice was heard from the *Temple*^[5.2.73] saying, "It is done!" (Rev. 16:17). Even though judgment is said to be complete at the pouring of the final bowl, we saw that several more chapters were still ahead before the kingdom of God finally arrives on earth and Satan is bound in preparation for the *Millennial Kingdom*^[5.2.39] to follow (Rev. 20:1-3). Revelation 17, 18, and 19 provide additional background concerning the judgment of Babylon and the overthrow of the kingdoms of man in favor of the kingdom of God and His Christ (Rev. 11:15).

In Revelation 17 and 18 John is shown the *Harlot*^[5.2.25], Babylon the Great (Rev. 17:5, 18)—both her background and ultimate destruction. In this chapter, John sees the exultation in heaven at the destruction of the Harlot on the earth below. Then he sees the marriage of the Lamb which is followed by the return of Jesus Christ to earth at His victorious Second Coming. Revelation 19 can be considered the *apex* of the book of Revelation because it describes the most important event remaining in history.

The kingdom of the *Beast*^[5.2.9] has wasted the earth (Isa. 14:16-17) and great darkness prevails. Those who follow God have been more intensely exterminated than at any time in history past. The saints that remain on earth lack the mark of the Beast needed for commercial activity (Rev. 13:17) and place their lives in danger by refusing to worship the Beast (Rev. 13:15). They are either in hiding, living off the black market, or they are in the special place of protection provided by God (see *Sheep in Bozrah*^[3.12.6.1]). All *appears* to be lost.

Then, at the darkest hour—which is always just before the dawn—heaven is opened and the long-awaited Saviour is seen riding forth with the armies of heaven in glorious array! Millennia of expectant waiting *finally* comes to fruition in the arrival of the "KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS" to slaughter the rebellious at the *Campaign of Armageddon*^[4.5] and to institute the glorious age of righteous rule that is the Millennial Kingdom. (See *The Arrival of God's Kingdom*^[2.4.3].)

Not only is the Second Coming of Christ perhaps the most dramatic event in Scripture, it ends the continually downward trend of history. Although sin and death remain for another one thousand years (Isa. 65:20-25), the coming of the Righteous King to earth starts history on an upward path. The age of the Millennium on earth demonstrates what all of earth's history *should have been*—with truly righteous rule by a righteous Man. Even this, in all its fullness, is to be surpassed in the final state when both sin and death are vanquished and the new heavens and new earth become the final abode for the righteous of all ages with full communion with God (Rev. 21:4).

This is the sweep of history before us and explains why this chapter is the *Alleluia* chorus—the word alleluia appearing four times in this chapter and nowhere else in the *NT*^[5.2.48].¹

After these things

After these things is Μετὰ ταῦτα [*Meta tauta*], the common phrase which separates portions of John's vision. The phrase indicates a sequential relationship between portions of John's vision as they are given, but the various portions are not necessarily chronological in their historical sequence. For example, John is shown the destruction of Babylon under the seventh bowl judgment (Rev. 16:19) *before* he is shown additional details concerning Babylon (Rev. 17).

I heard a loud voice of a great multitude in heaven

John heard a similar voice (or noise) from heaven when the 144,000 redeemed of Israel learned the new song (Rev. 14:2-3). There, the voice (or noise) was not explicitly identified as a multitude, but mention was made of numerous harps so it is probably a similar heavenly multitude in both scenes.

The voices are of all those in heaven including: (1) the voices of the Church, having been *raptured*^[4.14] before the Tribulation, (2) the voices of the Tribulation saints, many of whom were martyred (Rev. 6:9; 7:14; 12:11; 13:7, 15; 15:2; 16:6; 20:4), and (3) the voices of various ranks of angels. They sing in unison as one mighty, thunderous voice (Rev. 19:6).

Alleluia!

A transliteration of the Hebrew, הַלְלוּ־יָהּ [hal'êlû-yāh], a command: *You all praise Jah!* (e.g., Ps. 106:48).² The first occurrence of the word *Hallelujah* in the OT corresponds with the context of its usage here: “Sinners shall be consumed out of the earth, and the wicked shall be no more. Bless Jehovah, O my soul. Hallelujah!” (Ps. 104:35, *Darby’s Translation*).³

Salvation and glory and honor and power

The great multitude, who came out of the Great Tribulation, attributed salvation to both God and the Lamb (Rev. 7:9-10). Salvation from God is said to have come at the casting out of Satan, the accuser of the brethren, from heaven (Rev. 12:10). Glory and honor and power are attributed to God by the twenty-four elders because of His act of creation (Rev. 4:11). Every creature in heaven and on earth gives glory and honor and power to both God the Father and the Lamb (Rev. 5:13). Their praise recognizes the salvation found in the redemption provided by the Lamb: “You are worthy to take the scroll, and to open its seals; for You were slain and have redeemed us to God by Your blood” (Rev. 5:9) and “Worthy is the Lamb who was slain” (Rev. 5:12). Here, salvation is probably broader than personal redemption, but includes the rescue of all of creation, and especially the earth, from the corrupting influence of the Harlot (Rev. 19:2). See *Worship of God*^[2.4.2].

3.19.2 - Revelation 19:2

true and righteous are His judgments

The same attributes attributed to the Father here are attributed to the Lamb Who rides forth on the white horse Who is “Faithful and **True**, and in **righteousness He judges**” [emphasis added] (Rev. 19:11). See commentary on *Revelation 19:11*^[3.19.11].

The judgments of God are accurately assessed (true), utterly just, even *required* (righteous). “Righteous *are* You, O LORD, and upright *are* Your judgments” (Ps. 119:137). At the pouring forth of the third bowl, the angel from the altar made the same declaration, “true and righteous *are* Your judgments” (Rev. 16:7). When we consider the great upheaval and destruction which is the Tribulation, how quick we are to question God’s righteous punishment of sin! As the text reminds us time and time again, the severity of the judgments described in the book of Revelation are not evidence of God’s unfairness. Rather, their severity is a *testimony to His righteousness*—for only He knows the full breadth and depth of the sin which He now judges. “The judgments of the LORD *are true and righteous* altogether. More to be desired *are they* than gold, yea, than much fine gold; sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb” (Ps. 19:9b-10). See commentary on *Revelation 16:5*^[3.16.5] and *Revelation 16:7*^[3.16.7].

He has judged

In the praise of the multitude is found the fulfillment of God’s reply to the cry of the martyrs of the fifth seal:

And they cried with a loud voice, saying, “**How long, O Lord, holy and true, until You judge and avenge our blood** on those who dwell on the earth?” Then a white robe was given to each of them; and it was said to them that they should rest a little while longer, until both *the number of* their fellow servants and their brethren, who would be killed as they *were*, was completed. (Rev. 6:10-11) [emphasis added]

The cry of the martyrs reminds God that He is *holy and true*. His holiness requires judgment of sin. His true character guarantees He will deliver judgment. If He withheld judgment, He would be neither *holy* nor *true*.

the great harlot

The great harlot is τὴν πόρνην τὴν μεγάλην [tēn pornēn tēn megalēn]: *the harlot, the great [one]*. Although there have been many harlots upon the earth, this is a unique harlot among them—“the mother of harlots” (Rev. 17:5). John was told by an angel that he would be shown “the judgment of the great harlot” (Rev. 17:1). Her judgment is the subject of Revelation 17 and 18, and is not complete until the events of *both* chapters have transpired. The multitude declares the events of both chapters as a *single* judgment of the *Harlot*^[5.2.25], which is the city. There is no intimation of two judgments, as if

the Harlot was some other entity than the city itself. If the Harlot is taken as being something other than the city, then Scripture fails to record any heavenly exultation over the destruction of the city itself. This exultation over the great Harlot is in response to the destruction of the *city*. See *The Great Harlot*^[4.1.4].

who corrupted the earth with her fornication

Corrupted is ἔθειρεν [*etheiren*]: *she ruined*: “*Ruin, destroy; . . . in morals and religion seduce, corrupt, mislead.*”⁴ She made all the nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication (Rev. 14:8). See commentary on *Revelation 14:8*^[3.14.8]. She committed fornication both with the kings of the earth and its inhabitants (Rev. 17:1). See commentary on *Revelation 17:1*^[3.17.1]. The entire earth was involved because of her influence: sitting on peoples, multitudes, nations, and tongues (Rev. 17:15).

He has avenged on her the blood of His servants shed by her

The servants of God include saints, prophets, and apostles—all those who fear and trust Him (Rev. 10:7; 11:18; 15:3; 19:5; 22:3). The book of Revelation was given to His servants (Rev. 1:1; 22:6). It was God’s servants who were seduced to commit sexual immorality by *Jezebel*^[5.2.35] in the church at Thyatira (Rev. 2:20). Those who serve God have been a prime target of persecution throughout history, but never more so than during the Tribulation. The Harlot was “drunk with the blood of the saints and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus” (Rev. 17:6). In her “was found the blood of prophets and saints, and of all who were slain on the earth” (Rev. 18:24). See commentary on *Revelation 18:24*^[3.18.24].

Since she rode upon the *Beast*^[5.2.9] with *seven heads*^[4.3.2.4] throughout history and sat upon all nations, she influenced those on the earth to persecute the saints. Her persecuting role found its climax in the Tribulation when she influenced the *earth dwellers*^[5.2.18] to execute multitudes of martyrs who had the testimony of Christ (Rev. 6:9; 7:14; 12:11; 13:7, 15; 15:2; 16:6; 20:4).

It is *God* Who shall avenge His servants—they are not to avenge themselves (Mtt. 26:51-53). Yet Scripture records times when God’s judgment is carried out through human intermediaries. In the days of Jezebel, God anointed Jehu as king and avenged His servants at the hand of the king: “Thus says the LORD God of Israel: ‘I have anointed you king over the people of the LORD, over Israel. You shall strike down the house of Ahab your master, that I may avenge the blood of My servants the prophets, and the blood of all the servants of the LORD, at the hand of Jezebel.’” (2K. 9:6b-7). Similarly, God’s judgment against the Harlot was carried out by the Beast and his ten kings (Rev. 17:16). See commentary on *Revelation 17:16*^[3.17.16] and *Revelation 18:20*^[3.18.20].

3.19.3 - Revelation 19:3

Alleluia!

See commentary on *Revelation 19:1*^[3.19.1].

Her smoke rises up

Rises up is ἀναβαίνει [*anabainei*], present tense: *it presently rises*. The same verb tense appears in Revelation 14:10 which describes the ongoing torment of the *Beast*^[5.2.9] worshipers in the Lake of Fire: “And the smoke of their torment [presently] ascends forever and ever” (Rev. 14:11a). Like the torment of the Beast worshipers, the smoke of Babylon’s destruction continually rises to emphasize the ongoing reality of her destruction.

forever and ever!

εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας τῶν αἰώνων [*eis tous aiōnas tōn aiōnōn*]: *into the ages of the ages*. From the time of her destruction and throughout the *Millennial Kingdom*^[5.2.39], the area which was once Babylon will be burning pitch and a prison for demons (Rev. 18:2). The text implies that her destruction is so permanent that the land itself will be continually dangerous and unavailable to humans:

Its streams shall be turned into pitch, and its dust into brimstone; its land shall become burning pitch. It shall not be quenched night or day; its smoke shall ascend forever. From generation to generation it shall lie waste; no one shall pass through it forever and ever. (Isa. 34:9-10)

Forever and ever has several aspects: (1) the destruction of the city is permanent—it will never be

found again; (2) those destroyed in her will suffer eternally in the Lake of Fire; (3) the area occupied by the city will continually burn until the new heavens and the new earth, when the first earth passes away (Rev. 21:1). See *The Destruction of Babylon*^[4.1.2].

3.19.4 - Revelation 19:4

the twenty-four elders

The elders were first seen seated on thrones around God's throne (Rev. 4:4). They are probably representatives of the Church. See commentary on *Revelation 4:4*^[3.4.4].

the four living creatures

The four living creatures were first seen by John in the midst of the throne. They are of a high angelic order, probably cherubim. See commentary on *Revelation 4:6*^[3.4.6].

fell down and worshiped God who sat on the throne

The scene is much like that which John first saw when he was transported to heaven in the Spirit to see the twenty-four elders and living creatures worshipping before God's throne. The elders are found near the throne and continually falling in worship in recognition of the great acts of God. When John first saw the elders, they were falling before God, casting their crowns before the throne, and extolling His greatness in creation (Rev. 4:10). Later, when the Lamb took the scroll prior to loosing its seals, the elders fall in worship and adoration while singing a song of redemption (Rev. 5:7-9, 14). When the great multitude who came out of the Great Tribulation give praise to God and the Lamb, the elders fall on their faces in worship (Rev. 7:9-11). At the sounding of the seventh trumpet, when the kingdoms of this world are declared to have become the kingdom of God and His Christ, the elders fall in worship (Rev. 11:15-16). The participation of the elders falling in worship here indicates the great importance attached to the destruction of Babylon by heaven. God gains glory by her destruction, an important step on the way to establishing the *Millennial Kingdom*^[5.2.39] on earth.

Amen! Alleluia!

Amen means *truly*, as when expressing agreement. See commentary on *Revelation 3:14*^[3.3.14]. *Alleluia* means *praise God*. See commentary on *Revelation 19:1*^[3.19.1]. The elders and living creatures agree with the statement of the multitude and add their own praise.

3.19.5 - Revelation 19:5

a voice came from the throne

The voice comes from near the throne. It is not the voice of God Himself, as indicated by what is said: "Praise *our* God." It is probably the voice of an angel of high rank, such as one of the living creatures.

Praise our God all you His servants

Praise is ἀίνετε [aineite], second person, plural, imperative command: *you all praise!* "You who fear the LORD, praise Him! All you descendants of Jacob, glorify Him, and fear Him, all you offspring of Israel" (Ps. 22:23). Many of those who praise are the very servants who's blood was shed by the *Harlot*^[5.2.25] (Rev. 19:2). They praise all the more because God has avenged their martyrdom. Having experienced greater depths of persecution, they have greater ability to extol and elevate God.

Behold, bless the LORD, all *you* servants of the LORD, who by night stand in the house of the LORD! Lift up your hands *in* the sanctuary, and bless the LORD. The LORD who made heaven and earth bless you from Zion! (Ps. 134:1-3)

Praise the LORD! Praise the name of the LORD; praise *Him*, O you servants of the LORD! You who stand in the house of the LORD, in the courts of the house of our God, praise the LORD, for the LORD *is* good; sing praises to His name, for *it is* pleasant. (Ps. 135:1-3)

and those who fear Him, both small and great!

Some manuscripts omit *and* (καὶ [kai]). If included, it should probably be translated as *even* since the clause which follows provides additional description of the servants and does not denote a separate category of persons. *Fear* of God is an important aspect of understanding Who He is (Acts 10:2). See commentary on *Revelation 11:18*^[3.11.18]. The company of the redeemed knows no boundaries and

includes those who have had considerable influence and power in life, as well as those who are entirely unknown to the world. The cross of Christ is the great equalizer among men.

3.19.6 - Revelation 19:6

the voice of a great multitude

See commentary on *Revelation 19:1*^[3.19.1].

as the sound of many waters

This phrase describes the roar which attends heavenly voices and noises of great magnitude (Eze. 1:24; 43:2). John heard Christ's voice as the "sound of many waters" (Rev. 1:15).

as the sound of mighty thunderings

The voice of mighty heavenly creatures (Rev. 6:1; 10:3-4) and the sound of the multitude of voices is like that of powerful thunder. The heavenly multitude which attended the song of the 144,000 redeemed from among Israel also was like loud thunder (Rev. 14:2). The loudest electronic amplification system of any earthly praise will dwindle to insignificance in comparison to the thunderous praise from heaven at the accomplishment of God in His omnipotence!

Alleluia!

See commentary on *Revelation 19:1*^[3.19.1].

Imagine the largest stadium in the world, filled to overflowing with a thundering crowd. Now multiply that by one thousand, ten thousand, even myriad of myriads (Rev. 5:11)! Gather all the world's instruments together with all the heavenly instruments—instruments and sounds and voices of unimaginable purity, power, and magnificence. On command, they all shout forth: *ALLELUIA!*

Surely, in the spiritual realm, this thunderous praise is already beginning to erode the strength of the dragon and his unclean spirits who, at this very hour, are gathering the kings of the earth to their impending slaughter below (Rev. 16:13-14).

the Lord God Omnipotent reigns

Omnipotent is παντοκράτωρ [*pantokratōr*]. See commentary on *Revelation 1:8*^[3.1.8].

God is omnipotent, all-powerful: none of His purposes can be withheld or frustrated. "I know that You can do everything, and that no purpose of Yours can be withheld from You" (Job 42:2). "Ah, Lord GOD! Behold, You have made the heavens and the earth by Your great power and outstretched arm. There is nothing too hard for You" (Jer. 32:17). Jesus said, "With God all things are possible" (Mtt. 19:26b).

Who has measured the waters in the hollow of His hand, measured heaven with a span and calculated the dust of the earth in a measure? Weighed the mountains in scales and the hills in a balance? Who has directed the Spirit of the LORD, or as His counselor has taught Him? With whom did He take counsel, and who instructed Him, and taught Him in the path of justice? Who taught Him knowledge, and showed Him the way of understanding? Behold, the nations are as a drop in a bucket, and are counted as the small dust on the scales; look, He lifts up the isles as a very little thing. (Isa. 40:12-15)

Reigns is ἐβασίλευσεν [*ebasileusen*]: "rule over, control completely."⁵ "The aorist ἐβασίλευσεν [*ebasileusen*] is proleptic and ingressive. Looking back from the future point when the climactic battle of Rev. 19:19-21 is complete, the verb tense sees God's assumption of power in reigning over the earth."⁶ In one sense, God has and always will reign supreme. His rule over all creation has never been, nor ever will be in question: "Your throne is established from of old" (Ps. 93:2a), "The LORD reigns: let the peoples tremble! . . . He is high above all the peoples" (Ps. 99:1a-2). In another sense, the physical reign of God on earth has been corrupted by fallen men and usurped by Satan. It is in this sense—the mediatorial rule of God on earth through men—that events are now rapidly moving to bring God's kingdom to earth.

Our Father in heaven. Hallowed be Your name. **Your kingdom come. Your will be done. On earth as it is in heaven.** (Mtt. 6:9b-10). [emphasis added]

The worship of the multitude restates the announcement which attended the sounding of the seventh trumpet: "The kingdoms of this world have become *the kingdoms* of our Lord and His Christ, and He

shall reign forever and ever!” (Rev. 11:15). In the destruction of Babylon, the world is but a hair-breadth away from the institution of God’s literal earthly kingdom. All that remains is the destruction of the *Beast*^[5.2.9] and the kings of the earth at the *Campaign of Armageddon*^[4.5] (Rev. 19:17-21).

3.19.7 - Revelation 19:7

Let us be glad and rejoice and give Him glory for . . .

Their gladness and rejoicing is *because* the marriage has come. As in the First Coming of Christ, a long period of waiting is about to conclude (Zec. 9:9). The hopes and dreams of his servants will find consummation in His approaching intimacy.

The marriage of the Lamb has come

The time has arrived for Christ to marry His bride. We believe the bride is the Church, having been previously taken to heaven in the *Rapture*^[4.14]. Eve, having been formed from Adam’s body, was organically united with him (Gen. 2:21-24). In a similar way, the Church, consisting of all those baptized into the body of Christ by the Spirit (1Cor. 12:13), is spiritually joined with Christ in a unique way. She is His Church (Mtt. 16:18) which He now weds. See *Marriage of the Lamb*^[4.10].

His wife has made herself ready

Has made herself ready is ἡτοίμασεν ἑαυτὴν [*hētoimasen heautēn*]: *she has prepared herself*. She is both the subject and the object (*herself*) of the preparation. The puzzling aspect of her having prepared herself is answered in an understanding of the relationship between faith and works. Scripture teaches that true Biblical works are the result of faith (Jas. 2:17-18). Scripture also teaches that faith is a gift from God (John 6:44; Acts 11:18; Rom. 12:3; Eph. 2:8; Php. 1:29). Thus, she made herself ready *by the power of God working in her*. Paul said this very same thing: he labored, even striving, but that which was working in Him was of God. So it is with the wife of the Lamb.

To them God willed to make known what are the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles: which is Christ in you, the hope of glory. Him we preach, warning every man and teaching every man in all wisdom, that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus. To this **end I also labor, striving according to His working which works in me mightily**. (Col. 1:27-29) [emphasis added]

Later, John will be shown the New Jerusalem which is also said to be the wife of the Lamb. Like the church, she too is *prepared*:

Then I, John, saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. (Rev. 21:2).

Then one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls filled with the seven last plagues came to me and talked with me, saying, “Come, I will show you the bride, the Lamb’s wife.” And he carried me away in the Spirit to a great and high mountain, and showed me the great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God. (Rev. 21:9-10)

When the *Marriage of the Lamb*^[4.10] takes place, the descent of the New Jerusalem is at least one thousand years in the future. The city will eventually be presented as a bride, but does not participate in the marriage described here.

The bride is a figure for a material city yet to come as well as for the inhabitants of that city. The bride-figure cannot be limited to the individuals who will live in the city. It must also include the literal city with her physical characteristics (Alford).⁷

The New Jerusalem is the bride of the Lamb in the sense of the promised restoration of Jerusalem having found its ultimate fulfillment. See *Jerusalem Married to God*^[4.10.4]. See commentary on *Revelation 21:9*^[3.21.9].

The participation of the bride in her own preparation argues against any view which takes the bride as being merely the New Jerusalem (Rev. 21:2, 9) because the city on its own is inanimate.

The preparation of the bride includes her judgment at the judgment seat (*bema*) of Christ:

Believers have to make themselves ready ere they enter on their eternal glory. That is, the story of earth has to be gone over again in the presence of Him who is Christ (2Cor. 5:10). The light of the throne will be cast over and upon every moment of our lives, discovering the hidden, and bringing out the true character of acts, and words, and service. . . . This, and more is the application of the judgment seat of

Christ to the heavenly saints and *precedes* the marriage. . . The light of the throne has done its blessed word, bringing out into bold relief the whole story of her history on earth.⁸

Many references in the New Testament present the truth that the church will be judged by Christ Himself (Rom. 14:10-12; 1Cor. 3:11-16; 4:1-5; 9:24-27; 2Cor. 5:10-11; 2Ti. 4:8). Inasmuch as the translation of the church, from the *pretribulation*^[5.2.60] point of view, has already separated the righteous from the unrighteous, only saved people will be involved in the judgment of Christ in connection with the church. The judgment will have as its supreme question the matter of reward.⁹

3.19.8 - Revelation 19:8

And to her it was granted to be arrayed in fine linen

It was granted is εδόθη [*edothē*], often translated: *it was given*. *To be arrayed* is ἵνα περιβάλῃται [*Hina peribalētai*], middle voice, subjective mood: *so that she might clothe herself*.

In one of His parables, Jesus compared the kingdom of heaven to a king who gave a wedding feast for his son (Mtt. 22:2-14). Those who were invited to the feast would not come. So the king sent his servants out to invite whoever would come. At the time of the supper, the king encountered a man who did not have on a wedding garment. Because of his lack of proper clothing, he was cast out into outer darkness.

In this *parable*^[5.2.54], the king is Father God and His Son is Jesus Christ, the Lamb. The wedding feast is the wedding feast of the Lamb. Those who were invited are the nation of Israel. Those from the nations who eventually attend are those who accept the gospel as it went forth to all nations after the rejection of Jesus by Israel. The importance of having the wedding garment is seen in the response of the king to the man. The proper wedding attire is provided by the redemption of Christ. It is the imputed *righteousness of God* (Rom. 3:21-26). The man who was cast out of the marriage feast was ignorant of God's righteousness and sought to establish his own righteousness. He rejected the wedding garment provided by the king and so was ultimately found unfit to participate.

The bride is *given* the fine linen by her groom:

Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her, that **He might sanctify and cleanse her** with the washing of water by the word, that **He might present her to Himself a glorious church**, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish. (Eph. 5:25-27) [emphasis added]

Some suggest that the marriage itself does not take place in heaven—that the statement, “the marriage of the Lamb has come,” is to be understood as a proleptic statement which has the *Millennial Kingdom*^[5.2.39] in view.¹⁰ This view fails to explain the plain meaning of the text which implies that the bride is being attired prior to Christ's return. The bride is granted her wedding garments now and found to be wearing them when she rides forth with Christ at the Second Coming (Rev. 19:14). This indicates that the wedding itself takes place in heaven prior to the Second Coming:

One further matter of reconciliation requires a separation of the wedding itself (Rev. 19:7) from the wedding feast (Rev. 19:9). It is necessary to have the marriage initiated in heaven after the *Rapture*^[4.14] of the saints, because when Christ's army of saints return with Him to earth, they will have already put on their wedding apparel (Rev. 19:8, 14). So the initiation of the union happens in heaven, but the celebration of that union with a grand wedding feast ensues on earth.¹¹

clean and bright

The twenty-four elders are clothed in white robes (Rev. 4:4) as are the angels (Luke 24:4; Acts 1:10; Rev. 15:6). Those coming out of the Great Tribulation were also seen in white robes, having washed them white in the blood of the Lamb (Rev. 7:13-14).

The bride of the Lamb is to be contrasted with the *Harlot*^[5.2.25]. Both wear fine linen, but of different colors. The bride's is clean and bright, denoting her sinlessness before God, having been washed in the blood of the Lamb (Rev. 1:7). The Harlot wore purple and scarlet indicating her sinful luxurious living (Rev. 18:12). The clean and bright linen which the bride wears corresponds to the clothing promised to the overcomers in the church at Sardis (Rev. 3:4). Jesus told the Laodicean church that the white garments are to be obtained *from Christ* (Rev. 3:18).

The cleansing of the stain of sin in the lives of the faithful is illustrated in a passage from Zechariah. Joshua stands before the Lord clothed in filthy garments and the *accuser of the brethren* stands near, no doubt pointing to the filthiness of Joshua. The Lord responds rebuking Satan and removing Joshua's iniquity after which he is given rich robes to wear:

Then he showed me Joshua the high priest standing before the Angel of the LORD, and Satan standing at his right hand to oppose him. And the LORD said to Satan, "The LORD rebuke you, Satan! The LORD who has chosen Jerusalem rebuke you! *Is this not a brand plucked from the fire?*" Now Joshua was clothed with filthy garments, and was standing before the Angel. Then He answered and spoke to those who stood before Him, saying, "Take away the filthy garments from him." And to him He said, "See, I have removed your iniquity from you, and I will clothe you with rich robes." (Zec. 3:1-4)

It is by this same means—by God's provision of the blood sacrifice of the Lamb—that the bride will obtain her clothing. "We can wear the divine righteousness because He, first of all, wore the blood-stained garment."¹²

for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints.

Righteous acts is δικαίωματα [*dikaiōmata*]: *righteous [things]*. Her righteous acts are not found on their own. Truly righteous acts are always found in company with and motivated by faith:

But do you want to know, O foolish man, that faith without works is dead? Was not Abraham our father justified by works when he offered Isaac his son on the altar? **Do you see that faith was working together with his works, and by works faith was made perfect?** And the Scripture was fulfilled which says, "Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness." And he was called the friend of God. You see then that a man is justified by works, and not by faith only. (Jas. 2:20-24) [emphasis added]

Pentecost suggests the plural δικαίωματα [*dikaiōmata*] does not denote imparted righteousness, but righteousnesses which have survived judgment at the judgment seat of Christ:

It must be observed that the "righteousness of the saints" is plural and can not refer to the imparted righteousness of Christ, which is the believer's portion, but the righteousnesses which have survived examination and have become the basis for reward [1Cor. 3:9-15].¹³

It is the *bride* which wears the fine linen which is identified as the righteous acts of the saints. The characteristics described of the bride: her making herself ready, her requiring clean clothing, and her linen being the righteous acts of the saints, identify those who have been redeemed.

I will greatly rejoice in the LORD, My soul shall be joyful in my God; for **He has clothed me with the garments of salvation, He has covered me with the robe of righteousness**, as a bridegroom decks *himself* with ornaments, and as a bride adorns *herself* with her jewels. (Isa. 61:10) [emphasis added]

3.19.9 - Revelation 19:9

Then he said to me, "Write: Blessed are those . . ."

The person speaking is the angel who showed John "the judgment of the great harlot who sits on many waters" (Rev. 17:1). Since the same angel has been with John throughout Revelation 17, 18, and the first part of 19, it is best to understand Revelation 17:1 through Revelation 19:4 as a unified passage wherein the angel shows John *the judgment* (singular) of *the great harlot* (singular). This is more evidence indicating the identity of the *Harlot*^[5.2.25] as the city—that there are not two judgments, but only one. The Harlot which is the city is judged by God at the hand of the *Beast*^[5.2.9] and his ten kings (Rev. 17:16). See *One or Two Babylons*?^[4.1.4.2.2]

The angel reminds John of his original commission, to write down the things which he is being shown (Rev. 1:19; 2:1, 8, 12, 18; 3:1, 7, 14; 10:4; 14:13).

Those who are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb are blessed because the supper will take place in the kingdom of God: "Now when one of those who sat at the table with Him heard these things, he said to Him, 'Blessed is he who shall eat bread in the kingdom of God!'" (Luke 14:15).

Attendance at the supper is equivalent to finding entry into the kingdom of God. This is one of seven blessings given in the book of Revelation. See commentary on *Revelation 1:3*^[3.1.3].

who are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb

See *Marriage of the Lamb*^[4.10]. The Lamb is the Lion of the tribe of Judah, Jesus Christ, who prevailed to open the scroll with seven seals (Rev. 5:5-6).¹⁴ *Are called* is κλημένοι [*keklēmenoi*], perfect passive participle: *while having been called*. They were called in the past and now stand as invited guests.

Jesus' response to the faith of the Roman centurion (a Gentile) indicates who was invited:

When Jesus heard *it*, He marveled, and said to those who followed, "Assuredly, I say to you, I have not found such great faith, not even in Israel! And I say to you that many will come from east and west, and sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven. But the sons of the kingdom will be cast out into outer darkness. There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth." (Mtt. 8:10-12)

The "sons of the kingdom" are the Jews. They are the ones who were initially invited to the marriage supper, but refused to come. Therefore, the invitation went out to all nations (Mtt. 22:2-14).

The ones who are blessed are not the ones who were *invited, but refused to come*. It is the ones who were called according to God's election and predestination. See commentary on *Revelation 17:14*^[3.17.14]. They are the ones who are not only invited, but *accept the invitation* and turn to faith in Christ. Jesus indicated that although many would be called (κλητοί [*klētoi*]) to the marriage feast, few were chosen (εκλεκτοί [*eklektōi*]) (Mtt. 22:14). Only the chosen ones come to faith in Christ and actually attend the feast. This includes the saints of all ages who will sit down and eat with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

Since the bride needs no invitation to the marriage supper,¹⁵ those mentioned here are a separate body of saints who are not part of the church, having never been baptized into the body of Christ. They are the saved who died before the Day of Pentecost or who came to faith after the Restrainer was removed in the *Rapture*^[4.14] of the Church. See *Who is the Restrainer?*^[4.14.2]

Since the banquet includes the saints of all ages (not just the bride), this also indicates the feast will be held during the *Millennial Kingdom*^[5.2.39]. In order for Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob to participate, it will have to follow their resurrection (Isa. 26:19; Dan. 12:2). In order for the Tribulation martyrs to participate, it will also have to follow *their* resurrection (Rev. 20:4).

It is with the Marriage Feast that the Millennium will begin, . . . the invitations . . . go out to all the redeemed who are not members of the Church, i.e., the Old Testament and Tribulation saints soon to be resurrected.¹⁶

It is in the kingdom of God, when the Messianic Kingdom comes on earth, that Jesus will once again eat the Passover:

Then He said to them, "With *fervent* desire I have desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer; for I say to you, I will no longer eat of it until it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God." Then He took the cup, and gave thanks, and said, "Take this and divide *it* among yourselves; for I say to you, I will not drink of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes." (Luke 22:15-18)

Since the marriage supper consistently is used in reference to Israel on the earth, it may be best to . . . view the marriage of the Lamb as that event in the heavens in which the church is eternally united to Christ and the marriage feast or supper as the millennium, to which Jews and Gentiles will be invited, which takes place on earth, during which time the bridegroom is honored through the display of the bride to all His friends who are assembled there.¹⁷

Jesus promised those in the church at Laodicea who opened to His knock that he would dine with them and that they would sit with Him on His throne. Since His throne, the throne of David, is taken up during the Millennial Kingdom, the promise likely extends to participation in the marriage supper. See commentary on *Revelation 3:20*^[3.3.20].

Some see the need to include the millennial saints and the mention of the New Jerusalem as the bride of the Lamb as an indication that the feast will be prolonged into the eternal state:

[The marriage feast] cannot transpire on earth in a completed sense until after the Millennium when the rest of the faithful from the thousand-year period combine with the martyrs and other saints to complete the body of the redeemed (Charles). The language of Rev. 21:2, 9 is quite explicit regarding the bride in the new heaven and the new earth (Lee). The better part of wisdom is to include both the Millennium

and the new heaven and the new earth as the prolonged wedding feast of the Lamb and His bride (cf. Rev. 19:9). It will commence with Christ's glorious appearance to initiate His kingdom on this present earth.¹⁸

These are the true sayings of God

That which John sees, hears, and records is *inspired*^[5.2.33] by the Holy Spirit, and therefore true. John bore witness to all the things which he saw and recorded (Rev. 1:2), angels bear witness of their truth (Rev. 19:9; 22:6), and even God Himself bears witness to the words of this revelation as being true and faithful (Rev. 21:5). See commentary on *Revelation 1:2*^[3.1.2].

3.19.10 - Revelation 19:10

I fell at his feet to worship him . . . see *that you do not do that!*

Later, after seeing the revelation of the New Jerusalem and the eternal state, John falls again before an angel to worship (Rev. 22:8). The events John sees, the glory of the angel, and the desire for John to worship are such that he is apparently overcome. Perhaps what transpires is best explained by the divine purpose in what results: a stronger emphasis on the prohibition of the worship of angels.

In our own day, many confuse the uniqueness of the Creator with that which He has created. Angels, like men, are created beings. Thus, they are not to be objects of worship: "Let no one cheat you of your reward, taking delight in *false* humility and worship of angels, intruding into those things which he has not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind" (Col. 2:18). When we see people placing great emphasis upon angels, even worshiping them (Satan being an angel), we see the effects of the reprobate mind which rejects God. Those who exchanged the truth of God for the lie "worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator" (Rom. 1:25). This Creator/creature distinction is the ultimate reason why Jesus refused to yield to the temptation of Satan—for it would have meant the Creator worshiping one of His creatures (Mtt. 4:9-10)!

Unlike John, no rebuke was given when Joshua fell on his face to worship the Commander of the army of the LORD. In fact, the Commander said, "Take your sandal off your foot, for the place where you stand *is* holy" (Jos. 5:15b). Earlier, when John first saw the glorified Jesus, he fell at His feet as dead (Rev. 1:17). The absence of any rebuke in the foregoing situations indicates that the object of worship was none other than God—Jesus Christ!

I am your fellow servant, and of your brethren

Like the people of God, the elect angels are His servants and do His will (Ps. 103:20; Dan. 7:10; Luke 1:19; Heb. 1:14). Angels can be considered to be John's brothers in the sense that they share in the mission of carrying out God's will. They can also be considered his brothers because, like believers, they are "sons of God." Angels are called "sons of God" (Gen. 6:2, 4; Job 1:6; 2:1; 38:7) because, like Jesus (Luke 1:35) and Adam (Luke 3:38), they were created by a direct act of God. This can be said for all those who are spiritually born of God (Luke 20:36; John 1:12; Rom. 8:14, 19; Gal. 3:26). It is in this dual sense of doing God's will and having their genesis in God that the angel could say he was of John's brethren, the saints.

who have the testimony of Jesus

Although John bore witness to the testimony of Jesus, the testimony *provided* by Jesus (subjective genitive, Rev. 1:2), he suffered exile to Patmos because of what he testified *concerning* Jesus (objective genitive, Rev. 1:9). Later, when John attempts to worship the angel who shows him the New Jerusalem (Rev. 22:9), the angel reminds John once again that he is of John's brethren. Here, the brethren "have the testimony of Jesus." There, the angel refers to the brethren as those who "keep the words of this book". If the two phrases are equivalent, then the testimony emphasizes the preservation of the revelation provided by Jesus to John (Rev. 1:1). Preservation of the words is of little value if they are not promulgated to those who have yet to hear. Those who come to faith believe the testimony of the Father *concerning* the Son (1Jn. 5:9-10). See commentary on *Revelation 1:2*^[3.1.2].

Worship God!

When Cornelius met Peter, he fell down and worshiped him, but Peter stood him on his feet and

explained that, like Cornelius, he was just a man like Cornelius (Acts 10:25-26). After seeing a miraculous healing by Paul, the people of Lystra attempted to sacrifice to Barnabas and Paul. Paul explained that he and Barnabas were also men of the same nature (Acts 14:10-15). The first of the Ten Commandments written by the finger of God specifies that men “shall have no other gods before Me” (Ex. 20:3). The second commandment prohibits the making of carved images nor bowing down to them. This includes any likeness of something in heaven, on the earth, in the sea, or under the earth (Ex. 20:4). Therefore, the worship of angels is prohibited. When Satan tempted Jesus to worship him, Jesus replied, “Away with you, Satan! For it is written, ‘You shall worship the LORD your God, and Him only you shall serve’ ” (Mtt. 4:10).

For the testimony of Jesus

Testimony is μαρτυρία [*martyria*]: “attestation,”¹⁹ “with Christ as the content . . . witness of (or about) Jesus.”²⁰ The phrase *testimony of Jesus* can be understood in two ways. If Jesus is the *subject*, then Jesus is the source of the testimony (subjective genitive). If Jesus is the *object*, then the testimony concerns Jesus (objective genitive). Does this verse teach that *the testimony from Jesus* is the spirit of prophecy? Or that *the testimony about Jesus* is the spirit of prophecy? Both of these statements are certainly true. For it is the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of Christ (John 14:18; Rom. 8:9; 1Pe. 1:11) Who is the *source* of all prophecy (see below) and the primary focus of the revelation He provides *concerns* Jesus. See commentary on *Revelation 1:1*^[3.1.1] and *Revelation 1:2*^[3.1.2].

In the book of Revelation, the testimony (or witness) *to* Jesus dominates as the reason for the persecution and martyrdom of the saints (Rev. 1:9; 6:9; 11:7; 12:11, 17; 20:4). Scripture records the volume of the book is written of Him (Ps. 40:7; Heb. 10:7). On the road to Emmaus, Jesus said, “O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken! Ought not the Christ to have suffered these things and to enter into His glory?” (Luke 24:25a). Then Luke records, “And beginning at Moses and all the Prophets, He expounded to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself” (Luke 24:25b). Later, Jesus appeared to His disciples and explained, “all things must be fulfilled which were written in the Law of Moses and *the* Prophets and *the* Psalms concerning Me” (Luke 24:44). Jesus told the Pharisees, “You search the Scriptures, for in them you think you have eternal life, and these are they which testify of Me” (John 5:39). Paul said that to Jesus, “all the prophets witness” (Acts 10:43a). Peter said, “Of this salvation [through Jesus] the prophets have inquired and searched carefully, who prophesied of the grace *that would come* to you, searching what, or what manner of time, the Spirit of Christ who was in them was indicating when He testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ and the glories that would follow” (1Pe. 1:10-11).

is the spirit of prophecy.

All revelation given by God through His prophets was by the Spirit. “The Spirit of the LORD spoke by me, and His word *was* on my tongue” (2S. 23:2). “But truly I am full of power by the Spirit of the LORD, and of justice and might, to declare to Jacob his transgression and to Israel his sin” (Mic. 3:8). When Jesus referred to David’s statement in Psalm 110, He said, “How then does David in the Spirit call Him ‘Lord’?” (Mtt. 22:43). Peter said, “this Scripture had to be fulfilled, which the Holy Spirit spoke before by the mouth of David concerning Judas” (Acts 1:16). Jesus said it would be by “the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father” that the apostles would receive testimony concerning Him (John 15:26), “He will tell you things to come” (John 16:13). The *NT*^[5.2.48] prophet Agabus “stood up and showed by the Spirit that there as going to be a great famine throughout all the world” (Acts 11:28). Later, he took Paul’s belt, bound his own hands and feet, and said, “Thus says the Holy Spirit, ‘So shall the Jews at Jerusalem bind the man who owns this belt, and deliver *him* into the hands of the Gentiles’ ” (Acts 21:11). Two passages written by Peter, by the power of the Spirit, are of particular importance:

Of this salvation the prophets have inquired and searched carefully, who prophesied of the grace *that would come* to you, searching what, or what manner of time, the Spirit of Christ who was in them was indicating when He testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ and the glories that would follow. To them it was revealed that, not to themselves, but to us they were ministering the things which now have been reported to you through those who have preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven—things which angels desire to look into. (1Pe. 1:10-12)

Peter indicates that it was “the Spirit of Christ who was in” the prophets that testified. Thus, the Spirit of Jesus was the *empowering source* of their testimony. Yet Peter also indicates that the Spirit

“testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ and the glories that would follow.” In other words, the message which the Spirit testified *concerned* Jesus Christ.

And so we have the prophetic word confirmed, which you do well to heed as a light that shines in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts; knowing this first, that no prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation, for prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke *as they were* moved by the Holy Spirit. (2Pe. 1:19-21)

Peter indicates that all prophecy came by the Spirit. When the prophets spoke, God spoke by His Spirit. They were moved (φερόμενοι [*pheromenoi*]) by the Holy Spirit. It was not their own will, but God’s initiative which produced their *inspired*^[5.2.33] testimony. They were born along by God’s Spirit much like a ship is driven by wind and weather (Acts 27:15). They were not in ultimate control, but were vessels which God moved according to His purpose (John 3:8).

3.19.11 - Revelation 19:11

Now I saw heaven opened

Opened is ἠνεώγημένον [*ēneōgmenon*], perfect tense participle: *having been opened*. Heaven was now open when John saw it, having been previously opened. Just like the door which John saw by which he first ascended in his vision (Rev. 4:1). See commentary on *Revelation 4:1*^[3.4.1].

a white horse

The overcomer who rode forth at the opening of the first seal also rode a white horse (Rev. 6:2). He was the one who was granted authority by God to overcome the saints for a season (Rev. 13:5) and to appear initially as a peacemaker (Dan. 9:27). Now, the peace that he brought is seen to be a false peace and the time has arrived for the True Overcomer to ride forth to defeat him (Rev. 19:20). See commentary on *Revelation 6:2*^[3.6.2].

He who sat on him

This is the Lamb, riding forth as a glorified man. Previously, He stood in the midst of the throne opening the seven seals (Rev. 5:6-8). Before that, He had been seated at the right hand of the Father (Rev. 3:21) awaiting the time to initiate the sequence of events which would culminate in His ride.

called Faithful and True

Previously, He was called the “faithful witness” (Rev. 1:5). His witness is faithful because it is impossible for Him to lie (Num. 23:19; Rom. 3:4; Tit. 1:2; Heb. 6:18). Therefore, He alone is a reliable witness to Himself (John 8:14). He referred to Himself as “truth” (John 14:6). Because God alone is truly faithful, Jesus is holy—unique, like no other (Rev. 3:7). See commentary on *Revelation 1:5*^[3.1.5].

Because He is faithful [Rev. 19:11] He must discharge His office as judge, not shrinking from the administration of discipline or punishment where it is needed. Because He is true [Rev. 19:11] He cannot alter the standards of God which condemn sin. Favoritism and laxity cannot be found in Him, for He is the perfect administrator of justice in a world where injustice has long since reigned. . . . The meekness of Calvary and the sternness of Armageddon may seem inconsistent, but wherever sin exists, they may both be found.²¹

in righteousness He judges and makes war

Both are present-tense verbs: *He is judging and making war*. These are activities which take place at the time of His ride. Because His judgment is righteous, the *Campaign of Armageddon*^[4.5] will be a *just war*: “Gird Your sword upon *Your* thigh, O Mighty One, with Your glory and Your majesty. And in Your majesty ride [on a horse!] prosperously because of truth, humility, *and* righteousness” (Ps. 45:3-4a). The psalmist said, “For He is coming, for He is coming to judge the earth. He shall judge the world with righteousness and the peoples with His truth” (Ps. 96:13). The horrible slaughter, unique in all history (Rev. 14:20), will be completely just and a reflection of the absolute truth of man’s sinfulness and rebellion. Although man rationalizes his sinful condition with relativistic truth so as to deny his depravity, the judgment of God will assess his true condition. Man judges on a curve. God judges on an absolute scale. It is this difference which explains the magnitude of the slaughter as true justice.

His righteous judgment in the *Campaign of Armageddon*^[4.5] is the prelude to His righteous reign

during the *Millennial Kingdom*^[5.2.39] to follow as the “Branch of righteousness” (Jer. 23:5-6): “Of the increase of *His* government and peace *There will be* no end, upon the throne of David and over His kingdom, to order it and establish it with judgment and justice from that time forward, even forever. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this” (Isa. 9:7). “In mercy the throne will be established; and One will sit on it in truth, in the *tabernacle*^[5.2.69] of David, judging and seeking justice and hastening righteousness” (Isa. 16:5).

Even now, our own land languishes under unjust judgment. Having rejected the cornerstone of our judicial system, we are rapidly tilting toward calling that which is evil good and that which is good evil (Isa. 5:20). By the time of the end, the earth will utterly yearn for true justice.

Makes war is πολεμεῖ [*polemei*], the same root which is translated as the “**battle** of that great day of God Almighty” [emphasis added] (Rev. 16:14). See commentary on *Revelation 16:14*^[3.16.14]. See *Campaign of Armageddon*^[4.5].

Incredibly, many *preterists*^[5.2.59] do not see the Second Coming of Christ in the chapter before us:

There are some *fully-realized preterists* who do not believe that the Bible speaks of Christ coming to earth in the future [this is heresy]. They believe that all the references to the “*Second Coming*” in the Bible were fulfilled in A.D. 70. . . Most *preterist* commentators, however, seem to expect an actual coming of Christ in the future—much as do those who take other approaches to Revelation. Even these expositors, however, do not generally see the Second Coming of Christ in the passage before us. The coming of Christ on the white horse may be thought of by many as the quintessential vision of the Second Coming at the end of the present age, but most *preterists* agree with Jay Adams, who believes it applies to the continuing warfare of the church through the proclamation of the gospel following the fall of Babylon in the previous chapters.²²

It is difficult to know how to respond to such an unwillingness to take God’s word plainly. If most *preterists* don’t see the Second Coming of Christ in the passage before us, we wonder what, if anything, they *do see*? If the events of Revelation 19 do not describe the Second Coming of Christ, then we search in vain elsewhere in Scripture for a more detailed and dramatic account of this, the second most important event in history.

[This passage] answers specifically the theme verse of [Rev. 1:7 which tells of the worldwide audience this event will have (cf. Mtt. 24:27-31). In fact, this is the only event in Revelation that corresponds to that coming narrowly construed to refer to Christ’s personal coming.²³

See *Preterist Interpretation*^[2.12.2].

3.19.12 - Revelation 19:12

His eyes were like a flame of fire

His eyes match the description which John saw in his first vision of the glorified Christ (Rev. 1:14 cf. Rev. 2:18). His gaze is absolutely piercing and impossible to hide from. His absolute righteousness and the justice of His judgment would be impossible to endure except through identification with Him as one of His own: “Who can endure the day of His coming? And who can stand when He appears? For He *is* like a refiner’s fire and like launderers’ soap” (Mal. 3:2). See commentary on *Revelation 1:14*^[3.1.14].

on His head were many crowns

Crowns is διαδήματα [*diadēmata*]. He no longer wears the crown of thorns (Mtt. 27:29; Mark 15:17; John 19:2, 5). He is crowned with glory and honor and has been set by the Father over the works of His hands (Heb. 2:7-9). MacArthur suggests the many crowns are an indication of the crowns He will gather when He vanquishes the kings of the earth:

Many indicates His collecting of all the rulers’ crowns, signifying that He alone is the sovereign ruler of the earth. Collecting the crown of a vanquished king was customary in the ancient world. After defeating the Ammonites, David “took the crown of their king from his head . . . and it was placed on David’s head” (2S. 12:30).²⁴

More likely, the many crowns worn by Christ are an indication of His right to rule and the many facets of the character of His rule. Zechariah saw two of these crowns: His simultaneous role as *priest* and

king. Only in Messiah, the BRANCH, will these two rules coincide:

Then take silver and gold, and make **crowns**,²⁵ and set *them* upon the head of Joshua the son of Josedech, the high priest; and speak unto him, saying, thus speaketh the LORD of hosts, saying, behold the man whose name *is* The BRANCH; and he shall grow up out of his place, and he shall build the temple of the LORD: Even he shall build the temple of the LORD; and he shall bear the glory, and shall **sit and rule upon his throne**; and he shall **be a priest upon his throne** : and the counsel of peace shall be between them both. (Zec. 6:11-13, KJV) [emphasis added]

The high priest wore a crown above the miter (Zec. 3:5; Lev. 8:9). Messiah shall wear many crowns, one surmounting the other (Rev. 19:12). It was a thing before unknown in the Levitical priesthood that the same person should wear at once the crown of a king and that of a high priest (Ps. 110:4; Heb. 5:10). Messiah shall be revealed fully in this twofold dignity when He shall “restore the kingdom to Israel” (Acts 1:6).²⁶

The plurality of crowns also indicates He is the King par-excellence, the “KING OF KINGS”. See commentary on *Revelation 19:16*^[3.19.16]. See *Crowns*^[4.6].

He had a name written

Had a name written is γεγραμμένον [*gegrammenon*], perfect passive participle: *a name having been written*. The name was written upon Him in the past. The *MT*^[5.2.45] text has *having names written, and a name written*. In other words, having many names written, but one specific name which no man has known.

no one knew except Himself

Οὐδὲς οἶδεν εἰ μὴ αὐτός [*Oudes oiden ei mē autos*]: *no one knew if not Him*.²⁷ All the guessing of men throughout history will prove to no avail in identifying this name or else the Word of God would be broken. His unknown name is the subject of a proverb written by Agur the son of Jakeh:

Surely I *am* more stupid than *any* man, and do not have the understanding of a man. I neither learned wisdom nor have knowledge of the Holy One. Who has ascended into heaven, or descended? Who has gathered the wind in His fists? Who has bound the waters in a garment? Who has established all the ends of the earth? What *is* His name, and what *is* His Son’s name, if you know? (Pr. 30:2-4)

This riddle surfaces numerous times in various attempts to identify the Angel of the Lord. When Jacob wrestled with the man at Peniel, he asked the name of the man, but the man (the Angel of the Lord) did not provide it (Gen. 32:29). When Jehovah instructed Israel to follow the Angel He would send before them, He warned them not to provoke the angel, “for my name *is* in Him” (Ex. 23:21). When the Angel of the Lord appeared to Samson’s mother-to-be, she mentions He did not tell her His name (Jdg. 13:6). Later, when Samson’s father met the Angel and asked for His name, the Angel replied, “Why do you ask My name, seeing it *is* wonderful?” (Jdg. 13:18). (*Wonderful* is one of the known names of Messiah, Isa. 9:6.)

Agur interpreted his ignorance of the name of the Son as a lack of knowledge of the Holy One. To this we could add the words of Jesus, “no one knows the Son except the Father” (Mtt. 11:27; Luke 10:22). We believe the mysterious name of Jesus is a secret shared between only He and the Father and is intended to indicate their inviolate unity. God only shares His secrets with those who have intimacy with Him (e.g., Daniel, John). The secret name of Jesus will not be revealed until He and the Father choose to do so, possibly at His Second Coming. Whatever the name is, it will undoubtedly reveal some splendor concerning His character, like His many other names.

Overcomers in the church at Philadelphia were promised to have the name of the Father and of the New Jerusalem written upon them as well as Jesus’ new name (Rev. 3:11). Perhaps Jesus’ new name is this secret name.

This same idea that shared secrets demonstrate intimacy is found in the promise to the overcomers in the church at Sardis who were promised a white stone with a new name written upon it which no one knows except God and the one receiving it (Rev. 2:17).

3.19.13 - Revelation 19:13

robe dipped in blood

Dipped is βαβμμένον [*bebammenon*], perfect passive participle: *having been dipped*. This verb is from βαπτω [*baptō*]: *to baptize*. But here, it probably denotes garments *stained* in blood.²⁸ Used of “coloring cloth *dip into dye, dye* (*Rev. 19:13*).”²⁹ Patristic evidence and a few manuscripts have variations of ῥαντίζω [*hrantizō*]: *to “sprinkle someone or something,”*³⁰ but the evidence is weak and ambiguous.³¹

Some suggest the blood is His own:

Notice how Jesus will be proudly arrayed in His garment which is covered in blood; this will be the basis of divine judgment—that the world has spurned His blood. Jesus wears it proudly; we will be dressed in our white garments—He will be arrayed in His bloody one. The host that will accompany Jesus is proof positive of the effectiveness of His blood.³²

As attractive as this idea may be, it has several weaknesses: (1) nowhere in Scripture is there indication that Jesus wears His own blood; (2) His blood was spilled at the cross during His *First Coming* for redemption. This is a picture of His *Second Coming* which is in judgment and wrath. This is not His own atoning blood which is associated with His First Coming (Lev. 14:51; Rev. 1:5; 5:9). This is the blood of His enemies from His trampling them in the “winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God” (Isa. 63:3; Luke 19:27; Rev. 14:20; 19:15).³³ See *Blood Stained Garments*.^[4.5.5.1]

called the Word of God

Called is κέκληται [*keklētai*], perfect passive: *having been called*. This is a unique title of Jesus used by John the Apostle (John 1:1; 1Jn. 1:1; 2:14; 5:7 *TR*^[5.2.79]; Rev. 1:2; Rev. 19:13) and provides evidence that he is the author of the book of Revelation. See *Authorship*^[2.9].

Like God’s literal word which He has magnified above His name (Ps. 138:2), God highly exalted Jesus and has given Him the name above every name (Php. 2:9). Scripture informs us: “By the word of the LORD the heavens were made and all the host of them by the breath of His mouth” (Ps. 33:6 cf. Heb. 11:3; 2Pe. 3:5). Elsewhere, John uses this title to emphasize Jesus as the revelation of God in His incarnation:

That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, concerning the Word of life—the life was manifested, and we have seen, and bear witness, and declare to you that eternal life which was with the Father and was manifested to us—that which we have seen and heard we declare to you, that you also may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship *is* with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ. (1Jn. 1:1-3)

The *Logos* or Word is the expression of God’s nature in understandable terms, and whether those terms be mercy or judgment they are both equally the message of God.³⁴

This title also emphasizes Jesus’ role in creation (John 1:1-3; Eph. 3:9; Col. 1:16; Heb. 1:2; Rev. 3:14)—a key theme explaining why God has ultimate dominion to retake the earth at His Second Coming (Rev. 3:14; 4:11; 10:6).

3.19.14 - Revelation 19:14

armies in heaven

Armies is στρατεύματα [*strateumata*]: “troops,”³⁵ “armed force.”³⁶ The army is composed of “saints” which denotes those who are set apart and dedicated to God. This term includes both angels (e.g., Dan. 8:13) and men (e.g., Ps. 16:3; 34:9; Acts 9:13). Joel indicates that God’s “mighty ones” will be among them—almost certainly a reference to angels (Joel 3:11).

Scripture records rare glimpses into the abilities of these *mighty ones*. When Hezekiah petitioned the LORD for defense against Sennacherib, the king of Assyria, the LORD sent His angel who killed 185,000 Assyrians in one night (2K. 19:35). When forces came against Elisha and his servant became alarmed, Elisha prayed that the LORD might open his eyes: “And behold the mountain *was* full of horses and chariots of fire all around Elisha” (2K. 6:14 cf. Ps. 68:17).

Paul also indicates that angels will attend the revealing of Christ to those upon whom He will take vengeance:

... since *it is* a righteous thing with God to repay with tribulation those who trouble you, and to *give* you who are troubled rest with us **when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with His mighty angels**, in flaming fire taking vengeance on those who do not know God, and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. These shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power, when He comes, in that Day, to be glorified in His saints and to be admired among all those who believe, because our testimony among you was believed. 2Th. 1:7-10 [emphasis added]

We also know, from what the angel previously told John, that “those *who* are with Him are called, chosen, and faithful” (Rev. 17:14). This describes believers. Thus, those returning with Christ include both angels and believers, although it may be that only believers are on horses: “A factor which causes hesitation in identifying the armies as angels, however, is the unlikelihood that they would be on white horses as their leader is.”³⁷ See commentary on *Revelation 17:14*^[3.17.14].

The word [*armies*] is in the plural number, meaning that at least two separate armies will return with Him. One army is known as *hosts of the Lord*, or the angelic army [Mtt. 16:27]. . . . Another army that will return with Jesus is the army of the Church saints who had been raptured previously, . . . [Jude 1:14-15].³⁸

Although it is possible that the plural form, *armies*, denotes two categories of soldiers, this is not necessarily so because the same force is later referred to as “His army (στρατεύματος [*strateumatos*], singular)” (Rev. 19:19).

Since *The 70th Week of Daniel*^[2.13.5] is not over until Christ has returned to earth, it seems that the *OT*^[5.2.51] saints have not yet been resurrected (Dan. 12:2). Therefore, they are not a part of the army which rides forth. If the resurrection of the Tribulation saints occurs at the institution of the *Millennial Kingdom*^[5.2.39] (“they lived,” Rev. 20:4)—and the Tribulation has not yet officially ended—neither will they have been resurrected to participate in the army. This infers that the human element of the army is limited to the previously-raptured Church.

clothed in fine linen, white and clean

All the saints, both angels and believers, appear in bright, white attire (Rev. 3:4; 15:6). The white clothing of the angels is a reflection of their elect status and the glory of God. The white clothing of the believers indicates the righteousness of Christ which is attributed to them on account of His redeeming blood (Rev. 1:5; 7:14). See commentary on *Revelation 19:8*^[3.19.8].

3.19.15 - Revelation 19:15

Now out of His mouth goes a sharp sword

Out goes is ἐκπορεύεται [*ekporeuetai*]: *it is presently coming out*. The *MT*^[5.2.45] text has a *two-edged* sword.

He should strike the nations

He should strike is πατάξει [*pataxē*]: “Strike down, slay.”³⁹ “As inflicting a heavy or fatal blow.”⁴⁰ *Nations* is ἔθνη [*ethnē*] which can also be translated *Gentiles*. With one exception (Rev. 11:2), the context in the book of Revelation indicates that the Jewish nation is included in this term.⁴¹ Those among Israel who reject Jesus as Messiah will be included among the slain at His Second Coming (Eze. 20:34-38).

If Jesus literally and physically slays His enemies at His Second Coming (Rev. 19:21), how is it that the sword is figurative—coming out of His mouth? It represents the sword of the Spirit, the word of God: that which God has set forth as His spoken will (Eph. 6:17). Those who are slain meet their doom because they are judged by God’s righteous word (Heb. 4:12). They have consistently violated its precepts and standards and their destruction has been prophesied. In many ways, the action of their slaying is the unavoidable result of what God has said. This is why Jesus slays His enemies with His lips: “He shall strike the earth with the rod of His mouth, and with the breath of His lips He shall slay the wicked” (Isa. 11:4). His mouth is like a sharp sword (Isa. 49:2). Hence, when *Antichrist*^[5.2.3] is

destroyed, he is consumed “with the breath of [the Lord’s] mouth” (2Th. 2:8). The ultimate reason they are slain is found in God’s testimony—the law written in stone found in the ark of the covenant (Rev. 11:19; 15:5). The written law is His *word*, thus the weapon is said to come forth from His mouth. See commentary on *Revelation 1:16*^[3.1.16].

They are actually *slain* twice by His word. First, the enemies of Christ are *physically* killed at His Second Coming (Rev. 19:21). This is the first death. Next, the enemies of Christ are judged by God’s word before the Great White Throne and cast into the Lake of Fire (Rev. 20:12). This is the second death. See commentary on *Revelation 2:11*^[3.2.11].

He Himself will rule them with a rod of iron

He Himself will rule is αὐτὸς ποιμανεῖ [*autos poimanei*]: *He, He shall rule*. Emphasis is placed upon the identity of the One Who will rule in contrast to the thousands of years during which usurpers and unfit substitutes have clamored for that which alone is His. This is the promised rule of the male child which the woman who fled to the wilderness bore (Rev. 12:5). See commentary on *Revelation 12:5*^[3.12.5]. *He shall rule* is ποιμανεῖ [*poimanei*] which speaks of herding, nurturing, or tending as a shepherd. But his initial rule is violent because “they shall be dashed to pieces like the potter’s vessels” (Ps. 2:9):

The LORD said to my Lord, “Sit at My right hand, till I make Your enemies Your footstool.” The LORD shall send the rod of Your strength out of Zion. Rule in the midst of Your enemies! (Ps. 110:1-2)

Revelation indicates that the conquest of evil will be a crisis and not a process, nor will the evil be removed by the gradual improvement of civilization. The outward manifestation of the kingdom will occur only when Christ Himself returns.⁴²

See *Trouble Ahead*^[2.13.1].

Rod is ῥάβδος [*hrabdō*] which can be translated by “rod,” “staff,” or “scepter.” Balaam saw this scepter which was to rise out of Israel: “I see Him, but not now; I behold Him, but not near; a Star shall come out of Jacob; a scepter shall rise out of Israel, and batter the brow of Moab, and destroy all the sons of tumult . . . Out of Jacob One shall have dominion” (Num. 24:17-19). This prophecy of Balaam is widely interpreted of Messiah:

I see him, but not now; I behold him, but he is not near; when a king shall arise out of Jacob and be anointed the Messiah out of Israel. He shall slay the princes of Moab and reign over all mankind.—

*Targum Onkelos*⁴³

I see him, but he is not at the present time, I behold him but he is not near: but when a mighty king of the house of Jacob shall reign, and shall be anointed Messiah, wielding the mighty scepter of Israel. He shall slay the Moabite princes and shall bring to naught all the sons of Seth, the armies of Gog, destined to wage war against Israel, and their dead bodies shall fall before him.—*Targum Pseudo-Jonathan*⁴⁴

The scepter (rule) of Messiah from the line of Judah is also the subject of the prophecy of Jacob on his deathbed: “The scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh comes; and to Him *shall be* the obedience of the people” (Gen. 49:10). *Shiloh* means *to Him Whose right it is* and refers to Messiah:

The transmission of dominion shall not cease from the house of Judah, nor the scribe from his children’s children, forever, until the Messiah comes. to whom the kingdom belongs, and whom nations shall obey.

—*Targum Onkelos*⁴⁵

THE SCEPTRE [STAFF] SHALL NOT DEPART FROM JUDAH alludes to the Messiah, son of David, who will chastise the State with a staff, as it says, Thou shalt break them with a rod [staff] of iron (Ps. 2:9).—*Midrash Rabbah*, Genesis XCVII, New Version.⁴⁶

UNTIL SHILOH COMETH: he to whom kingship belongs (shelo). Rather than transliterating into English “Shilo” as though it were a proper name, the Rabbis translated the exact meaning of “Shilo” as “to whom it belongs/pertains.”—*Midrash Rabbah*, Genesis XCIX, 8-9.⁴⁷

He [the Messiah] will come and set on edge (makheh) the teeth of the nations of the world. . . He will upbraid them and show them how wrongly they had acted.—*Midrash Rabbah*, Genesis XCVIII, 8.⁴⁸

As was shown to Nebuchadnezzar in his dream and interpreted by Daniel, Messiah smashes all earthly

opposition with His rod of iron:

And in the days of these kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed; and the kingdom shall not be left to other people; **it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms**, and it shall stand forever. Inasmuch as you saw that the stone was cut out of the mountain without hands, and that it broke in pieces the iron, the bronze, the clay, the silver, and the gold—the great God has made known to the king what will come to pass after this. The dream is certain, and its interpretation is sure. (Dan. 2:44-45) [emphasis added]

Daniel's night vision also predicted Messiah's Second Coming. This is the time when all dominion is handed to the Son of Man and to the saints of the Most High:

I was watching in the night visions, and behold, *One* like the Son of Man, coming with the clouds of heaven! He came to the Ancient of Days, and they brought Him near before Him. Then to Him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom, that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve Him. His dominion *is* an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and His kingdom *the one* Which shall not be destroyed. (Dan. 7:13-14)

Then the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdoms under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people, the saints of the Most High. His kingdom *is* an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey Him. (Dan. 7:27)

This is the culminating phase of *Nebuchadnezzar's Dream and Daniel's Vision*^[4.3.1], when the Messianic King will finally reign. See *The Arrival of God's Kingdom*^[2.4.3].

Jesus promised the overcomer in the church of Laodicea that he would co-rule with Christ (Rev. 2:27). See commentary on *Revelation 2:27*^[3.2.27].

He Himself treads the winepress

He Himself treads is αὐτὸς πατεῖ [*autos patei*]: *He, He is presently treading*. As with His rule, His identity as the One Who treads is emphasized. His rule is *future tense* whereas His treading is *present tense*. This indicates He is treading the winepress at His Second Coming before He takes up His rule over the nations. This provides further evidence that His rule upon the throne of David begins *after* His return (Mtt. 25:31).

Although the armies of heaven are with Him (Rev. 19:14, 19), it appears that He alone does the work of judgment: “I have trodden the winepress **alone**, and from the peoples **no one was with Me**. . . . I looked, but *there was* no one to help, and I wondered that *there was* no one to help, and I wondered that *there was* no one to uphold; therefore My own arm brought salvation for Me” [emphasis added] (Isa. 63:3-5).

Isaiah 63:1-6 made it clear that although the armies of saints and angels will return with him, they will not participate in the fighting. Messiah will fight this battle by Himself.⁴⁹

He is responding to the command recorded by Joel: “Come, go down; for the winepress is full, the vats overflow—for their wickedness *is* great. Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision! For the day of the LORD is near in the valley of decision” (Joel 3:13b-14). When John saw Him in His glory, He had feet like fine brass, “as if refined in a furnace” (Rev. 1:15). This glowing hot feet foreshadow His trampling the winepress in judgment which John sees now. See commentary on *Revelation 1:15*^[3.1.15]. See *Grapes of Wrath*^[4.5.5].

of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God

Fierceness and wrath are τοῦ θυμοῦ τῆς ὀργῆς [*tou thymou tēs orgēs*]. Θυμοῦ [*Thymou*] describes a shorter-term, intense anger. ὀργῆς [*orgēs*] refers to a longer-term steady smoldering desire for revenge. See commentary on *Revelation 14:10*^[3.14.10].

Almighty is παντοκράτορος [*pantokratoros*]. See commentary on *Revelation 1:8*^[3.1.8].

This is the “great winepress of the wrath of God” (Rev. 14:19). The *NU*^[5.2.49] and *MT* texts have “fierceness of the wrath.”

3.19.16 - Revelation 19:16

He has on His robe and on His thigh a name written

Thigh is μηρὸν [*mēron*]: “The part of the leg somewhere above the knee.”⁵⁰ *Written* is γεγραμμένον [*gegrammenon*], perfect tense: *having been written*. Like the name written that no one knew except Himself (Rev. 19:12).

KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS

King of kings is βασιλεὺς βασιλέων [*basileus basileōn*]. *Lord of lords* is κύριος κυρίων [*kyrios kyriōn*]. Each phrase involves two words which have the same lexeme⁵¹ in a relationship indicating the supreme member: *the supreme King among kings, the supreme Lord among lords*.⁵² This usage is carried over from the OT^[5.2.51] (Deu. 10:17; Ps. 136:3) and reflects the lack of comparative and superlative forms in Hebrew.⁵³

When the final bowl of judgment is poured forth, then the proclamation attending the sounding of the seventh trumpet will be an accomplished reality: “The kingdoms of this world have become *the kingdoms* of our Lord and of His Christ, and He shall reign forever and ever!” (Rev. 11:15).⁵⁴

All the crowns of history will be recognized for what they are: usurpers who were unqualified to rule in the place of Messiah. The dragon had seven heads, each with a crown (Rev. 12:3). One of the heads had ten horns which were also found on the *Beast*^[5.2.9]. Each of the horns had a crown (Rev. 13:1). The crowned heads on the dragon represent *seven world empires*^[4.3.2.4]. The crowned horns (all on the seventh head) of the Beast represent *ten kings*^[4.3.2.22] at the time of the last Beastly empire. All of these various heads and horns had contested for the position which alone belongs to Christ, the King of kings. Christ will obtain the kingdom, but it will be achieved according to the will of the Father (John 4:34) and not by the avenue offered by Satan (Luke 4:5-8).

The assumption of the rule of the world will likewise bring with it the great desideratum of the race. When Adam was in Eden God was king. In the days of Israel’s greatest triumph it was the same. And until the original *Theocracy*^[5.2.76] is restored, and the powers of heaven again take the rulership and control of the nations, there is no peace, no right order for man. There is no earthly blessing like that of good, wise, and righteous government; but there is no such government outside of the government of the Father and the Son. Some are better than others, but none are satisfactory. Men have experimented with power for 6,000 years, and yet there is no department in which there is more disability, corruption, and unsatisfactoriness than in the administrations of government.⁵⁵

Previously, the angel explained to John that Christ would overcome the Beast and his ten kings, “for He is Lord of lords and King of kings” (Rev. 17:14).

3.19.17 - Revelation 19:17

standing in the sun

Standing is ἐστῶτα [*estōta*], perfect tense: *having stood*. The angel had taken his position prior to John seeing him. Fausset suggests his position in the sun is “so as to be conspicuous in sight of the whole world.”⁵⁶ “Though some have taken this as a very unusual phenomenon, the most natural explanation is that the angel is standing in the light of the sun with the angel himself possibly shining with even greater brilliance.”⁵⁷

the birds that fly in the midst of heaven

In the midst of heaven is ἐν μεσουρανήματι [*en mesouranēmati*]: in “the highest point of the sun’s circuit in the sky *zenith* . . . *directly overhead* [Rev. 8:13; 14:6].”⁵⁸

supper of the great God

Supper is δεῖπνον [*deipnon*], the same word which describes the marriage *supper* of the Lamb. Both suppers are hosted by God, but with dramatically different guests and foods. Those who are slaughtered for this supper share in the curse of Deuteronomy: “Your carcasses shall be food for all the birds of the air and the beasts of the earth, and no one shall frighten *them* away” (Deu. 28:26). Jesus indicated at His Second Coming there would be great bloodshed upon which birds would feast: “For as

the lightning comes from the east and flashes to the west, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be. For wherever the carcass is, there the eagles will be gathered together” (Mtt. 24:27-28). Those who are served to the birds following the *Campaign of Armageddon*^[4.5] suffer the same fate as those taken in judgment “when the Son of Man is revealed”:

“I tell you, in that night there will be two *men* in one bed: the one will be taken and the other will be left. Two *women* will be grinding together: the one will be taken and the other left. Two *men* will be in the field: the one will be taken and the other left.” And they answered and said to Him, “Where, Lord?” So He said to them, “Wherever the body is, there the eagles will be gathered together.” (Luke 17:34-37)

Jesus’ answer to the disciples’ question alluded to a passage in Job:

Does the eagle mount up at your command, and make its nest on high? On the rocks it dwells and resides, on the crag of the rock and the stronghold. From there it spies out the prey; its eyes observe from afar. Its young ones suck up blood; **And where the slain are, there it is.** (Job 39:27-30) [emphasis added]

3.19.18 - Revelation 19:18

the flesh of kings, the flesh of captains, the flesh of mighty men . . . free and slave, both small and great

Captains is χιλιάρχων [*chiliarchōn*]: leaders over a thousand troops. The same word is translated *commanders* in Revelation 6:15. These same categories of men previously hid in caves from God’s wrath (Rev. 6:15-17). See commentary on *Revelation 6:15*^[3.6.15].

Normally, men are to offer up animals in sacrifice to God. Here, as when God judges Gog on the mountains of Israel, He reverses the normal roles and offers up *men* as a sacrifice to *animals* (Eze. 39:17-20 cf. Isa. 34:6-7).

Goliath threatened David, “Come to me, and I will give your flesh to the birds of the air and the beasts of the field!” (1S. 17:44). David replied, “This day I will give the carcasses of the camp of the Philistines to the birds of the air and the wild beasts of the earth, that all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel” (1S. 17:46).

The repetition of the word flesh, occurring five times over, flesh, flesh, is very revealing. The race has walked in carnal enmity against God, living after the flesh, and now the day of His patience is at an end.⁵⁹

3.19.19 - Revelation 19:19

I saw the beast

This is the *Beast*^[5.2.9] who rose from the abyss in a miraculous restoration from death and was worshiped by the *earth dwellers*^[5.2.18]. See *The Beast*^[4.2]. See #16 - *Beast*^[4.3.2.16]. See commentary on *Revelation 13:1*^[3.13.1]. The angel previously told John, “These [the Beast and the ten kings] will make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb will overcome them” (Rev. 17:14).

the kings of the earth

Beyond the ten kings allied with the Beast, Scripture mentions “the kings from the east” as well as “the kings of the earth” (Rev. 16:12, 14). The Beast and his ten kings destroyed Babylon (Rev. 17:16-18) while the rest of the kings of the earth lamented her destruction (Rev. 18:9).

It is these specific kings of history, the kings of the earth at the time of the end, which provide the ultimate fulfillment of Psalm 2: “The kings of the earth set themselves and the rulers take counsel together against the LORD and against His Anointed [Messiah = Christ], *saying*, ‘Let us break their bonds in pieces and cast away their cords from us’ ” (Ps. 2:2-3). These are the final kings of history who fail to “kiss the Son, lest He be angry” so they “perish *in the way*” (Ps. 2:12).

gathered together to make war against Him

Gathered together is συνηγμένα [*synēgmena*], perfect tense: *having already gathered together*. This is the gathering which was initiated by the three unclean spirits like frogs “*which* go out to the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty” (Rev.

16:14). Having unknowingly followed Joel's instructions, they have beat their plowshares into swords and their pruning hooks into spears (Joel 3:9). This is Gods' assembly of kingdoms upon which He promised to pour out His indignation and fierce anger (Zep. 3:8). See *Campaign of Armageddon*^[4.5].

We may wonder how rational men could be carried with one impulse into an attempt so daring and so absurd; but when people put the truth from them, and submit themselves to the Devil's lead, what is there of delusion and absurdity into which they are not liable to be carried?⁶⁰

3.19.20 - Revelation 19:20

the beast was captured

Captured is ἐπιάσθη [*epiasthē*]: “seize, arrest, take into custody.”⁶¹

and with him the False Prophet who worked signs in his presence

False prophet is ψευδοπροφήτης [*pseudoprophētēs*], a compound word made up of ψευδής [*pseudēs*] (false) and προφήτης [*prophētēs*] (prophet). This is the second beast which John saw rise up out of the earth (Rev. 13:1). The *False Prophet*^[5.2.20] is found with the *Beast*^[5.2.9] because his power can only be exercised in the presence of the Beast (Rev. 13:12). See commentary on *Revelation 13:12*^[3.13.12]. See #18 - *False Prophet*^[4.3.2.18].

by which he deceived those who received the mark of the beast and worshiped his image

The False Prophet “had two horns like a lamb and spoke like a dragon” (Rev. 13:11). He was *a dragon in lamb's clothing!* See commentary on *Revelation 13:11*^[3.13.11]. The main purpose of the False Prophet was to deceive the *earth dwellers*^[5.2.18] into worshipping the first Beast who was miraculously restored and to cause them to receive his mark and worship his image (Rev. 13:12-17). He was empowered by Satan to perform lying signs and wonders for the purpose of “unrighteous deception among those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth” (2Th. 2:9). Their rejection of the love of the truth and salvation resulted in the compounding of their deception at the hands of God: “And for this reason God will send them strong delusion, that they should believe the lie, that they all may be condemned who did not believe the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness” (2Th. 2:11-12).

These two were cast alive into the lake of fire

These two were cast alive is ζῶντες ἐβλήθησαν οἱ δύο [*zōntes eblēthēsan hoi dyo*]: *while living they were thrown, these two*. Their being cast alive is emphasized by appearing first in the Greek. The repetition of *they ... these* also emphasizes the uniqueness of their treatment when compared with all others who reject God. This is also seen in the opening phrase of the next verse. They are given unique treatment. Rather than being killed, they become the only two individuals in history to be cast *alive* directly into hell (the Lake of Fire)!⁶² Their responsibility as leaders of the great opposition to God in the Tribulation results in their being denied access to stand at the Great White Throne Judgment. This may indicate their torment differs from that of the rest of the unsaved, which is by degrees based on their works. The Beast and False Prophet appear to receive unmitigated torment. See commentary on *Revelation 20:11*^[3.20.11].⁶³

They may also receive this unique treatment in order to serve as a *witness* to the horrors of eternal damnation. In a passage in Isaiah, which appears to describe the *Millennial Kingdom*^[4.11], all flesh goes forth to look upon corpses which appear to be in a location matching the description of the Lake of Fire:

“And it shall come to pass *That* from one New Moon to another, and from one Sabbath to another, all flesh shall come to worship before Me,” says the LORD. “And they shall go forth and look upon the corpses of the men who have transgressed against Me. For their worm does not die, and their fire is not quenched. They shall be an abhorrence to all flesh.” (Isa. 66:23-24)

This is probably not the eternal state, after the Great White Throne Judgment, when all the unsaved dead have been cast into the Lake of Fire (Rev. 20:15) because there is mention of New Moons and keeping Sabbath. If so, then the Beast and False Prophet are among the occupants of the Lake of Fire during the *Millennial Kingdom*^[4.11].

Today, no one is in the Lake of Fire (hell).⁶⁴ The Lake of Fire becomes populated as follows:

1. The Beast and the False Prophet are cast alive into the Lake of Fire at the Second Coming of Christ (Rev. 19:20).
2. After the Second Coming, immediately prior to the Millennial Kingdom, the non-believing *goats* among the nations are sent “into the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels” (Mtt. 25:41).⁶⁵
3. The devil is cast into the Lake of Fire at the end of the Millennial Kingdom (Rev. 20:10). His angels, having been imprisoned in the scorched regions of Babylon and Edom during the Millennial Kingdom (see commentary on *Revelation 18:2*^[3.18.2]), are probably also cast into the Lake of Fire at this time (Mtt. 25:41).
4. After the Millennial Kingdom and the Great White Throne Judgment, the unsaved dead, who are not written in the *Book of Life*^[4.4], are cast into the Lake of Fire (Rev. 20:15). These awake from the dust of the earth to everlasting contempt (Dan. 12:2).

Although the Beast and False Prophet are cast *while alive* into the Lake of Fire, the process results in their death: “I watched then because of the sound of the pompous words which the horn was speaking; I watched till the beast was slain, and its body destroyed and given to the burning flame” (Dan. 7:11). Paul told the church at Thessalonica, “And then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord will consume (ἀνελεῖ [*anelei*]) with the breath of His mouth and destroy with the brightness of His coming” (2Th. 2:8). *Consume* is ἀνελεῖ [*anelei*]: “take away, do away with, destroy . . . of persons kill, murder, usually in a violent way.”⁶⁶ Since the Lake of Fire only contains *individuals* and not *systems* or *institutions*, their destination provides additional evidence of their identity as individuals.

The contrast between the false overcomer (Rev. 6:2; 13:7) and the true overcomers (see *Who is the Overcomer?*^[4.15.1.3]) can now be seen. The Beast overcame physically for a time. Yet, in the end he lost both soul and body in hell. The saints whom he killed lost their physical lives, but their souls were immune to his persecution. “Do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. But rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell” (Mtt. 10:28).

burning with brimstone

The Lake of Fire continually burns with brimstone, yet its occupants are never consumed. After one thousand years, the Beast and the False Prophet are still there when Satan joins them after his final rebellion (Rev. 20:10). Everyone has eternal existence, although for the unsaved it is better described as *eternal death* for they are tormented continually and eternally (Rev. 20:10). The same breath which destroyed the Beast (2Th. 2:8) also provides a stream of brimstone which kindles their torment (Isa. 30:33). The Lake of Fire provides *everlasting* torment. It is unquenchable (Mtt. 3:12; 25:41, 46; Mark 9:43-46; 2Th. 1:9; 2Pe. 2:17; Jude 1:13; Rev. 14:11; 20:10).

3.19.21 - Revelation 19:21

The rest were killed

The rest emphasizes the unique treatment of the previous two in comparison with these. Unlike the *Beast*^[5.2.9] and the *False Prophet*^[5.2.20], the rest of those who war against Christ are killed. Their destination is Hades (Luke 16:22-23) where they undergo immediate torment while awaiting the Great White Throne Judgment (Rev. 20:11). They will be in Hades awaiting judgment for the one thousand year period of the *Millennial Kingdom*^[5.2.39].

with the sword which proceeded from the mouth of Him who sat on the horse

As we saw earlier, Jesus Himself treads the winepress (Rev. 19:15) and does all the killing at His Second Coming. The sword proceeding from His mouth is a figure pointing to the word of God as the basis for the death of those who oppose Him. See commentary on *Revelation 19:15*^[3.19.15].

The bloodshed is enormous (Rev. 14:20):

Now see that I, *even I, am He*, and *there is no God besides Me*; I kill and I make alive; I wound and I heal; nor *is there any* who can deliver from My hand. For I raise My hand to heaven, and say, “As I live

forever, if I whet My glittering sword, and My hand takes hold on judgment, I will render vengeance to My enemies, and repay those who hate Me. I will make My arrows drunk with blood, and My sword shall devour flesh, with the blood of the slain and the captives, from the heads of the leaders of the enemy.” (Deu. 32:39-42)

Come near, you nations, to hear; and heed, you people! Let the earth hear, and all that is in it, the world and all things that come forth from it. For the indignation of the Lord is against all nations, and His fury against all their armies; He has utterly destroyed them, He has given them over to the slaughter. Also their slain shall be thrown out; their stench shall rise from their corpses, and the mountains shall be melted with their blood. (Isa. 34:1-3)

See *Campaign of Armageddon*^[4.5].

Jesus strikes the *nations* with the sword (Rev. 19:15), including unbelievers from the nation of Israel. During the entire period which is *Jacob's Trouble and the Great Tribulation*^[2.13.4], God has said that two-thirds will be cut off and die with only one-third remaining (Zec. 13:8). As a result, the remaining third will “call on My name, and I will answer them” (Zec. 13:9). This is the horrible reality attending the spiritual regeneration of the nation of Israel (Eze. 37; Rom. 11:25-27). Truly, to whom much is given much is required! Heavy is the responsibility of the chosen nation.⁶⁷ Most of the Jews who survive the Second Coming are found in the special place which God has prepared for them. See *Sheep in Bozrah*^[3.12.6.1].

It is shortly after this time when Jesus takes up the throne of David and all from among the nations who were not direct participants in the *Campaign of Armageddon*^[4.5] are gathered before Him. There, He will separate the sheep from the goats and judge their eternal destiny by how they have treated *His brethren*—the faithful Jews who suffered so terribly during *Jacob's Trouble and the Great Tribulation*^[2.13.4] (Mtt. 25:31-46).⁶⁸ Those who demonstrated their faith by providing for His brothers will be given entry into the kingdom, arriving in the kingdom just in time for the marriage feast to follow.

And all the birds were filled with their flesh

They were filled is ἐχορτάσθησαν [*echortasthēsan*]: “eat one’s fill, be satisfied.”⁶⁹

The most graphic portrayal of Christ’s second coming is found in Revelation 19:11-21. In this extended passage Jesus Christ is described as leading a procession of angels and saints or armies in heaven to claim the earth, destroy the armies of the world, and defeat the *Antichrist*^[5.2.3] and False Prophet. This passage shows that Christ’s return will be one that entails great physical destruction and many deaths. For those who are not Christ’s own, it will be a terrifying and terrible event. For those of us who know Him as Savior, it will be a time of great joy, vindication, and anticipation. . . . Let us remember that for the believer this present life on Earth is the worst things will ever be for us. But, for the unbeliever, this present life will be the best they will ever experience.⁷⁰

People may indulge their unbelief and passions during these days of forbearance and grace, and see no disadvantages growing out of it. They may be angry at our earnestness, and account us croakers and fools when we put before them the demands and threatenings of the Almighty. But “*woe to him that striveth with his Maker!*” There is a deluge of bottled fury yet to be poured out on them that refuse to know God, and on the families that call not on his name, from which there is no escape, and from whose burning and tempestuous surges there is no deliverance. God help us to be wise, that we come not into that sea of death!⁷¹

Notes

¹ The equivalent phrase, הַלְלֵי-יְהוָה [*hal·lū-yāh*], is found in the OT^[5.2.51].

² *Piel* imperative, masculine plural. An intensive command. הַיְ [yāh] is short for הַיְהוּ [yāhw^h] (cf. Ps. 68:4).

³ “In the Hebrew text, it appears at the ends of Psalms 104, 105, 115, 116, 117, at the beginning of Psalms 111 and 112, and at the beginning and end of Psalms 106, 113, 135, and 146.”—Robert L. Thomas, *Revelation 8-22* (Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 1995), Rev. 19:1.

⁴ Timothy Friberg, Barbara Friberg, and Neva F. Miller, *Analytical Lexicon of the Greek New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2000), 398.

- 5 Friberg, *Analytical Lexicon of the Greek New Testament*, 89.
- 6 Thomas, *Revelation 8-22*, Rev. 19:6.
- 7 Thomas, *Revelation 8-22*, Rev. 21:11.
- 8 Walter Scott, *Exposition of The Revelation* (London, England: Pickering & Inglis, n.d.), Rev. 19:7.
- 9 John F. Walvoord, *The Millennial Kingdom* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1959), 277.
- 10 E. W. Bullinger, *Commentary On Revelation* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 1984, 1935), Rev. 19:6-7.
- 11 Thomas, *Revelation 8-22*, Rev. 19:7.
- 12 Donald Grey Barnhouse, *Revelation* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1971), 358.
- 13 J. Dwight Pentecost, *Things to Come: A Study in Biblical Eschatology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1958), 220-221.
- 14 Concerning Jesus as the Lamb in Revelation: Rev. 5:6, 8, 12-13; 6:1, 16; 7:9-10, 14, 17; 12:11; 13:8; 14:1, 4, 10; 15:3; 17:14; 19:7, 9; 21:9, 14, 22-23, 27; 22:1, 3.
- 15 “That they are invited guests marks them as a distinct group from the church, since a bride would hardly be invited to her own wedding.”—John MacArthur, *Revelation 12-22 : The MacArthur New Testament Commentary* (Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 2000), Rev. 19:7.
- 16 Arnold G. Fruchtenbaum, *The Footsteps of Messiah*, rev ed. (Tustin, CA: Ariel Ministries, 2003), 351.
- 17 Pentecost, *Things to Come: A Study in Biblical Eschatology*, 228.
- 18 Thomas, *Revelation 8-22*, Rev. 19:7.
- 19 Frederick William Danker, and Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 493.
- 20 Friberg, *Analytical Lexicon of the Greek New Testament*, 254.
- 21 Merrill C. Tenney, *Interpreting Revelation* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1957), 130-131.
- 22 Steve Gregg, *Revelation Four Views: A Parallel Commentary* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 1997), 448.
- 23 Thomas, *Revelation 8-22*, Rev. 19:11.
- 24 MacArthur, *Revelation 12-22 : The MacArthur New Testament Commentary*, Rev. 19:12.
- 25 Some object to rendering the plural עֲטָרוֹת [āṭārōt] as *crowns*. The thought is that it is impractical and out of step with OT^[5.2.51] practice for more than one crown to be placed upon the head of Joshua. They suggest it should be rendered by the *crown* (NKJV) and that what was made was a single ornate crown combining both silver and gold and indicating the unification of both the priestly and kingly station. This may be possible, but the natural rendering is the plural *crowns*. The same interpreters don’t express a similar reluctance to take the crowns as plural in the equivalent statement in the NT^[5.2.48]: : “on His head were many *crowns* (διαδηματα [diadēmata])” (Rev. 19:12).
- 26 A. R. Fausset, “*The Revelation of St. John the Divine*,” in Robert Jamieson, A. R. Fausset, and David Brown, *A Commentary, Critical and Explanatory, on the Old and New Testaments* (Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc., 1997, 1877), Zec. 6:11.
- 27 Οἶδεν [Oiden] is a perfect tense verb with present tense force. See [Daniel B. Wallace, *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics - Exegetical Syntax of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House and Galaxie Software, 1999, 2002), 578].
- 28 “In this case Rev. 19:13 means *a garment dyed in blood* (see JAScott, *Class. Journal* 16, “20, 53f for examples of βαπτω [baptō]=‘stain’ with blood from Batrachom. 220 and Lucian, *Ver. Hist.* 18 [2, 38 Teub.].)”—Danker, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 132.
- 29 Friberg, *Analytical Lexicon of the Greek New Testament*, 87.
- 30 Friberg, *Analytical Lexicon of the Greek New Testament*, 341.
- 31 Bruce M. Metzger, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament* (Stuttgart, Germany: Deutsche

- Bibelgesellschaft, 1994), Rev. 19:13.
- 32 Monty S. Mills, *Revelations: An Exegetical Study of the Revelation to John* (Dallas, TX: 3E Ministries, 1987), Rev. 19:13.
- 33 Some suggest that mention of blood on His robe requires that it be so stained while He is yet in heaven, before He rides forth. But the entire scene is one of action in-progress. Within two verses of the mention of His robe, He is *treading* (present tense) the winepress. “The epithet of the garment dipped in blood is proleptic as is the symbolism of the white horse and the white robes of His followers. It looks forward, not backward.”—Thomas, *Revelation 8-22*, Rev. 19:13.
- 34 Tenney, *Interpreting Revelation*, 131.
- 35 Danker, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 770.
- 36 Friberg, *Analytical Lexicon of the Greek New Testament*, 357.
- 37 Thomas, *Revelation 8-22*, s.v. “Rev. 19;14.”
- 38 Fruchtenbaum, *The Footsteps of Messiah*, 352.
- 39 Danker, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 634.
- 40 Friberg, *Analytical Lexicon of the Greek New Testament*, 303.
- 41 Rev. 2:26; 5:9; 7:9; 10:11; 11:2, 9, 18; 12:5; 13:7; 14:6, 8; 15:4; 16:19; 17:15; 18:3, 23; 19:15; 20:3, 8; 21:24, 26; 22:2.
- 42 Tenney, *Interpreting Revelation*, 164.
- 43 Tom Huckel, *The Rabbinic Messiah* (Philadelphia, PA: Hananeel House, 1998), Num. 24:7.
- 44 Huckel, *The Rabbinic Messiah*, Num. 24:7.
- 45 Huckel, *The Rabbinic Messiah*, Gen. 49:10.
- 46 Huckel, *The Rabbinic Messiah*, Gen. 49:10.
- 47 Huckel, *The Rabbinic Messiah*, Gen. 49:10.
- 48 Huckel, *The Rabbinic Messiah*, Gen. 49:10.
- 49 Fruchtenbaum, *The Footsteps of Messiah*, 352.
- 50 James Swanson, *Dictionary of Biblical Languages With Semantic Domains : Greek (New Testament)*, electronic ed. (Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, 1997), G3382.
- 51 “Lexeme: *n*. A minimal unit in the semantic system of a language; the words listed in a lexicon, as opposed to all the grammatical variants that the lexeme can produce (*buy* in relation to *buys*, *bought*, *buying*, *buyer*, etc.)”—Matthew DeMoss, *Pocket Dictionary for the Study of New Testament Greek* (Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity Press, 2001), 79.
- 52 “A further subset of the genitive of subordination category might be ‘the genitive in relation to a par excellence noun’ (though, at times, the nuances depart some from the subordination notion). That is, rarely a genitive indicates the class of which the head noun is the supreme member. When this occurs, both head noun and genitive noun have the same lexeme. For example, note βασιλεὺς βασιλέων [*basileus basileōn*] in Rev. 19:16; ἅγια ἁγίων [*hagia hagiōn*] in Heb. 9:3 (where the meaning is not strictly speaking that of subordination, just par excellence).”—Wallace, *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics - Exegetical Syntax of the New Testament*, 103.
- 53 “Since Hebrew lacked the comparative and superlative forms, some sort of circumlocution was necessary to suggest this notion. Often a genitive having the same lexeme as the head noun (or adj.) was so used, as here. Such expressions were rare in Greek; most in the NT^[5.2.48] are due to Semitic influence and many are stock phrases from the OT.”—Wallace, *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics - Exegetical Syntax of the New Testament*, 298.
- 54 The MT^[5.2.45] and NU^[5.2.49] texts have *kingdom* rather than *kingdoms*: “The kingdom of the world has become *the kingdom* of our Lord and of His Christ, and He shall reign forever and ever” (Rev. 11:15). See commentary on *Revelation 11:15*^[3.11.15].
- 55 J. A. Seiss, *The Apocalypse: Lectures on the Book of Revelation* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing

- House, 1966), 423.
- 56 Fausset, “*The Revelation of St. John the Divine*,” Rev. 19:17.
- 57 John F. Walvoord, *The Revelation of Jesus Christ* (Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 1966), Rev. 19:17.
- 58 Friberg, *Analytical Lexicon of the Greek New Testament*, 259.
- 59 Barnhouse, *Revelation*, 360.
- 60 Seiss, *The Apocalypse: Lectures on the Book of Revelation*, 440.
- 61 Danker, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 657.
- 62 The Lake of Fire is what is often called *hell*. Unfortunately, there is some confusion on this matter because the KJV also translates *Hades* as *hell*. Hades is a holding place of torment for the unsaved between their death and the Great White Throne Judgment (Rev. 20:13). It is not the final destination of the unsaved dead. After judgment, the unsaved dead are cast into the Lake of Fire, their final abode called “the second death” (Rev. 20:14).
- 63 [Bullinger, *Commentary On Revelation*, Rev. 19:20] suggests that both the Beast and the False Prophet are cast alive into the Lake of Fire because they ascended from the abyss and can no longer be slain as mortals. But Scripture says nothing about the False Prophet ascending from the abyss. Nor does the miraculous restoration of the Beast necessitate the conclusion that he cannot subsequently die.
- 64 The unsaved dead are currently in *Hades*, a temporary holding place of torment (Luke 16:22-23) until they stand in judgment following the *Millennial Kingdom*^[5.2.39] (Rev. 20:12-13).
- 65 These are among the irredeemable *Beast Worshipers*^[4.4.3.4].
- 66 Friberg, *Analytical Lexicon of the Greek New Testament*, 49.
- 67 Concerning Israel as the chosen nation: Ex. 3:7, 15, 18; Ex. 6:6; 19:5-6; Lev. 20:26; Deu. 4:34, 37; 7:6-8; 10:15; 14:2; 26:18-19; 2S. 7:23; 1K. 8:53; 1Chr. 16:13; 17:21; Ps. 105:6; 106:6-7; 135:4; Isa. 41:8; 43:1, 10; 44:1; 45:4; Jer. 10:16; Mtt. 24:22; Rom. 9:4; 11:5.
- 68 Some try to make *His brethren* mean the redeemed in general. But this has the fatal objection of being unable to explain who the sheep are. If His brethren are the redeemed and the sheep inherit the kingdom (Mtt. 25:34), then the sheep must be the redeemed as well and the distinction collapses. The Jewish context of Matthew 24 and 25 indicate that His brethren are the Jews of the Tribulation, among them the 144,000 sealed of God (Rev. 7:4).
- 69 Danker, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 883.
- 70 Thomas Ice, “Some Glorious and Incomparable Promises of the Bible,” *Pre-Tribe Perspectives*, vol. 8 no. 10, February 2004, p. 5.
- 71 Seiss, *The Apocalypse: Lectures on the Book of Revelation*, 443.

3.20 - Revelation 20

3.20.1 - Revelation 20:1

As we have continued in our study of the book of Revelation, we have observed how the number of fellow saints who share our understanding of the text dwindles ever more as we proceed. This is because interpreting the book of Revelation is like traveling along a series of roads from a point of origin to a destination. As with any roadway, along the route we meet with numerous forks in the road which head off in different directions—leading to varied destinations.

The fork in the road which looms before us in Revelation 20 is the thousand years: the *Millennial Kingdom*^[4.11]. Is the thousand year reign described here that of a literal kingdom on earth? And is it a future reign—or is it already in progress? Are the two resurrections which bracket the thousand years to be understood as literal, physical raisings from the dead? Or are they spiritual resurrections, related to faith? Or are they some combination of the two? When Satan is bound for the duration of this period, how complete is his binding? Who binds him and how is he bound? Is he bound even now? These are just some of the questions which confront the reader of Revelation 20.

That a kingdom would be the subject of this chapter is not unexpected. In the previous chapter we saw Christ ride forth under the declaration that he would (1) strike the nations, and (2) rule them with a rod of iron (Rev. 19:15). The striking took place during the *Campaign of Armageddon*^[4.5]. Now, the “KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS” (Rev. 19:16) is to take up His promised earthly reign (Mtt. 6:10). It would seem most natural that if His Second Coming occurs in Revelation 19, then the rule described here (Rev. 20:4) would follow upon His physical return. Alas, there is great confusion over what should be obvious.

The reader may recall the introductory material which we studied prior to our verse-by-verse exposition. He may recall the premise which motivated such preparation: *If we all read the same text, how is it that such widely-different understandings result?* The answer, to a great degree, was found in differing *Systems of Interpretation*^[2.12] which are themselves the result of different views concerning how to interpret the text, especially *Interpreting Symbols*^[2.7]. There is perhaps no more dramatic illustration of the significant affect that *interpretation* has upon meaning than the divergence of opinion attending the *Millennial Kingdom*^[4.11] which comes before us in this chapter.

The view we set forth is that of the earliest Church Fathers, known as *premillennialism*^[5.2.58] or *chiliasm*^[5.2.13]—the belief that Christ returns *before* His kingdom commences on earth for *one thousand* years.

We now come to Rev. 20:1-6 which was so universally held by the early Church to teach a literal resurrection, and to be so thoroughly consonant with Jewish views, that the Apocalypse narrowly escaped proscription by the enemies of Chiliasm . . . If we reject the early Church belief in this particular, the veracity of Apostolic Fathers, who assert that they received their interpretation of it from the Apostles and their associates . . . is impeached, and the teaching of the Apostles themselves which directly led to such a faith in all the churches established by them is open to grave suspicion. . . . Popery . . . almost crushed the early interpretation of the passage; but others held fast to it, as e.g. Paulikians, Waldenses, and Albigenses. Various writers, some men of acknowledged ability and talent, have continued from the Reformation . . . down to the present, to entertain the same, and today some of the most able men in nearly all, if not all, denominations, accept of this ancient faith.¹

In accord with our *A Policy of Inoculation*^[2.2.10], we will present elements of alternate views—together with what we view to be their weaknesses—so that the reader is better equipped to judge these matters for himself. Let the reader take note: whether or not one grasps firmly to the *Golden Rule of Interpretation*^[5.2.24] will to a large degree determine what meaning is derived from the text. Most agree that a plain, literal reading of the passage results in the premillennial understanding which we hold—that a future, literal reign of Jesus Christ on earth will follow His Second Coming and precede the eternal state:

Kuyper, in trying to refute chiliasm, makes admissions which substantially give his position away. In commenting on the passage Rev. 20:1-7, he notes: “*Reading this passage as if it were a literal description would not only tend to a belief in the Millennium but would settle the question of chiliasm*

for all who might be in doubt concerning the same . . . If we take it for granted now, that these thousand years are to be taken literally, that these thousand years are still in the future, and that this resurrection was meant to be a bodily resurrection, why then we may say, that at least as far as Rev. 20 is concerned, the question is settled. Then we must admit that Rev. 20:1-7 is a confession of chiliasm with all it contains.”—Kuyper, A. *Chiliasm*, p. 9.²

It was this very matter, opposition to what the book of Revelation describes regarding *The Arrival of God’s Kingdom*^[2.4.3] on earth, which inhibited its *Acceptance into the Canon*^[2.10]. See *Millennial Kingdom*^[4.11]. See *The Millennial Kingdom in the Early Church*^[4.11.9].

Depending upon how one understands the first few verses of this chapter, one will most likely wind up in one of the major interpretive camps: premillennial, *postmillennial*^[5.2.56], or *amillennial*^[5.2.1]. Only the premillennial interpreter takes the verses in their most literal way—symbolism being used to describe literal events yet future. The other two interpretive positions are forced into spiritualizing elements of the passage in order to achieve self-consistency among elements within the passage (e.g., the nature of the resurrections, the binding of Satan, the duration of the kingdom).

Waymeyer offers a helpful summary of key differences between premillennial, postmillennial, and amillennial interpretations of the first six verses of this pivotal chapter:

*Key Interpretive Issues in Revelation 20:1-6*³

Issue	Premillennial View	Postmillennial View	Amillennial View
Satan’s Binding:	Future	Present / Future	Present
First Resurrection:	Physical	Spiritual	Spiritual
Thousand Years:	Literal	Literal / Symbolic	Symbolic
Locale of Reign:	Earth	Earth / Heaven	Heaven
Chronology of chapters 19-20: ⁴	Sequential	Sequential / Recapitulation	Recapitulation

We submit that the premillennial interpretation is the only interpretation which does justice to the text—recognizing the use of *symbols* to describe *literal events* which are entirely consistent and which do not violate exegetical consistency (e.g., such as taking one resurrection as physical and the other as spiritual).

I saw an angel coming down from heaven

John has previously seen other angels coming down from heaven on divine missions. A mighty angel came down from heaven to stand upon the sea and land and declare God’s dominion retaking the earth (Rev. 10:2). An angel with great authority came down from heaven to declare the destruction of Babylon (Rev. 18:1). Even before this angel takes action, we know that he is on a mission from the throne having divine authority. Given his mission, it is remarkable that he is not even described as being *great* or *mighty*. Nevertheless, he will be able to easily dispatch Satan to his millennial prison.

having the key to the bottomless pit

In the ninth chapter, John saw a “star” which fell from heaven having the key to the shaft of this same earthly compartment (Rev. 9:1). The star (angel) opened the pit to loose the demonic locusts at the fifth trumpet judgment. Here, an angel will perform the opposite action with his key: locking up the bottomless pit, probably by means of securing the same shaft. If the star which loosed the locusts was Satan, the irony which confronts him now is being a prisoner in the very abyss which he was previously able to unlock. See commentary on *Revelation 9:1*^[3.9.1].

Bottomless pit is ἄβυσσος [*abysson*]: a very deep gulf or chasm in the lowest parts of the earth. See commentary on *Revelation 9:1*^[3.9.1].

*The Angel with the Key to the Bottomless Pit*⁵**a great chain in his hand**

This is not a literal chain, but a figure describing the angel's authority and ability to restrain Satan. This is not the first time where an angelic power will have been said to be *chained*: "God did not spare the angels who sinned, but cast *them* down to hell and delivered *them* into chains of darkness" (2Pe. 2:4) and "the angels who did not keep their proper domain, but left their own above, He has reserved in everlasting chains under darkness for the judgment of the great day" (Jude 1:6). Since spiritual beings, such as angels like Satan, cannot be restricted by physical means, we must understand the chain to denote a supernatural restraint which is ultimately provided by God for the express purpose of the angel's task. In a similar way that the rebellious angels were locked away and unable to roam, so too will be Satan. The figure of a *chain* is used: the restraint provides no degree of freedom whereby it may be *stretched*.

In our discussion of *The Rise of Allegorical Interpretation*^[2.7.3], we saw that once the tether of literal interpretation is cut, there is virtually no limit to the variety of fanciful solutions which may be provided as possible explanations for the meaning of the text. And so it is with amillennialism which denies the plain meaning of the text and takes almost the entire passage as an imprecise approximation of the spiritual authority now present in the Church. Here, we are told that an *angel* will bind Satan. Although the Church is never said to be an *angel*, amillennialist Kik is sure it is the Church which has

this chain and that Satan is *currently bound*:

It is not difficult to ascertain by what means Satan is bound. The chain is the Gospel. Wherever a soul is released through the preaching of the Gospel there Satan is restrained and limited. . . . Unfortunately the Church of today does not realize the power that Christ has given her. Christ has placed in her hands the chain by which she can bind Satan. She can restrain his influence over the nations. But today the Church bemoans the fact that evil is becoming stronger and stronger. She bemoans the fact that the world is coming more and more under the control of the Devil. Whose fault is that? It is the Church. She has the chain and does not have the faith to bind Satan **ever more firmly**. Satan is bound and the Church knows it not! Satan can be bound **ever more firmly** and the Church does it not! [emphasis added]⁶

According to amillennialism, the chain is riddled with lack of faith. Its ability to restrain is compromised because the Church doesn't realize it already has this chain. Satan would be bound *ever more firmly* if she would just realize this fact. Immediately we meet with a characteristic of amillennialism which fails to do justice to the text: the binding is not truly a binding. It is "loose" and needs to be *ever more firmly* pulled in. Amillennialism teaches that Satan was bound at the cross:

According to the *preterist*^[5.2.59] view, Satan is currently bound (Revelation 20:2-3) and crushed (Romans 16:20). The enemy was not just defeated *de jure* (legally) at the cross, but has been crushed *de facto* (in fact). Therefore, there is no external spiritual roadblock prohibiting Christians from reigning and ruling now.⁷

If the binding of Satan is *now* and its ineffectiveness is found in the weak faith of the Church, then what hope is there that he will *ever* be bound by this means? By the measure of amillennialism, even the "super apostle" Paul was unable to muster the necessary faith to get the job done:

And lest I should be exalted above measure by the abundance of the revelations, a thorn in the flesh was given to me, a messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I be exalted above measure. Concerning this thing I pleaded with the Lord three times that it might depart from me. And He said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness." Therefore most gladly I will rather boast in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. (2Cor. 12:7-9)

Paul was unable to "bind" Satan because Satan is not bound in this present age. His binding is future, after the Second Coming of Christ and during the *Millennial Kingdom*^[4.11].

3.20.2 - Revelation 20:2

He laid hold of the dragon

Laid hold is ἐκράτησε [ekratēse]: "take into one's possession or custody . . . arrest . . . apprehend someone."⁸ The dragon is the most-frequently used title for Satan in the book of Revelation (Rev. 12:3-4, 7, 9, 13, 16-17; 13:2, 4; 16:13; 20:2).

that serpent of old

Serpent of old is τὸν ὄφιν τὸν ἀρχαῖον [ton ophin ton arxaion]: *the serpent, the ancient [one]*. This alludes to the serpent in the garden of Eden, which Satan used to deceive Eve (Gen. 3:1-6). His title as dragon and serpent were seen in the heavenly war, when he was cast out: "So the great dragon was cast out, that serpent of old, called the Devil and Satan" (Rev. 12:9). See commentary on *Revelation 12:9*^[3.12.9]. Now that his two human accomplices, the *Beast*^[5.2.9] and the *False Prophet*^[5.2.20], have been cast into the Lake of Fire (Rev. 19:20) and his demonic forces are imprisoned in the burnt regions of Babylon and Edom (see commentary on *Revelation 18:2*^[3.18.2]), he must fend entirely for himself.

In that day the Lord with His severe sword, great and strong, will punish Leviathan the fleeing serpent, Leviathan that twisted serpent; and He will slay the reptile that is in the sea. (Isa. 27:1)

Awake, awake, put on strength, O arm of the LORD! Awake as in the ancient days, in the generations of old. *Are You not the arm* that cut Rahab apart, *and* wounded the serpent? (Isa. 51:9)

bound him

Bound is ἔδησεν [edēsen]: used of actual binding and imprisonment, as they attempted to bind the demoniac of the Gadarenes with chains (Mark 5:3). Used of John the Baptist who was *bound* in prison by Herod (Mark 6:17), it can also be used in a metaphorical sense, as when describing the deformed woman bound by Satan (Luke 13:16). Paul said that he went to Jerusalem, "bound in the spirit" (Acts

20:22). This generic angel, not said to be mighty or strong, is able to bind Satan with no mention of a protracted struggle. This is an indication of the great authority which the angel has which attends his divine mission. Although he is also a creature, a mere angel like Satan, he is empowered by the Creator and is able to bind any creature with ease—even Satan himself. This is the *de facto* (actual) fulfillment of what was accomplished *de jure* (legally) at the cross. In the bruising of Christ’s heel, the serpent had ultimately laid the groundwork for the bruising of his head: “And I will put enmity Between you [the serpent] and the woman, And between your seed and her Seed [Christ]; He shall bruise your head, And you shall bruise His heel” (Gen. 3:15).

Here is the foundational question regarding the binding of Satan? *Is he truly bound or isn’t he?* The text will make plain that his binding is complete because it is followed by his being casting into the bottomless pit which is then sealed. Those who assert that Satan is *bound even now* are faced with a dilemma because it is obvious both from Scripture and real experience that if Satan is bound today, then “his chain is too long!” Hence, *amillennialists*^[5.2.1] demonstrate great zeal (and considerable confusion) in their attempt to explain this “binding” such that it is not really a binding:

B. B. Warfield, whose eschatology seems to embrace some of the elements of both amillennialism and *postmillennialism*^[5.2.56], attempts to support the idea that Satan is bound in respect to heaven. He writes: “The ‘binding of Satan’ is therefore in reality not for a season but with reference to a sphere; and his ‘loosing’ again is not after a period but in another sphere: it is not subsequence but exteriority that is suggested. There is, indeed, no literal ‘binding of Satan’ to be thought of at all: what happens, happens not to Satan but to the saints, and is only represented as happening to Satan for the purposes of the symbolical picture. What actually happens is that the saints described are removed from the sphere of Satan’s assaults. The saints described are free from all access of Satan—he is bound with respect to them: outside of their charmed circle his horrid work goes on.”⁹

The basic problem with interpretations which assert that the kingdom described in this passage is actually upon us now, having begun at the cross, is that they are unable to understand or unwilling to recognize the delay between spiritual accomplishments and their outworking in the physical realm. On the way to Jerusalem prior to presenting Himself as king, just a few days from His crucifixion, Jesus stopped to teach a *parable*^[5.2.54] “because they thought the kingdom of God would appear immediately” (Luke 19:11). The parable concerned a nobleman who “went to a far country to receive for himself a kingdom and to return” (Luke 19:12). He instructs his servants to attend to his affairs in his absence. His *kingdom is not received until the time of his return*: “And so it was that when he returned, having received the kingdom, he then commanded these servants” (Luke 19:15). This parable, we might observe, was specifically intended to do away with the delusion that God’s kingdom on earth is fulfilled in the Church today. Christ accomplished everything necessary for the establishment of the kingdom at the cross, but the time was not right for its commencement—there was to be an intervening age: “It is not for you to know times or seasons which the Father has put in His own authority” (Acts 1:7b). The amillennialist, in his headlong zeal to make God’s kingdom on earth be *now*, ignores the many interpretive indicators otherwise. We agree with the amillennialist at one point: *if* the kingdom of God on earth is *now* *then* Satan must be bound even today. But the premise itself is flawed. Amillennialism must deny reality to cling to this error:

That something drastic happened to Satan with the first advent of Christ is seen also by the words of John 12:31, “Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out.” . . . In spite of the above passages there are people who will not believe that Satan is bound or that he has been cast out of his sphere of influence. They simply will not believe the words of Christ. “If Satan were bound and cast out,” they argue, “why is there so much evil in the world? If we believe that Satan is bound we must deny our senses.” It is better to believe Christ than it is to believe our senses.¹⁰

Kik confuses lack of faith with unsound interpretation. It is not our *disbelief* which tells us that Satan is not bound, it is our proper reading of God’s word *which confirms our real experience*. A sound interpretation of the text is in complete alignment with our experience: Satan cannot now be bound. The type of “faith” which Kik espouses is a blight on the people of God. It is founded on a flawed interpretation of God’s word and tries to fly at all costs, even denying reality, to the detriment of the believer. In this, it is like the faith of Christian Science which attributes the reality of sickness to an illusion of the mind.

Typical are amillennial explanations of the binding which is no binding at all:

There has been a binding of Satan. It is such a binding that he cannot touch a Christian. . . . We read in Revelation Twenty that Satan is also bound as far as deceiving the nations is concerned. Where previously he had completely deceived the Gentile nations now [after the cross] he could no longer do so. **This does not mean that no one within a nation could not be deceived. There might be many within a Gentile nation that would be deceived by the cunning of Satan. Even though Satan is bound** as far as the individual Christian is concerned, yet **a Christian may, for a period of time or concerning a certain doctrine, be deceived.** So also in regard to the nation. It simply means that Satan would no longer be in complete control of the nations as he was before the coming of Christ. [emphasis added]¹¹

We can agree with Kik at one point: Christians can indeed be deceived concerning doctrine: amillennialists are deceived concerning the doctrine of the binding of Satan! Even a cursory examination of Scriptural passages written *after the cross and the resurrection* indicate that Satan is not presently bound:

- Satan filled the heart of Ananias to lie to the Holy Spirit resulting in the death of he and his wife (Acts 5:3).
- Paul said that Satan is blinding the eyes of nonbelievers in this current age so that they should not receive the gospel (2Cor. 4:3-4).
- Paul told the Corinthians that Satan transforms himself (deceptively) into an angel of light (2Cor. 11:14).
- Paul was given a thorn in the flesh, “a messenger of Satan” to keep him humble (2Cor. 12:7).
- Paul told the Ephesians that the prince of the power of the air “now works in the sons of disobedience” (Eph. 2:2).
- Paul told the Ephesians not to give place to the devil (Eph. 4:27) and that they wrestled against “spiritual *hosts* of wickedness in the heavenly *places*” (Eph. 6:12).
- Paul was hindered by Satan from visiting the Thessalonian church (1Th. 2:18).
- The coming of the lawless one, the *Antichrist*^[5.2.3], will be “according to the working of Satan, with all power, signs and lying wonders” (2Th. 2:9). This is fulfilled, in part, by the activities of the False Prophet documented in the book of Revelation.
- Paul delivered Hymenaeus and Alexander to Satan so that they might learn not to blaspheme (1Ti. 1:20).
- James warns believers to submit to God and resist the devil (Jas. 4:7).
- Peter warns believers to be sober and vigilant because “your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour” (1Pe. 5:8).
- John tells us that “the whole world lies *under the sway of the wicked one*” (1Jn. 5:19).
- Satan is a source of deception throughout the events of the book of Revelation (Rev. 12:9; 13:14; 18:23; 19:20; 20:8, 10).

Here is a foundational danger of amillennialism: in their appropriation of “kingdom now” theology, they *deny reality*. But an important part of reality is the factual, historical resurrection of Jesus Christ. Amillennialists need to ask why a skeptical world should believe their witness concerning the historical fact of the crucifixion of Jesus for sin when they hold a theology which essentially denies reality?

This strange theory, the origin of which is traced to the Romish notion that the church is the kingdom, contends that whatever millennium there may be is being experienced in the present age. Its advocates interpret the book of Revelation as a description, or varied, descriptions, of this church age. . . . In their unenviable attempt to fit all the events anticipated in the Revelation into the history of this age, the amillennialists indulge in a form of speculation almost unsurpassed. Their abandonment of reason and sound interpretation has but one objective in mind, namely, to place χίλιοι [*chilioi*] (“thousand”) years—six times repeated in Revelation, chapter 20—back into the past and therefore something no longer to be anticipated in the future. **The violence which this interpretation imposes upon the whole prophetic revelation is such that none would propose it except those who, for lack of attention, seem not to realize what they do. . . . In sheer fantastical imagination this method surpasses Russellism, Eddyism, and Seventh Day Adventism, since the plain, grammatical meaning of**

language is abandoned, and simple terms are diverted in their course and end in anything the interpreter wishes. [emphasis added]¹²

How much better to take both Scripture and our real experience at face value—especially when they speak in concert that Satan is not bound at the present hour.

The binding of Satan at the beginning of the *Millennial Kingdom*^[5.2.39] is part of the seventh bowl judgment which was poured out upon the *air*, the domain of the “prince of the power of the air” (Rev. 16:17 cf. Eph. 2:2). See commentary on *Revelation 16:17*^[3.16.17]. The same bowl judgment also brought about the incarceration of his demonic hoards. See commentary on *Revelation 18:2*^[3.18.2].

thousand years

Thousand is χίλια [*chilia*], from which *chiliasm*^[5.2.13] is derived: the belief in a literal one thousand year reign of Christ on the earth.¹³ As with all progressive revelation, this passage provides information which was not before revealed—the duration of the *Millennial Kingdom*^[4.11]. Although critics are fond of observing that little more is revealed concerning the kingdom in this passage, the characteristics of the kingdom are set forth at length elsewhere in God’s word—especially in the *OT*^[5.2.51]—so God has no need to repeat Himself here. Even though the duration of one thousand years is listed no less than six times in this passage, few are those who take it at face value. See *The Abuse of Numbers*^[2.7.5.1]. Once we deny that one thousand years means one thousand years, there is no end to the suggestions which can be offered as to what period is really in view:

The term *thousand years* in Revelation Twenty is a figurative expression used to describe the period of the Messianic Kingdom upon earth. It is that period from the first Advent of Christ until His Second Coming. It is the total or complete period of Christ’s Kingdom upon earth. . . . If the binding of Satan began with the first coming of Christ then it follows that the *thousand years* began with His first coming. . . . Now the natural objection to this view is that the period from the first coming of our Lord to the present time can hardly be described as a Millennium. For one thing wars have not ceased and wickedness is still very much prevalent. As someone has stated: “if Satan is bound he must have a long tether.” **All appearances seem to be against the view that we are in the millennium now.** The trouble is that we have altogether a too materialistic concept of the millennial blessings. [emphasis added]¹⁴

Again we meet with amillennialism’s characteristic denial of reality. We are actually in the Millennium now: our error is that we just don’t happen to realize it! This detachment from reality can reach ridiculous extremes: “[Mild *preterist*^[5.2.59]] Gentry actually believes we are in some way in the new heavens and the new earth of Revelation 21-22. If this is true, then we all must be living in the ghetto side of the New Jerusalem. But there is no ghetto in the New Jerusalem.”¹⁵ In this rush to assert that every work of God has already come to pass, amillennialists *devalue* the promises of God. If *this* is the sum total of God’s kingdom on earth, then what’s there to get excited about? If most of the people living on earth *in the kingdom* have no idea they are even in such a kingdom—much less know and acknowledge the king—how can it be a kingdom in any real sense? In this, amillennialism has more in common with bizarre cults which specialize in “spiritual realities” and brainwash their adherents to ignore objective reality. This is unhealthy and unscriptural. Our God is a God of *reality* who does not ask us to deny the obvious:

Is the binding of Satan . . . so ineffective that murderers of saints, that dangerous enemies, still exist? What, then, becomes of God’s promises, if persecution, sore trial, threatened death and violent death itself is the characteristic of the Millennium?¹⁶

3.20.3 - Revelation 20:3

he cast him into the bottomless pit

Having unlocked the abyss, the angel casts Satan into it. The picture is of all authority being with the angel and Satan as his helpless prisoner. See commentary on *Revelation 20:1*^[3.20.1].

shut him up, and set a seal on him

Shut him up is ἔκλεισε αὐτον [*ekleise auton*]; *he locked him*. Only the *TR*^[5.2.79] text has *him* (αὐτον [*auton*]). *Set a seal on him* is ἐσφράγισεν ἐπάνω αὐτοῦ [*esphragisen epanō autou*]; *he sealed over*

or upon him, which can also denote having authority over the dragon.¹⁷ In the *MT*^[5.2.45] and *NU*^[5.2.49] texts, it is the *abyss* which is shut and sealed, not the dragon himself. In any case, the intended result is the same. Satan now has three strikes against him, he is: (1) bound, (2) shut up, (3) sealed in his prison. The word for sealed, ἔσφραγισεν [*esphragisen*], is the same word which describes sealing elsewhere in the book of Revelation (Rev. 7:3-8; 10:4; 20:3; 22:10).

Examples of *sealing* elsewhere in Scripture indicate its complete effectiveness:

- Nebuchadnezzar sealed Daniel in the lion's den (Dan. 6:17).
- Daniel was told to seal the book of Daniel until the time of the end (Dan. 12:4).
- Pilate commanded that Jesus' tomb be sealed (Mtt. 27:66).
- Believers are sealed with the Holy Spirit (John 14:16; 2Cor. 1:22; Eph. 1:13; 4:30).
- Jesus' testimony was sealed (John 3:33).
- Jesus was sealed by the Father (John 6:27).
- The 144,000 witnesses from the twelve tribes were *sealed* on their foreheads (Rev. 7:3-8).
- The things which the seven thunders uttered were *sealed up* so they would not be recorded by John (Rev. 10:4).
- The contents of the book of Revelation are not to be *sealed* (Rev. 20:3; 22:10).

The angel's treatment of Satan corresponds to Isaiah's prediction that disobedient angels would be punished and imprisoned:

The earth is violently broken, the earth is split open, the earth is shaken exceedingly. The earth shall reel to and fro like a drunkard, and shall totter like a hut; its transgression shall be heavy upon it, and it will fall, and not rise again. It shall come to pass in that day *That the LORD will punish on high the host of exalted ones, and on the earth the kings of the earth. They will be gathered together, as prisoners are gathered in the pit, and will be shut up in the prison; after many days they will be punished.* (Isa. 24:19-22) [emphasis added]

First, they are imprisoned, and after *many days* they receive their final punishment. This corresponds to the age of the *Millennial Kingdom*^[5.2.39] during which Satan and his angels are locked away. After his release and final rebellion (Rev. 20:7-10), he will meet his final punishment.

so that he should deceive the nations no more

The first human target of his deception was Eve in the garden (1Ti. 2:14). Since then, he has deceived nations throughout history, but never more so than his final attempt at victory during the Great Tribulation (Rev. 12:12). He restored *the Beast*^[4.2] from death so that all the world would worship him (Rev. 13:3). He spoke by the mouth of the *False Prophet*^[5.2.20] (Rev. 13:11) and empowered him to deceive the *earth dwellers*^[5.2.18] to their doom by taking the mark of the *Beast*^[5.2.9] (Rev. 13:14, 16; 14:9-11). He carried the *Harlot*^[4.3.2.21] as she rode throughout history upon his *seven heads*^[4.3.2.4] (Rev. 17:3 cf. Rev. 12:3) and made the inhabitants drunk with her fornicating wine (Rev. 17:2) and sorcery (Rev. 18:23). He controlled the three unclean spirits which were sent out to gather the kings to the *Campaign of Armageddon*^[4.5] (Rev. 16:13-14) which led them to the slaughter (Rev. 19:21).

His deceptive activities, which affect both believers and unbelievers, are a fact of the Church age:

But I fear, lest somehow, as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, so your minds may be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ. (2Cor. 11:3).

For such *are* false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into apostles of Christ. And no wonder! For Satan himself transforms himself into an angel of light. Therefore *it is* no great thing if his ministers also transform themselves into ministers of righteousness, whose end will be according to their works. (2Cor. 11:13-15)

A plain reading of the passage indicates that Satan is *unable* to deceive while he is locked away. As soon as he is released, he immediately goes out *to deceive* the nations (Rev. 20:8, 10), which he had been completely unable to do while in the abyss. "If this language does not mean that the immobilization of Satan is complete, so far as his deception of the nations (Grk. *ethne*) is concerned, then there is no way to express the idea."¹⁸

This is his pattern: misrepresentation of truth through deception so those who respond to his promises *always* wind up with unforeseen liabilities which attend participation in his schemes. His two greatest tools are *temptation* and *compromise*. See commentary on *Revelation 13:14*^[3.13.14].

till the thousand years were finished

What an amazing time of blessing this will be! Satan and his demonic realm will be rendered *completely inoperative* during the coming earthly kingdom of God. But this great blessing also has a flip side: in the removal of the great tempter is the removal of a convenient excuse by which men hide their own rebellious nature. And this, it would seem, is part of God's plan in locking Satan away for the duration of the Millennial Kingdom—to show man his utter incapability of obedience to God, even in the midst of ideal conditions and in the absence of the influence of the serpent of old.

But after these things he must be released for a little while.

After the thousand years have expired, he is released to deceive the nations one final time. Here we see the sovereignty of God Who uses *all things* to achieve His ultimate ends. Satan is no less a tool of God in his rebellion than in his obedience. Although God is not the author of sin, His sovereignty over the affairs of history is not the least threatened by the disobedience of His creatures. See commentary on *Revelation 20:7*^[3.20.7].

3.20.4 - Revelation 20:4

And I saw thrones, and they sat on them

Previously, it was the twenty-four elders who were seen sitting on thrones (Rev. 4:4). Here, the throne-sitters are resurrected *men* which supports our conclusion that the twenty-four elders are not angels, but resurrected men who also sit on thrones. See commentary on *Revelation 4:4*^[3.4.4].

Now the only “Company of Believers” that we see sitting on Thrones are the “Four and Twenty Elders” of Revelation 4:4-5. These as we have seen stand for the Church, and were resurrected or caught out before “The Tribulation,” and are the “Harvest” of which Christ and those who rose at the time of His Resurrection were the “First Fruits.”¹⁹

“Surely the sitters on these thrones are those to whom this implied judicio-regal authority is everywhere promised.”²⁰ They are the overcomers who obtained the promises Jesus gave to the church at Thyatira and Laodicea: “And he who overcomes, and keeps My works until the end, to him I will give power over the nations—*He shall rule them with a rod of iron: they shall be dashed to pieces like the potter’s vessels*” (Rev. 2:26-27), “To him who overcomes I will grant to sit with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne” (Rev. 3:21). See commentary on *Revelation 2:26*^[3.2.26] and *Revelation 3:21*^[3.3.21]. See *Millennial Reign of the Saints*^[4.11.6].

Here we begin to see what God has gained out of the whole trail of earth history. Man, made a little lower than the angels, is raised through the redemptive death of the Lord who also was willing to be made lower than the angels (Heb. 2:7, 9), to a higher position. In salvation we are not lifted back to the level from which Adam fell, but higher. We are not lifted to the level of the angels, but higher. We are lifted above all the principalities and powers to the very throne of Heaven.²¹

and judgment was given to them

These both reign and judge during the *Millennial Kingdom*^[5.2.39]. See *Judgment by the Saints*^[4.11.6.1].

These seated on thrones are from two major resurrection events, both of which are part of the category known as the *first resurrection*:

1. **OT**^[5.2.51] **Saints** - Those who came to faith and died prior to the baptizing work of the Spirit which began on the Day of Pentecost. These are the OT saints, many of whom are Jews, and who were resurrected after *Jacob’s Trouble and the Great Tribulation*^[2.13.4] (Dan. 12:2; Isa. 26:19).²²
2. **Church Saints** - Those who came to faith and lived beyond the Day of Pentecost to be baptized by the Spirit into the body of Christ, the Church. These were resurrected or translated at the *Rapture*^[4.14] of the Church (John 14:3; 1Cor. 15:51; 1Th. 4:13-18). See *Rapture*^[4.14].

See *Order of Resurrection*^[3.20.5.1].

Then I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded

Souls is ψυχὰς [*psychas*]. “These souls, once disembodied (Rev. 6:9), but here clearly resurrected, for they live and reign with Christ a thousand years. Thus, this is the figure of speech Metonymy of the Cause, whereby ‘soul’ is put for the person. . . . The use of ‘soul’ here provides no basis for asserting a spiritual, as opposed to a literal, reign or resurrection.”²³ It is also possible that John first describes them as souls because as he watches in the vision they come to life (are joined with their resurrected bodies).

Who had been beheaded is πεπελεκισμένων [*pepelekismenōn*], perfect tense: *the ones having been beheaded with an axe*.²⁴ They were martyred and are now identified as having been faithful unto death (Rev. 2:10). At the opening of the fifth seal, John saw those who had been slain “for the word of God and for the testimony which they held” (Rev. 6:9). Elsewhere, John was shown a great multitude who came out of the Great Tribulation, most of whom were probably martyrs (Rev. 7:13-14).

The guillotine in revolutionary France was a revival of the mode of capital punishment of pagan imperial Rome. Paul was *beheaded* [as was John the Baptist, Mtt. 14:8; Mark 6:24-15], and no doubt shall share *the first resurrection*, in accordance with his prayer that he “might attain unto the resurrection from out of the rest of the dead” (Greek, “*exanastasis*”). The above facts may account for the specification of this particular kind of punishment.²⁵

for their witness to Jesus and for the word of God

Witness to Jesus is μαρτυρίαν Ἰησοῦ [*martyrian Iēsou*], elsewhere translated *the testimony of Jesus* (Rev. 1:2, 9; 12:17; 19:10). John “bore witness to the word of God, and to the testimony of Jesus Christ” which included all the things he saw in his vision and are recorded in this book (Rev. 1:2). See commentary on *Revelation 1:2*^[3.1.2] and *Revelation 19:10*^[3.19.10].

who had not worshiped the beast or his image

Who had not worshiped is και οἳτινες οὐ προσεκύνησαν [*kai hoitines ou prosekynēsan*]: *and all the ones who not worshiped*. The *Beast*^[5.2.9] arose from the sea, having recovered from a deadly wound to the acclaim and worship of the world (Rev. 13:4). The *earth dwellers*^[5.2.18], under the urging of the *False Prophet*^[5.2.20], constructed an *image of the Beast*^[5.2.29] which was worshiped under penalty of death (Rev. 13:14-16). These, having faith and being protected from deception by the power of the Holy Spirit, had not been swayed by the great deception of their age. They had rejected worship of both the Beast and His image. As a result, they suffered martyrdom. In their *physical* death, having held true to their testimony (Rev. 12:11), they had escaped eternal torment (Rev. 14:9-11) which is the second death (Rev. 2:11; 20:6). Prior to the bowl judgments, John saw those from among them who had already died, who had “victory over the beast, over his image and over his mark *and* over the number of his name” singing the song of Moses and the song of the Lamb (Rev. 15:2-4).

The grammar of the Greek provides the possibility that a *third* group is described beyond those sitting on thrones and those who had been beheaded:²⁶

John describes three groups of resurrected believers (they “came to life”) in Rev. 20:4. First, the thrones represent believers of the pre-tribulation era (as the twenty-four elders sat on their thrones before the tribulation began—Rev. 4:4); second, the souls of those who will be martyred in the first half of the tribulation; and third, those who will refuse to worship the Beast in the second half of the tribulation.²⁷

The three groups are not mutually exclusive, for the second two are probably a subset from among the first:

That martyrs and the faithful ones under the Beast are not different parties from the sitters on the thrones, but special classes specifically included. A somewhat parallel presentation occurs in Revelation 1:7, where it is said of the Saviour at his great Epiphany, that “every eye shall see him, and they which pierced him.” The meaning is not that “they which pierced him” for a separate class apart from “every eye,” but that even those who slew Christ shall be among those denoted by “every eye,” and that they too shall look upon him.²⁸

In any case, these cannot include the living saints who survive the Tribulation until the Second Coming

of Christ and enter the *Millennial Kingdom*^[4.11] in their natural bodies, because *these* have previously died and are resurrected.

and had not received *his* mark on their foreheads or on their hands

Their hands is τήν χεῖρα αὐτῶν [*tēn cheira autōn*]: *the hand [singular] of them*. Hands is plural in the same sense as foreheads, *many people with one [right] hand* each that could have received the mark.²⁹ Their refusal of the mark of the Beast meant they could neither buy nor sell (Rev. 13:17). Their only means of survival was by supernatural assistance, living off the land, or through the black market. Thus, they demonstrated their faith *by their works* and lived under extreme duress in order to remain true to their faith in God.

they lived and reigned with Christ for a thousand years

They lived is ἐζήσαν [*ezēsan*], used of “dead persons who return to life, *become alive again*.”³⁰ It is an ingressive aorist: *they came to life and began to live*.³¹ The same word is used by Christ to describe His own resurrection: “These things says the First and the Last, who was dead, and *came to life* (ἐζήσεν [*ezēsen*])” (Rev. 2:8). It describes the revival of the Beast from *physical* death: “And he [the False Prophet] deceives those who dwell on the earth by those signs which he was granted to do in the sight of the beast, telling those who dwell on the earth to make an image to the beast who was wounded by the sword and *lived* (ἐζήσεν [*ezēsen*])” (Rev. 13:14).

The reason they come to life is because Christ overcame death (Rev. 1:18; 2:8). “For as the Father raises the dead and gives life to them, even so the Son gives life to whom He will” (John 5:21). “A little while longer and the world will see Me no more, but you will see Me. Because I live, you will live also” (John 14:19). “*This is a faithful saying: For if we died with Him, We shall also live with Him*” (2Ti. 2:11). Through identification by faith in Jesus Christ, they obtained resurrection to life. In one of the most significant scenes in the gospels, Jesus makes a dramatic claim:

Jesus said to her, “Your brother will rise again.” Martha said to Him, “I know that he will rise again in the resurrection at the last day.” Jesus said to her, “**I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live.**” (John 11:23-25) [emphasis added]

Their persecutors, the Beast worshipers, had saved their own physical lives for a time, but ultimately lost eternal life: “He who finds his life will lose it, and he who loses his life for My sake will find it” (Mtt. 10:39). This is a resurrection to receive a glorified body never to die again. It differs from those who were raised from the dead, but then died again (1K. 17:22; Luke 7:15; 8:54; John 11:43-44):

Jesus answered and said to them, “The sons of this age marry and are given in marriage. But those who are counted worthy to attain that age, and the resurrection from the dead, neither marry nor are given in marriage; nor can they die anymore, for they are equal to the angels and are sons of God, being sons of the resurrection.” (Luke 20:34-36)

Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; nor does corruption inherit incorruption. Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall be changed—in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal *must* put on immortality. (1Cor. 15:50-53)

Those who claim we are already in the time which John describes must find a different way of understanding this verse because the physical resurrection of the believing dead has obviously not yet transpired. The most frequent way to explain away the future force of the passage and move it into the past is to explain this resurrection as being a *spiritual regeneration* by which people come to faith—having previously been *spiritually dead*.

From at least the time of Augustine, the first resurrection was understood as a regeneration of the soul and the second resurrection as the general physical, bodily resurrection of the just and unjust (*City of God* 20.9-10). It must, however, be insisted that it is quite weak exegesis to make the first resurrection spiritual and the second one physical, unless the text itself clearly indicates this change, which it does not.³²

But this cannot be a spiritual resurrection because these are said to have *previously died because of their faith!* The very faith which the *amillennialist*^[5.2.1] now claims is attained at their “resurrection”:

It seems absurd to press this passage into a spiritual or moral conversion in the face of the beheading

which was *endured for* the Word, since it is virtually affirming that the sinner, *previous* to his conversion, suffers death because of his witnessing for Jesus; that the unregenerated man endures a beheading for his unswerving devotion to the truth; and then, after such an exhibition of love, he is resurrected, i.e., converted, etc. . . . The persons who have part in this resurrection are such as were converted to the truth *before* this death.³³

This is the future *physical resurrection* of the just which the early Church Father *Irenaeus*^[5.2.34] described:

“For, behold,” says Isaiah, “the day of the Lord cometh past remedy, full of fury and wrath, to lay waste the city of the earth, and to root sinners out of it.” And again he says, “Let him be taken away, that he behold not the glory of God.” And when these things are done, he says, “God will remove men far away, and those that are left shall multiply in the earth. And they shall build houses, and shall inhabit them themselves: and plant vineyards, and eat of them themselves.” For all these and other words were unquestionably spoken in reference to the resurrection of the just, which takes place after the coming of *Antichrist*^[5.2.3], and the destruction of all nations under his rule; in [the times of] which [resurrection] the righteous shall reign in the earth, waxing stronger by the sight of the Lord: and through Him they shall become accustomed to partake in the glory of God the Father, and shall enjoy in the kingdom intercourse and communion with the holy angels, and union with spiritual beings; and [with respect to] those whom the Lord shall find in the flesh, awaiting Him from heaven, and who have suffered tribulation, as well as escaped the hands of the Wicked one.³⁴

Their coming to life and reigning with Christ is a future event which is the fulfillment of the prayers of the saints throughout history that God would bring His kingdom to earth (Mtt. 6:10). See *The Arrival of God’s Kingdom*^[2.4.3]. This is the beginning of the literal kingdom on earth which smashes all other earthly kingdoms and fills the globe. See *Nebuchadnezzar’s Dream and Daniel’s Vision*^[4.3.1]. See *Millennial Kingdom*^[4.11]. Both Jesus and the saints rule in the kingdom. See *Millennial Reign of Messiah*^[4.11.5]. See *Millennial Reign of the Saints*^[4.11.6].

At the sounding of the seventh trumpet, it was announced that “He shall reign forever and ever” (Rev. 11:15). The reign of Christ and the saints eventually extends beyond the thousand years and on into the eternal state (Rev. 22:5).

3.20.5 - Revelation 20:5

But the rest of the dead did not live again until the thousand years were finished.

Live again is ἀνεζήσαν [anezēsan]: used “of the dead *become alive again, rise again, return to life.*”³⁵ The *MT*^[5.2.45] and *NU*^[5.2.49] texts have ἐζήσαν [ezēsan], the same term described the resurrection of the Tribulation martyrs in the previous verse. “Since all of the righteous are raised during the first resurrection, these designated as ‘the rest of the dead’ must refer to the unrighteous, who are not raised until after the first thousand years of the reign of Christ have transpired.”³⁶

Those *amillennialists*^[5.2.1] who are consistent in their exegesis are forced to take this resurrection as a spiritual resurrection, as they do the first resurrection. This places them in a bind because it is clear that these are the unsaved dead who are *never* spiritually regenerated. Kik illustrates the interpretive gymnastics which result when attempting to overcome the consistent literal meaning of the text:

It might seem that these dead would remain so only during the thousand-year period. They lived not *until the thousand years were finished*. One might think that when the thousand-year period ended that these dead would live. But the conjunction *until* is used in the sense “to the time that.” The rest of mankind remained in spiritual deadness to the time that the thousand years ended. . . . Their souls remained dead.³⁷

Kik tortures the word “until” until it finally cries out “never!” But *until* cannot mean *never* in this context because we see the rest of the dead resurrected a few verses from now! If the first resurrection is *spiritual*, then so must be the second. But if the second resurrection is taken as being spiritual, the amillennialist has a problem—after the thousand years the unsaved dead are resurrected: regenerated! Thus, he must make “until” mean “never.” It is difficult to imagine a clearer example of bringing a faulty concept to the text and twisting the interpretation until it yields the desired results. Here we see the most significant danger of amillennialism which is not its denial of the *Millennial Kingdom*^[5.2.39],

as serious as that might be, but its proclivity to distort God's word.

This resurrection is not that of the Church, previously taken up in the *Rapture*^[4.14]:

For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive *and* remain until the coming of the Lord will by no means precede those who are asleep. For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive *and* remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord. (1Th. 4:15-17)

Nor is it the resurrection of the two witnesses which occurred at the rise of the *Beast*^[5.2.9] from the abyss at the mid-point of the Tribulation:

Now after the three-and-a-half days the breath of life from God entered them, and they stood on their feet, and great fear fell on those who saw them. (Rev. 11:11)

This is the first of two resurrections *subsequent to Christ's Second Coming*, one prior to the Millennial Kingdom and the other afterward. The text describes *two resurrections* separated by a period of one thousand years.³⁸ This fact is compatible with the many other resurrection passages which indicate this very thing.

As early as the book of Daniel we see an indication of two categories of resurrection: "And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, Some to everlasting life, Some to shame *and* everlasting contempt" (Dan. 12:2). The Hebrew in this passage is difficult. The passage makes a distinction between *many* versus *all* and between two resulting categories: *everlasting life* and *everlasting contempt*:

Tregelles translates Daniel 12:2 as follows: "And many from among the sleepers of the dust of the earth shall awake; these shall be unto everlasting life; but those [the rest of the sleepers, those who do not awake at this time] shall be unto shame and everlasting contempt." [S. P. Tregelles, *Remarks on the Prophetic Visions in the Book of Daniel*, p. 159; words in brackets supplied by Tregelles].³⁹

The true rendering of Dan. 12:1-3, in connection with the context, is "And (at that time) *Many* (of thy people) shall awake (or be separated) *out from among* the sleepers in the earth-dust. *These* (who awake) shall be unto life everlasting, but *those* (who do not awake at that time) shall be unto shame and contempt everlasting." So, the most renowned Hebrew Doctors render it, and the best Christian exegetes.⁴⁰

Numerous passages in the *NT*^[5.2.48] indicate different categories of resurrection:

And you will be blessed, because they cannot repay you; for you shall be repaid at **the resurrection of the just**. (Luke 14:14) [emphasis added]

Do not marvel at this; for the hour is coming in which all who are in the graves will hear His voice and come forth—those who have done good, to **the resurrection of life**, and those who have done evil, to **the resurrection of condemnation**. (John 5:28-29) [emphasis added]

Women received their dead raised to life again. Others were tortured, not accepting deliverance, that they might obtain **a better resurrection**. (Heb. 11:35) [emphasis added]

Paul taught that all men will be raised from the dead:

But this I confess to you, that according to the Way which they call a sect, so I worship the God of my fathers, believing all things which are written in the Law and in the Prophets. I have hope in God, which they themselves also accept, that there will be a resurrection of *the* dead, **both of the just and the unjust**. (Acts 24:14-15) [emphasis added]

Although Paul appears to describe a single resurrection, elsewhere his teaching betrays otherwise: "That I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death, if, by any means, I may attain to the resurrection from the dead" (Php. 3:10-11). If Paul taught that all men were to be raised (Acts 24:14-15), how could he say he hoped to attain *the resurrection* from the dead? Here he speaks of a *specific resurrection*, the resurrection of the just—a separate resurrection from that of the unjust and the subject before us in this verse.

This is the first resurrection.

First is πρῶτη [*prōtē*] which can be used "of time: *first, earliest*"⁴¹ or it can describe relative priority: "foremost, chief, most important of all."⁴² The various individual resurrections which make up the

category of the first resurrection all precede the second resurrection in time. It is also the chief or foremost resurrection, the “better resurrection” (Heb. 11:35) because participation in the first resurrection indicates a person is saved and participates in the blessings of God’s kingdom on earth.

This resurrection is, therefore, the *chief, principal, pre-eminent one, because it pertains to that of the first-born*, constitutes the persons embraced in and experiencing its power *the first born* that belong exclusively—in a particular sense typified by the Jewish first-born—to God Himself. Hence not time but distinction is denoted.⁴³

The expression “first resurrection” has constituted an exegetical problem for all interpreters.

Posttribulationists^[5.2.57] cite this reference as evidence that the *rapture*^[5.2.62] could not occur until after the tribulation. *Pretribulationists*^[5.2.60] have rightly held that **the first resurrection is not an event, but an order of resurrection**. It is evident that our Lord rose from the dead as the first one to receive a resurrection body—others previously raised from the dead had merely been restored to their former natural bodies. His resurrection, though widely separated from resurrections which follow, is included in the first resurrection, otherwise the event described in Revelation would not be “first.” According to 1 Corinthians 15:20, Christ is “the firstfruits of them that are asleep,” i.e., the first part of the resurrection of all saints. Likewise, the evidence that the translation of the church takes place before the tribulation would point to a large segment of the righteous dead being raised before the tribulation. These also would qualify as taking part in the first resurrection. In contrast to the first resurrection of Revelation 20 is the resurrection of the wicked dead portrayed in the latter part of the chapter. The first resurrection therefore becomes the resurrection of all the righteous in contrast to the final resurrection which is the resurrection of the wicked. [emphasis added]⁴⁴

The first resurrection must not be spiritualized into the new birth experienced in this life by every believer, for such is not called a resurrection in Scripture. Many interpreters have been confused by failing to understand the meaning of “first.” “First” is here a term of priority, and the first resurrection includes all the several resurrections of the righteous dead which have occurred.⁴⁵

Dean Alford (“New Testament for English Readers,” *Com. loci*) remarks: “I cannot consent to distort the words from their plain sense and chronological place in the prophecy, on account of any considerations of difficulty, or of any risk of abuses which the doctrine of the Millennium may bring with it. Those who lived next to the Apostles, and the whole Church for three hundred years, understood them in the plain literal sense; and it is a strange sight in these days to see expositors who are among the first in reverence for antiquity, complacently casting aside *the most cogent instance of consensus* which primitive antiquity presents. As regards the text itself, *no legitimate treatment* of it will extort what is known as the spiritual interpretation now in fashion. If, in a passage where *two resurrections* are mentioned, where certain persons lived at the first, and the rest of the dead only at the end of a specified period *after* the first—if, in such a passage, the first resurrection may be understood to mean *spiritual* rising with Christ, while the second means *literal* rising from the grave; *then* there is an end of all significance in language, and Scripture is wiped out as *a definite testimony* to anything. If the first resurrection is spiritual, then so is the second, which I suppose none will be hardy enough to maintain; but if the second is literal, so is the first, which, in common with the whole Primitive Church and many of the best modern expositors, I do maintain, and receive as an article of faith and hope.”⁴⁶

3.20.5.1 - Order of Resurrection

The use of *first* to describe a resurrection which follows *after* Christ’s resurrection, gives us an initial clue that *first* cannot denote absolute chronological order—as that of a single event which occurs before all others. By this time, Christ has been resurrected for almost two thousand years, yet Scripture calls this *subsequent* event “the first resurrection.” It is *first* from the perspective of its *priority*: those who participate in the resurrection of life rather than the resurrection of condemnation (John 5:28-29). It is also first relative to the *Millennial Kingdom*^[4.11] since the subsequent resurrection will not be until one thousand years later. Christ was the first man to rise in the category which is the first resurrection:

But now Christ is risen from the dead, *and* has become the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. For since by man *came* death, by Man also *came* the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ all shall be made alive. **But each one in his own order: Christ the firstfruits, afterward those who are Christ’s at His coming.** (1Cor. 15:20-23) [emphasis added]

In this passage, Paul describes two, or possibly three resurrection events: (1) Christ, (2) the Church at

His coming in the *Rapture*^[4.14], and possibly, (3) all other believers at His physical Second Coming in judgment. An examination of Scripture reveals a number of individual resurrection events separated in time, all of which fall into one of two categories: the resurrection of life (the first resurrection) and the resurrection of condemnation (the second resurrection).⁴⁷ The first resurrection consists of several sequential resurrection events which are treated as a single category—the raising of all who are redeemed:

A man on Thanksgiving day may say, with great satisfaction, “All of the harvest is gathered in.” That harvest may have included a few handfuls gathered on the first day, then after a long interruption due to a rainstorm, for example, the major part of the harvest may have been gathered, and then, after another momentary interruption, the final sheaves are garnered.⁴⁸

These references [Luke 14:1-14; Php. 3:10-14; John 5:28-29; Rev. 20:6] show that there is a part of the resurrection program that is called “the resurrection of the just,” the “out-resurrection from the dead,” “a better resurrection,” “the resurrection of life,” and “the first resurrection.” These phrases suggest a separation; a resurrection of a portion of those who are dead, which resurrection leaves some dead unchanged while these resurrected undergo a complete transformation.⁴⁹

There are several different resurrection “events” which transpire in history, each of which falls into one of two categories. All but the last resurrection event make up the *first resurrection*.⁵⁰

*The Resurrections*⁵¹

Order	Which	Timing	Who	Description	Scriptures
1	First	The Third Day	Jesus Christ	The resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ, the “firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep.”	Mtt. 28:1-7; Mark 16:1-11; Luke 24:1-12; John 20:1-18; 1Cor. 15:20
2	First	Shortly after Christ’s Resurrection.	A Few <i>OT</i> ^[5.2.51] Saints	At the earthquake attending the crucifixion, graves were opened. Shortly after the resurrection of Christ, these saints were raised. ⁵²	Mtt. 27:50-53
3	First	Before the Tribulation.	Church	The resurrection of Church-age believers at the <i>Rapture</i> ^[4.14] .	John 14:3; 1Th. 4:13-18; 1Cor. 15:50-53
4	First	Middle of the Tribulation. ⁵³	Two Witnesses	God’s two witnesses will be raised after being killed by <i>The Beast</i> ^[4.2] .	Rev. 11:11-12
5	First	After Jacob’s Trouble	OT Saints	Old Testament saints will be resurrected to enter the <i>Millennial Kingdom</i> ^[5.2.39] . ⁵⁴	Dan. 12:1-2; Isa. 26:19; Eze. 37:13-14 ⁵⁵
6	First	Beginning of Millennial Kingdom.	Tribulation Martyrs	The Tribulation martyrs will be resurrected so that they can rule and reign with Christ.	Rev. 20:4-6
7	Second	End of Millennial Kingdom	Unbelieving Dead ⁵⁶	At the end of the millennial reign of Christ, the final resurrection will consist of all of the unbelieving, wicked dead. They will be found guilty at the Great White Throne Judgment and cast into the Lake of Fire.	Rev. 20:11-15

Although Scripture makes no mention of it, some believe there may be a resurrection of saints from among those who entered the Millennial Kingdom in their natural bodies and their offspring (Mtt. 25:34). If the righteous die at an advanced age (Isa. 65:20), then their resurrection is not recorded in Scripture:

The question has been raised concerning the judgment of those who die in the millennium. It is clear that the unsaved who die in the millennium are included in [the Great White Throne] judgment. The Scriptures are silent, however, concerning any rapture or translation of saints who survive the millennium and concerning the resurrection of saints who may die in the millennium. Both events may be safely assumed, but are not the subject of divine revelation, probably on the principle that this truth is of no practical application to saints now living. Further light may be cast upon this in the millennium itself as the truth of God is made known.⁵⁷

Others suggest that only unbelievers die during the Millennial Kingdom resulting in no believing dead to be resurrected:

The resurrection of the Tribulation saints completes the first resurrection. There will be no such thing as a resurrection of millennial saints.⁵⁸

According to Fruchtenbaum, in the Millennial Kingdom, believers never die but sinners die at age 100. This could account for the lack of mention of a post-millennium resurrection of the righteous dead.

Death in the millennium will be for unbelievers only. This is why the Bible does not speak of a resurrection of millennial saints, and why the resurrection of the tribulation saints is said to complete the first resurrection (Revelation 20:4-6).⁵⁹

A key passage which describes longevity in the Millennial Kingdom is found in Isaiah:

No more shall an infant from there *live but a few days*, nor an old man who has not fulfilled his days; for the child shall die one hundred years old, but the sinner *being* one hundred years old shall be accursed. (Isa. 65:20)

This passage does not unambiguously teach that only unbelievers die in the Millennium. It merely describes the great longevity which will be the blessing of those who are still in their natural bodies during this period. For example, what could it mean for *an old man to fulfill his days* if all sinners die at a relatively early age and the faithful never die? Furthermore, there is no indication whatsoever that death has been abolished until after the Millennium (Rev. 21:4). The argument that only unbelievers die during the Millennium is an argument from silence—the silence of an explicit mention of a post-millennial resurrection of the righteous dead. Although it is possible, arguments from silence are generally to be avoided.

Others suggest that the second resurrection includes believers who die during the *Millennial Kingdom*^[4.11] and who stand in judgment with the unbelieving dead at the Great White Throne Judgment.⁶⁰ This view has its own complications:

1. Scripture consistently recognizes two categories of resurrection in such a way as to infer that believers are not to be found in both.
2. The names given to the second resurrection, the resurrection “unto shame and everlasting contempt” (Dan. 12:2) and “the resurrection of condemnation” (John 5:28-29), seem to exclude the possibility of the inclusion of believers.
3. Believers do not face the possibility of standing in a judgment which decides their eternal destiny: (John 5:24).
4. The passage (below) which describes the second resurrection and subsequent judgment makes no mention of the presence of any faithful. Although the *Book of Life*^[5.2.10] is mentioned, nothing is said of the destiny of those who might be found written therein. Everything seems to indicate the book is used merely to testify to the absence of the names of the unsaved. “Only one group will be seen at this judgment, the dead—the spiritually dead.”⁶¹

See *Births, Deaths, and Resurrections*^[3.20.6.1].

3.20.6 - Revelation 20:6

Blessed and holy is he who has part in the first resurrection

They are blessed because “they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years” (Rev. 20:6). This blessing is equivalent to the blessing for those “who are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb” (Rev. 19:9) because they find entry into the kingdom of God (Luke 14:15). See commentary on *Revelation 19:9*^[3.19.9]. Their blessing is one of seven blessings given in the book of Revelation. See commentary on *Revelation 1:3*^[3.1.3].

These are *holy* (ἅγιος [*hagios*]) because they are the saints (ἁγίων [*hagiōn*]). They have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb (Rev. 7:14).

Over such, the second death has no power

Christ promised the overcomer of the church at Smyrna, the persecuted church which experienced martyrdom, that they would not be hurt by the second death (Rev. 2:11). They would be part of the first resurrection (at the *Rapture*^[4.14] of the Church) and the second death would have no power over them. The second death is the destiny of those who are not written in the *Book of Life*^[4.4]: “Then Death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And anyone not found written in the *Book of Life*^[5.2.10] was cast into the lake of fire” (Rev. 20:14). “But the cowardly, unbelieving, abominable, murderers, sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death” (Rev. 21:8).

In the Palestinian Targum on Deuteronomy 33:6, the *OT*^[5.2.51] *locus theologicus* in rabbinic Judaism for proving the resurrection from the dead, the Targum reads: “Let Reuben live in this world and not die in the second death in which death the wicked die in the word to come.” In the Targum the second death means exclusion from the resurrection. Not to die the second death, then, means to rise again to eternal life.⁶²

3.20.6.1 - Births, Deaths, and Resurrections

Scripture knows of *two births*, *two deaths*, and *two resurrections*. Everyone is *physically born* once. Those who do not undergo the second birth, the *spiritual birth*, also undergo the *second death* which is the permanent separation from God with eternal torment.

Participation in Births, Deaths, and Resurrections

Event	Unbeliever	Believer	Description
Born Again	No	Yes	The first birth is <i>physical</i> birth. The second birth is <i>spiritual</i> and occurs when a person comes to faith in Jesus Christ. ⁶³ Only believers are “born twice.”
1st Death	Yes	Yes	The first death occurs at the end of one’s physical life.
1st Resurrection	No	Yes	The first resurrection is a category and occurs in stages, beginning with the resurrection of Christ (1Cor. 15:20) and ending with the resurrection just prior to the <i>Millennial Kingdom</i> ^[5.2.39] (Rev. 20:5-6). Only believers participate in the first resurrection. ⁶⁴ See <i>Order of Resurrection</i> ^[3.20.5.1] .
2nd Resurrection	Yes	No	The second resurrection occurs at the end of the Millennial Kingdom at the Great White Throne Judgment (Rev. 20:11-13). Only unbelievers participate in the second resurrection. See <i>Order of Resurrection</i> ^[3.20.5.1] .
2nd Death	Yes	No	The second death is after the Millennium and the Great White Throne Judgment (Rev. 20:14-15). As there is eternal life beyond this present life for the faithful, so there is eternal death beyond the death of the wicked. ⁶⁵ The second death is commonly known as <i>hell</i> . ⁶⁶

When a person is *born again* (John 3:3-7; 1Pe. 1:23; 1Jn. 2:29; 3:9; 5:1, 18), he will only undergo the first death, but the second death has no power over him: “though he may die [the first death], he shall live [be resurrected never to face the second death]” (John 11:25b).

they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years

Christ made the saints “kings and priests to His God” (*a kingdom, priests to God*, *MT*^[5.2.45] and *NU*^[5.2.49] texts) (Rev. 1:6 cf. Rev. 5:10). See commentary on *Revelation 1:6*^[3.1.6]. See *Millennial Reign of the Saints*^[4.11.6].

The priestly duties of some will include service in the *Temple*^[5.2.73]:

“I will set a sign among them; and those among them who escape I will send to the nations: *to* Tarshish and Pul and Lud, who draw the bow, and Tubal and Javan, *to* the coastlands afar off who have not heard My fame nor seen My glory. And they shall declare My glory among the Gentiles. Then they shall bring all your brethren for an offering to the LORD out of all nations, on horses and in chariots and in litters, on mules and on camels, to My holy mountain Jerusalem,” says the LORD, “as the children of Israel bring an offering in a clean vessel into the house of the LORD. And I will also take some of them for priests *and* Levites,” says the LORD. (Isa. 66:19-21)

What the prophet has in mind here [Isa. 66:21] is a completely new order of things: the inclusion of Gentiles in the service of the Lord, without regard to race or descent.⁶⁷

See *Millennial Temple*^[4.16.5.10].

3.20.7 - Revelation 20:7

when the thousand years have expired, Satan will be released from his prison

Will be released is λυθήσεται [*lythēsetai*]: to “set free prisoners.”⁶⁸ Satan was bound and imprisoned in the abyss and is now set free. *Prison* is φυλακῆς [*phylakēs*], the same word which indicated the imprisonment of demons in Babylon (Rev. 18:2). Contrary to *amillennial*^[5.2.1] assertions, during the *Millennial Kingdom*^[5.2.39] Satan will not be able to deceive *anyone* even to the *slightest degree*. He is

not omnipresent and spends the entire time locked away in the abyss. See commentary on *Revelation 20:2*^[3.20.2].

3.20.8 - Revelation 20:8

go out to deceive the nations

As soon as Satan is released, he goes forth in his age-old pattern of deception. That Scripture records his going forth in deception is further confirmation of the fact that he was completely unable to do so during the time of his binding.

the four corners of the earth

This is figurative language indicating the four main compass directions (Eze. 7:2; Rev. 7:1).

Gog and Magog

The name Gog first appears as a descendant of Joel, of the tribe of Reuben (1Chr. 5:4). The leader of the rebellion which came against Israel more than one thousand years prior to this event was also named Gog:

The prince of Rosh, Meshech, and Tubal (“the chief prince of Meshech and Tubal,” KJV), who, Ezekiel said, would invade the restored land of Israel from the far distant northern land by the appointment of God in the last times, with a powerful army of numerous nations (Eze. 38:1-9) and with the intention of plundering Israel, now dwelling in security (Eze. 38: 10-16).⁶⁹

Attempts to identify Gog have included proposals of connections with (1) Gyges, King of Lydia (*Gugu* of Ashurbanipal’s records); (2) *Gaga*, a name in the Amarna correspondence for the nations of the N; (3) *Gaga*, a god from Ras Shamra writings; (4) a historical figure, especially Alexander; and (5) mythological sources, with Gog being a representation of the evil forces of darkness which range themselves against Yahweh and his people. None of these identifications has been demonstrated with certainty.⁷⁰

The name Magog is introduced to us as a son of Japheth and grandson of Noah (Gen. 10:2). In the previous attack against Israel, Gog is said to be “of the land of Magog” (Eze. 38:2):

The descendants of Magog (Eze. 38:2), possibly a people who lived in northern Asia and Europe. The Jewish historian Josephus identified these people as the Scythians, known for their destructive warfare. Magog may be a comprehensive term meaning “northern barbarians.” The people of Magog are described as skilled horsemen (Eze. 38:15) and experts in the use of the bow and arrow (Eze. 39:3, 9).⁷¹

Although Gog and Magog are both mentioned in Ezekiel 38 and 39, this rebellion is not the same event, as a comparison of several factors reveals:

This prophecy of Ezekiel concerning Gog and Magog cannot be identified with the prophecy in Rev. 20:7-10 for three reasons. The former takes place before the Kingdom is established on earth; the latter after this Kingdom. Also, in Ezekiel the invasion comes only from the north, but in Revelation it comes from the ‘four quarters of the earth.’ Furthermore, the rebellion of Gog and Magog and their destruction in Rev. 20:7-10 marks the ushering in of the eternal state (Rev. 20:11-15); but in Ezekiel it is preliminary to the *Millennial Kingdom*^[5.2.39] on earth.⁷²

First, the Ezekiel invasion comes from the north; the Revelation invasion comes from all over the world; *Second*, this view also fails to answer the problem of the seven months and seven years. This earth is done away with soon after the invasion mentioned in Revelation, not allowing any time (or place!) for seven months of burial or seven years of burning.⁷³

Whether Gog and Magog is a general reference to the enemies of the people of God or specific peoples in the rebellion of the end is difficult to determine from the scant details of this final rebellion.⁷⁴

While many explanations have been made, one of the intriguing ones is that Gog refers to the ruler and Magog to the people as in Ezekiel 38. Hence, what the passage means is that the nations of the world follow Satan, including the rulers (Gog) and the people (Magog) under the rulers. Another plausible explanation is that the expression is used much as we use the term “Waterloo” to express a disastrous battle, but one related to the historic origination of the term.⁷⁵

to gather them to battle

They are gathered by the deceiver, Satan. His function in the final rebellion is much like that of the

three unclean spirits which went forth to gather the kings of the earth to the *Campaign of Armageddon*^[4.5] (Rev. 16:13-16). *Battle* is πόλεμον [*polemon*]: armed conflict. The term is often used of a protracted engagement, but can also be used of a single battle.⁷⁶ See commentary on *Revelation 16:14*^[3.16.14].

3.20.9 - Revelation 20:9

breadth of the earth

Breadth is πλάτος [*platos*]: “the broad plain of the earth is perhaps meant to provide room for the countless enemies of God”⁷⁷ (cf. Hab. 1:6).

surrounded the camp of the saints

Camp is παρεμβολήν [*parembolēn*]: used of the barracks or headquarters of soldiers or an army in battle array, but also of the camp of Israel (Ex. 29:14 LXX^[5.2.38]; Lev. 4:12 LXX; Heb. 13:11).⁷⁸ “Used for the city of Jerusalem, inasmuch as that was to the Israelites what formerly the encampment had been in the desert.”⁷⁹ Here is proof that children are born during the *Millennial Kingdom*^[5.2.39]. All the unsaved were destroyed at the Second Coming leaving only the faithful at the inception of the Millennial Kingdom. One thousand years later, after numerous generations, there is a multitude of faithless who come against God. These are from among the offspring of the faithful who entered the Millennial Kingdom in their natural bodies.

It is a frightful commentary upon the nature of mankind that this showy rebellion is able to muster millions and millions of followers who gladly join in a last desperate effort to strike at God. Truly the carnal mind is *enmity* against God. The number is as the sands of the sea.⁸⁰

This section shows something of the deep, complex nature of evil. The source of rebellion against God does not lie in man’s environment or fundamentally with the devil but springs up from deep within man’s own heart. The return of Satan will demonstrate this in the most dramatic manner once for all.⁸¹

Men claim that they are seeking, evermore, a “perfect form of government”; but that they are not at all seeking such a government, but that they actually *hate* it, will be evidenced by their instant revolt to Satan’s banner when he is loosed for a “little season” after the Millennium. For we shall find the hordes of mankind rushing up to overthrow the righteous and benevolent reign of Christ at Jerusalem!⁸²

The rebellion is ultimately permitted by God who released Satan from prison for this very test. He is used to cull the last from among the unfaithful from the midst of humanity for God’s impending judgment. This rebellion also demonstrates to mankind their utter inability to vanquish sin apart from God’s power. Man now fails his final *dispensational*^[5.2.15] test:

From this we see that the “Millennial Dispensation,” like all the six Dispensations before it, will end in *failure*. God will have tested man in “Innocence,” under “Conscience,” under “Self-Government,” under the “Headship of the Family,” under “Law,” under “Grace,” and finally under the influence of the “Holy Spirit,” free from Satanic influences, and under them all he will prove himself to be hopelessly, incurably and incorrigibly bad.⁸³

the beloved city

Beloved is ἐγαπημένην [*egapēmenēn*], perfect tense participle: *having been loved*. This speaks of Jerusalem: “The LORD loves the gates of Zion more than all the dwelling places of Jacob” (Ps. 87:2 cf. Ps. 78:68; 132:13; Jer. 12:7). See *Jerusalem Married to God*^[4.10.4].

fire came down from God out of heaven

The enemies of God are destroyed directly by His hand, in much the same way as Sodom and Gomorrah (Gen. 19:24), those who came to arrest Elijah (2K. 1:10-15), Gog on the mountains of Israel (Eze. 38:22), and the land of Magog (Eze. 39:6).

3.20.10 - Revelation 20:10

The devil, who deceived them, was cast into the lake of fire

At the coming of Christ, it was the *instrument* of the devil, the *False Prophet*^[5.2.20], who deceived but

was captured and cast into the Lake of Fire. Now the devil himself meets a similar fate. The devil has been cast, in a series of stages, from the highest point in creation to the lowest. Satan was previously cast out of heaven to the earth (Rev. 12:9), probably near the mid-point of the Tribulation. After the Second Coming, he was bound and cast into the abyss (Rev. 20:2). Now, he is cast into his final destination, the Lake of Fire, which was originally prepared for him and his angels (Mtt. 25:41). Since it was prepared for both him and *his angels* (Rev. 12:4), we can infer that the fallen angels, who were confined during the *Millennial Kingdom*^[5.2.39], are either cast with him into the Lake of Fire (Rev. 18:2; Isa. 34:8-17), or join him shortly thereafter following the Great White Throne Judgment when the earth (including the abyss) is no more.

The career of Satan will then come to an end. With this final revolt, the Millennial Kingdom will come to an end, and there will be a transfer of authority as described in 1 Corinthians 15:24-28 . . . Ultimately, the power and authority of the Kingdom must be turned over to God the Father. But this can only occur after every enemy of man is abolished and there is no longer any challenge to God's rule, authority, and power (1Cor. 15:24). . . . It should be remembered that death will still exist in the Kingdom. It is only after Satan's final revolt and his confinement in the Lake of Fire that death can be abolished.⁸⁴

where the beast and the false prophet are

The devil joins his two henchmen from the time of the Tribulation who are already in the Lake of Fire. The *Beast*^[5.2.9] and the False Prophet were cast into the lake at the Second Coming of Christ one thousand years earlier (Rev. 19:20). They are *still* there and undergoing continuous torment. The Lake of Fire does not annihilate its occupants. They suffer *eternally*.

tormented day and night forever and ever

Day and night is a figure of speech meaning *continually* (Luke 18:7; Acts 9:27; Rev. 7:15; 12:10). Those who worshiped the Beast will be tormented forever and ever (Rev. 14:10 cf. Rev. 20:15).⁸⁵

At all events the doctrine of conscious, eternal torment for impenitent men is clearly revealed in the Word of God. Whether we can defend it on philosophic grounds or not, it is our business to believe it; and to leave it to the clearer light of eternity to explain what we cannot now understand, realizing that God has infinitely wise reasons for doing things for which we in our ignorance can see no sufficient reason at all. It is the most ludicrous conceit for beings so limited and foolish as the wisest of men are, to attempt to dogmatize how a God of infinite wisdom must act. All we know as to how God will act is what God has seen fit to tell us.⁸⁶

3.20.11 - Revelation 20:11

Then I saw a great white throne and Him who sat upon it

The scene before John is very similar to that which Daniel saw in his night vision:

I watched till thrones were put in place, and the Ancient of Days was seated; His garment *was* white as snow, and the hair of His head *was* like pure wool. His throne *was* a fiery flame, its wheels a burning fire; a fiery stream issued and came forth from before Him. A thousand thousands ministered to Him; ten thousand times ten thousand stood before Him. The court was seated, and the books were opened. (Dan. 7:9-10)

In Daniel's vision, it is the Father who judged on behalf of the Son. The judgment involved the decision to terminate the reign of *Antichrist*^[5.2.3] and give the kingdom to the Son and the saints:

"The Ancient of days" (God in His own ineffable person, not in the person of Christ) *did sit* in the role of a judge about to pass sentence. He is the Judge here [in Daniel 7:9-10], because the case is Christ's, involving the judgment of the Antichrist (Dan. 7:11-12), and the Son does not judge His own case, which is the peculiar province of the Father, to be distinguished from the province of the Son as Judge (cf. John 5:22).⁸⁷

The final judgment of the wicked is almost certainly to be judged by the One Who died on behalf of the world (John 1:29; 1Ti. 2:6; Heb. 2:9; 2Pe. 2:1; 1Jn. 2:2) to whom judgment has been given:

For the Father judges no one, but has committed all judgment to the Son, that all should honor the Son just as they honor the Father. He who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent Him. (John 5:22-23)

Truly, these times of ignorance God overlooked, but now commands all men everywhere to repent,

because He has appointed a day on which He will judge the world in righteousness by the Man whom He has ordained. He has given assurance of this to all by raising Him from the dead. (Acts 17:30-31)

Very little is said concerning the scene. The description of the throne is pregnant with forboding:

Weigh each word. *Great*,—it is the Infinite before whom the finite must stand; *White*,—it is the unveiled, undimmed blaze of the divine holiness and purity and justice; *Throne*,—it is majesty unlimited, in which inheres utter right to dispose of the destiny of creatures. Before such a throne, creatures cannot stand; but they *shall stand*—even the lost!⁸⁸

from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away

At the opening of the sixth seal, “the sky receded as a scroll when it is rolled up” (Rev. 6:14). Here, the old order of things gives up its dead and retreats in preparation for the creation of a new heavens and earth: “Now I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and first earth had passed away. Also there was no more sea” (Rev. 21:1).

Jesus had predicted that God’s word would outlast the first heavens and earth: “Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will by no means pass away” (Mtt. 24:35). The first heavens and first earth were preserved by God’s word for a time, but now the time has come for their judgment by fire and the perdition of ungodly men (2Pe. 3:7). This marks the end of the period of *The Day of the Lord*^[2.13.3]. See commentary on *Revelation 21:1*^[3.21.1].

Mention of God’s *face* speaks of His immediate presence, before which no man can stand without divine protection (Ex. 3:6; Ex. 19:21; 1K. 19:13; Isa. 6:5; 1Jn. 4:12):

The Talmud tells the legend of how Hadrian the emperor asked Yehoshua b. Hananya (c. A.D. 90): “I would like to see your God.” Yehoshua replied: “You cannot see him.” The emperor said: “Indeed I must see him.” Then the rabbi took Hadrian and placed him in the full blaze of the sun and said to him: “Look into it.” He answered: “I cannot.” Yehoshua replied; “If of the sun you say ‘I cannot look at it,’ which is only one of the servants who stand in the presence of God, how much more is it true of the Shekinah.”⁸⁹

The flight of His own creation from before his unmitigated presence also infers a degree of terror for those who are about to stand before the piercing gaze of His omniscient eyes of fire (Rev. 1:14; 19:12). Their judgment is before the completely righteous, all-powerful Perfection of Perfections.

And there was found no place for them.

The old order vanishes away. In the process, the dead are given up (see below) to stand before the terrifying presence of God.

But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in which the heavens will pass away with a great noise, and the elements will melt with fervent heat; both the earth and the works that are in it will be burned up. Therefore, since all these things will be dissolved, . . . the heavens will be dissolved, being on fire, and the elements will melt with fervent heat? (2Pe. 3:10-12)

Although we are not told of the safe harbor provided for the righteous by God during this momentous transition when the subatomic elements disassemble themselves, we can assume they are supernaturally provided for.

Writing many centuries in advance of particle physics and atom smashers, Peter describes the end of the universe as we know it in terms which would be difficult for any modern physicist to improve upon. What will it take to bring about such an immense conflagration? We are convinced it will be the mere ‘blink’ of the eye for God. Perhaps for the barest of time, less than a split nanosecond, He withdraws His sustaining power from the material order and all the matter of the universe converts back to an enormous quantity of energy in an explosion which is described by a famous Jewish equation: $e = mc^2$.

It is not that they [the earth and heaven] are to be purified and rehabilitated, but that the reverse of creation is to take place. They are to be uncreated. As they came from nothing at the word of God, they are to be sucked back into nothingness by the same word of God. Science may say that matter cannot be made and that matter cannot be destroyed, but such an attitude does not believe in the God of creation.⁹⁰

The phenomenon may well be one of mass/energy conversion, with the “matter” of earth structure converted into “energy” (heat, sound, or light). This same energy will be available for reconversion into the materials of the renewed earth, with all the contaminating effects of sin and the curse purged out of

it.⁹¹

We can only speculate in great ignorance at the immensity of the scene these few lines describe.

3.20.12 - Revelation 20:12

I saw the dead, small and great

Every category of man now stands on an individual basis before God. Wealth, power, fame, is all immaterial now. As the cross stands as the great equalizer among people of faith on the road to salvation, so the Great White Throne Judgment is the equalizer among those on their way to eternal damnation.

standing before God

For saints who pursue after God and desire to be in His presence, this is the ultimate blessing of the eternal state: “They shall see His face, and His name *shall be* on their foreheads” (Rev. 22:4). Just the opposite is true for the unrighteous dead about to be judged. The immediate presence of God will be a terror unimagined by them, for they are the object of His wrath in righteous judgment. This will be their only time of intimacy with God and it results in devastating negative consequences. While living, they expressed their desire to be independent from God. Soon their desire will be an eternal reality.

The flight of earth and heaven underscores the awful reality that nowhere remains to hide from God. Those in the Tribulation had attempted to hide in the rocks and caves from the wrath of God (Rev. 6:15-17), but now the entire material universe is gone and all that remains is a perfectly just, righteous, all-powerful God face-to-face with sinners without any covering for their sin. Previously there was the illusion that sin could be hidden from God, but all illusion has been stripped away.

The *MT*^[5.2.45] and *NU*^[5.2.49] texts have *before the throne* which carries the same meaning since God is on the throne.

books were opened

These books record the good and bad deeds of those about to be judged. This is the record of their “works” prior to death.

And another book was opened, which is *the Book of Life*

This book is singled out from among the other books because of its paramount importance. Unlike the books which record their works, this book records their *faith*, or lack thereof. The mere appearance of this book in the judgment is proof that access to God is by faith alone. For if salvation could be by works, the books recording their deeds would be sufficient for judgment.

Those who have not trusted in the Lamb of God, Jesus Christ, will be sadly disappointed to find how they have been deceived. Their self-righteousness is no righteousness after all. While living, they sought to establish their own righteousness and refused the gift of righteousness provided by God:

For I bear them witness that they have a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge. For they being ignorant of God’s righteousness, and seeking to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted to the righteousness of God. (Rom. 10:2-3)

Membership in beneficent organizations and associations, participation in righteous causes, attending Church, and all earthly *activities* will be of no avail in the ultimate determination of the final destiny of the unsaved. Good deeds will serve to mitigate punishment to some degree, but the ultimate destination—whether “heaven” or “hell”—is determined entirely by the presence or absence of one’s name in the *Book of Life*^[4.4]. See commentary on *Revelation 20:15*^[3.20.15].

Those who worshiped the *Beast*^[5.2.9] at the time of the end were *never* written in the book (Rev. 13:8; 17:8). See *Beast Worshipers are Unique*^[4.4.3.4]. Others were written in the book, but were blotted out as they came to their death without having exercised faith in God (Ex. 32:32-33; Ps. 69:28; Rev. 3:5). See *Book of Life*^[4.4]. They are not the overcomers. See *Who is the Overcomer?*^[4.15.1.3] Anyone not found written in the *Book of Life*^[5.2.10] is cast into the Lake of Fire (Rev. 20:15). Those who are written in the Book will be able to enter the New Jerusalem (Rev. 21:27).

the dead were judged

This is the final judgment of those who have rejected God. There is no second chance, no possibility of repentance beyond death:

And as it is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment, so Christ was offered once to bear the sins of many. To those who eagerly wait for Him He will appear a second time, apart from sin, for salvation. (Heb. 9:27-28)

They will give an account to Him who is ready to judge the living and the dead. (1Pe. 4:5)

The judgment will be absolutely righteous and true—something to be celebrated by the righteous dead (Ps. 9:7-8; 96:12-13), but feared by those who have not been washed in the blood of the Lamb (Rev. 1:5; 7:14). Their robes are not white like the righteous, but scarlet. Like the *Harlot*^[5.2.25], they are stained with sin (Isa. 1:18). The very Lamb of God, whose blood they rejected, will be their judge: “And He commanded us to preach to the people, and to testify that it is He who was ordained by God to be Judge of the living and the dead” (Acts 10:42). In the same way that He judged the living sheep and goats at His Second Coming (Mtt. 25:31), now he judges the dead: “I charge *you* therefore before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who will judge the living and the dead at His appearing and His kingdom” (2Ti. 4:1).

The nations were angry, and Your wrath has come, and the time of the dead, that they should be judged, and that You should reward Your servants the prophets and the saints, and those who fear Your name, small and great, and should destroy those who destroy the earth. (Rev. 11:18)

Christ will also be the final Judge of all moral creatures, whether men or angels. These judgments can be itemized as referring (1) to the church (2Cor. 5:10-11) (2) to Israel nationally and individually (Mtt. 24:27-25:30) (3) to the Gentiles at the time of His second coming to the earth (Mtt. 25:31-46) (4) to angels, probably at the end of the millennium (1Cor. 6:3; 2Pe. 2:4; Jude 1:6) (5) to the wicked dead (Rev. 20:12-15).⁹²

The faithful dead will not stand in this judgment: “Most assuredly, I say to you, he who hears My word and believes in Him who sent Me has everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment, but has passed from death into life” (John 5:24).

All the unsaved dead from all of history now stand before God Almighty—with two notable exceptions. The Beast and the *False Prophet*^[5.2.20] of the end were cast directly into the Lake of Fire, bypassing this judgment. There is no possibility that their punishment will be mitigated by any record of good works. See commentary on *Revelation 19:20*^[3.19.20].

according to their works, by the things which were written in the books

The things written is τῶν γεγραμμένων [*tōn gegrammenōn*], perfect tense passive participle: *the things having been written*. The contents of the books were written in the past. This is the record of all their good and bad deeds prior to death. They will be judged both by their deeds and by their knowledge:

There is a principle in Scripture that does teach degrees of punishment based upon degrees of sinfulness and upon greater or lesser light or knowledge and the response or lack of it to that light [Mtt. 11:20-24; Luke 12:47-48; John 19:11].⁹³

Those who knew more and failed to respond will bear greater guilt than those who knew less (Mtt. 11:23-24). Those among the Jews, who had great light concerning God but rejected their Messiah, will be among those who bear greater responsibility for their sin:

But in accordance with your hardness and your impenitent heart you are treasuring up for yourself wrath in the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God, who “will render to each one according to his deeds”: eternal life to those who by patient continuance in doing good seek for glory, honor, and immortality; but to those who are self-seeking and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness—indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish, on every soul of man who does evil, of the Jew first and also of the Greek. (Rom. 2:5-9)

None will be able to claim “I did not know, I did not hear” because every man entering the world receives sufficient revelation to seek God. Those who did not seek him will stand condemned by general revelation.⁹⁴ Although the revelation of God in nature is insufficient to save, it is *sufficient to condemn* those who fail to respond:

The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament shows His handiwork. Day unto day utters speech, and night unto night reveals knowledge. **There is no speech nor language Where their voice is not heard. Their line has gone out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world.** In them He has set a *tabernacle*^[5.2.69] for the sun. (Ps. 19:1-4) [emphasis added]

For since the creation of the world His invisible *attributes* are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, *even* His eternal power and Godhead, **so that they are without excuse**, because, **although they knew God, they did not glorify Him as God, nor were thankful, but became futile in their thoughts, and their foolish hearts were darkened.** Professing to be wise, they became fools (Rom. 1:20-22) [emphasis added]

Paul tells us that they *knew* God, but refused to glorify him and were not thankful. The horrible result was the developing futility of their thoughts and darkening of their minds. Ultimately, professing wisdom, they actually became fools. Twice in history *every man, woman, and child* on earth had intimate knowledge of God: at the creation and immediately after the global flood. Yet, today great portions of the earth are cloaked in spiritual darkness. Where once their forefathers knew God, they rejected Him and *actively walked away* from retaining His knowledge for their children and their children's children. No man has ever been forsaken by God. It is always man who forsakes God.

Along with His revelation in nature, God provided another form of general revelation: the law written upon men's hearts:

For **as many as have sinned without law will also perish without law**, and as many as have sinned in the law will be judged by the law (for not the hearers of the law *are* just in the sight of God, but the doers of the law will be justified; for when Gentiles, who do not have the law, by nature do the things in the law, these, **although not having the law, are a law to themselves, who show the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness**, and between themselves *their* thoughts accusing or else excusing *them*) in the day when God will judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ, according to my gospel. (Rom. 2:12-16) [emphasis added]

Those who never came to faith steadfastly rejected God. It was not a passive rejection where they slowly drifted away due to inaction. Paul tells us it was an active rebellion:

For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, **who suppress the truth in unrighteousness . . .** And even as **they did not like to retain God in their knowledge**, God gave them over to a debased mind, to do those things which are not fitting . . . knowing the righteous judgment of God that those who practice such things are deserving of death, not only do the same but also approve of those who practice them. (Rom. 1:18, 28-32) [emphasis added]

When we speak to people who reject the atoning sacrifice of Jesus Christ and ask them by what means they hope to enter heaven, they almost universally reply with the notion that they are basically good and that by their deeds they will find entry. They are convinced: (1) that their good deeds will outweigh the bad, (2) so long as they are better than some other person then they are acceptable to God—that God grades their sin on a scale relative to other people. The truth is, from God's perspective their bad deeds universally outweigh the good. Moreover, God does not grade on a relative scale to other people, but relative to the perfection of God Himself. This is an *absolute scale*.

Blind to these realities, they are convinced they will gain "heaven" by their works. And so God has promised to judge them by their works:

Give them according to their deeds, and according to the wickedness of their endeavors; give them according to the work of their hands; render to them what they deserve. (Ps. 28:4)

Also to You, O Lord, *belongs* mercy; for You render to each one according to his work. (Ps. 62:12)

If you say, "Surely we did not know this," does not He who weighs the hearts consider *it*? He who keeps your soul, does He *not* know *it*? And will He *not* render to *each* man according to his deeds? (Pr. 24:12)

For God will bring every work into judgment, including every secret thing, whether good or evil. (Ecc. 12:14)

I, the LORD, search the heart, *I* test the mind, even to give every man according to his ways, according to the fruit of his doings. (Jer. 17:10 cf. Jer. 32:19)

For the Son of Man will come in the glory of His Father with His angels, and then He will reward each according to his works. (Mtt. 16:27)

I will kill her children with death, and all the churches shall know that I am He who searches the minds and hearts. And I will give to each one of you according to your works. (Rev. 2:23)

And behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me, to give to every one according to his work. (Rev. 22:12)

The unbelieving dead will get what they desire: they will be judged by their works. But their works will be found to be imperfect. Not only in application, but in *motivation* because it is impossible for those who lack faith to please God (Heb. 11:6). Even their altruistic works are flawed by selfish and deceptive motivations.

The unregenerate man can, through common grace, love his family and he may be a good citizen. He may give a million dollars to build a hospital. . . If a drunkard, he may abstain from drink for utilitarian purposes, but he cannot do it out of love for God. All of his common virtues or good works have a fatal defect in that his motives which prompt them are not to glorify God,—a defect so vital that it throws any element of goodness as to man wholly into the shade.⁹⁵

The books will be opened and sin will be found. Lacking a covering for sin and unable to produce perfection, they will be unable to be in God’s presence and are destined for the Lake of Fire. Being a righteous and just God, the degree of their sin will determine their relative degree of torment. *But all torment is torment.*

It should be noted that while there are varying degrees of punishment in hell, everyone there will suffer intolerable, indescribable misery and torment. All sinners in hell will be utterly separated from God and all that comes from His goodness. Thus, they will be miserable, but not equally miserable.⁹⁶

3.20.13 - Revelation 20:13

The sea gave up the dead who were in it, and Death and Hades delivered up the dead who were in them

Hades followed along when Death rode forth at the fourth seal which resulted in widespread death (Rev. 6:7). Jesus has the keys of Hades and Death (Rev. 1:18). The righteous dead, whose soul and spirit were at one time in Hades,⁹⁷ have already been resurrected. Their soul and spirit has been reunited with their body at their participation in the category of the first resurrection. Thus, Jesus has emptied Hades and Death of those who are His prior to this judgment. See commentary on *Revelation 1:18*^[3.1.18].

This delivery of the dead—their casting out—probably occurs at the moment when the earth and heaven flee away at the presence of the Mighty Judge (Rev. 10:11). As the old order dissolves, “the dead are brought back to this judgment, their bodies being delivered from the grave, whether in the sea or on the land, and their soul and spirit is brought up from hades.”⁹⁸ Every person born into the world has eternal existence and is resurrected after death. “The essential identity of the dying and risen body is hereby shown; for the sea and grave give up their dead. The body that sinned or served God shall, in righteous retribution, be the body also that shall suffer or be rewarded.”⁹⁹ The number given up by the *sea* will be enormous, the overwhelming majority being those lost in judgment in the global flood (Luke 17:27).

The abhorrent fate of those whose bodies were devoured by the fish accounts for the special mention of this group at the resurrection . . . Both Greeks and Romans attached great importance to land burial and the inviolability of the tomb. They recoiled with great horror at the thought of death by drowning or even burial at sea.¹⁰⁰

This is the “resurrection of condemnation” (John 5:29). See *Order of Resurrection*^[3.20.5.1]. See commentary on *Revelation 20:11*^[3.20.11].

they were judged, each one according to his works

See commentary on *Revelation 20:11*^[3.20.11].

3.20.14 - Revelation 20:14

Then Death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire

Death (representing the bodies of the dead which had lain in the earth and sea) and Hades (the place of torment for soul and spirit of the unrighteous dead between death and the judgment) will be destroyed. Their physical reality vanishes in the fleeing of the earth and heaven—the destruction of the old order:

Death and Hades, here viewed as if they were personal beings, share the same fate. They, of course, cease to be. There is nothing more of temporal death or of the place of departed spirits after this. They are not personal beings, hence their casting into “the lake of fire” is the end of them; but, conceived of as persons, they are consigned to exactly the same eternal punishment with the other wicked.¹⁰¹

They are the final enemies to be destroyed before the eternal state and are vanquished to the Lake of Fire, a cosmic garbage dump:

The clearest and most vivid of the New Testament terms used to describe the final hell, the lake of fire, is *geenna* (Gehenna). Gehenna is the New Testament word for the valley of Ben-Hinnom (also called Topheth; 2K. 23:10; Isa. 30:33; Jer. 7:31-32; 19:6), located southwest of Jerusalem. In Old Testament times, idolatrous Israelites burned their children in the fire there as sacrifices to false gods (Jer. 19:2-6). In Jesus’ day, it was the site of Jerusalem’s garbage dump. The fires kept constantly burning there gave off foul-smelling smoke, and the dump was infested with maggots. Sometimes the bodies of criminals were dumped there. The valley of Ben-Hinnom was thus an apt picture of eternal hell, one used repeatedly by Jesus (Mtt. 5:22, 29, 30; 10:28; 18:9; 23:15, 33; Mark 9:43, 45, 47; Luke 12:5). Hell will be God’s eternal cosmic dump; its inmates will be burning as garbage forever.¹⁰²

Their casting into the Lake of Fire may be another indicator that none who stand in this judgment are saved. All who were part of the second resurrection (which emptied Death and Hades) are bound for the Lake of Fire.

This is the fulfillment of the promises of God to destroy death and the grave:

He will swallow up death forever, And the Lord GOD will wipe away tears from all faces; the rebuke of His people He will take away from all the earth; for the LORD has spoken. (Isa. 25:8)

So when this corruptible has put on incorruption, and this mortal has put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written: “Death is swallowed up in victory. O Death, where *is* your sting? O Hades, where *is* your victory?” (1Cor. 15:54-55 cf. Hos. 13:14.)

Then *comes* the end, when He delivers the kingdom to God the Father, when He puts an end to all rule and all authority and power. For He must reign till He has put all enemies under His feet. The last enemy *that* will be destroyed *is* death. (1Cor. 15:24-26)

And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away. (Rev. 21:4)

This is the second death

The *MT*^[5.2.45] and *NU*^[5.2.49] texts have: “This is the second death, the lake of fire.” Those who overcome by placing their faith in the Overcomer “shall not be hurt by the second death” (Rev. 2:11): Those who participated in the first resurrection need not fear the second death. “Over such the second death has no power” (Rev. 10:6a).

He who overcomes shall inherit all things, and I will be his God and he shall be My son. But the cowardly, unbelieving, abominable, murderers, sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death. (Rev. 21:7-8)

See *Births, Deaths, and Resurrections*^[3.20.6.1].

3.20.15 - Revelation 20:15

anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire

God is righteous and just. He will dutifully check the *Book of Life*^[4.4] for the name of each and every one who stands in this judgment. Scripture records the sober outcome: those not written in the book face eternal doom. Being “the resurrection of condemnation” (John 5:39), none of these will be found written. The *Beast*^[5.2.9] worshipers in their midst—a relatively small proportion of the sum total of unbelievers of all ages—will never have been written in the book (Rev. 13:8; 17:8; see *Beast Worshipers are Unique*^[4.4.3.4]). The rest of the unsaved dead were written in the book at one time, but having rejected God until their death, their names were blotted out (Ex. 32:32; Ps. 69:28; Rev. 3:5).

Although their deeds determine the relative degree of punishment, all who reject the Lamb of God stand without atonement for their sin and are condemned. It is their absence from the *Book of Life*^[5.2.10] of the Lamb (Rev. 13:8; 21:27) which seals their fate and indicates a complete lack of relationship with Jesus—He *never knew them* (Mtt. 7:22-23):

He who believes in Him is not condemned; but **he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.** (John 3:18) [emphasis added]

He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but **he who does not believe will be condemned.** (Mark 16:16) [emphasis added]

He who believes in the Son has everlasting life; and **he who does not believe the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him.** (John 3:36) [emphasis added]

And this is the testimony: that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. He who has the Son has life; **he who does not have the Son of God does not have life.** (1Jn. 5:11-12) [emphasis added]

See *Book of Life*^[4.4].

The redeemed will be blessed with God's intimate presence for eternity, but these go away into torment and eternal separation from all that is good—God. "These shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power" (2Th. 1:9).

Yes, O man! O woman! whoever you may be, your biography is written. An unerring hand has recorded every item, with every secret thing. There is not an ill thought, a mean act, a scene of wrong in all your history, a dirty transaction, a filthiness of speech, or a base feeling that ever found entertainment in your heart, but is there described in bold hand, by its true name, and set down to your account, to be then brought forth for final settlement, if not clean blotted out through faith in Christ's blood before this present life of yours is ended.¹⁰³

And I say to you, My friends, do not be afraid of those who kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do. But I will show you whom you should fear: **Fear Him who, after He has killed, has power to cast into hell; yes, I say to you, fear Him!** (Luke 12:4-5) [emphasis added]

Notes

- ¹ George H. N. Peters, *The Theocratic Kingdom* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 1978, 1884), 2:264.
- ² Charles Feinberg, *Premillennialism or Amillennialism* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1936), 212.
- ³ Matthew Waymeyer, *Revelation 20 and the Millennial Debate* (The Woodlands, TX: Kress Christian Publications, 2001, 2004), 13.
- ⁴ See *Literary Structure*^[2.14].
- ⁵ The angel with the key to the pit seen with the angel showing John the New Jerusalem in the background. Albrecht Durer (1471 - 1528). Image courtesy of the *Connecticut College* (<http://www.conncoll.edu/visual/Durer-prints/index.html>) *Wetmore Print Collection* (<http://www.conncoll.edu/visual/wetmore.html>).
- ⁶ J. Marcellus Kik, *Revelation Twenty: An Exposition* (Philadelphia, PA: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Company, 1955), 19-20.
- ⁷ Thomas Ice, "Some Practical Dangers of Preterism," in Tim LaHaye, and Thomas Ice, eds., *The End Times Controversy* (Eugene, OR: Harvest House Publishers, 2003), 423.
- ⁸ Frederick William Danker, and Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 448.
- ⁹ John F. Walvoord, *The Millennial Kingdom* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1959), 292.
- ¹⁰ Kik, *Revelation Twenty: An Exposition*, 17.
- ¹¹ Kik, *Revelation Twenty: An Exposition*, 27.
- ¹² Lewis Sperry Chafer, *Systematic Theology* (Dallas, TX: Dallas Theological Seminary, 1976), 4:281.
- ¹³ The 'ch' is pronounced as a 'k': *kill-iasm*.
- ¹⁴ Kik, *Revelation Twenty: An Exposition*, 28-29.
- ¹⁵ Ice, "Some Practical Dangers of Preterism," 420.
- ¹⁶ Peters, *The Theocratic Kingdom*, 2:268.

- 17 Danker, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 283.
- 18 Alva J. McClain, *The Greatness Of The Kingdom* (Winona Lake, IN: BMH Books, 1959), 481.
- 19 Clarence Larkin, *The Book of Revelation* (Glenside, PA: Rev. Clarence Larkin Estate, 1919), 176.
- 20 J. A. Seiss, *The Apocalypse: Lectures on the Book of Revelation* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1966), 457.
- 21 Donald Grey Barnhouse, *Revelation* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1971), 385.
- 22 Among this number are those few saints which rose shortly after Jesus as firstfruits (Mtt. 27:51-53). See *Order of Resurrection*^[3.20.5.1].
- 23 Jerome Smith, *The New Treasury of Scripture Knowledge* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1992), Rev. 20:4.
- 24 Danker, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 641.
- 25 A. R. Fausset, “*The Revelation of St. John the Divine*,” in Robert Jamieson, A. R. Fausset, and David Brown, *A Commentary, Critical and Explanatory, on the Old and New Testaments* (Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc., 1997, 1877), Rev. 20:4.
- 26 “The fact is that this pronoun, ὄτινες [*hoitines*] is in the nominative case, and therefore does not depend on any verb, but is the subject of a new sentence altogether, of which the verb is ‘lived again.’ This is a grammatical fact that scientifically determines the matter for us, and prevents us from introducing our own opinions. Of one class of persons, viz., the beheaded martyrs, it is said that they were righteously judged and vindicated. The next statement of verse 4 goes on to say that not only these (who were beheaded), but all, including these who refused to worship the Beast, ‘lived again’: *i.e.*, had part in the first resurrection.”—E. W. Bullinger, *Commentary On Revelation* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 1984, 1935), Rev. 20:4.
- 27 Monty S. Mills, *Revelations: An Exegetical Study of the Revelation to John* (Dallas, TX: 3E Ministries, 1987), Rev. 20:4.
- 28 Seiss, *The Apocalypse: Lectures on the Book of Revelation*, 458.
- 29 Those with physical abnormalities by birth or accident, who lack a right hand, can receive the mark on their forehead.
- 30 Danker, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 336.
- 31 Daniel B. Wallace, *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics - Exegetical Syntax of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House and Galaxie Software, 1999, 2002), 559.
- 32 Alan F. Johnson, *Revelation: The Expositor's Bible Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1966), 188.
- 33 Peters, *The Theocratic Kingdom*, 2:266.
- 34 Alexander Roberts, James Donaldson, and A. Cleveland Coxe, *Ante-Nicene Fathers Vol. I* (Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, 1997), s.v. “ECF 1.1.7.1.5.36.”
- 35 Timothy Friberg, Barbara Friberg, and Neva F. Miller, *Analytical Lexicon of the Greek New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2000), 54, 49.
- 36 Smith, *The New Treasury of Scripture Knowledge*, Rev. 20:5.
- 37 Kik, *Revelation Twenty: An Exposition*, 53.
- 38 We once listened to a nationally-known radio preacher preach against the idea that there were two resurrections anywhere to be found in Scripture. During his entire presentation—lasting nearly an hour—he never once mentioned Revelation 20!
- 39 Walvoord, *The Millennial Kingdom*, 282-283.
- 40 Nathaniel West, *The Thousand Years in both Testaments* (Fincastle, VA: Scripture Truth Book Co., n.d.), 266.
- 41 Danker, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 725.
- 42 Friberg, *Analytical Lexicon of the Greek New Testament*, 338.
- 43 Peters, *The Theocratic Kingdom*, 2:269.

- 44 Walvoord, *The Millennial Kingdom*, 278-279.
- 45 Smith, *The New Treasury of Scripture Knowledge*, Rev. 20:5.
- 46 Peters, *The Theocratic Kingdom*, 2:291.
- 47 “John does not directly refer to a second resurrection; a second resurrection is, however, correctly inferred both from the use of *prote* and also from the expression ‘the rest of the dead did not come to life until the thousand years were ended’ (Rev. 20:5).”—Johnson, *Revelation: The Expositor's Bible Commentary*, 188.
- 48 Barnhouse, *Revelation*, 381.
- 49 J. Dwight Pentecost, *Things to Come: A Study in Biblical Eschatology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1958), 396.
- 50 See Steve Lewis, *The Resurrection of Church-Age Believers*, www.spiritandtruth.org/teaching/Book_of_1st_Thessalonians/08_1Thess_4_13-18/webshow.htm#5.
- 51 John F. Walvoord, *Every Prophecy of the Bible* (Colorado Springs, CO: Chariot Victor Publishing, 1990, 1999), 464, 275.
- 52 “Matthew alone mentions this miracle. Nothing more is said about these people, which would be unlikely if they remained on earth for long. Evidently, these people were given glorified bodies; they appeared ‘to many’ (Mtt. 27:53), enough to establish the reality of the miracle; and then they no doubt ascended to glory—a kind of foretaste of 1Th. 4:16.”—John MacArthur, *The MacArthur Study Bible* (Nashville, TN: Word Publishing, 1997), Mtt. 27:52.
- 53 See *Events of the 70th Week of Daniel*^[2.13.5.4].
- 54 “The chief problem relative to the resurrections at the second coming of Christ among premillenarians is the question of whether righteous Israel and Old Testament saints in general are raised at this time. A popular interpretation originating in Darby and his associates is that resurrection of Old Testament saints takes place at the same time as the *rapture*^[5.2.62] of the church, that is, before the tribulation. This interpretation has been followed by such worthy expositors as William Kelly, A. C. Gaebelein, C. I. Scofield, and a host of others. Support for this interpretation is provided by three general arguments: (1) Christ died for Old Testament saints as well as for the church and therefore they are entitled to resurrection at the same time as the church, (2) According to 1 Thessalonians 4:16, the voice of the archangel is heard at the time of the rapture. Inasmuch as Michael, the archangel, is the special protector of Israel, his presence at the rapture would indicate Israel’s resurrection. (3) The twenty-four elders of Revelation 4 are composed of both Old and New Testament saints and, inasmuch as these are pictured in heaven crowned and therefore rewarded in Revelation 4 before the tribulation, it would indicate that Old Testament saints as well as the church have already been raised from the dead. . . . [But], there are good reasons for reconsideration. The reference to ‘the dead in Christ’ (1Th. 4:16) by no means clearly includes all saints. The expression ‘in Christ’ is uniformly used in the New Testament, wherever it has theological meaning, as a reference to those who have been baptized by the Spirit into the body of Christ, and is never used in reference to saints before the Day of Pentecost. It is significant that the word *saints*, a more general designation of the righteous, is not used but a technical expression, ‘the dead in Christ,’ is used instead. It would seem to indicate a limitation of the prediction to those [having been baptized by the Holy Spirit] who die in the present *dispensation*^[5.2.15]. . . . Over against the obscurity in the New Testament, however, is the fact that the Old Testament seems to place the resurrection of Israel after the tribulation [Dan. 12:1-2].”—Walvoord, *The Millennial Kingdom*, 279-281.
- 55 Opinions differ as to whether this passage includes any reference to a literal, physical resurrection. The context of the passage argues against it: (1) The bones are seen laying on the surface of the ground; (2) The bones are said to be “the whole house of Israel” (Eze. 37:11); (3) The manner in which the resurrection occurs—stage by stage and in response to Ezekiel’s command—is unlike any other physical resurrection recorded in Scripture.
- 56 There is a difference of opinion as to whether any believers are part of this resurrection. See commentary on *Revelation 20:12*^[3.20.12].
- 57 John F. Walvoord, *The Revelation of Jesus Christ* (Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 1966), 307.
- 58 Arnold G. Fruchtenbaum, *The Footsteps of Messiah*, rev ed. (Tustin, CA: Ariel Ministries, 2003), 376.
- 59 LaHaye, “A Literal Millennium as Taught in Scripture, Part 4,” in Thomas Ice, ed., *Pre-Trib Perspectives*, vol. 8 no. 10 (Dallas, TX: Pre-Trib Research Center, February 2004), 2.
- 60 “The resurrection of the dead, [including] the wicked as well as the rest of the righteous who not being of the

- number of the martyrs had not already been raised to a share in the Millennial Kingdom.”—Isbon T. Beckwith, *The Apocalypse of John* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2001), 161. “The wicked who had died from the time of Adam to Christ’s second advent, and all the righteous and wicked who had died during and after the millennium, shall then have their eternal portion assigned to them.”—Fausset, “*The Revelation of St. John the Divine*,” Rev. 20:11.
- 61 Barnhouse, *Revelation*, 390.
- 62 Johnson, *Revelation: The Expositor's Bible Commentary*, 189.
- 63 Luke 15:24, 32; John 3:3, 7; Gal. 6:15; 1Pe. 1:3, 23; 1Jn. 2:29; 3:9; 5:1, 18.
- 64 “The order of events in the resurrection program would be: (1) the resurrection of Christ as the beginning of the resurrection program (1Cor. 15:23); (2) the resurrection of the church age saints at the *rapture*^[5.2.62] (1Th. 4:16); (3) the resurrection of the tribulation period saints (Rev. 20:3-5), together with (4) the resurrection of Old Testament saints (Dan. 12:2; Isa. 26:19) at the second advent of Christ to the earth; and finally (5) the final resurrection of the unsaved dead [the second resurrection] (Rev. 20:5, 11-14) at the end of the millennial age. The first four stages would all be included in the first resurrection.”—Pentecost, *Things to Come: A Study in Biblical Eschatology*, 411.
- 65 “As there is a life beyond this present life for the faithful, so a death beyond the death which falls under our eye for the wicked.”—Richard Chenevix Trench, *Commentary on the Epistles to the Seven Churches in Asia* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 1861), 111.
- 66 The King James Version translates both *Hades* and *Gehenna*—the Lake of Fire—as *hell*. They are actually two different places. The final destiny of the unsaved is the latter, an existence of eternal punishment: “‘Vita damnatorum mors est,’ [death is a life of punishment] is the fearful gloss of Augustine.”—Trench, *Commentary on the Epistles to the Seven Churches in Asia*, 111.
- 67 Merrill F. Unger, *Unger's Commentary on the Old Testament* (Chattanooga, TN: AMG Publishers, 2002), Isa. 66:21.
- 68 Danker, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 483.
- 69 Merrill K. Unger, R. Harrison, Frederic F Vos, and Cyril J. Barber, *The New Unger's Bible Dictionary* (Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 1988), s.v. “Gog.”
- 70 Kenneth H. Cuffey, “Gog,” in David Noel Freeman, ed., *The Anchor Bible Dictionary* (New York, NY: Doubleday, 1996, c1992), 2:1056.
- 71 Ronald F. Youngblood, and R. K. Harrison, eds., *Nelson's New Illustrated Bible Dictionary* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 1997, c1995), s.v. “Magog.”
- 72 McClain, *The Greatness Of The Kingdom*, 187.
- 73 Fruchtenbaum, *The Footsteps of Messiah*, 121.
- 74 Barnhouse suggests that the Gog of Ezekiel, by way of demonic powers, is brought back after the Millennium for this final rebellion: “Just as Satan entered into Judas (John 13:27), whether personally or through one of his mighty principalities and powers we do not know, and as Satan clothed the human being called the wild beast, with his power, his throne, and great authority (Rev. 13:2), thus making him the *Antichrist*^[5.2.3], so Satan possesses some princeling, perhaps named Gog, through one of his mighty angels who own his sway.”—Barnhouse, *Revelation*, 387.
- 75 Walvoord, *The Revelation of Jesus Christ*, 303.
- 76 Danker, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 685.
- 77 Danker, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 666.
- 78 Danker, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 625.
- 79 James Strong, *The Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible* (Ontario: Woodside Bible Fellowship, 1996), G3925.
- 80 Barnhouse, *Revelation*, 388.
- 81 Johnson, *Revelation: The Expositor's Bible Commentary*, 191.
- 82 William R. Newell, *Revelation: Chapter by Chapter* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 1994, c1935), 320.

- 83 Clarence Larkin, *Dispensational Truth* (Glenside, PA: Rev. Clarence Larkin Estate, 1918, 1920), 96.
- 84 Fruchtenbaum, *The Footsteps of Messiah*, 520-521.
- 85 Concerning the eternal aspect of torment for the unjust: Ecc. c. 12:5; Isa. 66:24; Dan. 12:2; Mtt. 3:12; 25:41-46; Mark 9:43-46; 2Th. 1:9; 2Pe. 2:17; Jude 1:13; Rev. 14:11; 19:20; 20:10.
- 86 Barnhouse, *Revelation*, 389.
- 87 Unger, *Unger's Commentary on the Old Testament*, Dan. 7:9a.
- 88 Newell, *Revelation: Chapter by Chapter*, 328.
- 89 Arthur W. Kac, *The Messiahship of Jesus* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1980), 191.
- 90 Barnhouse, *Revelation*, 391.
- 91 Henry Morris, *The Revelation Record* (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 1983), Rev. 20:11.
- 92 Walvoord, *The Revelation of Jesus Christ*, 216.
- 93 Fruchtenbaum, *The Footsteps of Messiah*, 522.
- 94 “As the term *general revelation* is historically and universally employed in evangelical theology, the term *general* is intended to characterize not the character of revelation under discussion, but the audience to whom that revelation is available. . . It is general in its scope; that is, it reaches to all people.”—John F. MacArthur, and Wayne A. Mack, *Introduction to Biblical Counseling* (Dallas, TX: Word Publishing, 1994), 76.
- 95 Loraine Boettner, *The Reformed Doctrine of Predestination* (Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Company, 1932), 98.
- 96 John MacArthur, *Revelation 12-22 : The MacArthur New Testament Commentary* (Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 2000), Rev. 20:12.
- 97 Before the crucifixion. After the ascension they relocated from Hades to heaven.
- 98 Walvoord, *The Millennial Kingdom*, 332.
- 99 Fausset, “*The Revelation of St. John the Divine*,” Rev. 20:13.
- 100 Robert L. Thomas, *Revelation 8-22* (Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 1995), Rev. 20:13.
- 101 Seiss, *The Apocalypse: Lectures on the Book of Revelation*, 481.
- 102 MacArthur, *Revelation 12-22 : The MacArthur New Testament Commentary*, Rev. 20:14.
- 103 Seiss, *The Apocalypse: Lectures on the Book of Revelation*, 479.

3.21 - Revelation 21

3.21.1 - Revelation 21:1

In the previous chapter, John was shown an ideal time on earth when Satan was bound and Christ and the saints ruled for one thousand years. As wonderful as the *Millennial Kingdom*^[4.11] will be with many of God's promises regarding Israel, the earthly Jerusalem, and the renovated earth coming to fulfillment, it is not the ultimate plan of God. After the *Millennial Kingdom*^[4.11] and the final rebellion of Satan, John saw the original earth and heaven flee away. In the process the earth and sea gave up the dead who stood before God for judgment (Rev. 20:11-13).

During the *Millennial Kingdom*^[5.2.39], sin and death had not yet been vanquished (Isa. 65:20; Rev. 20:9). Now John sees the creation of a *new* heaven and earth which differs fundamentally from the old order. In a word, the new creation is *perfect*. There is no more sin or death. Those who populate the new earth enjoy full communion with God.

The *OT*^[5.2.51] prophets saw glimpses of the eternal state. The Holy Spirit revealed through them that there would be a new heavens and a new earth (Isa. 65:17; 66:22) and that death would eventually be no more (Isa. 25:8; Hos. 13:14). But their visions of the eternal state were often intertwined with revelation concerning the *Millennial Kingdom*^[4.11] making it difficult to draw a clear distinction between the two (e.g., Isa. 65:17-20).¹ Now, John is shown aspects of the eternal state which are markedly different from the *Millennial Kingdom*^[4.11]. Beginning with the first verse of this chapter, we are no longer in the Millennial Kingdom: there is no more *sin, death, sea, or Temple*^[5.2.73].²

Now I saw a new heaven and a new earth

The conjunction, *now* (καὶ [kai]), connects what follows with the previous chapter. The creation of the new heaven and new earth is in response to the destruction of the previous heaven and earth which fled away and gave up the dead (Rev. 20:11). *New* is καινὸν [kainon]: “in the sense that what is old has become obsolete, and should be replaced by what is new. In such a case the new is, as a rule, superior in kind to the old.”³

An earth which no longer smarts and smokes under the curse of sin,—an earth which needs no more to be torn with hooks and irons to make it yield its fruits,—an earth where thorns and thistles no longer infest the ground, nor serpents hiss among the flowers, nor savage beasts lay in ambush to devour,—an earth whose sod is never cut with graves, whose soil is never moistened with tears or saturated with human blood, whose fields are never blasted with unpropitious seasons, whose atmosphere never gives wings to the seeds of plague and death, whose ways are never lined with funeral processions, or blocked up with armed men on their way to war,—an earth whose hills ever flow with salvation, and whose valleys know only the sweetness of Jehovah's smiles,—an earth from end to end, and from centre to utmost verge, clothed with the eternal blessedness of Paradise Restored!⁴

The restorative work prior to the Millennial Kingdom was a *regeneration* (Mtt. 19:28), not an entirely new created order as here. This is demonstrated by the fact that after the Millennial Kingdom (Rev. 20:4-6), the earth and sea still contained all the unsaved dead of history. Although the millennial earth was renovated in order to recover from the judgments of the Tribulation and to restore Eden-like conditions, sin and death remained and the earth, in one sense, remained *unclean*. In the conflagration of the first heaven and earth, sin and death are completely purged from the created order (Rev. 20:14).

It was revealed to the OT prophets that the first heavens and earth would perish (Ps. 102:25-26; Isa. 51:6) and be replaced by a new heavens and earth:

For behold, I create new heavens and a new earth; and the former shall not be remembered or come to mind. But be glad and rejoice forever in what I create; for behold, I create Jerusalem *as* a rejoicing, and her people a joy. I will rejoice in Jerusalem, and joy in My people; the voice of weeping shall no longer be heard in her, nor the voice of crying. No more shall an infant from there *live but a few days*, nor an old man who has not fulfilled his days; for the child shall die one hundred years old, but the sinner *being* one hundred years old shall be accursed. (Isa. 65:17-20)

As we mentioned, the visions of the OT prophets often intermingled elements from both the Millennial Kingdom and the eternal state—the different elements sometimes being presented out of their

chronological sequence. Isaiah saw the new heavens and earth, but went on to describe a blessed time which *includes death and sin*. These latter characteristics are incompatible with the eternal state:

Isaiah's vision, while glimpsing the Kingdom age, the last ordered age in time, is projected into eternity. He saw the Millennium merging into the final state of bliss and having an everlasting feature to it, according to the Davidic Covenant (2S. 7:13, 16). So the prophecy employs language that although applicable to a degree to millennial conditions, will be fully realized on the regenerated earth, which will follow upon the *postmillennial*^[5.2.56] renovation by fire (2Pe. 3:10-13; Rev. 21:1; cf. Heb. 12:26-28).⁵

The prophets sometimes saw future events not only together; but in expanding their description of these events, they seem occasionally to reverse the time sequence in their record of the vision. An example of this may be seen in Isa. 65:17-25 . . . It is apparent, therefore, that Isaiah saw together on the screen of prophecy both the Millennial Kingdom and the Eternal Kingdom; but he expands in detail the former because it is the "nearest coming" event and leaves the latter for fuller description in a later New Testament revelation [Rev. 21:1-8].⁶

Some interpreters, insisting upon a strict chronological order for Isaiah's vision, mistake the creation described as the regeneration of the earth *prior to* the Millennial Kingdom:

Most interpreters understand the new heaven and new earth to be postmillennial, as this description succeeds the account of the last judgment. It is necessary, however, in interpreting prophecy to take into account all that the rest of the prophets have written. If this is done, it will be seen that the new heaven and new earth are distinctly revealed to be *premillennial*^[5.2.58] in the only other passages which contain the prediction (Isa. 65:17-19. 66:22. 2Pe. 3:13). Every student of prophecy knows that there are numerous instances of prophecies given out of their chronological sequence.⁷

No matter whether the interpreter takes the creation described here to be *before* the Millennium or *after*, he is forced to accept a reversal in order between prophetic vision and historical chronology in *some* passage. Either Isaiah's vision of the new heavens and earth *preceding* the Millennium is in chronological order or John's vision of the new heaven and earth *following* the Millennium is chronological. They cannot both be true. Fortunately, God has not left us to guess at the answer. He has left us a key with which to solve this conundrum: the destruction of death. Since the destruction of the first earth results in all the dead being given up and Death itself cast into the Lake of Fire (Rev. 20:14), we can expect that death will be purged before the new earth is created. This is the chronological sequence of John's vision: "And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death . . . for the former things have passed away" (Rev. 21:4). Since Isaiah's vision included death (Isa. 65:20) after the new creation (Isa. 65:17), it cannot be in chronological order. Nor does it describe a renovation prior to the Millennial Kingdom:

But one objection may be made to the supposition, that the prophet is here depicting the state of things in the millennium; viz., that this description is preceded by an account of the creation of a new heaven and a new earth. The prophet appears, therefore, to refer to that Jerusalem, which is represented in the Apocalypse as coming down from heaven to earth after the transformation of the globe. But to this it may be replied, that the Old Testament prophet was not yet able to distinguish from one another the things which the author of the Apocalypse separates into distinct periods. From the Old Testament point of view generally, nothing was known of a state of blessedness beyond the grave. Hades lay beyond this present life; and nothing was known of a heaven in which men were blessed. Around the throne of God in heaven there were angels and not men. And, indeed, until the risen Saviour ascended to heaven, heaven itself was not open to men, and therefore there was no heavenly Jerusalem whose descent to earth could be anticipated then. Consequently in the prophecies of the Old Testament the eschatological idea of the new Cosmos does unquestionably coincide with the millennium. It is only in the New Testament that the new creation intervenes as a party-wall between this life and the life beyond; whereas the Old Testament prophecy brings down the new creation itself into the present life, and knows nothing of any Jerusalem of the blessed life to come, as distinct from the new Jerusalem of the millennium.⁸

We see the same mix of revelation concerning the Millennium and the eternal state in another passage in Isaiah which mentions the new heavens and earth:

"For as the new heavens and the new earth which I will make shall remain before Me," says the LORD, "So shall your descendants and your name remain. And it shall come to pass *That* from one New Moon to another, and from one Sabbath to another, all flesh shall come to worship before Me," says the LORD. "And they shall go forth and look upon the corpses of the men who have transgressed against Me. For their worm does not die, and their fire is not quenched. They shall be an abhorrence to all flesh." (Isa. 66:22-24)

There is nothing in this passage of Isaiah which states that the new heavens and earth must precede the Millennium. It merely states that *as* the new creation will endure before God, *so shall* the faithful of Israel continue.

the first heaven and the first earth had passed away

Since the previous heaven and earth which passed away were the *first* (πρῶτος [*prōtos*]), this is the first and only true creation of heaven and earth since the original creation (Gen. 1:1). Therefore, the *regeneration* (παλιγγενεσία [*palingenesia*], *again genesis*) spoken of by Jesus was a restoration of the original creation which occurred prior to the *Millennial Kingdom*^[4.11].

Since the heaven and earth of the *Millennial Kingdom*^[4.11] were the *first*, it is not possible to interpret the passages by Isaiah (Isa. 65:17; 66:22) and Peter (2Pe. 3:10-13) as describing a creation event *before* the Millennium. If that were so, this would have been the *second* heaven and earth that had passed away. Moreover, the earth of the Millennial Kingdom contained the dead of all history (Rev. 20:13) and so cannot be a new creation as described by Isaiah, Peter, and John.

An important aspect of the revelation given by Peter concerns the *result* of the conflagration of the first heaven and earth:

But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in which the heavens will pass away with a great noise, and the elements will melt with fervent heat; both the earth and the works that are in it will be burned up. Therefore, since all these things will be dissolved, what manner *of persons* ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness, looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be dissolved, being on fire, and the elements will melt with fervent heat? Nevertheless we, according to His promise, look for **new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells**. (2Pe. 3:10-13) [emphasis added]

Here is another evidence that Peter cannot be describing the renovation preceding the Millennial Kingdom. Peter informs us that the new heavens and new earth will be characterized by true righteousness. Unlike the millennial earth, there will be no sin or death.

With the passing of the first heaven and earth, we find fulfillment of Jesus' predictions concerning the permanence of God's word:

For assuredly, I say to you, till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle will by no means pass from the law till all is fulfilled. (Mtt. 5:18 cf. Luke 16:17)

Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will by no means pass away. (Mtt. 24:35 cf. Mark 13:30; Luke 21:33)

The purpose of God, as set forth by His written word, extends not just beyond this life, but beyond this entire created order. His words are more certain than the physical reality around us. The temporal nature of this present world is to be a powerful motivator for the Christian to invest in heavenly priorities:

But this I say, brethren, the time *is* short, so that from now on even those who have wives should be as though they had none, those who weep as though they did not weep, those who rejoice as though they did not rejoice, those who buy as though they did not possess, and those who use this world as not misusing *it*. For the form of this world is passing away. (1Cor. 7:29-31)

Therefore, since all these things will be dissolved, what manner *of persons* ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness, looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be dissolved, being on fire, and the elements will melt with fervent heat? Nevertheless we, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells.

Therefore, beloved, looking forward to these things, be diligent to be found by Him in peace, without spot and blameless. (2Pe. 3:11-14)

no more sea

Some suggest the sea is omitted from the eternal state because of its negative connotation. It was the sea, overflowing with rain and the fountains of the deep, which judged the world at the flood (Gen. 7:11). The sea covered Pharaoh and his army at the Exodus (Ex. 14:28). Leviathan, the fleeing serpent who would be slain, made his home in the sea (Isa. 27:1). The wicked are compared to the troubled sea (Isa. 57:20). The *four vicious Gentile powers*^[4.3.2.8] seen by Daniel arose from the sea (Dan. 7:3). The final beastly ruler, the *Antichrist*^[4.2] arose out of the sea (Rev. 13:1). Another possibility is that the sea

represents the need of cleansing due to sin which will no longer be necessary in the eternal state.⁹

The lack of sea in the eternal state offers a helpful guide when interpreting the OT. In passages describing times of great blessing, if the *sea* is mentioned, then we know the passage cannot relate to the eternal state, but must describe conditions of the *Millennial Kingdom*^[4.11].

3.21.2 - Revelation 21:2

Then I, John, saw the holy city

This is one of five places in the book of Revelation where John refers to himself by name (Rev. 1:1, 4, 9; 21:2; 22:8). See *Authorship*^[2.9].

The *holy city* is also called the *holy Jerusalem* (Rev. 21:10). Throughout Scripture, Jerusalem is considered holy, although at times she plays the harlot (Isa. 1:21). Jerusalem is called the “city of the great King” (Ps. 48:2), “city of God” (Ps. 87:3), “the faithful city” (Isa. 1:21), and the “holy city” (Isa. 52:1). Joel predicted, concerning her final state: “Jerusalem shall be holy, and no aliens shall ever pass through her again” (Joel 3:17). Anyone who takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy will have his part in the holy city taken away (Rev. 22:19).

New Jerusalem

New is καινῆν [*kainēn*]: new in quality, “by way of contrast with the old or obsolete *better, superior, different* . . . Substantively *new (and better) one*.”¹⁰ Although the earthly Jerusalem had been restored for the *Millennial Kingdom*^[5.2.39] in accordance with God’s word (e.g., Isa. 62), it is not the ultimate city sought by those who follow Jesus. In a similar way to which the *Temple*^[5.2.73] on earth corresponds to a *greater reality in heaven*^[4.16.4], the earthly Jerusalem will eventually be replaced by the New Jerusalem. Unlike the earthly Jerusalem, the New Jerusalem has never been subject to destruction or desolation. Nor has it ever needed watchmen on its walls to pray for its protection and reestablishment (Isa. 62:6).

Paul compared the earthly Jerusalem with the “Jerusalem above” when teaching of the superiority of the New Covenant over the Old (Gal. 4:24-26). Jesus called the New Jerusalem “the city of My God” and promised the overcomer that He would write upon him the name of the city (Rev. 3:12). The New Jerusalem is the ultimate destination of all the saints. Those who follow Jesus have no continuing city on earth, but ultimately seek the one to come, the New Jerusalem (Heb. 13:14).

But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the firstborn *who are* registered in heaven, to God the Judge of all, to the spirits of just men made perfect, to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling that speaks better things than *that of* Abel. (Heb. 12:22-24)

Again, we meet with the tendency of many interpreters to take the description of the city as being symbolic of some deep spiritual truth rather than the description of a literal city which God has prepared as the ultimate dwelling place for the faithful in their glorified existence beyond this life (John 14:2-3). One danger of taking the description of the New Jerusalem as symbolism is the flexibility it affords for molding its meaning in accord with the desire of the interpreter. Symbolic interpretation has often been a useful tool of cults:

A symbolical New Jerusalem is crucial to at least three major cults—Christian Science, Mormonism, and the Swedenborgians. Christian Science symbolizes almost every detail of the New Jerusalem in order to fit it into the cult’s teachings. . . . Joseph Smith, founder of Mormonism, attempted to establish the symbolized New Jerusalem (“Zion”) in the State of Missouri. . . . The Swedenborgians . . . call themselves the Church of the New Jerusalem. Founder Swedenborg wrote voluminously, and his commentary on the book of Revelation [states] . . . “By the twelve thousand furlongs [in Rev. 21:16] are signified all the goods and truths of that church.”¹¹

In order to prevent interpreters from waxing allegorical in their approach to the New Jerusalem, John is given a tour of the city by an angel who carefully *measures its physical dimensions*. The scene is reminiscent of the passage in Ezekiel where an angel (“man”) shows Ezekiel the *Millennial Temple*^[4.16.5.10] and provides detailed measurements concerning its physical layout (Eze. 40:3 ff). In

both Ezekiel and here, the prophets behold structures vastly different than anything in history. Because of this, many are reluctant to take the details in a literal fashion and reduce the passages to teaching general spiritual principles.

These dimensions [of the city] should not be interpreted as providing architectural information about the city. Rather, we should think of them as theologically symbolic of the fulfillment of all God's promises.¹²

One can wonder only how 12,000 stadia (Rev. 21:16) and 144 cubits (Rev. 21:17) could convey great "spiritual truths" or "theological insights!" If this were true, we should thank God that He chose *not* to give us truly important information, such as the requirements of salvation, in similar "theological symbolism" as these interpreters assume to be His mode of communication here! They are at a loss to explain the meaning of the details and why God would indicate that measurements be taken of immaterial objects. Those bold enough to hazard a *guess* at the symbolical meaning of the measurements have little agreement as to the insights of great magnitude and import which they purportedly represent. As is always the case with symbolic interpretation, the meaning of the text is rendered *unknowable*.

Unwilling to take the language of Scripture at face value, many seek for some hidden meaning behind John's description. But if the words do not mean what they say, who has the authority to say what they do mean? Abandoning the literal meaning of the text leads only to baseless, groundless, futile speculation.¹³

If God gave these two chapters in symbolic form, then we dare say that man should not be held responsible for understanding their contents, for they mean whatever an interpreter wants them to mean! Instead, we believe the measurements are literal and the act of measuring is intended to indicate the physical reality of what is presented in the vision. Thus, the description of the New Jerusalem concerns a real, physical city. Tan identifies numerous reasons for taking the city literally:

First, . . . all the elements of an actual city—dimensions, foundations, walls, gates, streets—are indicated. . . . *Second*, although the apostle John sees this prophecy in a vision, he certainly does not resort to imagination nor indulge in exaggeration. . . . The fact that John records non-earthly things such as gate-sized pearls proves that he does not alter the form of the prophecy for the sake of reader comprehension. *Third*, . . . In the account of the New Jerusalem . . . the same angel [who identified the *Harlot*^[5.2.25] of Rev. 17 as a symbol (Rev. 17:18)] offers not a word or clue regarding its possible symbolism. *Fourth*, in the account of the New Jerusalem, the inhabitants of the city are differentiated from the city itself. If the New Jerusalem symbolizes the church, and its inhabitants are church members, how could the church separate from itself. *Fifth*, the patriarch Abraham . . . "looked for a *city* which hath foundations whose builder and maker is God" (Heb. 11:10). Moreover, the early Hebrew Christians were assured of their positional rights "unto the *city* of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem" (Heb. 12:22). And our Lord promises the disciples, "In my Father's house are many mansions" (John 14:3). This hope of a city promised to so many people down the ages surely cannot be a symbol. *Sixth*, an actual, material city in eternity is proper and logical because of the constitution of the redeemed who will be in resurrected bodies throughout eternity. A resurrected body without any material point of reference would be highly unsatisfactory. *Seventh*, . . . a literal, material New Jerusalem . . . comes naturally and logically to the thinking of most uncritical laymen.¹⁴

We believe the approach which God intends is *literal interpretation with spiritual application*: every detail is to be taken literally, but also provides symbolism for spiritual learning, meditation, and application. See *Interpreting Symbols*^[2.7].

coming down

Coming down is καταβαίνουσαν [*katabainousan*], present tense: *while coming down*. John saw the city as it was in the process of descending. John sees the city descend in two separate visions. Here, he sees the New Jerusalem as part of the overall scene describing the newly recreated order. A few verses later, an angel gives John a detailed tour of the city which comprises the last half of the chapter (Rev. 21:9-27).

prepared as a bride

Prepared is ἡτοιμασμένην [*hētoimasmenēn*], perfect passive participle: *having been prepared*. The passive form of the participle indicates the bride had no part in her preparation. This is because the bride is *inanimate*: a city. This bride contrasts with the bride mentioned in Revelation 19:7 who "made

herself ready”, ἡτοιμάσεν ἑαυτὴν [*hētoimasen heautēn*]. The bride at the marriage of the Lamb participated in her readiness—indicating she is made up of living beings: the saints who had previously been resurrected at the *Rapture*^[4.14]. See *Church Betrothed to Christ*^[4.10.5]. Here, the bride is an inanimate city which is prepared by God:

In My Father’s house are many mansions [dwelling places]; if *it were not so*, I would have told you. **I go to prepare a place for you**. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, *there* you may be also. (John 14:2-3) [emphasis added]

By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to the place which he would receive as an inheritance. And he went out, not knowing where he was going. By faith he dwelt in the land of promise as *in a foreign country*, dwelling in tents with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise; for he waited for the city which has foundations, **whose builder and maker is God**. (Heb. 11:8-10) [emphasis added]

Bride is νύμφην [*nymphēn*], “a young woman engaged.”¹⁵ “It can also be *the newly married woman*.”¹⁶ In Revelation 19:7, *bride* is γυνή [*gynē*], meaning “woman.” There, her status as a bride was derived from the context. The two terms are made equivalent in Revelation 21:9 where John is shown “the bride, the Lamb’s wife”: τὴν νύμφην τὴν γυναῖκα τοῦ ἀρνίου [*tēn nymphēn tēn gynaike tou arniou*], *the bride, the woman of the Lamb*.

At the time of the marriage of the Lamb (Rev. 19:7), the *OT*^[5.2.51] saints had not yet been raised (Dan. 12:2; Isa. 26:19) and the earthly Jerusalem suffered under the trampling of the Gentiles (Rev. 11:2). In the previous chapter, during the *Millennial Kingdom*^[4.11] (Rev. 20:4-6), all the saints had been raised and the earthly Jerusalem restored in glory for one thousand years. Then the first heaven and earth passed away and a new order was created. The *NT*^[5.2.48] teaching of the *Church Betrothed to Christ*^[4.10.5], the Lamb’s wife at the marriage (Rev. 19:7), is now joined with the OT passages which indicate that *Israel is married to Jehovah*^[4.10.3] and *Jerusalem is married to God*^[4.10.4]. The New Jerusalem represents the ultimate consummation of the varied wedding motifs where all the people of God inhabit a city enjoying intimate communion with God face-to-face (Rev. 22:4).

Without the saints, whose home and residence it is, it would not be the Lamb’s Wife; and yet it is the Lamb’s Wife in a sense which does not exclude the foundations, walls, gates, streets and constructions which contribute to make it a city. Mere edifices and avenues do not make a city; neither does a mere congregation or multitude of people make a city. You cannot have a living city without people to inhabit it and you cannot have a city without the edifices and avenues arranged in some fixed shape for the accommodation of those who make up its population. It is the two together, and the order in which the parts are severally disposed, the animate with the inanimate, which constitute a city.¹⁷

adorned for her husband

Adorned is κεκοσμημένην [*kekosmēmenēn*], perfect passive participle: *having been decorated*. “Primarily to arrange, to put in order (English, cosmetic), is used of furnishing a room, Mtt. 12:44; Luke 11:25, and of trimming lamps, Mtt. 25:7.”¹⁸ Whereas the bride at the marriage of the Lamb wears *linen* for her covering (Rev. 19:8), the city wears the glory of God and precious stones (Rev. 21:11). The garments of the city are not given as clothing, nor related to righteousness, because the city is inanimate.

God is her husband because it is He who restores her and has promised that she would rejoice as a bride. Although He had adorned the earthly Jerusalem as a beautiful woman, she played the harlot (Eze. 16:1-16). Nevertheless, He promised that one day Jerusalem would wear beautiful garments again, for she would be holy and no unclean thing would come into her (Isa. 52:1). See *Jerusalem Married to God*^[4.10.4].

3.21.3 - Revelation 21:3

a loud voice from heaven

The *NU*^[5.2.49] text has *from the throne*. A loud voice from heaven told John not to write what the seven thunders uttered (Rev. 10:4). The same voice commanded John to take the little book from the hand of the angel which stood on the sea and earth (Rev. 10:8). A loud voice from heaven called the two

witnesses up to heaven at the time of their *Rapture*^[5.2.62] (Rev. 11:12). A loud voice from heaven indicated that those who died at the time of the worship of the *Beast*^[5.2.9] would be blessed (Rev. 14:13). A loud voice from heaven called God's people out of Babylon prior to her destruction (Rev. 18:4). In each case, the voice is probably that of God. Here, the voice refers to God in the third person which may indicate it is that of a mighty angel: "This is an announcement about God, not directly from Him."¹⁹

Behold, the *tabernacle*^[5.2.69] of God is with men

Tabernacle is σκηνη [skēnē], "lodging, dwelling, of the tents of nomads [Heb. 11:9] . . . [used] in the account of the Transfiguration . . . Mtt. 17:4; Mark 9:5; Luke 9:33."²⁰ The same term is used of the *Tabernacle in the Wilderness*^[4.16.5.2] (Acts 7:44) and of David (Acts 15:16). The Beast blasphemed the tabernacle of God (Rev. 13:6). The temple of the testimony was opened prior to the pouring forth of the seven bowls of wrath (Rev. 15:5).

The tabernacle is the meeting place between *sinful man and a holy God*^[4.16.1]. Through His work on the cross, Jesus created the *Temple of the Believer*^[4.16.5.5], the dwelling place of the Holy Spirit among believers in this age (1Cor. 6:19; 2Cor. 6:16; Eph. 2:19-22). But the spiritual union of believers with Christ is not the ultimate communion which the voice now declares. "For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part, but then I shall know just as I also am known" (1Cor. 13:12 cf. Rev. 22:4).

Such an unveiled view of God is impossible for mortal men. No living person has ever seen God in the fullness of His glory (John 1:18; 6:46; 1Jn. 4:12); He is invisible (Col. 1:15; 1Ti. 1:17) and "dwells in unapproachable light" (1Ti. 6:16; cf. Ps. 104:2), exposure to which would mean instant death for any living person (Ex. 33:20). But in heaven, "the pure in heart . . . shall see God" (Mtt. 5:8), since they will be perfectly holy.²¹

He will dwell with them and they shall be His people.

He will dwell is σκηνώσει [skēnōsei], related to σκηνη [skēnē], *tabernacle*. The same root word, σκηνω [skēnō], describes God dwelling among men in the incarnation (John 1:14).

People is λαοὶ [laoi]: "peoples" (*TR*^[5.2.79] and NU texts), but λαός [laos]: "people" (*MT*^[5.2.45] text). If plural, it may refer to the *nations* (ἔθνη [ethnē]) which bring their glory and honor into the city (Rev. 21:24-26).²²

Of all the things which God could say concerning the blessings attending the eternal state, why is this emphasized by being the first? Because it is the *greatest blessing found in all of Scripture*. In this promise is found the culmination of the scarlet thread of redemption which runs from Genesis through Revelation. This has been the great purpose of the Kinsman-Redeemer, Jesus Christ (see commentary on *Revelation 5:2*^[3.5.2]). Since the rebellion of Adam, every tabernacle, every *Temple*^[5.2.73], every correspondence between God and man has been with this ultimate goal in mind: the restoration of full fellowship between God and man.

Thus, the great multitude which John saw coming out of the Great Tribulation were blessed by being in God's presence night and day: "And He who sits on the throne will dwell [tabernacle] among them" (Rev. 7:15). Now, in the New Jerusalem, man will see God face-to-face (Rev. 22:4)—without the encumbrance of sin which has separated man since the Fall in the Garden of Eden. See *The Abiding Presence of God*^[4.16.2].

Being His people speaks of an intimate relationship between God and men (Lev. 26:11-12; Jer. 7:23-24; 11:4; 30:18-22; 32:38; Zec. 13:8-9). They are only His people because *He has given them a heart to know Him*. It is a work of God. This spiritual restoration had already begun for Israel in the *Millennial Kingdom*^[4.11]:

For I will set My eyes on them for good, and I will bring them back to this land; I will build them and not pull them down, and I will plant them and not pluck them up. Then **I will give them a heart to know Me**, that I am the LORD; and they shall be My people, and I will be their God, for they shall return to Me with their whole heart. (Jer. 24:6-7) [emphasis added]

But this *is* the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the LORD: **I will**

put My law in their minds, and write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people. No more shall every man teach his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, “Know the LORD,” for **they all shall know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them,** says the LORD. For I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more. (Jer. 31:33-34) [emphasis added]

During that time, God’s sanctuary had been in the midst of Israel (Eze. 37:24) within the *Millennial Temple*^[4.16.5.10]. Now, in the New Jerusalem, God *is* the Temple—the entire city is as the *holy of holies* of all previous temples. In the past, both Israel (Hos. 1:10; Rom. 9:26) and the Gentiles (Zec. 2:10-11) were “not his people.” In the eternal state, all the redeemed are His.

3.21.4 - Revelation 21:4

And God will wipe away every tear

Wipe away is ἐξάλειψει [*exaleipsei*], also used of *blotting out* names from the *Book of Life*^[4.4] (Rev. 3:5). Both the justice and mercy of God can be seen in this term: God blots out the names of unbelievers from the *Book of Life*^[4.4] even as He wipes away the tears of believers. God wiped away every tear from the eyes of those who came out of the Great Tribulation (Rev. 7:17). God will minister to all those who previously suffered: “Blessed *are* those who mourn, for they shall be comforted” (Mtt. 5:4). All the memories of pain and suffering will be forgotten in the wonder of the new order which God creates. The only exception will be those who were blotted out of the *Book of Life*^[5.2.10]. Having been cast into outer darkness, they will continually weep (Mtt. 8:12).

there shall be no more death

Here is the fulfillment of the incredible promise of the *OT*^[5.2.51] prophets that death would be swallowed up (Isa. 25:8; Hos. 13:14). Death had not been a part of the original created order, but came by the curse at the disobedience of Adam (Gen. 3:19). Throughout history, with few exceptions,²³ death has been the common lot of the living. Although Christ abolished death *de jure* at His First Coming (2Ti. 1:10; Heb. 2:14-15), the shadow of death extended even beyond the Second Coming of Christ and into the *Millennial Kingdom*^[5.2.39] (Isa. 65:20).

Death and Hades were cast into the Lake of Fire at the Great White Throne Judgment (Rev. 20:14). See commentary on *Revelation 20:14*^[3.20.14]. They were destroyed in the conflagration of the old order. The last enemy that would be destroyed was death (1Cor. 15:26).

Around our churches lie our graveyards, and all the highways are lined with cemeteries and depositories of the dead. We can scarcely open our eyes without seeing the gloomy hearse, the funeral procession, the undertaker’s warehouse, the shop full of mourning goods, or the stonemason chiselling epitaphs. Every newspaper we pick up has its obituary lists, and every week brings forth its bills of mortality. On the right hand, on the left hand, before us, behind us, around us, beneath us, in all seasons, in all climes, everywhere is death. . . . The time will come with death itself shall die; not by the power of man, not by mortal skill or earthly medicines, but by the great redemption of God.²⁴

Now the curse which brought death is done away with in entirety and, with it, death (Rev. 22:3 cf. Gen. 3:19). See commentary on *Revelation 21:24*^[3.21.24].

nor sorrow, nor crying

Although there was great joy in the *Millennial Kingdom*^[4.11] (Isa. 65:18-20; Jer. 31:13), this will surpass it because there will be no death.

And the ransomed of the Lord shall return, and come to Zion with singing, with everlasting joy on their heads. They shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away. (Isa. 35:10)

former things have passed away

Former things have passed away is τὰ πρῶτα ἀπῆλθαν [*ta prōta apēlthan*]: *the first [things] departed*. They departed when the “first (πρῶτη [*prōtē*]) heaven and earth passed away (ἀπῆλθαν [*apēlthan*])” (Rev. 21:1).

Paul encouraged the Corinthians to retain an eternal perspective in their daily lives because “the form of this world is passing away” (1Cor. 7:29). “The things which are seen *are* temporary, but the things which are not seen *are* eternal” (2Cor. 4:17). See commentary on *Revelation 20:11*^[3.20.11]. One of the

reasons believers are not to love the world is because, knowing the Scriptures, they realize that all that is in the world is ultimately transitory:

Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that *is* in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—is not of the Father but is of the world. And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever. (1Jn. 2:15-17)

3.21.5 - Revelation 21:5

He who sat on the throne said

This is God the Father Who John saw when he first ascended in his vision to heaven (Rev. 4:2, 9; 5:1).

Behold, I make all things new.

I make is ποιῶ [poiō], present tense: *I am making*. *New* is καινῶν [kainā], new in quality or kind, better. See commentary on *Revelation 21:1*^[3.21.1].

What God creates in the new heaven and new earth will surpass anything which man has imagined: “But as it is written: ‘Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor have entered into the heart of man the things which God has prepared for those who love Him.’ ” (1Cor. 2:9 cf. Isa. 43:16-19). The old creation which had long groaned under corruption is delivered by a new creation:

For the earnest expectation of the creation eagerly waits for the revealing of the sons of God. For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of Him who subjected *it* in hope; because the creation itself also will be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groans and labors with birth pangs together until now. Not only *that*, but we also who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, eagerly waiting for the adoption, the redemption of our body. (Rom. 8:19-23)

The redemption set forth in the book of Revelation is much broader than the individual redemption of sinful men. It extends to the redemption of the earth and even the entire creation. See commentary on *Revelation 5:1*^[3.5.1].

Like the new birth, the new creation is a work of God: “Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new” (2Cor. 5:17).

Write, for these words are true and faithful

John is reminded of his task, to record that which he sees and hears for the benefit of the saints. See commentary on *Revelation 1:11*^[3.1.11] and *Revelation 1:19*^[3.1.19]. The statements which God has just made, concerning the elimination of death and the making of all things new, are difficult for people living under the dominion of physical death to consider so God emphasizes the reliability of what John has been told (Rev. 19:9; 22:6). “Forever, O LORD, your word is settled in heaven” (Ps. 119:89). The word of God lives and abides forever (1Pe. 1:23).

The words spoken by the voice from heaven have the same characteristics as those of Jesus. Jesus referred to Himself as “the Amen, the Faithful and True Witness” (Rev. 3:14). When He rode forth at the Second Coming, He was called “Faithful and True . . . the Word of God” (Rev. 19:11-13). There is unity between the will of the Father and the Son.

3.21.6 - Revelation 21:6

It is done!

It is done is Γέγονε [Gegone], perfect tense: *it has become!* The perfect tense emphasizes the completion of the task of creating the new order and the ongoing effects of that creative act which continue into the present as seen by John. The words of the Father are reminiscent of the words of the Son which resulted in redeemed saints being present to enjoy the new creation: “It is finished!” (John 19:30). *It is finished* is τετέλεσται [tetelestai], perfect tense, *it has come to an end, been completed, accomplished*. Jesus’ words emphasize the *closure* which His death on the cross brought to the old order of things. The Father’s words emphasize the new beginning of blessing which flow from the work of the Son.

Now, the *de jure* (legally obtained) work of Christ on the cross becomes *de facto* (accomplished

reality). The last enemy, death, has been destroyed and redemption, in its totality, extends throughout God's creation.

I am the Alpha and Omega, the Beginning and the End.

I am is ἔγω εἶμι [*egō eimi*]: *I, am*. Great emphasis is placed upon the One speaking and His uniqueness. This unique title of God is applied both to the Father (here) and the Son (Rev. 22:13). The phrase is also applied to the Son in two parts (Rev. 1:11; 2:8). See commentary on *Revelation 1:11*^[3.1.11]. The same title, with the addition of “the First and the Last,” is taken by Jesus (Rev. 22:13). Jesus and the Father are One (John 10:30)! Jesus is “the Beginning of the creation of God” (Rev. 3:14). See commentary on *Revelation 3:14*^[3.3.14].

I will give of the fountain of the water of life freely to him who thirsts.

Freely is δωρεάν [*dōrean*]: “as a gift, without payment, gratis . . . undeservedly, without reason.”²⁵ The water of life is redemption, portrayed in many different aspects throughout the Scriptures. “In that day a fountain shall be opened for the house of David and for the inhabitants of Jerusalem, for sin and for uncleanness” (Zec. 13:1). These are the wells of salvation which Isaiah spoke about (Isa. 12:3). The water of life is only available from God, the fountain of life (Ps. 36:6). He is the “fountain of living waters” (Jer. 2:13).

In the wilderness wandering, Moses’ struck the rock (representing Christ, 1Cor. 10:4) from which life-giving waters came forth (Ex. 17:6). The promise of redemption by the Holy Spirit is compared to life-giving water (Isa. 44:3; John 7:37-38).

Jesus answered and said to her, “If you knew the gift of God, and who it is who says to you, ‘Give Me a drink,’ you would have asked Him, and He would have given you living water.” The woman said to Him, “Sir, You have nothing to draw with, and the well is deep. Where then do You get that living water? Are You greater than our father Jacob, who gave us the well, and drank from it himself, as well as his sons and his livestock?” Jesus answered and said to her, “Whoever drinks of this water will thirst again, but whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him will never thirst. But the water that I shall give him will become in him a fountain of water springing up into everlasting life.” (John 4:10-14)

Those coming out of the Great Tribulation were led by the Lamb to living fountains of waters (Rev. 7:14). During the *Millennial Kingdom*^[4.11], living water flowed from the *Millennial Temple*^[4.16.5.10] (Eze. 47:1, 8-9; Joel 3:18; Zec. 14:8). A pure river of water of life flows from the throne of God and the Lamb in the New Jerusalem (Rev. 22:1). The final invitation given by the Spirit and the bride in the book of Revelation is to take the water of life freely (Rev. 22:17).

Because redemption is infinitely costly, only God could pay the price. The price was the death of God in the person of the Son of God (Rev. 1:18). It was the Lamb who *redeemed* (ἀγοράζω [*agorazō*], purchased) sinners from among men by His blood (Rev. 1:5; 5:9). Since the price has already been paid in full (John 19:30), no man can add to the finished work. To even suggest such a possibility is to devalue the life of the Son of God and declare His purchase inadequate. The joyous result of God's work is that eternal life, which would otherwise be infinitely expensive, is now available simply for the asking:

Ho! Everyone who thirsts, come to the waters; and you who have no money, come, buy and eat. Yes, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price. (Isa. 55:1)

This is the essential difference between *religion* and *relationship*. Religion looks to find, in the puny self effort of man, something of value to present before God by which man may be justified. Relationship sees man's utter incapability and throws itself upon the grace and mercy of God, accepting that which God has already provided as a remedy. Self-righteousness, which is no real righteousness, is the primary stumbling block leading to God for it recoils at the idea that restoration to God *is completely without cost*:

Independent, rebellious man says the opposite—“Something in my hand I bring.” This is the one thing common to all systems of religion. They quarrel and fight to the death over the question as to what that “Something” is to be: but they are all at one agreement that it must be *something*. and as the weary conflict has gone on, and will continue to the end.²⁶

If this gift is *free*, without cost, how can it be that so many refuse to accept it? The answer is found in their *lack of thirst*. It is free for *him who thirsts!* Do you know the Lamb as your redeemer? Are you

thirsty for this water which will become a fountain in you springing up into everlasting life? It is available for the asking to all who come to Him in humility and need.

3.21.7 - Revelation 21:7

He who overcomes shall inherit all things

He who overcomes is ὁ νικῶν [*ho nikōn*], by now familiar: *the overcomer*. The promises to the *Seven Churches of Asia*^[4.15] were given to “him who overcomes” (Rev. 2:7, 11, 17, 26; 3:5, 12, 21). Through their identification with Jesus, the True Overcomer (John 16:33; 1Jn. 4:4), they inherit all the promises given to the overcomer and everything which Jesus is given. See *Who is the Overcomer?*^[4.15.1.3]

They inherit the kingdom of God prepared for them from the foundation of the world (Mtt. 25:34). As children of God, believers are “heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ” (Rom. 8:15). What an incredible promise! *Anything and everything* which the Father has given to the Son is also the possession of the saints!

It is *demeaning* of the saints, given their eternal position, to compete and strive over earthly morsels when all the while they have bank accounts swelling with eternal value. Paul recognizes this and admonishes the Corinthians not to boast or become partisan in their thinking because “all things are yours: whether Paul or Apollos or Cephas, or the world or life or death, or things present or things to come—all are yours” (1Cor. 3:21).

In the same way as an earthly inheritance, the things which pass to the saints do so without reference of their merit or effort. They are attained solely because they stand as brothers of Christ. It is the value accumulated at the Father’s hand which passes to the sons in their inheritance:

In Him also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestined according to the purpose of Him who works all things according to the counsel of His will, that we who first trusted in Christ should be to the praise of His glory. (Eph. 1:11-12)

Not only is the inheritance bountiful beyond measure, it is also *incorruptible*. In this world we may lose our job, our savings, our home, our health, and our loved ones, but our inheritance in God is beyond the reach of disaster and loss:

Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that does not fade away, reserved in heaven for you. (1Pe. 1:3-4)

The *MT*^[5.2.45] and *NU*^[5.2.49] texts have “these [things]” instead of “all things”.

I will be his God and he shall be My son

He shall be is αὐτὸς ἔσται [*autos estai*]: *He, he shall be*. The position of the overcomer as a son of God is emphasized. This phrase emphasizes the reason for the overcomer’s inheritance: his position as a son of God.

The phrase *son of God* describes those who are of *direct descent* from God. The angels were created directly by God and are the sons of God (Gen. 6:2, 4; Job 1:6; 2:1; 38:7). Adam was created directly by God and is called the “son of God” (Luke 3:38). In His humanity, being born of the Holy Spirit, Jesus is the Son of God (Luke 1:35).²⁷ And the redeemed, born of God’s Spirit, are the sons of God:

But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name: who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God. (John. 1:12-13)

Being born of the Spirit, the overcomer has the *Spirit of adoption* Who identifies him as a son and therefore an heir:

For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God. For you did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you received the Spirit of adoption by whom we cry out, “Abba, Father.” The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with *Him*, that we may also be glorified together. (Rom. 8:14-17)

And because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying out, “Abba,

Father!” Therefore you are no longer a slave but a son, and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ. (Gal. 4:6-7)

Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed on us, that we should be called children of God! Therefore the world does not know us, because it did not know Him. Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is. (1Jn. 3:1-2)

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ, just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love, having predestined us to adoption as sons by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will. (Eph. 1:3-5)

The relationship between the overcomer and God is to be one of intimacy, modeled after that of the Son and the Father (John 1:1; 17:5). See commentary on *Revelation 20:3*^[3.20.3].

3.21.8 - Revelation 21:8

But the cowardly

Cowardly is δειλοῖς [*deilois*]: “timid [ones],”²⁸ “persons showing fear in a shameful way.”²⁹ The word is used to describe lack of faith (Mtt. 8:26; Mark 4:40).

During the Tribulation, the *Beast*^[5.2.9] worshipers took his mark, partly out of fear of losing their lives (Rev. 13:15). They were among those who, because of fear, saved their lives, but ultimately lost both their soul and body in hell (Mtt. 10:28). The wicked and lazy servant hid his talent in the ground out of fear rather than investing it for the Lord’s benefit. He was cast into outer darkness (Mtt. 25:25; Luke 19:21). Those who deny Jesus before men, possibly out of fear, will not be confessed by the Son of Man before God and His angels (Luke 12:8-9). Many of the religious rulers believed in Jesus, but for fear of being put out of the synagogue by the Pharisees, would not confess Him. *They loved the praise of men more than the praise of God* (John 12:43).

This passage concerns those who are among the *unredeemed*, it is not a threat that believers who struggle with fear at times are in danger of the Lake of Fire. Those who are born-again have not been given a spirit of fear, “but of power and of love and of a sound mind” (2Ti. 1:7).

unbelieving

Unbelieving is ἀπίστοις [*apistois*]: *ones without faith*. Those who did not believe the truth are condemned (2Th. 2:12). Those who are unbelieving have a defiled mind and conscience. They often profess to know God, but by their works they deny Him (Tit. 1:15-16). Lack of faith in the Son results in eternal condemnation:

He who believes in the Son has everlasting life; and he who does not believe the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him. (John 3:36)

He who believes in the Son of God has the witness in himself; he who does not believe God has made Him a liar, because he has not believed the testimony that God has given of His Son. (1Jn. 5:10)

There are no unbelieving among the overcomers: “And this is the victory which has overcome the world—our faith. Who is he who overcomes the world, but he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?” (1Jn. 5:4b-5).

abominable

Abominable is ἐβδελυγμένοις [*ebdelygmenois*]: “abhorrent, detestable [ones],”³⁰ “loathsome [ones].”³¹ The passive participle indicates they have become abominable because they participated in activities which are considered abominable to God. They are considered unclean and, therefore, will never enter the holy city (Rev. 21:27). The cup which the *Harlot*^[5.2.25] held was full of abominations and the filthiness of her fornication (πορνείας [*porneias*], see below) (Rev. 17:4).

Abominable activities under the Law of Moses include: partaking of unclean animals (Lev. 11:10-42); homosexual behavior (Lev. 18:22; 20:13); bestiality (Lev. 18:23-26); improper consumption of an offering (Lev. 19:7); idol worship (Deu. 7:25-26); child sacrifice (Deu. 12:31; Deu. 18:10); offering an imperfect sacrifice (Deu. 17:1); worshipping other gods, including astral bodies (Deu. 13:13-14; Deu. 17:3-4); sorcery, witchcraft, soothsaying, interpreting omens (Deu. 18:12); cross-dressing (Deu. 22:5);

offering money gained through sinful practices in the house of the Lord (Deu. 23:18); taking a woman back after having divorced (Deu. 24:4); and many more. All of these activities have a common attribute: they are behaviors which arouses God's anger because they contravene His law. In this sense, abomination and rebellion are related. See commentary on *Revelation 17:4*^[3.17.4].

sexually immoral

Sexually immoral is πόρνοις [*pornois*]: fornicating ones³², used of a man who has sexual intercourse with a prostitute (1Cor. 5:9). The same root word describes the Harlot: πόρνης [*pornēs*]. During the Tribulation, the *earth dwellers*^[5.2.18] refused to repent of their sexual immorality (Rev. 9:21).

sorcerers

Sorcerers is φαρμάκοις [*pharmakois*]: “one who prepares and uses drugs for magical purposes or ritual witchcraft *sorcerer, poisoner, magician*.”³³ During the Tribulation, the earth dwellers refused to repent of their sorceries (Rev. 9:21). See commentary on *Revelation 9:21*^[3.9.21].

idolaters

Idolaters is εἰδωλολάτραις [*eidōlolatraits*]: those who take part in idol-worship or consult false prophets.³⁴ *Jezebel*^[5.2.35] seduced God's servants to commit sexual immorality and eat things sacrificed to idols (Rev. 2:20 cf. 1Cor. 10:19-20). See commentary on *Revelation 2:20*^[3.2.20].

liars

Jesus told the Pharisees, “You are of *your* father the devil, and the desires of your father you want to do. . . . there is no truth in him. When he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own *resources*, for he is a liar and the father of it” (John 8:44). The coming of the lawless one, the *Antichrist*^[5.2.3], was with all power, signs and *lying* wonders (2Th. 2:9). Those who continue to lie will ultimately fall prey themselves to lies: they will not come to the truth (2Th. 2:11-12). Eventually, their own conscience becomes seared (1Ti. 4:2). All who reject salvation are ultimately liars: “Who is a liar but he who denies that Jesus is the Christ?” (1Jn. 2:22). The truth of God has been made known to men through general revelation, but men actively *suppress the truth* (lie) in unrighteousness. Knowing the truth, they promote false ideas such as God doesn't exist or that His existence cannot be known (Rom. 1:18). See commentary on *Revelation 20:12*^[3.20.12].

shall have their part

Not having the Holy Spirit, these do not inherit the kingdom of God and, by nature, practice the works of the flesh (Rom. 8:1-5; Gal. 5:16):

Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness, idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies, envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries, and the like; of which I tell you beforehand, just as I also told you in time past, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God. (Gal. 5:19-21)

For this you know, that no fornicator, unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God. Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of these things the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience. Therefore do not be partakers with them. (Eph. 5:5-7)

But we know that the law *is* good if one uses it lawfully, knowing this: that the law is not made for a righteous person, but for *the* lawless and insubordinate, for *the* ungodly and for sinners, for *the* unholy and profane, for murderers of fathers and murderers of mothers, for manslayers, for fornicators, for sodomites, for kidnappers, for liars, for perjurers, and if there is any other thing that is contrary to sound doctrine. (1Ti. 1:8-10)

Those described by this list are ones who *continued in these activities without repentance*. In writing to the church at Corinth, Paul emphasizes the forgiveness which remains available for the godless in this age of grace, if they would but turn to God in faith and be cleansed of their sin:

Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived. Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals, nor sodomites, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners will inherit the kingdom of God. **And such were some of you. But you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified** in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God. (1Cor. 6:9-11) [emphasis added]

the lake which burns with fire

Which burns is καιομένη [kaiomenē], passive participle: *the lake being presently burnt* with fire. Emphasis is placed upon the ongoing reality of the fire. All the unsaved dead, who were not found written in the *Book of Life*^[4.4], were cast into the Lake of Fire (Rev. 20:15). See commentary on *Revelation 20:15*^[3.20.15].

3.21.9 - Revelation 21:9

one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls with the seven last plagues

The seven last plagues were called *last* because “in them the wrath of God is complete” (Rev. 15:1). This may be the same angel which showed John the *Great Harlot*^[4.1.4] (Rev. 17:1).

Come, I will show you

The angel, having one of the seven bowls, refers back to the seventh bowl itself which destroyed Babylon (Rev. 16:19) and invites a comparison between two *great cities* : Babylon, the *Harlot*^[5.2.25] and the New Jerusalem, the bride (Rev. 21:10).

the bride, the Lamb’s wife

Bride is νύμφην [nymphēn], used of the holy city, the New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven (Rev. 21:2). *Wife* is γυναίκα [gynaika], used of the wife of the Lamb at His marriage (Rev. 19:7). Concerning Jesus’ title as *Lamb*, see commentary on *Revelation 5:6*^[3.5.6]. See commentary on *Revelation 21:2*^[3.21.2]. See commentary on *Revelation 19:7*^[3.19.7]. See *Jerusalem Married to God*^[4.10.4].

Some expositors take the remainder of this chapter and the first part of the following chapter as a recapitulation which describes the participation of the New Jerusalem within the *Millennial Kingdom*^[4.11] hovering over the earth.³⁵ They interpret the nations on the earth (Rev. 21:24-26) as being millennial nations which access the New Jerusalem above. In particular, they point to the existence of the tree of life in the New Jerusalem as evidence that the millennial nations will receive healing from it.

There are significant problems with the recapitulation view:

- If the millennial nations have access to *the tree of life*, why then is there still death during the thousand years (Isa. 65:20)? Although, the millennial nations will have access to *all kinds of trees* (plural) which provide fruit for food and leaves for medicinal purposes, these are not the tree of life (Eze. 47:12). Nor do the location of these trees correspond with that of the tree of life in the eternal city (Rev. 22:2).
- Within this vision of the city, the curse is said to be no more (Rev. 22:3). Yet the curse continues during the Millennium (Isa. 65:20; Rev. 20:8-9).

This is not a recapitulation, but a further refinement of the overview which John saw in Revelation 21:1-8.³⁶

3.21.10 - Revelation 21:10

he carried me away in the Spirit

The identical phrase described John’s journey with the angel who showed him the *Harlot*^[5.2.25] (Rev. 17:3). An intentional contrast is being made between the *Harlot*, the great city Babylon, and the *bride*, the great city, the New Jerusalem.

It is the Holy Spirit who transports John while the angel journeys with him. See commentary on *Revelation 17:3*^[3.17.3]. John was “in the Spirit” on the Lord’s Day when he had his first vision of the glorified Lord (Rev. 1:10). He was also “in the Spirit” when he was called up to the throne room to see the things yet future (Rev. 4:2). See commentary on *Revelation 4:2*^[3.4.2].

to a great and high mountain

In the twenty-fifth year of the Babylonian captivity, the hand of the LORD was upon Ezekiel and took him in the visions of God to a very high mountain upon which there was “something like the structure

of a city” (Eze. 40:2). Ezekiel was shown the millennial Jerusalem, not the New Jerusalem as here. Like John, he was attended by an angel (*man*) with a measuring rod who then measured aspects of the city for Ezekiel to record.³⁷

The high mountain may merely be the vantage point from which John is shown the holy Jerusalem. Or, it may reflect the terrain upon which the holy city alights. This would correspond to the *mountain of the Lord’s house*, the site of the *Temple during the Millennial Kingdom*^[4.16.5.10] (Isa. 2:2-4; Zec. 8:3-4). This seems likely because, as in the Millennium, a river goes forth from beneath the throne (Rev. 22:1). Thus, the area of the New Jerusalem must be elevated above the surrounding region.

the great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God

Descending is καταβαίνουσιν [*katabainousan*], present tense: *while coming down*. John saw the city as it was in the process of descending. It appears John sees the city descend twice. First, he sees it descending as part of the general presentation of the eternal order (Rev. 21:2). Now, the vision recapitulates the descent prior to a detailed tour with the angel. The appearance of the city’s descent twice in the same chapter does not necessitate taking the descents as two different points in history (one a millennial descent, the other in the eternal state). As we discussed above, lack of the curse (Rev. 22:2) is conclusive evidence against any idea that Revelation 21:9-22:7 concerns the New Jerusalem in the Millennium. See commentary on *Revelation 21:9*^[3.21.9].

3.21.11 - Revelation 21:11

having the glory of God

This is the *Shekinah*, the visible manifestation of God’s presence. Because of His presence, the eternal city has no need for the light of the sun or moon (Isa. 66:19-20; Rev. 22:5). See commentary on *Revelation 22:5*^[3.22.5]. See *The Abiding Presence of God*^[4.16.2].

Her light was like a most precious stone

Her light will be like “a city that is set on a hill” which “cannot be hidden” (Mtt. 5:14).

like a jasper stone

Her walls are of jasper (Rev. 21:18) and her first foundation is adorned with jasper (Rev. 21:19).

clear as crystal

Because of how jasper (ἰάσπιδι [*iaspidi*]) is described by Scripture, some think it is not the jasper we know, but perhaps *diamond*. See commentary on *Revelation 4:3*^[3.4.3]. The purity and clarity of the city is consistently emphasized (Rev. 21:18, 21; 22:1). The description of her pure light recalls the sea of glass under the heavenly throne (Eze. 1:22; Rev. 4:6; 15:2).

As we have seen, there is a close analogy between the Church and the New Jerusalem, both being the Lamb’s wife (Rev. 19:7; 21:2, 9). The purity and preparation of the New Jerusalem are closely analogous to Christ’s purification and preparation of the Church:

Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her, that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word, that He might present her to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish. (Eph. 5:25-27)

3.21.12 - Revelation 21:12

she had a great and high wall

Isaiah saw a time of peace for Jerusalem when the people of God would “call your walls Salvation and your gates Praise” (Isa. 60:18).

This wall doubtless was a memorial to God’s protection of His people throughout their long history. The New Testament saints would well remember how their lives were “hid with Christ in God” (Col. 3:3). Now, the wall does not need to serve as a means of protection for God Himself dwells in the city. This is further proven by the fact that each of the four walls of the city has three gateways which never will be shut.³⁸

with twelve gates

Gates is πυλῶνας [*pylōnas*]: used “of the large gate at the entrance of temples and palaces . . . at the place of the rich man (Luke 16:20) . . . of the magnificent city gates of Babylon.”³⁹ There are three gates on each of the four sides of the city (Rev. 21:13). Each gate is of one pearl (Rev. 21:21). None of the gates will ever be shut (Rev. 21:25) and the glory of the nations and kings of the earth shall be transported through them (Rev. 21:24). See *Twelve: Jewish Tribes, Completeness*^[2.7.5.3.7].

twelve angels at the gates

Those who do not have the right to the tree of life are unable to pass through the gates into the city (Rev. 22:14). The gates may remain open because there is no possibility of the unclean approaching the city. They are eternally relegated to the Lake of Fire which is the “outer darkness” (Mtt. 8:12; 22:13; 25:30).

twelve tribes of the children of Israel

Children is υἱῶν [*huiōn*]: *sons*. Within Scripture, the sons of Israel are the literal, physical offspring of the man Jacob (Rev. 7:4-8). Those who deny any distinction between the Church and Israel in God’s purposes are hard-pressed to account for the distinction here, carried into the eternal state, between the *twelve tribes of Israel* and the *twelve apostles of the Lamb* (Rev. 21:14).

Mounce is typical of those who read past the plain distinction in the text and interpret it to mean just the opposite: “The juxtaposition of the twelve tribes with the twelve apostles **shows the unity of ancient Israel and the NT**^[5.2.48] **church.**” [emphasis added]⁴⁰ If the Church is the “new Israel” as *Replacement Theology*^[5.2.63] claims, then why the *distinction* between the names of the tribes of Israel and the names of the apostles of the Church—as two separate groups—memorialized in eternity? The names of the *tribes* on the gates and the names of the *apostles* on the foundations (Rev. 21:14) are a memorial to two different peoples of God who occupied different roles in God’s redemptive plan, both of which are found in the eternal city: *Israel* and the *Church*.

It is significant that John brings together the twelve tribes of Israel and the twelve apostles here, and makes a distinction between them. Jesus did the same earlier (Mtt. 19:28; Luke 22:30). This distinction shows the wrongness of identifying the twelve tribes in Rev. 7:4-8 with the church.⁴¹

Even though the twelve apostles were all Jewish, and therefore physical descendants of Jacob, their names are distinguished from the twelve tribes. This reflects the reality that the Church did not exist prior to the Day of Pentecost when the Holy Spirit first began His baptizing work forming the body of Christ (Mtt. 16:18; Acts 1:5). Although the apostles are all Jewish and will rule over the twelve tribes (Mtt. 19:28), their greater affinity is as members of the Church.

Once more we see the Scriptural declaration that all twelve tribes of Israel are known to God (Rev. 7:4). None of the tribes are lost. See *Ten Tribes Lost?*^[4.17]

3.21.13 - Revelation 21:13**three gates on the east . . . north . . . south . . . west**

The layout of the gates around the holy city is similar to the *Camp of Israel*^[4.7.2] around the *Tabernacle in the Wilderness*^[4.16.5.2]. In the wilderness, three tribes camped in each compass direction around the *Tabernacle*^[5.2.69]. The Levites camped in the center and served as a buffer between the glory of God (in the Tabernacle) and the tribes. See *Camp of Israel*^[4.7.2]. See *Tabernacle in the Wilderness*^[4.16.5.2].

If the heavenly layout were to follow the encampment in the wilderness around the Tabernacle, then:

- The gates on the east would be named for Judah, Issachar, and Zebulun.
- The gates on the north would be named for Dan, Asher, and Naphtali.
- The gates on the south would be named for Reuben, Simeon, and Gad.
- The gates on the west would be named for Ephraim, Manasseh, and Benjamin.

In the camp in the wilderness, Jacob and Levi are omitted in favor of listing Jacob’s two half tribes: Ephraim and Manasseh. Since Levi encamped around the Tabernacle in the center, and Manasseh and

Ephraim comprise all of Joseph, every individual in all twelve tribes is accounted for.

However, in the heavenly scene, there is no encampment around the sanctuary which is the entire New Jerusalem (Rev. 21:22). Therefore, the names of the gates may be according to the plan of the millennial city (Eze. 48:30-35):

- The gates on the east would be named for Joseph, Benjamin, and Dan.
- The gates on the north would be named for Reuben, Judah, and Levi.
- The gates on the south would be named for Simeon, Issachar, Zebulun.
- The gates on the west would be named for Gad, Asher, Naphtali.

With Joseph including both Ephraim and Manasseh, Levi is explicitly listed and all twelve tribes are accounted for. It may be that an entirely new order occurs in the New Jerusalem as Scripture does not give us these details.

3.21.14 - Revelation 21:14

the wall of the city had twelve foundations

The foundations are adorned with precious stones (Rev. 21:19). See commentary on *Revelation 21:19*^[3.21.19].

By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to the place which he would receive as an inheritance. And he went out, not knowing where he was going. By faith he dwelt in the land of promise as in a foreign country, dwelling in tents with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise; for he waited for the city which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God. (Heb. 11:8-10)

See *Twelve: Jewish Tribes, Completeness*^[2.7.5.3.7].

on them were the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb

The *MT*^[5.2.45] and *NU*^[5.2.49] texts have *the twelve names of the twelve apostles*. Regarding the distinction between the names of the tribes of Israel and the apostles of the Lamb, see commentary on *Revelation 21:12*^[3.21.12].

The question arises as to which twelve names are represented? Eleven of the twelve seem clear enough, but who will be listed as the twelfth? Will it be *Judas*, the original apostle chosen by Jesus (John 6:70)? Or perhaps *Matthias*, chosen by the eleven to replace Judas (Acts 1:26)? The third possibility is *Paul*, chosen by the Lord (Acts 9:3-6, 15-16). While it is impossible to know, and perhaps not of great importance, we are inclined to think the twelfth name will be that of the Apostle Paul, for it seems impossible that his name would not appear on a foundation as a major contributor to the early church and the New Testament. On the other hand, like the scars which remain on Jesus' glorified body (John 20:27 cf. Rev. 5:6), perhaps the name of Judas will be retained as a memorial of Christ's atoning work on the cross.

The apostles, along with the prophets, are considered the foundation of the spiritual temple in the Lord (Eph. 2:19-22 cf. Eph. 3:5; 4:11).

Concerning Jesus' title as *Lamb*, see commentary on *Revelation 5:6*^[3.5.6].

3.21.15 - Revelation 21:15

a gold reed to measure the city

Reed is μέτρον κάλαμον [*metron kalamon*]. Μέτρον [*Metron*] is "an instrument for measuring."⁴² Κάλαμον [*Kalamon*] is "the (dried) stalk of tall plants."⁴³ The *reed* is a golden staff made for measurement.

Ezekiel was shown the *Millennial Temple*^[4.16.5.10] and told to record the dimensions measured by an angel (Eze. 40:3-5). Previously, John was instructed to measure the *Tribulation Temple*^[4.16.5.9] (Rev. 11:1). The New Jerusalem is measured to highlight its importance to God and indicate its real physical dimensions.

Zechariah saw an angel who measured Jerusalem. The precise dimension were not given, but the

measurement indicated that God's attention was directed toward the city for enlargement and restoration (Zec. 2:1-5). See commentary on *Revelation 21:2*^[3.21.2].

3.21.16 - Revelation 21:16

The city is laid out as a square

Although the land dedicated for the millennial city had the dimensions of five thousand cubits wide and twenty-five thousand cubits long (Eze. 45:6), the portion where the city itself stood was, like the eternal city, also square: four thousand five hundred cubits on a side (Eze. 48:16, 30-35).

twelve thousand furlongs

Furlongs is σταδίων [*stadiōn*], each of which is equivalent to 400 cubits or 1/8 mile. The dimension is equivalent to 4,800,000 cubits or approximately 1,500 miles.⁴⁴ Morris takes the stadia as 600 Greek feet or approximately 607 English feet resulting in a dimension of 1,380 miles.⁴⁵

The city itself is gargantuan; it is a cube of 12,000 stadia (i.e., with sides of 1,380 miles each [depending upon the value taken for 1 stadia]). Now, the base of the city is staggering enough, for its area is 63% of that of the forty-eight contiguous states of the USA, yet it is 1,380 miles high as well. Now, as we are given no details, we cannot say what significance the height has, but by way of comparison, this city would only need 102 levels to equal the surface area of the earth, i.e., the combined areas of the oceans and the land masses (this last figure would require each level to be separated by 70,000 feet, considerably higher than commercial jet airplanes operate in 1998). These hypothetical 102 levels would have a combined area 340% larger than the total land area, deserts and vast frozen wastes included, of the present earth. The point of all this comparison is to emphasize that the city God describes is actually many times more commodious than the earth we know.⁴⁶

Its length, breadth, and height are equal.

The eternal city is over 1,060 times larger in each dimension than the millennial city proper and has a total square area over 1.1 million times larger. The gargantuan proportions of the city are such that many seem unable to take them as the description of a literal city. But how is this huge city any more difficult to believe than a totally new heaven and earth (Rev. 21:1)? And how often is skepticism over God's prophecy based on our limited experience in the present reality—none of which need attend the scene before us?

The equal dimensions of the city recall the holy of holies in the *Temple*^[5.2.73] where the ark of the covenant resided, which was twenty cubits long, twenty cubits wide, and twenty cubits high (1K. 6:19). The entire New Jerusalem is the eternal "holy of holies" (Rev. 21:22).

For a detailed estimate of the ability of the city to accommodate the redeemed of history, see [Morris, *The Revelation Record*].

3.21.17 - Revelation 21:17

one hundred and forty-four cubits

Each *Cubit* is a "forearm; as a measure of length . . . equivalent to 17.5 inches, 1.5 feet, or 0.46 meters."⁴⁸ The wall measures one hundred and forty-four cubits, or approximately 216 feet (65.8 meters). Since the wall is said to be "great and high" (Rev. 21:12) and the city itself is of immense height, this dimension is most likely the width.⁴⁹

3.21.18 - Revelation 21:18

The construction of its wall was of jasper

Jasper was the last stone in the breastplate of the high priest (Ex. 28:20; 39:13). It was also one of the stones which was Satan's covering in the garden of God (Eze. 28:13). The light of God's glory in her midst shines through the jasper walls (Rev. 21:11).

pure gold, like clear glass

Pure and *clear* are from the same word, καθαρός [*katharos*]: *clean, pure, free from dirt*.⁵⁰ *Solomon's Temple*^[4.16.5.3] was overlaid with gold (1K. 6:22). The New Jerusalem is considered the queen in

relation to the King, the Lamb. “At Your right hand stands the queen in gold from Ophir” (Ps. 45:9). See *Jerusalem Married to God*^[4.10.4].

The purity of the gold speaks of that which has been tested and refined by fire to remove the dross (Job 23:10; Zec. 13:9; 2Cor. 4:17-18; 1Pe. 1:7). Those who inhabit the New Jerusalem are now without sin. No mention is made of lesser metals, such as silver or bronze (Isa. 60:17).

3.21.19 - Revelation 21:19

The foundations of the walls of the city *were* adorned with all kinds of precious stones

Were adorned is κεκοσμημένοι [*kekosmēmenoi*], perfect passive participle: *having been decorated*. She was adorned in the past in preparation for her husband. See commentary on *Revelation 21:2*^[3.21.2].

O you afflicted one, tossed with tempest, *and* not comforted, behold, I will lay your stones with colorful gems, and lay your foundations with sapphires. I will make your pinnacles of rubies, your gates of crystal, and all your walls of precious stones. (Isa. 54:11-12)

There is some uncertainty as to the relationship between the names of the stones in the original languages (Greek and Hebrew) versus our modern equivalents. The interested reader is encouraged to refer to more extensive treatments concerning their identity in recommended reference works.⁵¹

3.21.19.1 - Tribal Stones

The description of the foundations of the New Jerusalem mentions twelve different stones. Immediately, this brings to mind the twelve stones on the high priest’s breastplate. Each stone represented one of the twelve tribes:

On the outside of the breastplate and placed in gold settings were twelve precious stones in four rows of three stones each. On each of the stones was inscribed the name of one of the tribes of Israel, presumably in the order of their births, as was the case with the onyx stones on the shoulders (Ex. 28:10). The order and names of the stones are listed in Exodus 28:17-20.⁵²

A survey of various Bible translations (ASV,⁵³ DBY,⁵⁴ ESV,⁵⁵ KJV,⁵⁶ MKJV,⁵⁷ NASB95,⁵⁸ NET,⁵⁹ NIV,⁶⁰ NKJV,⁶¹ NRSV,⁶² TNK,⁶³ YLT⁶⁴) indicates some uncertainty surrounding the identification of several of the stones associated with the twelve tribes as found in the high priest’s breastplate.

Stones of the Tribes of Israel

Birth Order	Tribe	Majority Stone ⁶⁵	Alternate Stones
1	Reuben	sardius	ruby (NASB95, NIV, NET), carnelian (NRSV, TNK)
2	Simeon	topaz	chrysolite (NRSV, TNK)
3	Levi	carbuncle	emerald (DBY, NASB95, NKJV, NRSV, TNK), beryl (NET, NIV)
4	Judah	emerald	turquoise (NASB95, NET, NKJV, NRSV, TNK), carbuncle (DBY)
5	Dan	sapphire	-
6	Naphtali	diamond	emerald (NET, NIV), moonstone (NRSV), amethyst (TNK)
7	Gad	jacinth	opal (DBY, MKJV, YLT), ligule (KJV)
8	Asher	agate	-
9	Issachar	amethyst	crystal (TNK)
10	Zebulun	beryl	chrysolite (DBY, NET, NIV, MKJV)

Birth Order	Tribe	Majority Stone ⁶⁵	Alternate Stones
11	Joseph	onyx	lapis lazuli (TNK)
12	Benjamin	jasper	-

Attempts to correlate the tribal stones with the stones on the foundations of the New Jerusalem meet with several difficulties:

1. The correlation between the Hebrew names of the stones of the breastplate and the Greek names of the stones is uncertain.
2. The foundations are named according to *apostles* and not *tribes* and therefore there may not be a precise correlation between the stones on the foundations and the stones of the tribes.

Thus, attempts to connect the foundation stones with the stones of the breastplate have generally been unproductive:

Eight of the stones are the same as in the breastplate, with the four remaining ones being words that are unused in the LXX^[5.2.38]: χαλκηδών [*chalkēdōn*], χρυσόπρασος [*chrysoprasos*], ὑάκινθος [*huakinthos*], σαρδόνυξ [*sardonix*] (Swete). The symbolism is rich in meaning. The old covenant confined the privilege of direct fellowship with God to the high priest, but in the new city the privilege will belong to all the people of God (cf. Rev. 21:22) (Moffatt). A difference in the order of the stones' listing in the two situations is not a serious problem for this view.⁶⁶

There seems no way, however, of identifying the stone that corresponds to each apostle. Similarly, there is no apparent correlation with the order of the precious stones in the priestly breastplate (Exodus 28:17-20) or the stones in the heavenly garden (Ezekiel 28:13), although a number of the stones are the same in both instances. . . . No particular patterns or reasons for the particular sequence seem discernible at this time.⁶⁷

What we *can* be sure of is that God will have chosen the foundation stones to achieve a visually stunning result! It may well be that the stones are chosen more for visual effect than any relationship to the stones on the breastplate of the high priest:

A close study of the colors of these precious stones will bring to mind the colors of the rainbow, and how God used the rainbow as a promise to Noah that he would never again destroy the earth by water (Gen. 9:12-17).⁶⁸

Each foundation will be composed of different precious stones with its own dominant color. They can be delineated as follows: 1. Jasper—green; 2. Sapphire—blue; 3. Chalcedony—greenish; 4. Emerald—green; 5. Sardonyx—red and white; 6. Sardius—fiery red; 7. Chrysolite—golden yellow; 8. Beryl—aqua green; 9. Topaz—greenish yellow; 10. Chrysoprase—golden green; 11. Jacinth—violet; 12. Amethyst—purple.⁶⁹

3.21.20 - Revelation 21:20

See *Tribal Stones*^[3.21.19.1]

3.21.21 - Revelation 21:21

The twelve gates were twelve pearls: each individual gate was of one pearl.

Being made of pearl speaks, primarily, of great value (Rev. 17:4). Pearls, coming from an unclean animal (an oyster, Lev. 11:10), may also carry a secondary association of *unclean* or *Gentile*.

In order to move the gospel out from the Jews to the Gentiles, Peter was given a vision of a sheet containing many unclean animals and told to kill and eat them. When he refused to partake of the unclean animals, God responded, “What God has cleansed you must not call common (κοίνου [*koinou*])” (Acts 10:13). This was preparatory to Peter entering the household of a Gentile, Cornelius, so that the gospel could go forth to the Gentiles. Here, John is told that nothing *that defiles* (κοινουν [*koinoun*], *common*) will be allowed to enter through the gates of the city (Rev. 21:27).

Jesus paid for both a treasure hidden in a field (Israel) and a pearl of great price (the Gentiles) (Mtt. 13:45-56). The pearl Jesus bought was considered unclean, but also of great value. The pearls may stand as a testimony that the redeemed from among the Gentiles, who responded to God in faith, are no longer considered unclean and can pass through the gates.

the street of the city was pure gold, like transparent glass

The street of the city is like the sea of glass (Rev. 4:6; 15:2; 21:18). See commentary on *Revelation 4:6*^[3.4.6] and *Revelation 15:2*^[3.15.2].

3.21.22 - Revelation 21:22

But I saw no temple in it

The word for *temple*, ναὸν [*naon*] has two general meanings in relation to the house of God in Jerusalem. “(1) In a narrower sense, the inner sanctuary within a sacred precinct (τὸ ἱερόν [*to hieron*]) where the divine being resides *shrine*, (*inner*) *temple* (Mtt. 27:51); (2) in a broader yet specific sense, the sanctuary in Jerusalem consisting of the (outer) Holy Place and the (inner) Holy of Holies *temple* (Mtt. 26:61).”⁷⁰

for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are its temple

For most of history, God had purposed that there be a *Temple*^[5.2.73] to mitigate His holy presence in the midst of sinful men. Now there is no more sin and man and God can enjoy full fellowship without separation (John 1:1). It was the redemptive work of Jesus on the cross which ultimately restored full fellowship between man and God (Mtt. 27:39; John 2:19; Col. 1:19; Rev. 5:9). See *Temple of God*^[4.16].

Significantly, God the Father and God the Son are equally considered to be the Temple. Again, we see the equivalency of Jesus Christ with the Father. Jesus is God (John 10:30; Col. 2:9; Rev. 1:8, 18)! See commentary on *Revelation 1:8*^[3.1.8] and *Revelation 1:18*^[3.1.18].

Almighty is παντοκράτωρ [*pantokratōr*]. See commentary on *Revelation 1:8*^[3.1.8].

Concerning Jesus’ title as *Lamb*, see commentary on *Revelation 5:6*^[3.5.6].

3.21.23 - Revelation 21:23

The city had no need of the sun or of the moon to shine in it

Although most take this passage to indicate there will be no more sun or moon, the passage need not preclude the existence of the sun and moon. It merely indicates that the city had no *need* of their light because of the *Shekinah* glory of God in the midst of the city.

The form of expression would not make impossible the existence of the sun and the moon, as this scripture merely says there is no need of them.⁷¹

Neither the sun nor the moon will ever really be destroyed, of course, since God has promised that they, as well as all the starry heavens, will endure forever (Psalm 148:3-6; Daniel 12:3). It is just that their light is no longer needed to illumine the holy city, for the city itself radiates light to all the surrounding regions (Rev. 21:24). However, the sun and moon will continue to serve their present functions with respect to the nether regions of the earth, serving there as lights by day and night, respectively.⁷²

It is difficult to be dogmatic as to whether the sun and moon will necessarily exist in the eternal state. It may be that there is no sun and moon, as in the early part of creation week.⁷³ “The city will be bright enough to supply illumination for the whole new creation (Alford, Lee).”⁷⁴ God created light on the first day (Gen. 1:3), but the sun and moon were not created until the fourth day (Gen. 1:14):

On the fourth day the luminaries were made; because God, who possesses foreknowledge, knew the follies of the vain philosophers, that they were going to say, that the things which grow on the earth are produced from the heavenly bodies, so as to exclude God. In order, therefore, that the truth might be obvious, the plants and seeds were produced prior to the heavenly bodies, for what is posterior cannot produce that which is prior.—Theophilus of Antioch⁷⁵

Here we see one of the primary characteristics of the eternal state: it stands as the restoration of many things from the early creation. See *Genesis and Revelation as Bookends*^[2.13.8].

Several passages use the sun and moon as witnesses of eternal promises:

Thus says the LORD, Who gives the sun for a light by day, the ordinances of the moon and the stars for a light by night, Who disturbs the sea, and its waves roar (The LORD of hosts *is* His name): **“If those ordinances depart from before Me, says the LORD, then the seed of Israel shall also cease from being a nation before Me forever.”** Thus says the LORD: “If heaven above can be measured, and the foundations of the earth searched out beneath, I will also cast off all the seed of Israel for all that they have done, says the LORD.” (Jer. 31:35-37) [emphasis added]

“Once I have sworn by My holiness; I will not lie to David: His seed shall endure forever, **And his throne as the sun before Me; it shall be established forever like the moon**, even [like] the faithful witness in the sky.” Selah. (Ps. 89:35-37) [emphasis added]

These passages tie God’s faithfulness in promises regarding Israel and the Davidic throne to the continuance of the sun and moon: “It shall be established forever like the moon.” Whether these promises are meant to extend only to the end of the present order (Rev. 21:1) or beyond into the eternal order is difficult to determine. The specifics of these promises may no longer pertain after the *Millennial Kingdom*^[4.11], once Israel’s promises have been fulfilled and the Lamb’s Davidic throne is merged with the Father’s throne (Rev. 22:3). The reliance of these promises on the sun and moon may infer their continued existence in the eternal state.

Another piece of evidence which points to the continuance of the moon in the eternal state is the tree of life. The tree is said to yield its fruit *every month* (Rev. 22:2). *Month* is μήνα [*mēna*]: “using the moon’s cycle as a measure of time *month* (Luke 1:24); in reference to religious festivals held at the time of the new moon *new moon* (Gal. 4:10).”⁷⁶ Mention of a monthly cycle implies that the moon may still be present and continue to serve for “signs and seasons” (Gen. 1:14). The existence of the moon for calendrical reasons would imply the continuance of the sun as well, since the moon reflects the light of the sun.

the glory of God illuminated it. The Lamb is its light.

Isaiah saw a day, after the punishment of the “host of exalted ones” (probably fallen angels), when the brightness of the *Shekinah* glory would make the moon disgraced and the sun ashamed (Isa. 24:23). Now, the glory of the Lord serves in their stead. Whether or not the sun and moon actually cease to exist, the *Shekinah* glory of God will serve in their place in the city and its vicinity:

The sun shall no longer be your light by day, nor for brightness shall the moon give light to you; but the Lord will be to you an everlasting light, and your God your glory. Your sun shall no longer go down, nor shall your moon withdraw itself; for the Lord will be your everlasting light, and the days of your mourning shall be ended. (Isa. 60:19-20)

Similarly, the glory of the Lord illuminated the *holy of holies* within the original *Tabernacle*^[5.2.69]:

The dwelling-place of God’s glory in the Tabernacle and the *Temple*^[5.2.73] on earth had no light of sun or moon; for the Shechinah or glory of God was sufficient.⁷⁷

What has happened? *Man has been brought fully into the holy of holies which is lit only by God’s glory!* Again, we see the emphasis on the communion of man with a holy God. There is no longer any separation of any sort because sin has been completely done away with. This is why there was still a *Millennial Temple*^[4.16.5.10] during the thousand years, but not Temple building in the New Jerusalem. In the Millennium, sin still existed (Isa. 65:20; Rev. 20:7-10).

In our own day, the Lamb serves as the spiritual light bringing revelation to men (Luke 2:32; John 1:4-5; 8:12). “God is light and in Him is no darkness at all” (1Jn. 1:5). God’s glory had been seen in the millennial Jerusalem, but the New Jerusalem will eclipse everything from the previous order:

Arise, shine; for your light has come! And the glory of the LORD is risen upon you. For behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and deep darkness the people; but the LORD will arise over you, and His glory will be seen upon you. The Gentiles shall come to your light, and kings to the brightness of your rising. (Isa. 60:1-3)

3.21.24 - Revelation 21:24

And the nations of those who are saved shall walk in its light

The *MT*^[5.2.45] and *NU*^[5.2.49] texts omit *of those who are saved*. The term *nations* (ἔθνη [ethnē]) denotes the diversity of the redeemed, from every tribe, tongue, people, and nation (Rev. 5:9; 13:7; 14:6). In the place of the sun and moon, the nations walk in the light provided by God's glory which emanates from the city and illuminates the earth (Rev. 21:23; 22:5). Questions which arise in our mind concerning the curvature of the earth, how far the glory of God shines upon the earth, and whether there is darkness anywhere upon the earth are not answered in this brief description. The nature of the new heaven and earth could be so radically different from anything we know as to render our questions baseless. Perhaps the *Shekinah* glory extends its radiant beauty from the city outward over the entire earth.

the kings of the earth shall bring their glory and honor into it

This had already been the experience of the earthly Jerusalem during the *Millennial Kingdom*^[4.11] (Isa. 60:3-12; 66:12). Here is evidence that "heaven" will be much different than is commonly conceived. These kings are *of the earth*: having their primary place of activity upon the earth rather than within the city. They bring their glory from *outside* the city *into* (εἰς [eis]) it. The glory and honor of the kings probably describes gifts of value and beauty which are brought as presents of worship to God and the Lamb in the midst of the city.

Some have seen this as evidence of two categories of the faithful: those who reside within the city (glorified saints) and those who reside outside the city on the earth (those left living at the end of the *Millennial Kingdom*^[4.11]).

Those nations, during the Millennium, that walk in the Divine light of the earthly Jerusalem, are transferred to the new earth, to walk in the Heavenly light of the New Jerusalem.⁷⁸

Is there any way, however, that these could be nations of people still in a natural state (say, like Adam and Eve before the fall) continuing over from the millennium? . . . Admittedly, however, the Scriptures do not deal with this particular subject directly . . . one must certainly be tentative on this point, that this particular group of saints, some from each millennial nation, may have been (like Enoch and Elijah long before) translated to the heavenly Jerusalem still in the flesh. In such a hypothetical situation, they would then be in that state in the city when it descended to the earth. . . . This interpretation of this text, doubtful and fraught with difficulties though it may be, would help in answering certain other questions.⁷⁹

I . . . hold it to be a necessary and integral part of the Scriptural doctrine of human redemption, that our race, as a self-multiplying order of beings, will never cease either to exist or to possess the earth. . . . Ransomed nations in the flesh are therefore among the occupants of the new earth, and the blessed and happy dwellers in it, as Adam and Eve dwelt in Paradise.⁸⁰

This is an issue on which the text of Revelation is silent, but there is one . . . theory which seems to satisfy the available criteria best. . . . This opinion holds that "the nations" are composed of saved people who survive the *millennial kingdom*^[5.2.39] without dying and without joining Satan's rebellion and who undergo some sort of transformation that suits them for life in the eternal state. They will be like Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden prior to the Fall (cf. Govett, Seiss). They will be unresurrected human beings who will inhabit the new earth, Paradise restored (Rev. 22:1-5), throughout eternity.⁸¹

Shall not God then during the "Renovation of the Earth by Fire," in some manner, not as yet revealed, take off righteous representatives of the Millennial nations that he purposes to save, and when the earth is again fit to be the abode of men, place them back on the New Earth, that they may increase and multiply and replenish it, as Adam (Gen. 1:27-28), and Noah (Gen. 9:1), were told to multiply and replenish the present earth.⁸²

This surprising suggestion is not without complications. See commentary on *Revelation 22:2*^[3.22.2].

3.21.25 - Revelation 21:25

Its gates shall not be shut at all

Not . . . at all is the double negative, οὐ μὴ [ou mē], indicating there is no possibility of their ever

needing to close. *Shut* is κλεισθῶσιν [*kleisthōsin*], *they would be locked*. The same word describes the locking away of Satan in the bottomless pit (Rev. 20:3). In the *Millennial Kingdom*^[4.11], the gates of the earthly Jerusalem were never shut day or night (Isa. 60:11). Now, there is no night and the gates remain continually open. The gates remain open for those outside the city to freely enter into it, where God and the Lamb are in its midst, and where they may access the leaves of the tree of life. See commentary on *Revelation 22:2*^[3.22.2].

no night there

The glory of God will provide a continuous source of light within the city. The text does not say “there shall be no night,” but “there shall be no night *there*”—that is, in the New Jerusalem. Whether night exists elsewhere on the earth is not said. Many assume there is no night *anywhere* on the earth as if the mere existence of darkness were an indication of sin.⁸³ But the text only says there will be no night *there*—in the neighborhood of the holy city and region of the earth which the *Shekinah* glory illuminates.

The city itself will radiate light as bright as daylight, so night will ever come, even when the earth’s rotation carries the city away from the sun.⁸⁴

Of course, we are in speculative territory supposing that the new earth is much like today: a sphere which rotates subject to physics as we know it today. The text tells us the barest minimum concerning many aspects of the new heaven and earth. They may be radically different from that which we assume from our experience today.

3.21.26 - Revelation 21:26

they shall bring the glory and the honor of the nations into it

The *MT*^[5.2.45] text adds: *that they may enter in*. See commentary on *Revelation 21:24*^[3.21.24].

3.21.27 - Revelation 21:27

there shall by no means enter it anything that defiles

Defiles is κοινὸν [*koinon*]: *common*. This speaks of those things which are unclean. At one time, the Gentiles had been considered unclean (κοίνου [*koinou*], Acts 10:13). All who inhabit the eternal state and access the city have been washing in the blood of the Lamb (Rev. 1:5) and are now clean. There is no more sin. See commentary on *Revelation 21:21*^[3.21.21].

Isaiah saw a “Highway of Holiness” over which nothing unclean would pass and upon which the redeemed would walk, those who had been ransomed (Isa. 35:8-10). A day was coming when the uncircumcised and the unclean would no longer come to Jerusalem (Isa. 52:1). “Jerusalem shall be holy, and no aliens shall ever pass through her again” (Joel 3:17). See commentary on *Revelation 21:8*^[3.21.8].

only those who are written in the Lamb’s Book of Life

This does not imply that some outside the city may be refused entry at the gates. The gates remain open at all times because only the redeemed and (now) sinless inhabit the new heaven and new earth. What this phrase is saying is that all who participate in the eternal state are the redeemed who were written in the Lamb’s *Book of Life*^[5.2.10] and that none of the lost will ever enter the city because they are eternally incarcerated in the Lake of Fire.

These are the overcomers of all history, including those during the Tribulation who refused to worship the *Beast*^[5.2.9]. Jesus promised the overcomer in the church at Sardis that his name would not be blotted out of the *Book of Life*^[4.4]. The Beast worshipers were never written in the book (Rev. 13:8; 17:8). The unrighteous dead were judged by this book: those who were not written in the Book of Life were cast into the Lake of Fire at the passing away of the old order (Rev. 20:12-15). See commentary on *Revelation 20:15*^[3.20.15]. See *Book of Life*^[4.4].

- 1 See *Millennial Passages*^[4.11.7] where we discuss keys to identifying millennial passages from those which describe the eternal state.
- 2 There may also be that there is no more *sun* and *moon* (see commentary on *Revelation 21:23*^[3.21.23]).
- 3 Frederick William Danker, and Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 394.
- 4 J. A. Seiss, *The Apocalypse: Lectures on the Book of Revelation* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1966), 487-488.
- 5 Merrill F. Unger, *Unger's Commentary on the Old Testament* (Chattanooga, TN: AMG Publishers, 2002), Isa. 65:17-25.
- 6 Alva J. McClain, *The Greatness Of The Kingdom* (Winona Lake, IN: BMH Books, 1959), 138.
- 7 Jerome Smith, *The New Treasury of Scripture Knowledge* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1992), Rev. 21:1.
- 8 Carl Friedrich Keil, and Franz Delitzsch, *Commentary on the Old Testament* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2002), 7:624-625.
- 9 “Water, for example, was used for cleansing—hence, the laver in the *tabernacle*^[5.2.69] and the sea in the temple. There is no more need for cleansing in the new earth, however.”—Henry Morris, *The Revelation Record* (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 1983), Rev. 15:3.
- 10 Timothy Friberg, Barbara Friberg, and Neva F. Miller, *Analytical Lexicon of the Greek New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2000), 212.
- 11 Paul Lee Tan, *The Interpretation of Prophecy* (Dallas, TX: Bible Communications, Inc., 1993), 288-289.
- 12 Alan F. Johnson, *Revelation: The Expositor's Bible Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1966), 200.
- 13 John MacArthur, *Revelation 12-22 : The MacArthur New Testament Commentary* (Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 2000), Rev. 21:12.
- 14 Tan, *The Interpretation of Prophecy*, 289-292.
- 15 Friberg, *Analytical Lexicon of the Greek New Testament*, 273.
- 16 Danker, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 545.
- 17 Seiss, *The Apocalypse: Lectures on the Book of Revelation*, 496.
- 18 W. E. Vine, *Vine's Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words* (Nashville, IL: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1996), G2885.
- 19 Robert L. Thomas, *Revelation 8-22* (Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 1995), Rev. 21:3.
- 20 Danker, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 754.
- 21 MacArthur, *Revelation 12-22 : The MacArthur New Testament Commentary*, Rev. 21:3.
- 22 “A noticeable change from the singular to the plural λαοί [*laoi*], ‘peoples,’ makes an expansion beyond the boundaries of Israel, usually referred to by the singular λαός [*laos*], ‘people.’”—Thomas, *Revelation 8-22*, Rev. 21:3.
- 23 Enoch, Elijah, translated saints at the *Rapture*^[4.14].
- 24 Seiss, *The Apocalypse: Lectures on the Book of Revelation*, 489-490.
- 25 Danker, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 210.
- 26 E. W. Bullinger, *Commentary On Revelation* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 1984, 1935), Rev. 22:5.
- 27 He is the eternal Son of God—even before the incarnation.
- 28 Danker, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 173.
- 29 Friberg, *Analytical Lexicon of the Greek New Testament*, 105.
- 30 Danker, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 138.

- 31 Friberg, *Analytical Lexicon of the Greek New Testament*, 89.
- 32 Danker, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 693.
- 33 Friberg, *Analytical Lexicon of the Greek New Testament*, 397.
- 34 Danker, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 221.
- 35 [Walter Scott, *Exposition of The Revelation* (London, England: Pickering & Inglis, n.d.)], [Arno C. Gaebelein, *The Revelation* (Neptune, NJ: Loizeaux Brothers, 1961)].
- 36 It is analogous to the way in which Genesis 2 expands upon the creation of man on day six of Genesis 1.
- 37 The devil took Christ up on an exceedingly high mountain to show Him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory (Mtt. 4:8).
- 38 Donald Grey Barnhouse, *Revelation* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1971), Rev. 21:12.
- 39 Danker, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 729.
- 40 Robert H. Mounce, *The Book of Revelation* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1977), Rev. 21:14.
- 41 Thomas, *Revelation 8-22*, Rev. 21:14.
- 42 Danker, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 515.
- 43 Friberg, *Analytical Lexicon of the Greek New Testament*, 213.
- 44 Trent C. Butler, Chad Brand, Charles Draper, and Archie England, eds., *Broadman and Holman Illustrated Bible Dictionary* (Nashville, TN: Broadman and Holman Publishers, 2003), 1666.
- 45 Morris, *The Revelation Record*, Rev. 21:16.
- 46 Monty S. Mills, *Revelations: An Exegetical Study of the Revelation to John* (Dallas, TX: 3E Ministries, 1987), Rev. 21:16.
- 47 Morris, *The Revelation Record*.
- 48 Friberg, *Analytical Lexicon of the Greek New Testament*, 312.
- 49 So [MacArthur, *Revelation 12-22 : The MacArthur New Testament Commentary*], [Mills, *Revelations: An Exegetical Study of the Revelation to John*], [Morris, *The Revelation Record*].
- 50 Danker, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 388.
- 51 [Geoffrey W. Bromiley, ed., *International Standard Bible Encyclopedia* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1979, 1915)], [Butler, *Broadman and Holman Illustrated Bible Dictionary*], [Merrill K. Unger, R. Harrison, Frederic F Vos, and Cyril J. Barber, *The New Unger's Bible Dictionary* (Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 1988)], [Ronald F. Youngblood, and R. K. Harrison, eds., *Nelson's New Illustrated Bible Dictionary* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 1997, c1995)], and [David Noel Freeman, ed., *The Anchor Bible Dictionary* (New York, NY: Doubleday, 1996, c1992)].
- 52 William Varner, *Jacob's Dozen: A Prophetic Look at the Tribes of Israel* (Bellmawr, NJ: Friends of Israel Gospel Ministry, 1987), s.v. "The Ephod and the Breastplate."
- 53 *American Standard Version*.
- 54 *Darby's Translation*.
- 55 *English Standard Version*.
- 56 *King James Version*.
- 57 *Modern King James Version*.
- 58 *New American Standard Bible, 1995 Update*.
- 59 *New Electronic Translation : NET Bible*, electronic edition (Dallas, TX: Biblical Studies Press, 1998).
- 60 *New International Version*.
- 61 *New King James Version*.

- 62 *New Revised Standard Version.*
- 63 *Tanakh: The Holy Scriptures: A New Translation of the Holy Scriptures According to the Traditional Hebrew Text* (Philadelphia, PA: Jewish Publication Society, 1997, c1985).
- 64 *Young's Literal Translation.*
- 65 Unless listed under the *Alternate Stones* column, each of the Bible translations listed above give the majority identification.
- 66 Thomas, *Revelation 8-22*, Rev. 21:19.
- 67 Morris, *The Revelation Record*, Rev. 21:18.
- 68 Barnhouse, *Revelation*, 407.
- 69 Arnold G. Fruchtenbaum, *The Footsteps of Messiah*, rev ed. (Tustin, CA: Ariel Ministries, 2003), 537.
- 70 Friberg, *Analytical Lexicon of the Greek New Testament*, 269.
- 71 John F. Walvoord, *The Revelation of Jesus Christ* (Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 1966), Rev. 21:23.
- 72 Morris, *The Revelation Record*, Rev. 21:23.
- 73 “Sun and moon, the luminaries of the first creation (Gen. 1:14) have no place in the second; cf. Isa. 60:19.”—Henry Barclay Swete, *The Apocalypse of St. John* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 1998, 1906), Rev. 21:23.
- 74 Thomas, *Revelation 8-22*, Rev. 21:23.
- 75 Alexander Roberts, James Donaldson, and A. Cleveland Coxe, *Ante-Nicene Fathers Vol. II* (Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, 1997), s.v. “ECF 1.2.3.1.2.13.”
- 76 Friberg, *Analytical Lexicon of the Greek New Testament*, 262.
- 77 Bullinger, *Commentary On Revelation*, Rev. 21:23.
- 78 Bullinger, *Commentary On Revelation*, 668.
- 79 Morris, *The Revelation Record*, Rev. 21:24.
- 80 Seiss, *The Apocalypse: Lectures on the Book of Revelation*, 483, 492.
- 81 Thomas, *Revelation 8-22*, Rev. 21:24.
- 82 Clarence Larkin, *The Book of Revelation* (Glenside, PA: Rev. Clarence Larkin Estate, 1919), Rev. 21:24.
- 83 “The existence of darkness was another result of the curse on the earth at Satan’s fall (Gen. 1:2). During the six days of creation, there was only a partial removal of the darkness (the sun by day) and the night (the moon and the stars provided limited light) that existed. But in the Eternal Order, since all the effects of sin are to be removed forever, there will be no night.”—Fruchtenbaum, *The Footsteps of Messiah*, 538.
- 84 Morris, *The Revelation Record*, Rev. 21:25.

3.22 - Revelation 22

3.22.1 - Revelation 22:1

In the previous chapter, John was shown a new order of things. An entirely new heaven and earth were created to replace the first heaven and earth which fled away at the Great White Throne Judgment (Rev. 20:11). In addition to the new heaven and new earth, John saw the holy city, the New Jerusalem, descending from heaven as a bride for the Lamb (Rev. 21:2, 9). John's vision was given in two parts. The first part provided an overview of the eternal order (Rev. 21:1-8). In the second part, an angel accompanied John on a more detailed tour of the New Jerusalem, providing additional information and measurements of the city. In many ways, the chapter break at Revelation 21:27 is unfortunate because the first five verses of this chapter should really be considered as the conclusion of John's detailed tour of the New Jerusalem.

he showed me

This is the angel who first accompanied John "in the Spirit" to show him the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God (Rev. 21:10). This is one of the angels having the seven bowls filled with the seven last plagues (Rev. 21:9). It may be the same angel which took him "in the Spirit" to see the great harlot, Babylon (Rev. 17:3). The tour contrasts the New Jerusalem, the city of God, with Babylon, the city of man.

a pure river of water of life

This is the fountain of the water of life which God promised to the thirsty in the previous chapter (Rev. 21:6). Its ultimate source is God Himself, for it proceeds from His throne (cf. Ps. 36:8-9; 46:4).

A similar river will flow from under the threshold of the *Millennial Temple*^[4.16.5.10] (Eze. 47:1-2; Zec. 14:8), but that river does not reach all regions, so sin remains in the Millennium (Eze. 47:11). Now, sin is no more and life abounds in all parts of the new creation. See commentary on *Revelation 7:17*^[3.7.17], *Revelation 21:6*^[3.21.6], and *Revelation 22:17*^[3.22.17].

clear as crystal

The purity and clarity of the water is remarkable to John. The clarity speaks of sinlessness and symbolizes the cleansing from sin of those who partake of the river. Although this is a literal river in the eternal state, it also typifies the Holy Spirit Who cleanses and gives life to those who trust Christ in this age (John 4:10; 7:37-38). In the eternal state, there is no more death because there is no more sin (Rev. 21:4).

When John first ascended to the throne room in heaven, he saw the sea of glass like crystal, in the midst of the throne (Rev. 4:6). The sea of glass probably symbolized this river which would be the basis of cleansing and eternal life in the new heaven and earth. Although the nations will partake of the tree of life, the tree itself draws from this river of life (cf. Ps. 1:3).

proceeding from the throne of God and of the Lamb

The river proceeds from the throne because the source of all life is ultimately God (Job 33:4; Eze. 37:9; John 1:4; 14:6; Acts 3:15; Rev. 11:11).

There is no sea from which waters are raised by the sun, as in the present hydrologic cycle (Rev. 21:1) and thus no rainfall to supply the river with its flow. Rather, it proceeds "out of the throne of God and of the Lamb," high at the central pinnacle of the holy city. Evidently the mighty Creator is continually creating the waters, then sending them forth to give perpetual life and cleansing and beauty to the city and its inhabitants, and then on out into the uttermost parts of the new earth.¹

The throne is *of God and of the Lamb*. In the eternal state, there is no more distinction between the throne of the Father in heaven and that of the Son on earth (Mtt. 25:31; Rev. 3:21). Jesus rules from the Davidic throne during the *Millennial Kingdom*^[4.11] until the last enemy, death, is destroyed (Rev. 20:14). Then, He delivers the kingdom to God the Father (1Cor. 15:24-26) and the throne of David merges with the heavenly throne of the Father (Rev. 22:3) and both the Father and the Son continue to rule forever.

See commentary on *Revelation 3:21*^[3.3.21] and *Revelation 20:14*^[3.20.14].

On Jesus as the Lamb, see commentary on *Revelation 5:6*^[3.5.6].

3.22.2 - Revelation 22:2

In the middle of its street, and on either side of the river, was the tree of life

The Greek lacks the article: *the* tree. There are several trees, each of them *a tree of life*. “It was not one individual tree, but a particular tree as to its kind, as we speak of ‘the apple’ or ‘the oak,’ denoting a species of which there are many specimens.”² There may have been exactly three trees, or John saw three groups of trees of the same kind in each of the three areas. What John sees is very similar to what Ezekiel saw during the Millennium, but Ezekiel’s trees were not the tree of life, but other nourishing trees which provide long life during the *Millennial Kingdom*^[4.11] (Isa. 65:20):

Along the bank of the river, on this side and that, will grow all *kinds of* trees used for food; their leaves will not wither, and their fruit will not fail. They will bear fruit every month, because their water flows from the sanctuary. Their fruit will be for food, and their leaves for medicine. (Eze. 47:12)

Medicine (Eze. 47:12) is תְּרוּפָה [t^rūphāh]: either from the root רוּץ [rūph], *to make small* as in medical powder, or from רָפָא [rāphā], *to heal*.³ Translated by ὑβίεια [hybieia] in the *LXX*^[5.2.38]: *health, soundness of body*. During the Millennium, the leaves of the trees near the river will provide for the physical healing of the peoples, but it is important to recognize that these trees cannot be the tree of life. Those who consume the leaves live to an advanced age, but do not avoid death (Isa. 65:20).⁴

Jesus said to the church at Ephesus that He would give the overcomer “to eat from the tree of life, which is in the midst of the Paradise of God” (Rev. 2:7). He alluded to the original placement of the tree of life in the Garden of Eden (Gen. 2:9) and indicated that the redeemed would once more have access to the tree in a future paradise—the eternal state which John now sees. Those who do His commandments (or *wash their robes*, *MT*^[5.2.45] and *NU*^[5.2.49] texts) will have authority to access the tree of life (Rev. 22:14). Those who take away from the words of the book of this prophecy will have their part taken away from the tree of life (Rev. 22:19, *MT* and *NU* texts). Evidently, access to the tree of life is one and the same as salvation and indicates that all who inhabit the eternal state will have access to the tree on an equal basis.

When man rebelled in the Garden of Eden, he was cut off from the tree of life (Gen. 3:22-24). Since then, death has reigned over all peoples, even the people of God—with few exceptions. We rejoice in the fact that in the redemptive counsels of God, history is to be brought full circle to affect a full return to a Paradise without death which was previously lost:

The harmonious unity of Scripture is herein exhibited. The Fathers compared it to a ring, an unbroken circle, returning into itself. Between the events of Genesis and those at the close of the Apocalypse, at least six thousand or seven thousand years intervene; and between Moses the first writer and John the last about one thousand five hundred years. How striking it is that, as in the beginning we found Adam and Eve, his bride, in innocence in Paradise, then tempted by the serpent, and driven from the tree of life, and from the pleasant waters of Eden, yet not without a promise of a Redeemer who should crush the serpent; so at the close, the old serpent cast out for ever by the second Adam, the Lord from heaven, who appears with His Bride, the Church, in a better Paradise, and amidst better waters (Rev. 22:1): the tree of life also is there with all its healing properties, not guarded with a flaming sword, but open to all who overcome (Rev. 2:7), and there is no more curse.⁵

All worlds move in circles; and the grand march of God’s providence with man moves in one immense round. It starts with Paradise, and thence moves out through strange and untried paths, until it has fulfilled its grand revolution by coming back to the point from which it started; not indeed to repeat itself, but thenceforward to rest forever in the results of that wonderful experiment. Genesis is the Book of beginnings; the Revelation is the Book of the endings of what was then begun; and the last laps back upon the first, and welds the two ends of the history into a golden ring of eternity.⁶

See *Genesis and Revelation as Bookends*^[2.13.8].

During this present age, where physical death has not yet been abolished, those who follow after God are likened to a fruitful tree typified by the tree of life near the river of living water which John sees in the eternal state:⁷

Blessed *is* the man who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor stands in the path of sinners, nor sits in the seat of the scornful; but his delight *is* in the law of the LORD, and in His law he meditates day and night. He shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that brings forth its fruit in its season, whose leaf also shall not wither; and whatever he does shall prosper. (Ps. 1:1-3)

Between the Fall in the Garden of Eden (Gen. 3:22-24) and the creation of the new heavens and earth (Rev. 21:1), the cross of Jesus Christ is the *tree of life* for all who trust in His redeeming work (Acts 5:30; Gal. 3:13; 1Pe. 2:24).

which bore twelve fruits

Which bore is ποιῶν [poioun], present tense participle: *continually making*. The text implies fruit is continuously being produced from which we can conclude it is also being consumed on an ongoing basis.

each tree yielding

Yielding is ἀποδίδου [apodidou], present tense participle: *continually giving out*.

every month

The tree produces fruit on a monthly basis. Its ongoing production implies an ongoing consumption of the fruit by the nations, although this is not explicitly said. In the *Millennial Kingdom*^[4.11], the fruit of similar trees were used for food (Eze. 47:12), whereas their leaves were used for medicine. In the eternal state, John sees the leaves used for healing, but nothing is said concerning the use of the fruit. We can probably assume the nations will eat of the fruit of the tree. This should not be surprising since Jesus, in His resurrected body, continued to eat food (John 21:12; Acts 10:41).⁸

And whether they need it for the support of their undecaying immortality or not, [partaking of the Tree of Life] is everywhere presented as one of the most precious privileges of God's glorified saints. We cannot suppose that they ever hunger or thirst in that high realm, or that there is ever any waste in their immortal energies needing recuperation from physical digestion; but still the participation of these Life-fruits bespeaks a communion with Life, the joy of which exceeds all present comprehension.⁹

The mention of *months* may imply that the sun and moon, although not needed for light in the vicinity of the New Jerusalem, continue to exist within the eternal state.¹⁰

The fact that months are identified as such in [the] New Jerusalem indicates that the orbital and rotational motions of the earth will go on as God established in the very beginning and that the moon likewise will continue orbiting around the earth.¹¹

See commentary on *Revelation 21:23*^[3.21.23].

The productivity of the tree in eternity is a model of what the Christian life is to be now. Believers are to be *continuously* yielding spiritual fruit, much of which is also for the healing of the nations. God expects productivity from all who would serve Him (cf. Mtt. 21:19; Mark 11:13).¹² In the same way the tree of life yields fruit because of its position next to the river of life, so must the productive Christian abide in Christ:

Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in Me. I am the vine, you *are* the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing. (John 15:4-5)

The leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations

Healing is θεραπεῖαν [therapeian]: which can also denote “*servicing, service, care*.”¹³ The leaves, in some way, provide “prosperity for the nations.”¹⁴

Jesus taught that all who exist in the eternal state with a glorified body are equal to the angels and *cannot die* (Luke 20:35-36). But here, John is shown the tree of life and told: “the leaves of the tree of life were for the healing of the nations.” Even if *healing* (θεραπεῖαν [therapeian]) is taken to mean *service* (Luke 12:42; Mtt. 24:45), there is still the question as to why the nations would need ongoing access to the tree of life? And if the nations access the tree in relation to life, how does that square with Jesus' teaching that those who have been glorified cannot die?

Similar questions confront us in the book of Genesis, before the Fall into sin. Adam and Eve are in the Garden of Eden, in a state of sinless perfection, and are given access to the tree of life (Gen. 2:9, 16).

Later, when they disobey God, their access to the tree is cut off lest they eat of it and live forever (Gen. 3:22-24). Several things are implied by the Genesis account: (1) the tree of life served a purpose in the Garden of Eden prior to the entrance of sin and death; (2) Adam and Eve undoubtedly partook of the fruit of the tree before their fall into sin since it was permitted; (3) had Adam and Eve *continued* to eat from the tree after their fall into sin, then they would never have died. It seems that ongoing access to the tree provided eternal life. But how does this fit with the abundant Scriptural teaching that death is a result of sin (Gen. 2:17; Rom. 5:12-15, 21; 6:16, 23; 7:5, 11-13; 8:2; Jas. 1:15)? In the absence of sin, both in the Garden of Eden before the Fall and in the eternal state, what purpose does the tree of life serve?

Why would healing be necessary in eternity? What is the meaning of the healing leaves? What is their purpose? Admittedly these questions are puzzling. However, the concept of healing leaves need not imply sickness. The tree of life existed in the Garden of Eden before sin and sickness (Gen. 2:9; 3:22), and it can also exist in the New Jerusalem without illness. After all, there will be no curse there (Rev. 22:3).¹⁵

Healing, however, does not necessarily indicate the presence of disease any more than the wiping away of tears (Rev. 21:4) implies that sorrow still exists in the new Jerusalem. The tears were those caused by the troubles of this creation, tears that will no longer exist in the new creation. Likewise, the disease for which this healing provides is that of the former creation which no longer exists in the new Jerusalem.¹⁶

With such an understanding, we can suggest a relationship between the *tree of life*, *sin*, and *death*. The tree of life serves as a source from which sinless men obtain life. They do not attain eternal life in any sort of *independent manner*, but are completely and forever dependent upon God, the ultimate source of life. This dependence is reflected in their need to access the fruit from the tree for its life-giving qualities. The moment sin enters into the picture, as it did in the Garden and which it can never do again in eternity, *independence* of God results.¹⁷ When sin entered in the Garden of Eden and independence from God with it, God saw fit to remove access to the tree of life—the very channel by which He had chosen to dispense eternal life. The result was death. To summarize: sin brought independence from God which was manifest in being cut off from the tree of life resulting in death. In the eternal state, man will be sinless and have eternal life, but the creation and the creature will always and forever remain *dependent* upon the Creator as the source of life. The ongoing need to access the tree of life for eternity reflects the continued dependence of the creatures upon the Creator—a reality which God has chosen to manifest via the tree.

Some attempt to avoid these questions by taking the tree of life as symbolic of salvation and spiritual life, and not as a real tree in a real eternal city. However, there are numerous reasons why the tree in the New Jerusalem should be taken as a literal tree:

Some interpreters view the tree as only symbolic. But a literal view of the tree is proper for two reasons. First, since there was a literal tree of life in the historical Garden of Eden (Gen. 2:9; 3:22, 24), it is possible for this tree also to be literal. Second, if the city, walls, gates, street, river, and light are literal (and the most reasonable evidence shows that they are), then the tree of life is most likely literal also. However, viewing the tree as literal does not exclude its also having symbolic significance for those who see it and eat of it. Just as the literal walls and foundations of the New Jerusalem will be memorials to Israel and to the apostles (Rev. 21:12, 14), so the tree of life can have a memorial function also.¹⁸

Even those who take the tree literally struggle with the idea that healing should be found in the tree. Some propose that the healing relates to the maintenance of a population among the faithful who still reside in natural bodies in eternity. The “healing problem,” along with the possible differences between the nations and kings of the earth which reside *outside* the city versus the glorified saints *within* the city, have caused some to suggest that the nations in the eternal state may be made up of humans in their natural bodies living in conditions much like that of the original creation. This might answer some of the puzzles which are before us: why God created a new heaven *and earth*, why there are gates to the city which infers some are primarily occupied outside and others inside, and why the tree of life remains if only glorified saints remain? Several expositors suggest such a solution, as we discussed in our commentary on *Revelation 21:24*^[3.21.24]. For example:

There are two classes of people who will live eternally upon the earth: (1) the saints, who as co-heirs with Christ (Rom. 8:17) are given glorified bodies (1Cor. 15:52), who possess the kingdom (Dan. 7:18) and rule over the kingdom (Rev. 20:4, 6) as its inheritors (Mtt. 25:34); (2) natural people, described here

[1Cor. 15:52] as “flesh and blood” who are the eternal subjects of the kingdom, who eternally perpetuate the natural race of earthly men in the flesh (Ps. 72:5; Isa. 59:21; Eze. 37:25; Luke 1:32-33. 2Pe. 3:13).¹⁹

Two classes of people are thus distinctly recognized in the new heaven and earth;—a class in glory who get the fruits of the Tree of Life, and a class in the estate of “nations” who get the leaves; but, whether fruits or leaves, a great and glorious blessing. . . . The meaning is not that the nations are full of sicknesses and ailments; for these remains of the curse are gone then, though it may be from the virtue of these leaves. The meaning rather is the preservation of health and comfort, and not that maladies then exist to be removed. The Life-leaves are for the conservation and augmentation of the Life-blessedness of men on earth, as the Life-fruits are for the joy of the saints in heaven.²⁰

One objection to such a view is found in Paul’s statement: “Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; nor does corruption inherit incorruption” (1Cor. 15:50). Although Jesus referred to his resurrected body as “flesh and bones” (Luke 24:39), it was clearly a different body than that which Adam and Eve had in their natural state. Jesus’ resurrected body is the sort of incorruptible body which the saints will inherit when glorified. There is no corruption in the eternal state, for sin shall be no more. And so it was in the Garden of Eden before the fall of Adam and Eve. But the prohibition against *flesh and blood* in the ultimate kingdom of God—beyond the millennium—would seem to be at odds with a restoration of the conditions in the Garden of Eden. Some try to get around the plain meaning of Paul’s statement by postulating two classes of peoples in the eternal state: those with glorified bodies who rule and reign and those in natural bodies who are their subjects.²¹ But such a proposition seems without support in Scripture which knows of only one class among the redeemed in eternity: those who inherit the kingdom, obtain eternal life, are granted the right to enter the city, and partake of the tree of life. The promise to the overcomer at the church of Ephesus and the last blessing of all of Scripture, at the close of the book, imply that *all the faithful are of a single class* in regard to their access to the tree of life:

He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. “To him who overcomes I will give to eat from the tree of life, which is in the midst of the Paradise of God.” (Rev. 2:7)

Blessed *are* those who do His commandments, that they may have the right to the tree of life, and may enter through the gates into the city. (Rev. 21:14)

These are the redeemed, those who obtain eternal life by faith in Christ. The promises they obtain are described in terms which match that of the *nations* and *kings of the earth* in the eternal state who bring their glory and honor through the gates into the city (Rev. 21:24-26) and partake of the tree of life (Rev. 22:2). Dividing up access to the tree of life into two classes, some in glorified bodies who partake of the *fruit* and others in unglorified bodies which partake of the *leaves* is without Scriptural support.

The suggestion that partaking of the Tree of Life pertains to the citizens within the city and entrance through the city’s gates relates to the nations, is also faulty. Both are relevant to all believers: authority over the Tree of Life and access to the way that leads to it.²²

A better solution is to understand the mention of *nations* and *kings of the earth*, which come in through the gate to the New Jerusalem, as merely a description of the identity of the redeemed from among the nations and as emphasizing their right to access the holy city which has been their ultimate hope and destiny all along (John 14:2-3; Gal. 4:25-26; Heb. 11:10, 16; 12:22; 13:14; Rev. 3:12).

The proposal that human beings, in natural bodies, continue to populate the eternal state as separate peoples from the glorified saints seems to raise as many issues as it attempts to solve.²³ Nor does it account for the ultimate unity among the redeemed of eternity in its proposal that flesh and blood *can* inherit the eternal kingdom of God. Neither does it provide additional insight into the purpose of the tree of life in the eternal state because it proposes conditions no different than those in the Garden of Eden for which the mystery of the need for a tree of life during conditions of sinless perfection remains. As intriguing as the view may be to some, it seems to go beyond Scripture and fails to provide significant benefit in an understanding of eternity.

Probably all that we can safely conclude is that the *healing* provided by the leaves of the tree provides some sort of service to the inhabitants of the eternal state. Exactly what that service is, we are not in a position to ascertain. Since the tree provides both *fruit* and *leaves*, the leaves may have a purpose unrelated to eating from the tree:

The third and preferred explanation is that the healing leaves may represent spiritual service or care. The Greek word for healing is *θεραπεία* [*therapeia*], “serving, service, care,” from the verb *θεραπεύω* [*therapeuō*], “to serve, be a servant.” Liddell, Scott, and Jones list many examples where this term refers to serving and has no connection with illness or the need for healing. Only in the sense of care, treatment, or serving the sick did it come to be applied to “healing” or “curing,” as in “therapy” and “therapeutic.” True, the word is used in Revelation 13:3, 12 of a wound healed; but in Luke 12:42 it is used of “service” of a faithful and wise steward, and in Acts 17:25 for serving God. The leaves, then, are there to minister to or serve the redeemed as they serve God (Rev. 22:3).²⁴

The chemical ingredients of the rich foliage of the trees might be available for innumerable uses in the economy of the nations which is to be kept healthy by the leaves of the tree.²⁵

3.22.3 - Revelation 22:3

And there shall be no more curse

There shall be no more curse is *πᾶν κατανάθεμα οὐκ ἔσται ἔτι* [*pan katanathema ouk estai eti*]: *and every accursed thing not it will be still*. “And every curse will no longer be.”²⁶ During the *Millennial Kingdom*^[4.11], aspects of the curse remained. Sin and death continued and the serpent still ate dust (Isa. 65:20, 25). Now, every last curse is removed, including the curses from God at the Fall of mankind into sin (Gen. 3:15-19): death is no more (Rev. 21:4). Many of the curses in the *OT*^[5.2.51] were in response to sin and served a corrective purpose (e.g., Deu. 27:15-26; 28:15-68). In the eternal state, there is no more sin and therefore no more need for correction by God. See *Genesis and Revelation as Bookends*^[2.13.8].

This is the time when the “creation itself also will be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God” (Rom. 8:19). At the cross, Christ had redeemed the faithful from the curse of the law, but now this becomes the real physical experience of all creation (Gal. 3:13).

None will ever age, nothing will ever be lost, all work will be productive and enduring. The entropy law, the so-called second law of thermodynamics, will be repealed. Information will nevermore become confused, ordered systems will not deteriorate into disorder, and no longer will energy have to be expended merely to overcome friction and dissipation into nonrecoverable heat. Entropy will from now on be conserved along with energy and mass and momentum. Though “time” will continue on forever, “time’s arrow” will no longer be directed downward.²⁷

It is difficult for us to even consider what such an existence would be like. Our only experience and means of existence is the current order of things, which includes the curse, entropy, friction, and so on. When we begin to consider what removal of the curse in all its fulness might entail, we run into the near impossibility for our finite minds—so limited by our own experience—to even *conceive* of the ramifications of this pregnant phrase: *there shall be no more curse!*

Eternity is before us, and infinity surrounds us. We shall have an eternity of time to explore and discover the secrets of an infinitely varied and limitless cosmos.²⁸

but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it

There is no more distinction between the throne of the Father and that of the Son (Rev. 3:21). The Davidic throne of the Son merges with the throne of the Father in the eternal state. See commentary on *Revelation 22:1*^[3.22.1] and *Revelation 3:21*^[3.3.21].

As we pass from chapter 20 into chapter 21 of the Apocalypse, therefore, we stand at the junction point between two worlds and between two kingdoms. It is the end of the “first” or “natural” order of things, and the beginning of the final order of things. Here also the Mediatorial Kingdom of our Lord ends, not by abolition, but by its mergence into the Universal Kingdom of God. Thus it is perpetuated forever, no longer as a separate entity, but in indissoluble union with the original Kingdom of God from which it sprang. . . . This does not mean the end of our Lord’s regal activity, but rather that from here onward in the unity of the Godhead He reigns with the Father as the eternal Son. There are no longer two thrones: one His Messianic throne and the other the Father’s throne, as our Lord indicated in Revelation 3:21. In the final Kingdom there is but one throne, and it is “the throne of God and of the Lamb” (Rev. 22:3).²⁹

During the *Millennial Kingdom*^[4.11], God had been in the midst of the earthly Jerusalem in the person of the Son Who ruled from the Davidic throne. During that time, Jerusalem was called “THE LORD IS

THERE” (Eze. 48:35). Now, both Father and Son are permanently in the midst of the New Jerusalem. This is the fulfillment of the proclamation of the previous chapter, “Behold, the *tabernacle*^[5.2.69] of God *is* with men, and He will dwell with them” (Rev. 21:3). See commentary on *Revelation 21:3*^[3.21.3].

Concerning Jesus as the *Lamb*, see commentary on *Revelation 5:6*^[3.5.6].

His servants shall serve Him.

Shall serve is λατρεῦσουσιν [*latreuousin*]: “Carrying out religious duties in a spirit of worship.”³⁰ The service will not be a burden, for it will be a form of *worship*. The service of God is a great reward! Prior to the Fall, in the Garden of Eden, Adam was given the task of tending and keeping the garden (Gen. 2:15). Thus, *work is not a result of the curse, but part of God’s perfect design*.³¹

It shows us most clearly that the heaven of the glorified saints is not one of idleness. They have something more to do than to sing, and worship, and enjoy. Indeed the perfection of worship is service, activity for God, the doing of the will of God. And this is to be one of the highest characteristics of the heaven of the saints. They are to do work, heavenly work, the highest kind of work.³²

This service will not be toilsome because they shall behold the Lord and be in His presence:

One *thing* I have desired of the LORD, That will I seek: That I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the LORD, and to inquire in His temple. (Ps. 27:4)

Blessed *is the man* You choose, and cause to approach *You, that* he may dwell in Your courts. We shall be satisfied with the goodness of Your house, of Your holy temple. (Ps. 65:4)

Those whom John saw coming out of the Great Tribulation were honored by serving before the throne of God day and night (Rev. 7:15). Jesus promised that if any servant truly followed Him, then “where I am, there My servant will be also” (John 12:26). This is the role of a bond-servant who willingly forgoes the freedom to leave and chooses to remain in the master’s household to serve forever (Ex. 21:3-6). The ultimate goal of the saints is to attain God’s presence and serve Him (Rev. 21:3).

3.22.4 - Revelation 22:4

They shall see His face

They shall see is ὄψονταί [*opsontai*], middle tense: *they themselves will see*. The saints will see His face *firsthand!*

The full glory of God has never been available to sinful man, for God’s fire consumes sin (Ex. 24:17; Num. 16:35; Deu. 4:24; Heb. 12:29). Therefore, God has never been seen *fully* by men in the flesh (1Jn. 4:12). When God met with the children of Israel “face to face” on Mount Sinai, His presence was so terrifying that the children of Israel requested that Moses mediate between them and God (Deu. 5:4-5). Even Moses, whom God later said He spoke with “face to face” (Ex. 33:11; Num. 12:8; Deu. 34:10), was afraid to look upon God:

Moreover He said, “I *am* the God of your father—the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.” And Moses hid his face, for he was afraid to look upon God. (Ex. 3:6)

When Moses asked to see the glory of the Lord, God only permitted him a passing glimpse in order that he might not be consumed:

But He said, “You cannot see My face; for no man shall see Me, and live.” And the Lord said, “Here is a place by Me, and you shall stand on the rock. So it shall be, while My glory passes by, that I will put you in the cleft of the rock, and will cover you with My hand while I pass by. Then I will take away My hand, and you shall see My back; but My face shall not be seen.” (Ex. 33:20-23)

Many times, God was represented in the first person by the Angel of the Lord, the preincarnate Jesus Christ (John 1:18). Jacob wrestled with the Angel of the Lord and called the place *Peniel* (face of God) because he had seen God face to face, but lived (Gen. 32:30). But this was not God’s unveiled glory. When Elijah fled from *Jezebel*^[5.2.35] to Mount Horeb, when he sensed God’s presence, he took care to wrap his face in his mantle lest he see God’s glory directly (1K. 19:13). When Isaiah saw God in the heavenly *Temple*^[5.2.73], he realized he would be consumed because of his sinful state. But a seraph flew to him with a coal and cleansed his sin (Isa. 6:5-7).

As early as the book of Job, it has been the hope and dream of the redeemed to see God firsthand:

For I know *that* my Redeemer lives, and He shall stand at last on the earth; and after my skin is destroyed, this *I know*, that in my flesh I shall see God, Whom I shall see for myself, and my eyes shall behold, and not another. *How* my heart yearns within me! (Job 19:25-27)

The psalmist also understood that one day, in a righteous state, he would see God's face:

As for me, I will see Your face in righteousness; I shall be satisfied when I awake in Your likeness. (Ps. 17:15)

In the scene before John, the many promises of Jesus that the righteous would have intimacy with God, now find their fulfillment:

Blessed *are* the pure in heart, for they shall see God. (Mtt. 5:8)

And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, *there* you may be also. (John 14:3)

Father, I desire that they also whom You gave Me may be with Me where I am, that they may behold My glory which You have given Me; for You loved Me before the foundation of the world. (John 17:24)

Paul and John also looked forward to this day:

For now we see in a mirror, dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part, but then I shall know just as I also am known. (1Cor. 13:12)

Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is. And everyone who has this hope in Him purifies himself, just as He is pure. (1Jn. 3:2-3)

See *Hide and Seek*^[4.16.1]. See *The Abiding Presence of God*^[4.16.2].

His name shall be on their foreheads.

Jesus told the church at Philadelphia that the overcomer would have three names written upon him: (1) the name of God; (2) the name of the New Jerusalem; and (3) Jesus' new name (Rev. 3:12). His name was written on the forehead of the 144,000 Jews of the Tribulation (Rev. 7:3; 14:1). In a similar way to which the *Beast*^[5.2.9] worshipers received the mark of the Beast as an indication of their identity with the Beast (Rev. 13:16), the servants of God will be dedicated to Him. See commentary on *Revelation 7:3*^[3.7.3] and *Revelation 13:16*^[3.13.16]. This name upon their foreheads recalls the dedication of the high priest who wore a plate of gold upon his headdress which was engraved: "HOLINESS TO THE LORD" (Ex. 28:36).

3.22.5 - Revelation 22:5

There shall be no night there

The *NU*^[5.2.49] text and some manuscripts in the line of the *MT*^[5.2.45] text omit *there* implying the general absence of darkness, whether in the city or elsewhere. See commentary on *Revelation 21:23*^[3.21.23].

They need no lamp nor light of the sun, for the Lord God gives them light

Gives them light is φωτίζει ἐπ' αὐτούς [*phōtisei ep autous*], present tense: *He is shining upon them*. Those within the vicinity of the New Jerusalem will receive the radiant light of God's glory. "This is the message which we have heard from Him and declare to you, that God is light and in Him is no darkness at all" (1Jn. 1:5). They will have no *need* of the sun, although the sun may still be present in the eternal state. See commentary on *Revelation 21:23*^[3.21.23].

they shall reign forever and ever

Their initial reign is for one thousand years during the *Millennial Kingdom*^[4.11] (Rev. 20:4-6). See *Millennial Reign of the Saints*^[4.11.6]. After the throne of the Son is merged with the Father, the saints continue to co-reign with Him in eternity. In Daniel's night vision, the angel explained, "the saints of the Most High shall receive the kingdom, and possess the kingdom forever, even forever and ever" (Dan. 7:18).

Jesus told the church at Thyatira that the overcomer would co-rule with Him (Rev. 2:27). See commentary on *Revelation 2:27*^[3.2.27]. He also told the church at Laodicea that the overcomer would

sit with Him on His throne (Rev. 3:21). See commentary on *Revelation 3:21*^[3.3.21].

3.22.6 - Revelation 22:6

These words are faithful and true

See commentary on *Revelation 3:14*^[3.3.14], *Revelation 19:11*^[3.19.11], and *Revelation 21:5*^[3.21.5].

The angel's words reinforce an important truth: Everything John has seen in Revelation will come to pass. What the *inspired*^[5.2.33] apostle has written is not mystical; the Apocalypse is not a record of his bizarre dreams or the result of an overactive imagination. It is not an allegory from which readers can extract hidden meanings of their own concoction. It is an accurate description of events and persons yet to come.³³

the Lord God of the holy prophets

The *MT*^[5.2.45] text has τῶν πνευμάτων τῶν προφητῶν [*tōn pneumatōn tōn prophētōn*]: *of the spirits of the prophets*. Regarding the testimony born by the spirits of the prophets, see commentary on *Revelation 19:10*^[3.19.10].

to show His servants the things which must shortly take place

The same Greek phrase occurs in the introductory verse of this book. The expectation of His *imminent*^[4.8] coming is found throughout the book. See commentary on *Revelation 1:1*^[3.1.1].

The exactness, detail, and precision with which earlier prophecies already fulfilled came to pass forms the pattern for those yet to be fulfilled. God's prophetic record is perfect. He predicted Israel would go into captivity, and the nation did (Lev. 26:33-39). He predicted the destruction of Babylon (Isa. 13:1-14:27; Jer. 50-51) and Tyre (Isa. 23:1 ff.), and those cities were destroyed. He predicted that Messiah would be born in Bethlehem (Mic. 5:2), to a virgin (Isa. 7:14), and be killed by sinners (Isa. 53:7-10) and He was. Thus, when God predicts future events, such as the *rapture*^[5.2.62] of the church, the rise of *Antichrist*^[5.2.3], the seal, trumpet, and bowl judgments, the Battle of Armageddon, the return of Jesus Christ, and His thousand-year earthly kingdom, those events will just as certainly come to pass [Isa. 46:9-11].³⁴

3.22.7 - Revelation 22:7

I am coming quickly

I am coming is ἔρχομαι [*erchomai*], present tense: *I am presently coming*. The emphasis on the impending arrival of Jesus and the events described in John's vision is intentional (Rev. 3:11). John is told not to seal the words of the prophecy of this book, "for the time is at hand" (Rev. 22:10). Jesus is coming quickly with each man's reward (Rev. 22:12). His coming is *imminent*^[4.8]: it is as if He is already underway. His impending arrival serves as a great motivator for godly living in the present. It also indicates there are no preconditions on His return for the church at the *Rapture*^[4.14] nor for His return as a thief upon an unsuspecting world in the *Day of the Lord*^[5.2.14] (1Th. 5:2). See *When Does the Day of the Lord Dawn?*^[2.13.3.1] See *Imminency*^[4.8]. See commentary on *Revelation 3:3*^[3.3.3], *Revelation 3:11*^[3.3.11], and *Revelation 16:15*^[3.16.15].

In our discussion of the *Preterist Interpretation*^[2.12.2] of the book of Revelation, we identified two main types of *preterism*^[5.2.59]: (1) *partial* or *mild* preterism, and (2) *full*, *extreme*, or *consistent* preterism. We noted the dangerous tendency of those who begin as partial preterists (which is orthodox) to eventually embrace full preterism (which is heterodox). This occurs because the position of partial preterism is inherently unstable. It requires one to hold to an inconsistent interpretation of passages, such as this, which teach the soon arrival of Jesus.

In order to remain orthodox, partial preterists cannot do away completely with the future, literal Second Coming of Jesus. Yet, they maintain that passages which teach that Jesus is coming "quickly" must have been fulfilled in the past (most often by the A.D. 70 "judgment coming" of Jesus in the destruction of Jerusalem by Rome). But this places them on the horns of an interpretive dilemma because "soon coming" passages which are equivalent must be interpreted differently or the Second

Coming will be denied. For example, partial preterist Kenneth Gentry takes this passage in Revelation to describe the future Second Coming of Christ. But the passage is a summary of the entire book of Revelation—including other promises of Jesus’ soon coming. This creates an inconsistency:

This creates a contradiction within [moderate] preterism. Since Rev. 22:6 is a statement referring to the whole book of Revelation, it would be impossible to take *tachos* as a reference to A.D. 70 . . . and at the same time hold that Rev. 20:7-9 teaches the Second Coming. [Moderate preterists] must either adopt a view similar to futurism, or shift to the extreme preterist view that understands the entire book of Revelation as past history, thus eliminating any future Second Coming and resurrection.³⁵

Thus, the only safe (orthodox) preterism is *inconsistent* in its assertion that passages which teach “soon” or “quickly” *must* be fulfilled within the lifetime of the original recipients of the book—the *Seven Churches of Asia*^[4.15]. As soon as they consistently take this stance, they deny the future, literal Second Coming of Christ and leave orthodoxy for heresy. As we discuss in our commentary on *Revelation 1:3*^[3.1.3], the solution is found in understanding “soon” as an indication from God’s perspective that no more preconditions remain before Christ could return. Thus, it is an indication of eschatological *Imminency*^[4.8] which reflects God’s perspective of time (2Pe. 3:8).

Blessed is he who keeps the words of the prophecy of this book.

He who keeps is ὁ τηρῶν [*ho tērōn*], present participle: *the one continually watching over and guarding*.³⁶ This is one of seven blessings given within the book of Revelation. This blessing is a restatement of an aspect of the first blessing: “Blessed is he who reads and those who hear the words of this prophecy, *and keep those things which are written in it*, for the time is near” (Rev. 1:3). See commentary on *Revelation 1:3*^[3.1.3].

The angel who speaks with John is among those *presently keeping* the words of this book (Rev. 22:9). Jesus said, “Blessed *are* those who hear the word of God and keep it!” (Luke 11:28b). The angel tells us that the book of Revelation contains *prophecy*. It is not a devotional work setting forth the ultimate victory of good over evil or general spiritual principles. See *Can’t God Prophecy?*^[2.3.1] Neither is it to serve as a platform for out-of-balance sensationalism without application:

God does not command believers to read Revelation merely to satisfy their curiosity about the future. He did not inspire it to provide material for detailed chronological charts of end-time events. There is a seemingly endless stream of books on prophecy being churned out, with speculative prophetic schemes proliferating *ad infinitum, ad nauseam*. But it was not God’s purpose to give Christians a detailed analysis of the prophetic significance (if any) of contemporary cultural, political, military, and social events or trends. God *inspired*^[5.2.33] Revelation for one purpose: to reveal the glory of His Son and call believers to live godly, obedient lives in light of His soon return. The purpose of Revelation is not to provide entertainment, but to provide motivation for godly living.³⁷

In order to *keep* the words of the prophecy of this book, believers must:

1. Guard the text from tampering and corruption.³⁸
2. Guard the proper interpretation of the words. “Believers are called to guard or protect the book of Revelation. It must be defended against detractors who deny its relevance, against critics who deny its veracity and authority, as well as against confused interpreters who obscure its meaning.”³⁹ See *Systems of Interpretation*^[2.12].
3. Apply the lessons of the book to their own lives (Luke 6:46; John 14:15; 15:10).
4. Promulgate the message of the book to the church and to those who have not heard.⁴⁰

Those who call Jesus Lord should pay special attention to the attitude of the Master toward the *written text*:

In this final message, the Lord Jesus Christ, the living Word of God, pays great honor to the written Word of God. This fact we should mark very carefully, for we are living in a day when men are attempting to downgrade the written Word in favor of the living Word. Our Lord Jesus Christ in every phase of His ministry was careful to honor the written Word and to submit Himself to it. There can be no doubt of the fact that our Lord joined Himself with God the Father by magnifying the written Word. Thus the psalmist bears witness: “I will worship toward thy holy temple, and praise thy name for the

lovingkindness and for thy truth: *for thou hast magnified thy word above all thy name*” (Ps. 138:2). We also remember how the Lord Jesus made it abundantly clear that by His coming He did not intend to destroy, nor even loosen up, the Word of God, but to fulfill it in every jot and tittle [Mtt. 5:18].⁴¹

How often Christians today emphasize their devotion and zeal for the Lord, while holding a faulty view of the Scriptures. This is an age-old recipe for disaster, demonstrated by religious but unbelieving Israel at Jesus’ First Coming. Paul called it *zeal without knowledge* (Rom. 10:2). It seems that many believe God can be worshiped *emotionally*, but without truth (John 4:23-24).⁴² This is dangerous and deceptive ground: believing themselves to be exhibiting great devotion and offering true worship, they are in reality worshiping a God of their own creation and holding His word in relatively low esteem. May we study the importance our Lord placed upon the Scriptures and their reliability and then make it our own!

3.22.8 - Revelation 22:8

Now I, John

This is one of five places in the book of Revelation where John refers to himself by name (Rev. 1:1, 4, 9; 21:2; 22:8). In every case, he merely gives his first name and assumes his readership will know which “John” is meant. This is evidence of authorship by John *the Apostle*. See *Authorship*^[2,9].

saw and heard these things

The *MT*^[5.2.45] and *NU*^[5.2.49] texts have *the one presently hearing and seeing these [things]*. This is a signature of John the Apostle (John 21:24; 1Jn. 1:1).

I fell down to worship before the feet of the angel

This is the second time that John has been overcome by the magnitude of the scene and the revelation provided by the Angel. “No believer, not even one of great spiritual stature as John, is beyond the subtle temptation to worship what is good itself in place of God who alone is to be worshiped.”⁴³ See commentary on *Revelation 19:10*^[3,19,10].

3.22.9 - Revelation 22:9

See that you do not do that.

See commentary on *Revelation 19:10*^[3,19,10].

I am your fellow servant, and of your brethren the prophets

See commentary on *Revelation 19:10*^[3,19,10].

of those who keep the words of this book.

Those who keep is τῶν τηροῦντων [*tōn tērountōn*], present tense participle: *those presently watching over and guarding*. The angel is among the blessed ones who conveys and seeks to preserve what God has said to John (Rev. 1:3, 22:7).

Worship God.

Because God is *Creator* and all else is *creature*, He alone may be worshiped. See commentary on *Revelation 4:11*^[3,4,11] and *Revelation 19:10*^[3,19,10].

3.22.10 - Revelation 22:10

Do not seal the words of the prophecy of this book

Do not seal is μὴ σφραγίσῃς [*mē sphragisēs*], *you should not seal*. Daniel was told to “shut up the words, and seal the book until the time of the end; many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall increase” (Dan. 12:4).

In the context, the search for knowledge seems to be the main idea. . . . John Calvin translated it, “Many shall investigate, and knowledge shall increase.” Leupold interprets the verse to mean, “Many shall diligently peruse it, and knowledge shall be increased.” In the Hebrew, the word for “knowledge” is *haddaat*, literally, “the knowledge,” that is, understanding of this long prophecy. Some consider the sentence as referring to the eyes of a reader running “to and fro” in reading the Word of God (cf. 2Chr.

16:9). . . . As Young goes on to explain, what the angel is saying to Daniel is that for the immediate future, attempts to understand these prophecies will be in vain, but in the time of the end, when these prophecies will become especially pertinent, additional understanding will be given.⁴⁴

Unlike Daniel, John is told *not* to seal the words. What is the primary difference between that which Daniel recorded and the revelation now given to John? In a word, *timing!* When Daniel was given his vision, he was told to “seal up the vision for *it refers to many days in the future*” (Dan. 8:26). Much of what was revealed to Daniel could not possibly take place for at least 500 years, for it concerned the time of the end and could not transpire until after the First Coming of Jesus when He died on the cross to accomplish redemption. John’s vision is given after the cross, when no more preconditions remain for the fulfillment of what he is shown. The Second Coming of Christ was not *imminent*^[4.8] in Daniel’s day, now it is. There is also the matter of progressive revelation. As we have seen, the book of Revelation is very heavily dependent upon the book of Daniel. In a very real sense, the book of Revelation *completes* the revelation which was originally given to Daniel:

The revelation given to Daniel covered so much territory and expanded over such a long period of time that he was unable to understand much of what he wrote. Daniel was told to seal his book [Dan. 12:4, 8-9] until the time when many of the prophecies would be explained and clarified by later revelation. With the book of Revelation, much of the Book of Daniel has been clarified, expanded, detailed, and explained. So John, in contrast to Daniel, was told not to seal up his book, for all prophecy can now be understood and its fulfillment could begin at any time.⁴⁵

Since it is *not* a sealed book, it is then obvious that it is *meant to be understood* and not shrouded in undecipherable mystery and allusion:

What a rebuke to the negligence, the neglect, the sneering, ignorant arrogance, shown by most of Christendom toward The Revelation! Our Lord Jesus may declare it an open, unsealed, understandable book; *men* say it is filled with “unintelligible language” and “mystic symbols.” Christ says: “Blessed is he that readeth”; *men* say: “Let it alone, you cannot understand it.”⁴⁶

Dare we suppose that the merciful Jesus would hang his benedictions so high as to be beyond the reach of those to whom they are so graciously proposed? Would he mock us by suspending his offered blessings on terms beyond our power? Yet this is the charge men bring against their Redeemer when they think to plead the incomprehensibility of this Book for their neglect and practical rejection of it. The very propounding of these blessings and rewards is God’s own seal to the possibility of understanding this Book equally with any other part of Scripture. Would he, the God of truth, lie to us? Would he, the God of mercy, mock us? Would he who gave his life for us, and ever lives and ministers in heaven and earth for our enlightenment and salvation, give us a Book to tell us of the outcome of all his gracious operations, command us to note its words, to believe and treasure its contents, and promise us a special blessedness in so doing, if what he has thus put into our hands is not at all within the limits of our comprehension and successful mastery? . . . Therefore these very benedictions pronounce against the common notion that this Book is too difficult for ordinary Christians, and rebuke all who despise and avoid it.⁴⁷

for the time is at hand.

At hand is ἐγγύς ἐστίν [*engys estin*]: *near it is* . The almost identical phrase occurs at Revelation 1:3. See commentary on *Revelation 1:3*^[3.1.3].

The reason the prophecy is not to be sealed is because the time had arrived in which the contents of the prophecy were relevant to those living even in the time of John. The expectation of Christ’s *imminent*^[4.8] return for the Church is evident throughout the *NT*^[5.2.48] and continues among healthy congregations even to our own time.

A natural reading of the New Testament yields the truth that to the early church Jesus’ coming was *imminent*^[5.2.30], that is, that it could happen at any time. They believed that He could come back for them in their lifetime. For the early church, imminence contained elements both of certainty and uncertainty. They were certain that Jesus would one day return, but (unlike numerous modern date setters) were uncertain when. Not knowing when He might return, they wisely lived prepared for and hoping for Jesus to return at any moment.⁴⁸

According to Scripture, Christ could return for the Church before we finish writing the commentary for this chapter! The contents of the book of Revelation concern themes which are vital for the Church to

understand. They serve as a motivator for godly living, for evangelization, and guard us from deceiving ourselves into thinking that the world will, by and large, convert to Christ. The exact opposite is shown to be true here. As Paul said, “Let no one deceive you by any means; for *that Day will not come* unless the falling away comes first, and the man of sin is revealed, the son of perdition” (2Th. 2:3).

3.22.11 - Revelation 22:11

He who is unjust, let him be unjust

He who is unjust is ὁ ἀδικῶν [*ho adikōn*]: *the one acting unjustly, damaging, or doing wrong*. One who violates God’s law.⁴⁹ *Let him be unjust* is ἀδικησάτω [*adikēsatō*]: active voice participle: *let him do unjustly*. He is unjust as shown by his ongoing actions.

he who is filthy, let him be filthy still

He who is filthy is ὁ ῥυπαρὸς [*ho hryparos*]: “*morally impure, degenerate, completely bad; . . . a morally filthy person*.”⁵⁰ The opposite of καθαρὸς [*katharos*]: clean, pure.

After one of Daniel’s visions, he was told that the words were closed up until the time of the end and that both good and evil would continue: the wicked would not understand the things of God, but the wise would (Dan. 12:9-10). The same situation is before us in this age. We have much more revelation than Daniel was given, including the entire New Testament and this book of last things. Yet, the wicked continue to ignore the sure prediction of the judgment of God on the horizon. This will culminate in a generation at the time of the Tribulation who are unique in their blasphemy and unrepentant rejection of God. Even though they will know God exists and that He is the source of their judgment (Rev. 6:15-17), they will continue in rebellion and refuse every opportunity to repent (Rev. 9:21; 16:8, 11). See *Beast Worshipers are Unique*^[4.4.3.4].

God is saying that men choose to sin because they want to, not because they know no better; and the inference is that even this book, which reveals the ultimate, stark, destiny of sin, will not deter sinners from pursuing their fancy.⁵¹

In view of this reality, the marching orders of the Church are similar to those of the prophet Ezekiel:

But when I speak with you, I will open your mouth, and you shall say to them, “Thus says the Lord GOD.” He who hears, let him hear; and **he who refuses, let him refuse**; for they *are* a rebellious house. (Eze. 3:27) [emphasis added]

It was not Ezekiel’s responsibility to *make the rebellious turn*. His responsibility was to accurately preserve and convey the message of God. Those who would respond did so. Those who would not did not. He did not *own the results!*

Preaching Revelation draws the line. Its truths will melt the hearts of the repentant and harden the hearts of the unrepentant. Those same truths thus become either an instrument of salvation, or an instrument of damnation (cf. 1Cor. 1:18; 2Cor. 2:15-16).⁵²

Paul gave similar instructions to Timothy:

Yes, and all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution. But evil men and impostors will grow worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived. But **you must continue in the things which you have learned and been assured of**, knowing from whom you have learned *them*. (2Ti. 3:12-14) [emphasis added]

he who is righteous, let him be righteous still

Let him be righteous is δικαιοσύνην ποιησάτω [*dikaiosynēn poiēsatō*]: *righteousness let him do*. Those who are righteous evidence their redemption through righteous acts (Jas. 2:18-24). “The fruit of the righteous *is* a tree of life, and he who wins souls *is* wise” (Pr. 11:30).

he who is holy, let him be holy still

Holy is ὁ ἅγιος [*ho hagios*]: *the holy [one]* which is the same root word as *saint*. They are holy because they are set apart to God and indwelt by the Holy Spirit:

Do you not know that you are the temple of God and *that* the Spirit of God dwells in you? If anyone defiles the temple of God, God will destroy him. For the temple of God is holy, which *temple* you are.

(1Cor. 3:16-17)

3.22.12 - Revelation 22:12

I am coming quickly

I am coming quickly is ἔρχομαι ταχύ [*erchomai tachy*], present tense: *I am presenting coming quickly*. His arrival is *imminent*^[4.8]—He is already underway! See commentary on *Revelation 22:7*^[3.22.7], *Revelation 1:3*^[3.1.3], and *Revelation 1:7*^[3.1.7].

My reward is with me to give every one according to his work

Reward is μισθός [*misthos*] which denotes either “*reward or punishment* as the case may be.”⁵³ *To give* is ἀποδοῦναι [*apodounai*]: “*give back . . . of divine or human retribution . . . repay . . . pay back.*”⁵⁴ *Every one* is ἐκάστω [*hekastō*]: *to each*. The emphasis is on *individual* judgment, either for rewards or punishment.

When the seventh angel sounded his trumpet, a proclamation from heaven declared:

The nations were angry, and Your wrath has come, and the time of the dead, that they should be judged, and that You should reward [δοῦναι τὸ μισθὸν [*dounai to misthon*]] Your servants the prophets and the saints, and those who fear Your name, small and great, and should destroy those who destroy the earth. (Rev. 11:18)

The servants of God are judged to receive rewards (Isa. 40:10-11; 62:11; Luke 14:12-14; 1Cor. 3:13-15; 2Cor. 5:10; Col. 3:22-25; 1Jn. 2:28), but the God-rejecters are judged for punishment (1Pe. 4:18; Rev. 2:23; 20:11-15):

The purpose of the return of Jesus is to render to each man according to his works. His coming at the *Rapture*^[5.2.62] is to reward the saints for the works done in their bodies since salvation. The purpose of the Second Coming is to render judgment for the works of unrighteousness.⁵⁵

For the Son of Man will come in the glory of His Father with His angels, and then He will reward each according to his works. (Mtt. 16:27)

“Blessed *is* the man who trusts in the LORD, and whose hope is the LORD. For he shall be like a tree planted by the waters, which spreads out its roots by the river, and will not fear when heat comes; but its leaf will be green, and will not be anxious in the year of drought, nor will cease from yielding fruit. “The heart *is* deceitful above all *things*, and desperately wicked; who can know it? I, the LORD, search the heart, *I* test the mind, even to give every man according to his ways, according to the fruit of his doings. ”*As* a partridge that broods but does not hatch, *so is* he who gets riches, but not by right; it will leave him in the midst of his days, and at his end he will be a fool.” (Jer. 17:7-11)

But in accordance with your hardness and your impenitent heart you are treasuring up for yourself wrath in the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God, who “will render to each one according to his deeds”: eternal life to those who by patient continuance in doing good seek for glory, honor, and immortality; but to those who are self-seeking and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness—indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish, on every soul of man who does evil, of the Jew first and also of the Greek; but glory, honor, and peace to everyone who works what is good, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. (Rom. 2:5-10)

See commentary on *Revelation 19:8*^[3.19.8] and *Revelation 20:12*^[3.20.12].

3.22.13 - Revelation 22:13

I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End

Alpha (Α) and omega (Ω) are the first and last letters of the Greek alphabet. Thus, Jesus is the *first and the last* (below). Jesus also used this unique title of God in the opening chapter of this book. The Father takes it to Himself in the previous chapter (Rev. 21:6). See commentary on *Revelation 1:8*^[3.1.8].

the First and the Last

In the *OT*^[5.2.51], this title is uniquely God’s (Isa. 41:4; 43:10; 44:6; 48:12). Jesus applied it to Himself when He told John to write what he saw and send it to the *Seven Churches of Asia*^[4.15] (Rev. 1:11). Jesus is eternal (John 1:1; Isa. 9:6; Mic. 5:2; John 8:58; 17:5; Col. 1:17; Heb. 13:8). As we’ve seen in

many different ways throughout this book, *Jesus is God!* See commentary on *Revelation 1:1*^[3.1.11].

3.22.14 - Revelation 22:14

Blessed are those who do His commandments

Those who do is οἱ ποιοῦντες [*hoi poiountes*], present tense participle: *the ones continually doing*.

The NU^[5.2.49] text has *blessed are those who wash their robes*, which speaks of their sin being cleansed by the blood of Christ (cf. Rev. 1:5; 7:14).⁵⁶

Those who are born-again and truly known by the Son are the ones who do the will of the Father:

Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but **he who does the will of My Father in heaven**. Many will say to Me in that day, ‘Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?’ And then I will declare to them, ‘**I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!**’ (Mtt. 7:21-23) [emphasis added]

Our blessing does not derive from merely *knowing* the things of God, but from *doing* them (John 13:15 cf. Rev. 12:17; 14:12). Jesus said that if we love Him, then we will keep His commandments (John 14:15, 21-23). When we neglect to keep His commandments, we demonstrate our lack of love for Him. Our motivation to keep His commandments is also found in our desire to purify ourselves in preparation for His appearing (1Jn. 3:2-3). The power to keep His commandments is derived from the indwelling Holy Spirit (1Jn. 3:24). If we call him “Lord,” but do not keep His commandments, we are schizophrenic. How can He be Lord when we will not obey Him (Luke 6:46)? Worse than that, we are found to be liars concerning our relationship with Him:

Now by this we know that we know Him, if we keep His commandments. He who says, “I know Him,” and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. (1Jn. 2:3-4)

Therefore lay aside all filthiness and overflow of wickedness, and receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls. But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves. For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man observing his natural face in a mirror; for he observes himself, goes away, and immediately forgets what kind of man he was. (Jas. 1:21-24)

This is one of seven blessings given within the book of Revelation. See commentary on *Revelation 1:3*^[3.1.3].

that they may have the right to the tree of life

They may have the right to the tree of life is ἔσται ἡ ἐξουσία αὐτῶν ἐπὶ [*estai hē exousia autōn epi*]: *it will be the authority of them over the tree of life*. The right to the tree of life is universal to all believers. No mention is made of two categories of the redeemed in eternity: those who require access to the tree and those who do not. Neither is there mention of some who eat the *fruit* and others who only use the *leaves*. See commentary on *Revelation 22:2*^[3.22.2].

may enter through the gates into the city.

Those who are born-again are the overcomers. Through the power of the Holy Spirit they will also be those who do the commands of the Lord. They are among the redeemed who are written in the *Book of Life*^[4.4] and therefore avoid the second death which is being cast into the Lake of Fire (Rev. 21:15). They have full access to the New Jerusalem whose gates are never closed (Rev. 21:24-26). All the redeemed have access through the gates. Access through the gates is equivalent with rights to the tree of life because the tree is *within* the city. To access the tree, one must first go through the gates. See commentary on *Revelation 21:24*^[3.21.24].

3.22.15 - Revelation 22:15

But outside are dogs

Dogs is κύνες [*kynes*] which refers to those who are impure, “as an unclean animal”⁵⁷ (Ps. 22:16, 20; Isa. 56:10-11; Mtt. 7:15; Php. 3:2).

“The dogs” . . . is a metaphor for the morally impure as it is throughout Scripture. They represent male

prostitutes (Deu. 23:18), Gentiles (Mtt. 15:26), and Judaizers (Php. 3:2-3), among other things (cf. 2K. 8:13; Ps. 22:16, 20; Isa. 56:10; Mtt. 7:6; Mark 7:27). In the Orient dogs are scavengers and are objects of great contempt.⁵⁸

sorcerers . . . sexually immoral . . . murderers . . . idolaters . . . whoever loves and practices a lie
Whoever loves and practices a lie is παῖς φιλῶν καὶ ποιῶν ψεῦδος [*pas philōn kai poiōn pseudos*]:
all while continually loving and continually doing [a] lie. See commentary on Revelation 21:8^[3.21.8].
Sorcerers is οἱ φάρμακοὶ [*hoi pharmakoi*]: those who use drugs for magical arts. See commentary on
 Revelation 9:2^[3.9.21].

sexually immoral

Sexually immoral is οἱ πόρνοι [*hoi pornoi*]: a prostitute or fornicator. The same root word as *Harlot*^[5.2.25].

The verse does not intend to teach that in the eternal state all manner of wicked men will be living just outside the heavenly city. It simply describes the future with the imagery of the present. The contrast is between the blessedness of the faithful and the fate of the wicked.⁵⁹

3.22.16 - Revelation 22:16

I, Jesus, have sent My angel to testify to you these things in the churches

The Revelation of Jesus Christ (the contents of which are recorded by this book), was given by God to the Son Who then sent and signified it by His angel to John (Rev. 1:1). See commentary on Revelation 1:1^[3.1.1]. *Testify* is μαρτυρῆσαι [*martyrēsai*]: *testify or witness*. See commentary on Revelation 1:2^[3.1.2].

To you is ὑμῖν [*hymin*]: *to you all [plural]*. The primary recipients of the testimony which John was told to write to were the *Seven Churches of Asia*^[4.15] (Rev. 1:11). Even so, each letter to the churches includes the injunction: “He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches” (Rev. 2:7, 11, 17, 29. 3:6, 13, 22). This indicates that the message of the book of Revelation is to go out to whomever has a *spiritual* ear to hear (Rev. 13:9).

This is the first mention of the *church* (ἐκκλησία [*ekklesia*]) since the letters to the *Seven Churches of Asia*^[4.15] (Rev. 3:22). We believe this is another indication of the *pretribulation*^[5.2.60] *Rapture*^[4.14] of the Church. The church will be excluded from the events of the Tribulation and so is not mentioned after chapter 3 until now. See *Rapture*^[4.14]. See commentary on Revelation 4:1^[3.4.1].

I am the Root and the Offspring of David

Jesus is the Root (offspring) of Jesse, David’s father (Isa. 11:10). Thus, He is the offspring of David and qualifies as heir to the Davidic throne (Isa. 9:7; Mtt. 1:1; Luke 3:31; Acts 13:23; Rom. 1:3-4;). See commentary on Revelation 5:5^[3.5.5].

There is also a sense in which Jesus is the *source* out of which David came, for Jesus is the origin of creation (John 1:3, 10; Eph. 3:9; Col. 1:16; Heb. 1:2; Rev. 3:14). This dual relationship of Jesus to the line of David was the source of the riddle which the Pharisees were unable to answer:

While the Pharisees were gathered together, Jesus asked them, saying, “What do you think about the Christ? Whose Son is He?” They said to Him, “*The Son of David*.” He said to them, “How then does David in the Spirit call Him ‘Lord,’ saying: ‘The LORD said to my Lord, “Sit at My right hand, Till I make Your enemies Your footstool” ’? If David then calls Him ‘Lord,’ how is He his Son?” And no one was able to answer Him a word, nor from that day on did anyone dare question Him anymore. (Mtt. 22:41-46)

The solution to the riddle is found in the eternity and incarnation of Jesus. In His deity, Jesus is the God of David, hence David’s *Lord*. In His humanity, Jesus is in the line of descent from David—the son of David. Thus, Jesus is both David’s master and his son.

Jesus . . . in His humanity is the root and offspring of David, but as to His deity, He is the *Shechinah* Glory, as seen in the brightness and visibility of the light of the morning star.⁶⁰

the Bright and Morning Star

The bright and morning star is ὁ ἄστυρ ὁ λαμπρὸς ὁ πρωϊνός [*ho astēr ho lampros ho prōinos*]: *the star, the bright, the early one belonging to the morning*.⁶¹ John the Baptist was to go before Jesus, *the Dayspring*:

And you, child, will be called the prophet of the Highest; for you will go before the face of the Lord to prepare His ways, to give knowledge of salvation to His people by the remission of their sins, through the tender mercy of our God, with which the Dayspring from on high has visited us; to give light to those who sit in darkness and the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace. (Luke 1:76-79)

Dayspring is ἀνατολή [*anatolē*]: *the place of rising, the dawn*.⁶² Jesus is the bright and morning star because He is “the true Light which gives light to every man coming into the world” (John 1:9). He is the “Sun of Righteousness” who “shall arise with healing in His wings” (Mal. 4:2). Jesus promised to give the overcomer in the church at Thyatira “the morning star” (Rev. 2:28).

His coming in power and glory is the sun-rise for Israel and the Gentiles, the breaking of the millennial day. But for His Church He comes first as the morning-star, as the morning-star in the eastern sky precedes the rising of the sun in all His glory. The Lord will come as the morning-star some time in the interval between the 69th and 70th week of Daniel and as the Sun of Righteousness after that week has come to an end.⁶³

See commentary on *Revelation 2:28*^[3.2.28].

Until Jesus returns, we have the prophetic word, such as this very book, to serve as a beacon of hope while we continue in this dark world:

And so we have the prophetic word confirmed, which you do well to heed as a light that shines in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts; knowing this first, that no prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation, for prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke *as they were* moved by the Holy Spirit. (2Pe. 1:19-21)

The morning star rises in the hearts of men who trust Him by faith even before He arrives to herald the dawn of a new day and the beginning of His *Millennial Kingdom*^[4.11] on earth. Only those who are motivated arise before the dawn to look for the morning star which heralds the approaching day:

Yes, the day is not here—but lo, the harbinger of the day, the Morning Star! It shines in the night, but it prophesies the coming sunrise. “The assembly (*ecclesia*—the Church) sees Him in the now far spent night as the Morning Star, recognizes Him, while watching for Him, according to His own Word, in His bright heavenly character—a character which does not wake a sleeping world, but is the delight and joy of those who watch. When the sun arises, He will not be thus known: the earth will never so know Him, bright as the (coming) day will be” (*Darby*).⁶⁴

3.22.17 - Revelation 22:17

And the Spirit and the bride say, “Come!”

Say is λέγουσιν [*legousin*], present tense: *they are saying*. The invitation is for the present and is ongoing. *Come* is ἔρχου [*erchou*], a second-person singular imperative command: *you [singular] come!* The invitation is to an *individual*.

The invitation is for Christ, the bridegroom, to come and is made by the Church, *the bride of this age* who is destined to inhabit the New Jerusalem, along with other people of God (Rev. 19:7; 21:2, 9). Indwelt by the Holy Spirit (John 7:39), she makes intercession for the return of Christ according to the will of God (Rom. 8:26-27). This is seen in the closing invitation by John, a member of the Church, for the return of our Lord: “Even so, come, Lord Jesus!” (Rev. 22:20). The mention of the Spirit may also refer to the prophets, through whom the Holy Spirit predicted the coming of Christ.

Throughout the centuries, God’s people have waited for, prayed for, hoped for, and watched for Christ’s return. They are weary of the battle against sin and long to see Jesus Christ exalted, glorified, and honored. They long for Him to return and take them to heaven to live with Him forever (John 14:3; 1Th. 4:17). They long for the day when their perishable, mortal bodies will be transformed into their imperishable, immortal resurrection bodies (1Cor. 15:53-54). They know that in that glorious day there will be no more sorrow, no more tears, no more crying, no more pain, and no more death. Rebellion will be swiftly dealt with; God and the Lamb will be glorified and will reign forever over the new heaven

and the new earth.⁶⁵

And let him who hears say, “Come!”

Come!: this invitation is also to an *individual*. Those who have ears to hear what the Spirit says in the book of Revelation will come to faith. They too will then issue an invitation for Christ’s speedy return.

And let him who thirsts come.

Let him who thirsts come is καὶ ὁ διψῶν ἐρχέσθω [*kai ho dipsōn erchesthō*], present tense participle: *and the one [presently] thirsting, let him come*. This invitation is to those who have not yet come to salvation, both within the church assembly and outside, which thirst for God:

Though this invitation could address the stranger who sometimes attended Christian worship (cf. 1Cor. 14:23-24) (Moffatt), plenty of regular attenders had not yet attained the category of an overcomer, as the seven messages of chapters 2-3 make very plain.⁶⁶

Ho! Everyone who thirsts, come to the waters; and you who have no money, come, buy and eat. Yes, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price. (Isa. 55:1)

The only requirement is *thirst*. Without thirst, the free water of life will not be attained (Rev. 21:6).

As the deer pants for the water brooks, so pants my soul for You, O God. My soul thirsts for God, for the living God. When shall I come and appear before God? (Ps. 42:1-2)

Blessed *are* those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be filled. (Mtt. 5:6)

Those who thirst for God in the present age, and trust in faith, are baptized by the Holy Spirit into the body of Christ, the Church (1Cor. 12:13):

On the last day, that great *day* of the feast, Jesus stood and cried out, saying, “If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink. He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.” But this He spoke concerning the Spirit, whom those believing in Him would receive; for the Holy Spirit was not yet *given*, because Jesus was not yet glorified. (John 7:37-39)

Whoever desires, let him take the water of life freely.

Whoever desires is ὁ θέλων [*ho thelōn*], present tense participle: *the one [presently] desiring*. This is essentially the same invitation which the Father made: “I will give of the fountain of the water of life freely to him who thirsts” (Rev. 21:6). See commentary on *Revelation 21:6*^[3.21.6].

3.22.18 - Revelation 22:18

I testify to everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book

The message of the book of Revelation is not just for the *Seven Churches of Asia*^[4.15] nor just for the saints, but is given to *all who have ears to hear*. The message is not conveyed in imprecise, generalized ideas, but by the *very words of this book*. This speaks of the verbal *inspiration*^[5.2.33] of the written text.⁶⁷ Thus, John recorded, “Blessed *is* he who reads and those who hear **the words** of this prophecy, and keep those things which are **written** in it” [emphasis added] (Rev. 1:3). Jesus Himself said, “Blessed *is* he who keeps the **words** of the prophecy **of this book**” [emphasis added] (Rev. 22:7). The emphasis upon the *written revelation* of God is nothing new. Jesus and the apostles spoke extensively on the topic: the phrase, “it is written,” occurs 61 times in the *NT*^[5.2.48] alone.⁶⁸ See commentary on *Revelation 1:3*^[3.1.3].

This should be ample indication that *there can be no Christianity without the Bible*. The latest generation of believers, who have little desire for the Scriptures and even less knowledge of them *cannot and will not survive as true Christians!* They may call themselves “Christians” and even do works “for the Lord.” But Christianity without knowledge of God’s word is not Christianity. It is a deception and an imposter. Knowledge of the Scriptures is not optional, but absolutely essential! Without it, Christians are no different than the Elks, Masons, or any other group which undertakes beneficent works without knowledge of God’s priorities.

Without God’s word, Christianity is deception and bondage:

Then Jesus said to those Jews who believed Him, “**If you abide in My word**, you are My disciples indeed. And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.” (John 8:31-32) [emphasis added]

This tremendous promise of true freedom has an important precondition: *If you abide in My word . . .* And where is His word to be found in our day? In the midst of emotional worship? In “goose bumps” we get in our devotional time? In the Scriptures! The Scriptures *alone* are the objective measure of God’s will and person. Without knowledge of the Scriptures, maturity is impossible and deception is the certain result. See commentary on *Revelation 13:13*^[3.13.13].

If anyone adds to these things

The *things* are the events and facts which are recorded by the words of the prophecy of this book. Early on, God gave a general prohibition against adding to or subtracting from His inspired word (Deu. 4:2; 12:32; Pr. 30:6; Jer. 26:2). This principle applies to all of Scripture, including the book of Revelation.

The words of the inspired text are considered:

1. God’s.
2. Understandable to those who read the text in its plain sense.
3. The primary source by which man can understand the requirements of God.
4. A reliable means of understanding the way of eternal life.

These factors support a literal interpretation of the text using the *Golden Rule of Interpretation*^[5.2.24]. If the text were to be primarily figure or allegory, then how could it be possible for God to hold man accountable to a message so obscure?

That the specific words of Revelation are not to be sealed up stresses again that there is no hidden, secret meaning apart from the normal sense of the text. If the truth is not clear in those words then this command is nonsense. If the plain, normal understanding of the words of Revelation does not convey the meaning God intended its readers to grasp, then those words *are* sealed.⁶⁹

God is surely capable of speaking plain words, through His angel and through John, to us, and we had better let Him say what He says. This is a book of revelation, not mystification, of apocalypse, not *apocrypha*^[5.2.5].⁷⁰

Although the warning against adding or removing apply specifically to *this* book, by both implication and experience, the *canon*^[5.2.12] of Scripture is complete with the book of Revelation:

Chafer well concludes: “The formal closing of the New Testament canon is at least intimated in Revelation 22:18. The dissimilarity in the manner in which the two Testaments end is significant. All the unfulfilled expectation of the Old Testament is articulate as that testament closes and the last verse gives assurance of the coming of another prophet. But no continued revelation is impending as the New Testament is terminated: rather the announcement is made that the Lord Himself will soon return and the natural conclusion is that there would be no further voice speaking from heaven before the trumpet heralds the second advent of Christ. Of no small moment is the fact that since the canon of the Bible was divinely closed no attempts have been made to add to it.”⁷¹

These two warnings against additions and subtractions in their context are concerned specifically with the book of Revelation, and the primary emphasis is not on the Bible as a whole. However, since the book of Revelation is the final revelation of God’s Word, the principle behind the warning can be extended to the Bible as a whole, for the Bible as a whole is complete only with the book of Revelation.⁷²

The main examples in our own day of those who add to the inspired text are numerous cults which append extra-Biblical writings to the text by elevating them on a par with the inspired Scriptures:

Examples of those who add are the numerous cults that accept other writings as inspired and authoritative and place them on equal grounds with the Bible (i.e., the Mormons with *The Book of Mormon* and Christian Science with their *Key to the Scriptures*).⁷³

Some, such as Mohammed, have led whole nations away from the truth, and the total effect of all of them has been incalculably tragic.⁷⁴

God will add to him the plagues that are written in this book

These plagues are the various judgments of God which will be poured out during the Tribulation (Rev. 9:18, 20; 11:6; 15:1, 6, 8; 16:9, 21; 18:4, 8; 21:9) and include receiving the wrath of God and being

tormented in the Lake of Fire (Rev. 14:10; 21:15). Those who add to the words do so in order to modify God's message to suit the dictates of their own heart. Like Israel of old, such a person will be separated for adversity, "according to all the curses of the covenant that are written in this Book of the Law" (Deu. 29:21). This may also be an indication that attempts to add to the contents of the book of Revelation may increase at the time of the end and that those who participate in such activities will find themselves in the midst of the Great Tribulation. In any event, those who add to His words are no doubt destined for the Lake of Fire for eternal torment as described herein (Rev. 20:15).

3.22.19 - Revelation 22:19

If anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy

No one is to add to or take away from God's word (Deu. 4:2; 12:32; Pr. 30:6; Jer. 26:2).

This warning concerns those who would deliberately tamper with the actual written words of this book. They are the ones who could not be saved and thus will not enjoy the blessings set forth for the redeemed.

There are also other ways in which the words of this prophecy can be seriously distorted to great detriment. By maintaining that only *some* of the words are faithful and true and that other words contain *error*, it becomes possible to dismiss those portions thought to be in error, thereby excising portions of the message of God:

Examples of those who subtract are those who refuse to accept the entire body of Scripture as God's *inspired*^[5.2.33] Word and hold to concepts of partial inspiration or no inspiration.⁷⁵

The cults add to the words of the book of this prophecy, the liberals take away from them, and both are regarded by the Lord as blasphemies deserving of the most serious punishment.⁷⁶

As we saw in our discussion of various *Systems of Interpretation*^[2.12], it is also possible to seriously distort the message of the book, without changing the individual words, by means of incorrect interpretation. If the place of the book within the *canon*^[2.10] is unassailable, then the next means of attacking the message of the book is often by distorting the interpretation of the text in order to remove aspects deemed objectionable.

For example, if unfulfilled passages or prophecies are interpreted in such a way as to effectively relegate them to the past, then the import of what the words teach is lost on present and future generations. This is the travesty of the *Preterist Interpretation*^[2.12.2] which removes whole prophecies of benefit for the church and misapplies them to the destruction of Jerusalem by Rome in A.D. 70. In a similar way, the *Idealist Interpretation*^[2.12.3] undermines the effectiveness of many passages in this book. Instead of describing future events in history, the passages are interpreted as teaching general spiritual principles with no specific application within real history.

It is not sufficient for the Church of God to merely protect the written words—as important as that may be. She must also protect and maintain sound principles of interpretation so that the meaning of the words is the intended one originally given by the Holy Spirit through John. This has been a primary concern of our treatment of the book: a belief that the value of what was written is being *undermined from within* by Christians whose theology is incompatible with its plain meaning and who desire to "reinterpret" the book to suit their own notions and agenda for the Church.

This constitutes a most serious indictment and sober warning to any who would tamper with the Holy Scriptures. Lest anyone still object that it applies only to the Book of Revelation, it may be noted, historically, that the various atheists and humanists, as well as the motley array of modernists, liberals, higher critics, and other pseudointellectuals in Christendom who have rejected or questioned, ridiculed or allegorized away the books of Daniel, Isaiah, Jonah, Acts, Peter, or any other books of the Bible have also, invariably, done the same to the Book of Revelation, to the Book of Genesis, and the other books of the Pentateuch. The first and last books of the Bible have constituted a touchstone, as it were, so that the attitude of men and women toward those books always seems to determine their real attitude toward all the Scriptures. Therefore, the Lord had Moses stress the divine integrity of his writings (Deuteronomy 4:2) and John stress the inviolability of Revelation.⁷⁷

God shall take away his part from the Book of Life

The *TR*^[5.2.79] text stands alone having *Book of Life*^[5.2.10]. The *MT*^[5.2.45] and *NU*^[5.2.49] texts have *tree of life*. It appears that the word *Book* is an artifact reflecting the reliance of Erasmus on the Latin *Vulgate*^[5.2.81] for the last six verses of the book of Revelation.

Deficiencies other than typographical are not all Erasmus' fault, or only partly so. He had the use of less than twenty manuscripts and used mainly only two or three. His only manuscript of Revelation lacked its last page; so Erasmus himself translated the Latin Vulgate back into Greek for the last six verses.⁷⁸

Instead of ἀπὸ τοῦ ζύλου [*apo tou zylou*] (from the tree), the Textus Receptus (followed by the King James Version) reads ἀπὸ βίβλου [*apo biblou*] (from the book), a reading that occurs in no Greek manuscript. The error arose when Erasmus, in order to provide copy for the last six verses of Revelation (which were lacking in the only Greek manuscript of Revelation available to him), translated the verses from the Latin Vulgate into Greek. . . . The corruption of “tree” into “book” had occurred earlier in the transmission of the Latin text when a scribe accidentally miscopied the correct word *ligno* (“tree”) as *libro* (“book”).⁷⁹

Whether his part is taken from the *Book of Life*^[4.4] (Rev. 3:5; 13:18) or the tree of life (Rev. 2:7; 22:2, 14), either way the one who takes away from God's words will be excluded from among the saved.

from the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book

The one who adds to God's word receives plagues (Rev. 22:18). The one who takes away has no part in the New Jerusalem and the many other blessings (e.g., the promises to the overcomer) which the book describes.

3.22.20 - Revelation 22:20

Surely I am coming quickly

Surely is ναί [*naí*]: “yes, indeed, certainly, in solemn assurance.”⁸⁰

It has been over 1900 years since Jesus spoke these words to John. As Peter predicted so long ago, many scoff at the idea that “quickly” and “soon” could refer to a yet future, literal, physical Second Coming of Jesus to overthrow the rebellious kingdoms of the earth. Even the *preterists*^[5.2.59] ridicule the idea that the many promises of a *soon* return could actually be describing Christ's second advent and so they find them fulfilled by invisible and unverifiable *spiritual comings* in the past. In this, they are in agreement with non-believing skeptics:

Beloved, I now write to you this second epistle (in *both of* which I stir up your pure minds by way of reminder), that you may be mindful of the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets, and of the commandment of us, the apostles of the Lord and Savior, knowing this first: that **scuffers will come in the last days, walking according to their own lusts, and saying, “Where is the promise of His coming? For since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of creation.”** For this they willfully forget: that by the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of water and in the water, by which the world *that* then existed perished, being flooded with water. But the heavens and the earth *which* are now preserved by the same word, are reserved for fire until the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men. But, beloved, **do not forget this one thing, that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.** The Lord is not slack concerning *His* promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance. (2Pe. 3:1-9) [emphasis added]

Peter's words are a source of great encouragement for those who await the return of Christ—Whose promises are better than gold and more sure than the ground we walk upon. The reason for the 1900 years and counting, between this promise and our day, are explained by Peter:

- **Perspective** - From God's perspective, one thousand years are as a day. God is timeless. From His perspective, the time between this promise and our own is short: “To Him, His absence has not yet been two days long!”⁸¹
- **Grace and Mercy** - The lengthy delay *from our perspective* is a great testimony to the grace and mercy of God. Once the events described in this book begin, things will escalate rapidly and ominously. Each year that Christ's return is delayed is another year of unmerited favor poured out upon a rebellious earth wherein those who fear God and thirst after Him have

opportunity to attain salvation by faith in the shed blood of Jesus Christ. Yet, men “are not only indifferent to the love of God, they despise it, misreading it as a sign of God’s weakness instead of His grace.”⁸²

- **Judgment Building** - Those who reject Christ continue to push the world further and further from God. One day, *the iniquity of the earth-dwellers will be complete* (cf. Gen. 15:16). When that day occurs, Christ will come as a thief upon an unsuspecting world and *The Day of the Lord*^[2.13.3] will begin (Mtt. 24:43; Luke 12:39; John 10:10; 2Pe. 3:10; Rev. 3:3). The judgment which is awaiting this world ultimately results in the “perdition of ungodly men” (Rev. 20:11-15).

This precious promise closes the book of Revelation and the *NT*^[5.2.48]. Those who love the Lord Jesus Christ eagerly await His return:

For our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will transform our lowly body that it may be conformed to His glorious body, according to the working by which He is able even to subdue all things to Himself. (Php. 3:20-21)

The promise of His return is a powerful motivator for the saints to deny the world and to live lives in preparation of His *imminent*^[4.8] return:

For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age, looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from every lawless deed and purify for Himself *His* own special people, zealous for good works. (Tit. 2:11-14)

History is strewn with the foolish who have attempted to establish dates, even general ones, at which Christ will finally come in fulfillment of this promise. Such attempts are dangerous and ill-advised:

Well has Archer Butler said, “To seek to penetrate more closely into these awful secrets is vain. A sacred obscurity envelops them. The cloud that shrouded the actual presence of God on the mercy-seat, shrouds still his expected presence on the throne of judgment. It is a purposed obscurity, and most salutary and useful obscurity, a wise and merciful denial of knowledge. In this matter it is his gracious will to be the perpetual subject of watchfulness, expectation, conjecture, fear, desire,—but no more. To cherish anticipation, he has permitted gleams of light to cross the darkness; to baffle presumption, he has made them *only* gleams. He has harmonized with consummate skill, every part of his revelation to produce this general result;—now speaking as if a few seasons more were to herald the new heaven and new earth, now as if his days were thousands of years; at one moment whispering into the ear of his disciple, as if ready to be revealed, at another retreating into the depth of infinite ages. It is his purpose thus to live in our faith and hope, remote yet near, pledged to no moment, possible at any; worshipped not with consternation of a near, or indifference of a distant certainty, but with the anxious vigilance that awaits a contingency ever at hand.”⁸³

Even so, come, Lord Jesus!

The saints are in full agreement with Jesus’ promised return, for they love His appearing (2Ti. 4:8):

So Christ was offered once to bear the sins of many. To those who eagerly wait for Him He will appear a second time, apart from sin, for salvation. (Heb. 9:28)

The closing words of the Song of Solomon illustrate this desire:

[The King to the Shulamite:] You who dwell in the gardens, the companions listen for your voice—Let me hear it! (Sos. 8:13)

[The Shulamite in response:] Make haste, my beloved, and be like a gazelle or a young stag on the mountains of spices. (Sos. 8:14)

The Shulamite desires the king’s speedy return. . . . Christ is to make haste to return at His second advent and is portrayed figuratively as a fleet gazelle or stag bounding over the mountains of spices, overcoming all impediments (Ps. 2:1-12) to manifest His fragrance in Kingdom rule . . . which will be a sweet aroma to Israel and the nations of the millennial earth.⁸⁴

Unlike the Adam and Eve who hid in shame, the redeemed long for God to come looking for them:

The first word we hear man address to the Lord in the Bible is the solemn word “I heard thy voice in the garden, and I was afraid” (Gen. 3:10). The last word addressed to the Lord by redeemed man is “even so, Come, Lord Jesus.” And between these two utterances in Genesis and Revelation is the story of

redemption.⁸⁵

3.22.21 - Revelation 22:21

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ *be* with you all. Amen.

The *MT*^[5.2.45] text has *with all of the saints*. “The Greek witnesses present seven different endings (not counting those that append ‘Amen’).”⁸⁶

A benediction of this type is quite unusual at the conclusion of an apocalyptic writing, but it is quite fitting for this one which incorporates epistolary features for the churches and is to be read in them (Rev. 1:3-4).⁸⁷

3.22.22 - Epilogue

For the faithful, the book of Revelation is itself a taste of the river of life, for it refreshes hope in the coming of Christ and gives certain knowledge of the overthrow of evil and the ultimate restoration of all things:

It has been a weary time, a waiting time, a suffering time, but His Coming or presence shall turn the gloom of night into gladness and everlasting joy. The shadows of time are passing away, and the first faint streaks of an eternal day, which knows neither evening nor tears are almost discernible. Hold on, ye wearied pilgrim host! Joy cometh in the morning. We wait for *Him*, not for the fulfilment of prophecy. Is His Coming a reality in our souls? Does it influence the life, and shape the conduct, and impart vigour, as we press on?⁸⁸

For the faithless, the book pushes him further in his hardened rejection of God:

I doubt not, that this Apocalypse has been and will be the rock on which many a one’s salvation is wrecked by reason of the offense taken at its presentations. To the savants and scientists of this world, there is no part of all the Scriptures which seem so absurd and impossible. They can get on with everything else a thousandfold better than with the outlines of the future which this Book gives. To their philosophy it is the very consummation of nonsense. And if this is the scheme and outcome of the Gospel system, they will have none of it. They know better. They have got beyond all such puerilities. They would not swallow such things for their lives, and scorn to take for divine what embraces them as the consummation of this world. Their sneers, contempt, and blasphemy nowhere rise to such a pitch as when they are asked to accept and believe that this Book is of God, and means what it says.⁸⁹

The question, dear reader, is which are you? Will you reach out to take the promises which Christ gives the overcomer throughout the pages of this book and become one who believes in Him? Will you respond in faith to the open invitation to partake of the living waters, freely given? Will you be among those who are kept from the hour of trial which is to come upon the whole world (Rev. 3:10)? Will you love the appearing of the Lord Jesus and say, with the rest of the saints: “Even so, come, Lord Jesus!”

Or will you remain among the skeptics, the sophisticated, the independent and self-sufficient, who have no need of God and would just as soon He did not exist? Have you already hardened your heart beyond the point of return such that you will be one of those destined to stand before the Great White Throne, whose name is missing from the *Book of Life*^[4.4] (Rev. 20:15)?

Today, if you will hear His voice, do not harden your hearts . . . Now is the day of salvation! (Heb 3:15; 2Cor. 6:2)

Notes

- ¹ Henry Morris, *The Revelation Record* (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 1983), Rev. 22:1.
- ² J. A. Seiss, *The Apocalypse: Lectures on the Book of Revelation* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1966), 505.
- ³ Wilhelm Gesenius, and Samuel Prideaux Tregelles, *Gesenius' Hebrew and Chaldee Lexicon to the Old Testament Scriptures* (Bellingham, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc., 2003, 1810-1812), 874.
- ⁴ “The trees in both cases line the river; but in the earthly order they are outside the city; and though bread trees, they are not the Tree of Life. The heavenly River issues not from the sanctuary but from the throne. It does not

- flow into the sea, but through the avenues and streets of the city.”—Seiss, *The Apocalypse: Lectures on the Book of Revelation*, 506.
- ⁵ A. R. Fausset, “*The Revelation of St. John the Divine*,” in Robert Jamieson, A. R. Fausset, and David Brown, *A Commentary, Critical and Explanatory, on the Old and New Testaments* (Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc., 1997, 1877), Rev. 22:2.
- ⁶ Seiss, *The Apocalypse: Lectures on the Book of Revelation*, 503.
- ⁷ “The tree of life is mentioned four times in Proverbs (Pr. 3:18; 11:30; 13:12; 15:4), metaphorically depicting wisdom, fruitful works, hope, and the benefits of the wise use of the tongue.”—Daniel K. Wong, “*The Tree of Life in Revelation 2:7*,” in *Bibliotheca Sacra*, vol. 155 no. 618 (Dallas, TX: Dallas Theological Seminary, April-June 1998), 211.
- ⁸ “The Saviour after his glorious resurrection did eat, even of the course food of mortals. The angels did eat of Sarah’s cakes and of Abraham’s dressed calf (Gen. 18:6-8).”—Seiss, *The Apocalypse: Lectures on the Book of Revelation*, 506.
- ⁹ Seiss, *The Apocalypse: Lectures on the Book of Revelation*, 507.
- ¹⁰ Fruchtenbaum believes a monthly calendar will continue, but without the benefit of the moon: “It should be noted that the word *month* is used, so some kind of dating system will be present in the Eternal Order. Since there will be no sun, moon, or night, it will be a radically different dating system than the one in which we presently live.”—Arnold G. Fruchtenbaum, *The Footsteps of Messiah*, rev ed. (Tustin, CA: Ariel Ministries, 2003), 539.
- ¹¹ Morris, *The Revelation Record*, Rev. 22:2.
- ¹² We speak here of productivity *as measured by God*, not the constant activity which so often characterizes Christian work, which has more in common with Martha than Mary (Luke 10:38-42).
- ¹³ Frederick William Danker, and Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 358.
- ¹⁴ Timothy Friberg, Barbara Friberg, and Neva F. Miller, *Analytical Lexicon of the Greek New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2000), 196.
- ¹⁵ Wong, “*The Tree of Life in Revelation 2:7*,” 219.
- ¹⁶ Robert L. Thomas, *Revelation 8-22* (Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 1995), Rev. 22:2.
- ¹⁷ A viable definition of sin is simply *independence from God*.
- ¹⁸ Wong, “*The Tree of Life in Revelation 2:7*,” 213.
- ¹⁹ Jerome Smith, *The New Treasury of Scripture Knowledge* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1992), 1Cor. 15:50.
- ²⁰ Seiss, *The Apocalypse: Lectures on the Book of Revelation*, 507.
- ²¹ “Those who argue that ‘flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom’ (1Cor. 15:50) forget that these natural generations are subjects of the kingdom, not inheritors, for only the resurrected saints in glorified bodies are co-heirs with Christ in His eternal kingdom (Rom. 8:17).”—Smith, *The New Treasury of Scripture Knowledge*, 2Pe. 3:13.
- ²² Thomas, *Revelation 8-22*, Rev. 22:14.
- ²³ “There is no indication whatever in Scripture that resurrected and translated beings have the quality of human sex, much less the capacity to produce offspring.”—John F. Walvoord, *The Revelation of Jesus Christ* (Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 1966), Rev. 21:24.
- ²⁴ Wong, “*The Tree of Life in Revelation 2:7*,” 220-221.
- ²⁵ Morris, *The Revelation Record*, Rev. 22:2.
- ²⁶ Jay P. Green, *The Literal Translation of the Holy Bible* (Lafayette, IN: Sovereign Grace Publishers, Inc., 2001), Rev. 22:3.
- ²⁷ Morris, *The Revelation Record*, Rev. 22:3.
- ²⁸ Morris, *The Revelation Record*, Rev. 22:3.

- 29 Alva J. McClain, *The Greatness Of The Kingdom* (Winona Lake, IN: BMH Books, 1959), 513.
- 30 Friberg, *Analytical Lexicon of the Greek New Testament*, 244.
- 31 With the curse came *less productive* working conditions (Gen. 3:18-19).
- 32 Seiss, *The Apocalypse: Lectures on the Book of Revelation*, 510.
- 33 John MacArthur, *Revelation 12-22 : The MacArthur New Testament Commentary* (Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 2000), Rev. 22:6.
- 34 MacArthur, *Revelation 12-22 : The MacArthur New Testament Commentary*, Rev. 22:6.
- 35 Kenneth L. Gentry, and Thomas Ice, *The Great Tribulation: Past or Future?* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 1999), 112.
- 36 Danker, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 814.
- 37 MacArthur, *Revelation 12-22 : The MacArthur New Testament Commentary*, Rev. 22:7.
- 38 Perhaps the most significant threat to the text in our day is to be found in the plethora of devotional paraphrases of the text which generally serve to obscure its true meaning. Instead of being nourished and having their minds renewed by the meat of God’s word, believers are turning to the pabulum of these paraphrases which feed their emotion at the cost of true understanding.
- 39 MacArthur, *Revelation 12-22 : The MacArthur New Testament Commentary*, Rev. 22:7.
- 40 “To fail to preach Revelation is not only foolish (cf. Rev. 1:3), but sinful. Any Christian who fails to learn its truths is forfeiting blessing; any preacher who fails to proclaim its truths is sinfully unfaithful to his mandate. . . More than just a failure to teach the whole counsel of God (Acts 20:27), it is outright disobedience to the command not to seal up the words of the Apocalypse.”—MacArthur, *Revelation 12-22 : The MacArthur New Testament Commentary*, Rev. 22:10.
- 41 Donald Grey Barnhouse, *Revelation* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1971), 410.
- 42 Often, *emotionalism* is mistaken for worship in the Spirit. But the Holy Spirit is the *Spirit of Truth*. It is *impossible* to worship “in the Spirit” while remaining ignorant of God’s word.
- 43 Alan F. Johnson, *Revelation: The Expositor’s Bible Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1966), 205.
- 44 John F. Walvoord, *Daniel: The Key to Prophetic Revelation* (Chicago, IL: Moody Bible Institute, 1971), Dan. 12:4.
- 45 Fruchtenbaum, *The Footsteps of Messiah*, 544.
- 46 William R. Newell, *Revelation: Chapter by Chapter* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 1994,c1935), 362.
- 47 Seiss, *The Apocalypse: Lectures on the Book of Revelation*, 514.
- 48 MacArthur, *Revelation 12-22 : The MacArthur New Testament Commentary*, Rev. 22:6.
- 49 Friberg, *Analytical Lexicon of the Greek New Testament*, 34.
- 50 Friberg, *Analytical Lexicon of the Greek New Testament*, 343.
- 51 Monty S. Mills, *Revelations: An Exegetical Study of the Revelation to John* (Dallas, TX: 3E Ministries, 1987), Rev. 22:11.
- 52 MacArthur, *Revelation 12-22 : The MacArthur New Testament Commentary*, Rev. 22:10.
- 53 Danker, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 523.
- 54 Friberg, *Analytical Lexicon of the Greek New Testament*, 66.
- 55 Fruchtenbaum, *The Footsteps of Messiah*, 545.
- 56 “The [TR^[5.2.79]] reading appears to be a scribal emendation, for elsewhere the author uses the expression τηρεῖν τὰς ἐντολάς [têrein tas entolas] (Rev. 12:17; 14:12).”—Bruce M. Metzger, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament* (Stuttgart, Germany: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1994), Rev. 22:14.
- 57 Danker, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 461.

- 58 Thomas, *Revelation 8-22*, Rev. 22:15.
- 59 Robert H. Mounce, *The Book of Revelation* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1977), Rev. 22:15.
- 60 Fruchtenbaum, *The Footsteps of Messiah*, 546.
- 61 Danker, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 725.
- 62 Danker, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 62.
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4 - Related Topics

4.1 - Babylon and the Harlot

4.2 - The Beast

4.3 - Beasts, Heads, and Horns

4.4 - Book of Life

4.5 - Campaign of Armageddon

4.6 - Crowns

4.7 - Four Gospels

4.8 - Imminency

4.9 - Jezebel

4.10 - Marriage of the Lamb

4.11 - Millennial Kingdom

4.12 - Nero

4.13 - Nicolaitans

4.14 - Rapture

4.15 - Seven Churches of Asia

4.16 - Temple of God

4.17 - Ten Tribes Lost?

4.18 - Worldly Churches

4.19 - Zechariah's Horses

4.1 - Babylon and the Harlot

Babylon, mentioned six times by name in the book of Revelation (Rev. 14:8; 16:19; 17:5; 18:2, 10, 21), plays a significant role in the events prior to the Second Coming of Jesus Christ. As with almost all other aspects of the book of Revelation, in order to understand what Babylon *is* and what it *is not*, it is important to recognize that the book of Revelation is the capstone of many streams of prophecy which find their source elsewhere in Scripture, and especially in the *OT*^[5.2.51]. In a similar way that *Genesis and Revelation serve as bookends*^[2.13.8] around God's written revelation, Babylon also has great significance both in the beginning and end of God's plan in history.

*Babylon in Iraq*¹



4.1.1 - Babylon of Old

The earliest mention of Babylon and the region it occupies, the land of Shinar, is found not long after the global flood:

Cush begot Nimrod; he began to be a mighty one on the earth. He was a mighty hunter before the LORD; therefore it is said, “Like Nimrod the mighty hunter before the LORD.” **And the beginning of his kingdom was Babel, Erech, Accad, and Calneh, in the land of Shinar.** From that land he went to Assyria and built **Nineveh**, Rehoboth Ir, Calah and Resen between Nineveh and Calah (that *is* the principal city). (Gen. 10:8-12 cf. 1Chr. 1:10)² [emphasis added]

It was Nimrod who established a kingdom at Babel. In fact, this is the first mention of the concept of *kingdom* in Scripture. In a very real sense, *Nimrod was the first king*. And in order to be a king, one needs to have *subjects* and a *realm*. This implies centralization in a way which ran counter to God's command following the flood: “Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth” (Gen. 9:1, 7 cf. Gen. 1:22, 28). Reading between the lines, we can already see the seeds of rebellion.

Now the whole earth had one language and one speech. And it came to pass, as they journeyed from the east, that they found a plain in the land of Shinar, and they dwelt there. Then they said to one another, “Come, let us make bricks and bake *them* thoroughly.” They had brick for stone, and they had asphalt for mortar. And they said, “Come, let us build ourselves a city, and a tower whose top *is* in the heavens; let us make a name for ourselves, lest we be scattered abroad over the face of the whole earth.” But the LORD came down to see the city and the tower which the sons of men had built. And the LORD said, “Indeed the people *are* one and they all have one language, and this is what they begin to do; now nothing that they propose to do will be withheld from them. Come, let Us go down and there and confuse their language, that they may not understand one another's speech.” So the LORD scattered them abroad from there over the face of all the earth, and they ceased building the city. Therefore its

name is called Babel, because there the LORD confused the language of all the earth; and from there the LORD scattered them abroad over the face of all the earth. (Gen. 11:1-9)

Although Scripture is not overtly negative concerning Nimrod, his involvement establishing the first kingdom and initiating a building project which resulted in a severe judgment from God (the introduction of languages) clearly indicates his sinful ambitions.

Babylon has from its inception symbolized evil and rebellion against God. It was founded by Nimrod (Gen. 10:9), a proud, powerful, God-rejecting ruler. Babel (Babylon) was the site of the first organized system of idolatrous false religion (Gen. 11:1-4). The Tower of Babel, the expression of that false religion, was a ziggurat; an edifice designed to facilitate idolatrous worship. God judged the people's idolatry and rebellion by confusing their language and scattering them over the globe (Gen. 11:5-9). Thus the seeds of idolatry and false religion spread around the world from Babylon, to take root wherever these proud rebels and their descendants settled.³

There is also abundant tradition concerning the rebellion of Nimrod:

Now it was Nimrod who excited them to such an affront and contempt of God. He was the grandson of Ham, the son of Noah,— a bold man, and of great strength of hand. He persuaded them not to ascribe it to God as if it was through his means they were happy, but to believe that it was their own courage which procured that happiness. He also gradually changed the government into tyranny,—seeing no other way of turning men from the fear of God, but to bring them into a constant dependence upon his power. He also said he would be revenged on God, if he should have a mind to drown the world again; for that he would build a tower too high for the waters to be able to reach! and that he would avenge himself on God for destroying their forefathers!⁴

According to the Sages, Nimrod was the primary force behind this rebellion. The *Midrashim* explain his sinister motive. He planned to build a tower ascending to Heaven and, from it, wage war against God.⁵

The Targum of Jonathan says, "From the foundation of the world none was ever found like Nimrod, powerful in hunting, and in rebellions against the Lord." The Jerusalem Targum says, "He is powerful in hunting and in wickedness before the Lord, for he was a hunter of the sons of men, and he said to them, 'Depart from the judgment of the Lord, and adhere to the judgment of Nimrod!' Therefore as it is said, 'As Nimrod is the strong one, strong in hunting, and in wickedness before the Lord.' " The Chaldee paraphrase of I Chronicles 1:10 says, "Cush begat Nimrod, who began to prevail in wickedness, for he shed innocent blood, and rebelled against Jehovah."⁶

In the founding of Babel was the foundation for what would later flower as Babylon under Nebuchadnezzar and figure so highly in the events of Scripture, especially the book of Daniel which we have seen is key to understanding much of the book of Revelation.

Another negative connotation concerning Babel may be seen in the proverb taken up by Isaiah concerning the king of Babylon:

Take up this proverb against the king of Babylon . . . How you are fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! *How* you are cut down to the ground, You who weakened the nations! For you have said in your heart: 'I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God; I will also sit on the mount of the congregation on the farthest sides of the north; I will ascend above the heights of the clouds, I will be like the Most High.' Yet you shall be brought down to Sheol, to the lowest depths of the Pit. Those who see you will gaze at you, *and* consider you, *saying*: 'Is this the man who made the earth tremble, who shook kingdoms?' (Isa. 14:4, 12-16)

The connection between Satan (here *Lucifer*) and Babylon is seen in this proverb which begins with the human king in view, but soon goes far beyond what could be said of the human king to identify the spiritual power motivating the king (cf. Eze. 28:12). Since Satan has been active in the affairs of the world since the creation of mankind, it is no surprise to find his influence in the realm of corrupt kings and kingdoms extending far back in history. Portions of the proverb, "Is this the man who made the earth tremble, who shook kingdoms", appear to speak of the ultimate king of Babylon at the time of the end, the *Antichrist*^[4.2]:

Isaiah thus makes the Babylonian monarch speak according to the ideas of his people . . . and at the same time reflects the satanic spirit of self-deification to appear in fullest development in the last king of Babylon, the *Antichrist*^[5.2.3] (Rev. 13:8).⁷

Prior to the introduction of languages by God, the majority of mankind refused to disperse across the globe, but gathered in the region of Shinar instead. The result of the introduction of language was the scattering of different language groups over the face of all the earth (Gen. 11:9). This initial centralization, followed by the global distribution, *is the primary mechanism by which Babylon became the central influence in all cultures and civilizations which followed*. This is how she came to sit on “peoples, multitudes, nations, and tongues” (Rev. 17:15).

In the record of Babel, as minimal as it is, we see the *first human king and kingdom* in direct rebellion to the commands of God resulting in judgment. In Babylon of the end, we will see the *last human king and kingdom* in ultimate rebellion to the commands of God resulting in the final judgment of all human kingdoms to be replaced by the *Millennial Kingdom*^[5.2.39] ruled by Messiah. See *The Beast*^[4.2]. See #16 - *Beast*^[4.3.2.16].

4.1.2 - The Destruction of Babylon

A point of disagreement concerning the interpretation of Scripture involves how to handle passages which predict events and circumstances which evidently have not come to pass. For those who uphold the *inerrancy*^[5.2.32] and *inspiration*^[5.2.33] of Scripture, there are only two alternatives:

1. **Dramatic Hyperbole**^[5.2.27] - Prophetic passages must be understood to employ extensive use of figures of speech such as hyperbole for dramatic effect. They should not be understood in a literal way, but must be seen as a form of dramatic exaggeration emphasizing the harshness with which God views sin and its related judgment. They were fulfilled in an approximate way by events of the past or are statements of spiritual principles.
2. **Literal Prediction** - Unfulfilled prophetic passages make limited use of hyperbole, but in such a way that it is obvious where it occurs (e.g., 1S. 5:12). In the main, prophetic passages are accurate predictions of catastrophic judgments which have not yet occurred.

Depending upon which of these two views one holds when reading the *OT*^[5.2.51], unfulfilled passages will either be loosely applied to the immediate circumstances or they will be seen as extending beyond the immediate circumstances and speaking to an ultimate fulfillment in the distant future. *Futurist interpreters*^[2.12.5] are of this latter persuasion because they understand previously fulfilled prophecy to indicate a pattern of literal fulfillment. See *The Art and Science of Interpretation*^[2.7.2].

This is of great importance when we come to the matter of Babylon in Scripture because all interpreters are aware that extensive prophecies concerning Babylon, and especially the *manner of her destruction*^[4.1.2.2], have never been fulfilled as they were stated. Those who favor dramatic hyperbole as an explanation tend to believe the passages were fulfilled in an approximate, but suitable way. Those who favor literal prediction believe these passages have never been fulfilled, even approximately, and continue to speak of the future destruction of Babylon at the time of the end. We are in this latter group.

4.1.2.1 - Babylon's Historic Fall

When one examines the historical record concerning the fall of the city of Babylon in 539 B.C. to Persia (Dan. 5:30-31), it is clear that the term “destruction” is much too strong a word to describe what actually transpired. Babylon has never been *destroyed* at the hands of a catastrophic attack as prophesied in the *OT*^[5.2.51] (see *Babylon's Predicted Destruction*^[4.1.2.2]).

On the night that Belshazzar, king of the Chaldeans, was slain and the city came under the control of Darius the Mede, it “fell” politically, but not physically. There was no large-scale attack upon the city. In fact, many within the city were not even aware for quite some time afterwards that the city had been taken. The city was taken by diverting the waters of the Euphrates. This allowed armed forces to wade under her defenses without much of a fight:

The city fell by complete surprise. Half of the metropolis was captured before the rest of it was “aware” of the fact, according to Herodotus. Cyrus diverted the waters of the Euphrates and by night entered the city through the dried up channel (Dan. 5:30-31).⁸

Rather than being physically overthrown, as predicted by Isaiah (Isa. 13, 14, 47) and Jeremiah (Jer. 50, 51), the city and its occupants were treated with considerable respect:

On . . . Oct. 29, 539 B.C., sixteen days after the capitulation, Cyrus himself entered the city amid much public acclaim, ending the Chaldean dynasty as predicted by the Hebrew prophets (Isa. 13:21; Jer. 50f). Cyrus treated the city with great respect, returning to their own shrines the statues of the deities brought in from other cities. The Jews were sent home with compensatory assistance. He appointed new governors, so ensuring peace and stable conditions essential to the proper maintenance of the religious centers.⁹

Babylon generally flourished under the Persians, although there is record of a revolt against Xerxes I which resulted in a harsh response:

Under the Persians, Babylon retained most of its institutions, became capital of the richest satrapy in the empire, and, according to Herodotus, the world's most splendid city. A revolt against Xerxes I (482) led to destruction of its fortifications and temples and the melting down of the golden image of Marduk.¹⁰

In subsequent campaigns which took control of Babylon, rather than being violently overthrown, the city slowly decayed due to competition and neglect:

On October 12, 539 B.C., Babylon fell to Cyrus of Persia, and from that time on the decay of the city began. Xerxes plundered it. Alexander the Great thought to restore its great temple, in ruins in his day, but was deterred by the prohibitive cost. During the period of Alexander's successors the area decayed rapidly and soon became a desert. From the days of Seleucus Nicator (312-280 B.C.), who built the rival city of Seleucia on the Tigris, queenly Babylon never revived.¹¹

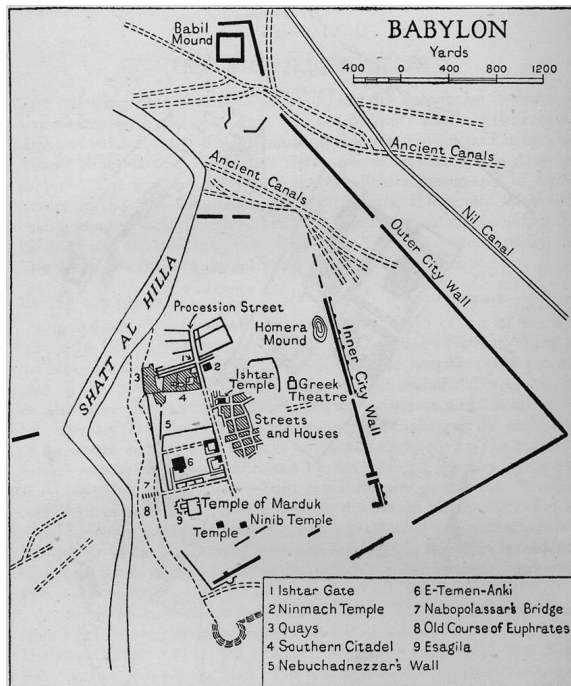
Even when Greece, the great *leopard beast*^[4.3.2.11] of Daniel's night vision (Dan. 7:6) came calling in the person and empire of Alexander the Great, the city was not destroyed:

[On] Oct. 1, 331 B.C., Alexander marched to Babylon, where the Macedonian was triumphantly acclaimed, the Persian garrison offering no opposition. He offered sacrifices to Marduk, ordered the rebuilding of temples that Xerxes allegedly had destroyed, and then a month later moved on to Susa.¹²

Alexander subsequently returned to Babylon with great construction plans to make it his capital, but these were interrupted by his death in 323 B.C. After Alexander, the city was ruled by a series of kings including Seleucus I (323-250) during which Babylon's economic—but not religious importance—declined sharply due to competition with the establishment by Antiochus I of a new capital at Seleucia on the Tigris (274 B.C.). Later, the city remained a center of Hellenism, supporting Jews in Palestine who opposed Herod.¹³ After the destruction of the *Second Temple*^[4.16.5.4] by Rome in A.D. 70, many Jews left Jerusalem for the area of Babylon. This trend increased after the Bar Kokhba war.¹⁴ The region of Babylon became an important center for Jewry outside Israel:

After the destruction of the *Second Temple*^[5.2.73] in 70 C.E., and especially after the war of Bar Kokhba (132-35 C.E.), some scholars went down from Palestine to Babylon. The arrival of "Abba the Tall," Rab, in approximately 219, brought about a period of prosperity in the study of the Law in Babylon. Rab in Sura and Shmuel in Nehardea gave public instruction in the Law and trained many pupils. In this period academies were established, and they continued to exert an influence on Jews, not only in Babylon but throughout all the lands of their dispersion, as late as the 12th century.¹⁵

Although the city still stood when Roman emperor Trajan entered it in A.D. 115, by about A.D. 200 the site of the city was deserted.¹⁶ Thereafter, the city was mostly forgotten until the 1800s when archaeological expeditions began to investigate the site. In the mid-1960s, the Iraqi Department of Antiquities carried out further work at the site. "The Ishtar gateway . . . was partially restored together with the Procession Way . . . The *Ninmah* temple was reconstructed, and a museum and rest house built on the site, which is also partially covered by the village of Jumjummah."¹⁷

Plan of Babylon (1944) ¹⁸

In more recent times, Saddam Hussein built himself a palace on a man-made hill beside the footprint of the original city. Then, in 1987, he ordered construction of a replica of Nebuchadnezzar's vast palace on the original site. Museums were also built. But since his fall from power in 2003, his private palace was ransacked by mobs and two museums at the site were looted. During almost this entire time, there have been people occupying the site or living nearby—in stark contrast to the predictions of Scripture concerning the uninhabitable wasteland it is predicted to one day become.¹⁹

4.1.2.2 - Babylon's Predicted Destruction

History records that although Babylon “fell” numerous times at the hands of different invaders, it never suffered anything like a complete destruction. Instead, it continued to be inhabited hundreds of years after its initial fall to Persia and eventually, through neglect more than anything else, became insignificant on the stage of world history. Yet the prophecies of Isaiah, Jeremiah, and John indicate a completely different scenario for her destruction. One that is sudden, swift, and absolutely catastrophic. We have gathered a number of these predictions together below so the reader may see for himself what the Holy Word of God predicts concerning the severity and permanence of her destruction:

And Babylon, the glory of kingdoms, the beauty of the Chaldean's pride, will be as when God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah. It will never be inhabited, nor will it be settled from generation to generation; nor will the Arabian pitch tents there, nor will the shepherds make their sheepfolds there. (Isa. 13:19-20)

“And look, here comes a chariot of men *with* a pair of horsemen!” Then he answered and said, “Babylon is fallen, is fallen! And all the carved images of her gods He has broken to the ground.” Oh, my threshing and the grain of my floor! That which I have heard from the LORD of hosts, The God of Israel, I have declared to you. (Isa. 21:9-10)

Therefore evil shall come upon you; you shall not know from where it arises. And trouble shall fall upon you; you will not be able to put it off. And desolation shall come upon you suddenly, *which* you shall not know. (Isa. 47:11)

Because of the wrath of the Lord she shall not be inhabited, but she shall be wholly desolate. Everyone who goes by Babylon shall be horrified and hiss at all her plagues. (Jer. 50:13)

Come against her from the farthest border; open her storehouses; cast her up as heaps of ruins, and destroy her utterly; let nothing of her be left. (Jer. 50:26)

“Therefore the wild desert beasts shall dwell *there* with the jackals, and the ostriches shall dwell in it. It shall be inhabited no more forever, nor shall it be dwelt in from generation to generation. As God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah and their neighbors,” says the Lord, “So no one shall reside there, nor son of man dwell in it.” (Jer. 50:39-40)

“They shall not take from you a stone for a corner nor a stone for a foundation, but you shall be desolate forever,” says the LORD. (Jer. 51:26)

And the land will tremble and sorrow; for every purpose of the LORD shall be performed against Babylon, to make the land of Babylon a desolation without inhabitant. (Jer. 51:29)

Her cities are a desolation, a dry land and a wilderness, a land where no one dwells, through which no son of man passes. (Jer. 51:43)

Thus says the Lord of hosts: “The broad walls of Babylon shall be utterly broken, and her high gates shall be burned with fire; the people will labor in vain, and the nations, because of the fire; and they shall be weary.” (Jer. 51:58)

And Jeremiah said to Seraiah, “When you arrive in Babylon and see it, and read all these words, then you shall say, ‘O LORD, You have spoken against this place to cut it off, so that none shall remain in it, neither man nor beast, but it shall be desolate forever.’ ” (Jer. 51:61-62)

And the ten horns which you saw on the beast, these will hate the harlot, make her desolate and naked, eat her flesh and burn her with fire. (Rev. 17:16)

And he cried mightily with a loud voice, saying, “Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and has become a dwelling place of demons, a prison for every foul spirit, and a cage for every unclean and hated bird!” (Rev. 18:2)

Therefore her plagues will come in one day—death and mourning and famine. And she will be utterly burned with fire, for strong is the Lord God who judges her. The kings of the earth who committed fornication and lived luxuriously with her will weep and lament for her, when they see the smoke of her burning, standing at a distance for fear of her torment, saying, “Alas, alas, that great city Babylon, that mighty city! For in one hour your judgment has come.” (Rev. 18:8-10)

For in one hour such great riches came to nothing. Every shipmaster, all who travel by ship, sailors, and as many as trade on the sea, stood at a distance and cried out when they saw the smoke of her burning, saying, “What *is* like this great city?” They threw dust on their heads and cried out, weeping and wailing, and saying, “Alas, alas, that great city, in which all who had ships on the sea became rich by her wealth! For in one hour she is made desolate.” (Rev. 18:17-19)

Then a mighty angel took up a stone like a great millstone and threw it into the sea, saying, “Thus with violence the great city Babylon shall be thrown down, and shall not be found anymore.” (Rev. 18:21)

Again they said, “Alleluia! Her smoke rises up forever and ever!” (Rev. 19:3)

Her destruction is said to be literal and catastrophic like that of Sodom and Gomorrah. Her walls will be completely destroyed and her gates burned with fire. There will be nothing left of her, no person shall ever reside there, nor will any building material be taken from her ruins. This destruction will be sudden, complete, and permanent. It seems clear that Babylon has yet to suffer in the way which God has so extensively foretold.

Not only are the *OT*^[5.2.51] prophecies of Isaiah and Jeremiah unfulfilled in the history of Babylon, but John’s vision recorded in approximately 95 A.D. reiterates and even extends these predictions. Either God is a God of wholesale and extensive exaggeration or a literal destruction remains pending. It is impossible, unscriptural, and irreverent to believe that such an extensive portion of God’s word is to be spiritualized or taken as *hyperbole*^[5.2.27].

4.1.2.3 - The Timing of Babylon’s Destruction

Having seen the severe manner in which Babylon is to be destroyed, we now examine the *timing* of Babylon’s destruction. When are these prophecies of her destruction to take place? The most obvious starting point is to understand that her destruction is future to John’s day, for the book of Revelation contains an extensive prediction of her destruction. This places her destruction sometime after 95 A.D. (See *Date*^[2.11].) Yet we saw that *Babylon’s Historic Fall*^[4.1.2.1] was actually a relatively slow demise because she continued to be inhabited for several decades after the writing of the book of Revelation before fading into obscurity. Within not many years after John’s dramatic predictions *there was no significant city of Babylon left to be destroyed.*

If Babylon is to be destroyed as predicted by the prophetic word, and she is not a spiritual symbol representing a non-literal city or movement, then she must be reconstructed prior to the time of the end. And this we expect. (See *Babylon is Babylon!*^[4.1.3.5]) From God's word, we know that her prophesied destruction comes in *The Day of the Lord*^[2.13.3]. One of the most significant passages describing that day is found in Isaiah 13, "ground zero" of an extensive passage concerning *Babylon*:

Wail, for the day of the LORD is at hand! It will come as destruction from the Almighty. Therefore all hands will be limp, every man's heart will melt, and they will be afraid. Pangs and sorrows will take hold of *them*; they will be in pain as a woman in childbirth; they will be amazed at one another; their faces *will be like* flames. Behold, the day of the LORD comes, cruel, with both wrath and fierce anger, to lay the land desolate; and He will destroy its sinners from it. For the stars of heaven and their constellations will not give their light; the sun will be darkened in its going forth, and the moon will not cause its light to shine. I will punish the world for *its* evil, and the wicked for their iniquity; I will halt the arrogance of the proud, and will lay low the haughtiness of the terrible. I will make a mortal more rare than fine gold, a man more than the golden wedge of Ophir. Therefore I will shake the heavens, and the earth will move out of her place, in the wrath of the LORD of hosts and in the day of His fierce anger. (Isa. 13:6-13)

In another key passage concerning the destruction of Babylon, Jeremiah relates that the time is to be connected with the national regeneration of Israel: " 'In those days and in that time,' says the LORD, 'The iniquity of Israel shall be sought, but *there shall be* none; And the sins of Judah, but they shall not be found; For I will pardon those whom I preserve' " (Jer. 50:20). This is the time when the Deliverer comes out of Zion and turns ungodliness from Jacob (who is Israel, Rom. 11:26-27), as prefigured in Ezekiel's vision of the dry bones (Eze. 37). This connects the destruction of Babylon with the *time of Jacob's trouble*^[2.13.4]—the Tribulation which precedes the *Millennial Kingdom*^[5.2.39]. This is confirmed by the book of Revelation where the destruction of Babylon is found under the very last judgment, the seventh bowl of God's wrath (Rev. 16:19).

4.1.3 - The Identity of Babylon

Having established that historical Babylon never faced the destruction predicted in Scripture and that such destruction will occur during the time of the end, we now turn to the question of the identity of Babylon.²⁰ It must be observed that this question does not arise primarily from Scripture, but from *unbelief*. For an examination of Scripture shows no confusion as to the identity of Babylon. *Babylon is simply Babylon!*^[4.1.3.5] Yet, the divergence between what history records and Scripture predicts concerning this city has caused many to question whether "Babylon" is really to be understood in its literal sense or whether it might not be symbolic, denoting some other physical location or even an abstract spiritual or political movement—not a city at all. The collision between God's word and history to date has caused many to abandon the literal interpretation of the identity of Babylon in search of other solutions.

Five prominent approaches for identifying Babylon in Revelation 17-18 [include]: the world, Jerusalem, Rome, an end time religious system, and futuristic, literal, rebuild Babylon. Other interpretive options exists, such as viewing Babylon as the Roman Catholic Church or as an eclectic amalgamation of two or more of these views.²¹

We will attempt to acquaint the reader with the most popular views together with what we believe to be their weaknesses in comparison with the literal view. There is considerable overlap between some of the views so our treatment is general and intended mainly to serve as background information for understanding why we believe Babylon is best understood as the *literal city on the banks of the Euphrates River*^[4.1.3.5]. For a more thorough treatment of the alternative views, see [Woods, *What is the Identity of Babylon In Revelation 17-18?*].

4.1.3.1 - Babylon is the World?

This view holds that Babylon of the time of the end represents a world-spanning global, anti-God system. Usually, the system is partitioned into ecclesiastical and commercial elements which are associated with the *Harlot*^[5.2.25] (Rev. 17) and the city (Rev. 18), respectively:

Babylon stands for all that is the world, as over against the call of the heart of God. . . . There is a form

of Babylon which is political, and there is a form which is religious.²³

What is before us now is the mystic Babylon, that huge system of spiritual adultery and corruption which holds sway over the whole prophetic scene. It is scarcely possible [writing before 1860!] to conceive of a huge system of wickedness eagerly embraced by the nations once called Christian. It will nevertheless be so.²⁴

[Isaiah 13:6 is a] prefigurement of the final destruction of Babel (Babylon), connoting prophetically the disordered political and governmental system that characterizes the earth during “the times of the Gentiles” (Luke 21:24; Rev. 18:1-24). This political Babylon, together with ecclesiastical Babylon . . . shall be destroyed at the second advent of Christ. Political Babylon stands in contrast to the divine order (Isa. 11:1-12:6) with Israel in her own land, the center of spiritual blessing and the divine world government of the King-Messiah (Isa. 2:1-5).²⁵

In this view, the term Babylon is not to be associated with any physical location, but denotes the practices which originated in Babylon and then spread throughout the world. Thus, to destroy “Babylon” is to destroy these religious and commercial systems, wherever they may be found.

The ancient Babylon is better understood here as the archetypal head of all entrenched worldly resistance to God. Babylon is a trans-historical reality including idolatrous kingdoms as diverse as Sodom, Gomorrah, Egypt, Babylon, Tyre, Nineveh, and Rome. Babylon is an eschatological symbol of satanic deception and power; it is a divine mystery that can never be wholly reducible to empirical earthly institutions. It may be said that Babylon represents the total culture of the world apart from God.²⁶

We believe this view, while having some measure of truth, is inadequate. It properly accounts for the global influence clearly attributed to Babylon (Rev. 17:5, 15, 18; 18:24), but in doing so it also overlooks many aspects which are difficult to interpret as pertaining to anything other than a specific physical location. Babylon is called a *city* and is associated with the Euphrates River. She is destroyed at the hands of the *Beast*^[5.2.9] and his ten kings (Rev. 17:16-18), but they themselves are not destroyed by this same event. Yet they represent worldly ungodliness in the extreme. At her destruction, she becomes a dwelling place for demons (Rev. 18:2). Mention is made of merchants, ships, musicians, and craftsmen. Furthermore, she is differentiated from the nations which she influenced (Rev. 14:8; 17:2; 18:2, 23). If she *deceived* the nations (Rev. 18:23), how can she *be* those ungodly systems whom she herself produced by her deception? Another weakness of this view, which is shared by other views, is the artificial distinction which is made between *The Great Harlot*^[4.1.4] and the city Babylon. We believe this distinction is brought *to* the text, but not derived *from* the text which indicates they are one and the same (Rev. 17:18; 18:21-19:2).²⁷

A variation of this view takes Babylon to be a literal city, but as any commercial center at the time of the end which God chooses to judge, wherever located: “As far as we are concerned, the ‘city’ that represents commercial Babylon could be any great port city in the world to which the commerce of the world should be transferred, and which should thus head up the whole idea of commerce to be brought into judgment and sudden destruction.”²⁸ Thus *Babylon* could have been Liverpool when it was a great shipping port or New York today or any ungodly city of tomorrow. The “city” represents the concept of commercialism, wherever God happens to decide to judge it when the time is right. But contrary to Barnhouse and others, Scripture knows of no *commercial Babylon* as opposed to any other *noncommercial Babylon*. See *One or Two Babylons?*^[4.1.4.2.2] See *The Great Harlot*^[4.1.4] See *Babylon is Babylon!*^[4.1.3.5]

4.1.3.2 - Babylon is Ecclesiastical?

Another quite popular view sees Babylon primarily as an ecclesiastical system (Rev. 17), but also having commercial attributes (Rev. 18). This view takes the word *mystery* written upon her forehead (Rev. 17:5) as part of her title rather than an indication that there is a mystery associated with John’s vision concerning her role in the time of the end. See the discussion of the identity of *The Great Harlot*^[4.1.4]. See *Mystery Babylon?*^[4.1.4.2]

4.1.3.3 - Babylon is Rome?

Perhaps the most popular view concerning the identity of Babylon is that she represents the city of Rome.

Tertullian^[5.2.75], *Irenaeus*^[5.2.34], and Jerome use Babylon as representing the Roman Empire. In the Middle Ages Rome is frequently styled “the Western Babylon.” The sect of the Fraticelli, an eremitical organization from the Franciscans in the fourteenth century, who carried the vow of poverty to the extreme and taught that they were possessed of the Holy Spirit and exempt from sin—first familiarized the common mind with the notion that Rome was the Babylon, the great harlot of the Book of Revelation.²⁹

This interpretation goes back at least to the time of Tertullian (*AdvMarc* iii.13). It was adopted by Jerome and Augustine and has been commonly accepted by the Church. There are some strong reasons for accepting it. (1) The characteristics ascribed to this Babylon apply to Rome rather than to any other city of that age: (a) as ruling over the kings of the earth (Rev. 17:18); (b) as sitting on seven mountains (Rev. 17:9); (c) as the center of the world’s merchandise (Rev. 18:2f 19:2); (d) as the persecutor of the saints (Rev. 17:6).³⁰

Because Rome, with the Vatican, is home to the global system of Roman Catholicism, the identity of Babylon as the city of Rome has often gone hand-in-hand with the view that *The Great Harlot*^[4.1.4] represents Roman Catholicism, possibly wed with other religious systems. See *Mystery Babylon*?^[4.1.4.2]

The identity of Babylon with Rome has been bolstered by three events of history:

1. **The fall of Jerusalem in A.D. 70** - In a similar way that Babylon destroyed Jerusalem and *Solomon’s Temple*^[4.16.5.3] in the days of Nebuchadnezzar, Rome destroyed Jerusalem and the *Second Temple*^[4.16.5.4] under Titus. This established Rome as a key enemy of Israel and Jerusalem prior to the time of John’s writing. Thus it is thought to be only natural that *Babylon* would be used as a code name for *Rome*.³¹
2. **Christian Persecution** - For the early church (remembering that John wrote from exile on Patmos during the reign of Domitian), the modern-day persecutor of the saints was Rome. Although John’s prophecies concerned the time of the end, those who have sought to restrict fulfillment to his immediate audience can find no other viable candidate outside of Rome. At that time, she was indeed “the center of the world’s merchandise [and] the persecutor of the saints.”³²
3. **The Reformation** - When the reformers broke away from Roman Catholicism, the prophecies concerning Babylon and the *Beast*^[5.2.9] provided ready ammunition against Rome. By identifying the papal system and Rome with the Beast and Babylon, it could be clearly seen that Roman Catholicism was the predicted enemy of the true faith and destined for eventual destruction. Due to its great utility, this view has dominated Protestant interpretation for many years. “The Romish Church is not only accidentally and as a matter of fact, but in virtue of its very PRINCIPLE, a harlot, the metropolis of whoredom, ‘the mother of harlots’; whereas the evangelical Protestant Church is, according to her principle and fundamental creed, a chaste woman; the Reformation was a protest of the woman against the harlot.”³³ See *Relation to the Pope*^[4.2.8].

Although evidence for the identification of Babylon with Rome may initially appear convincing, upon careful examination it becomes clear that Babylon cannot mean Rome.

Those who propose that Babylon be understood as a code name for Rome often point to evidence of such use in early extra-biblical writings: “For the early church the city of Rome was a contemporary Babylon. [In *II bar.* 11:6; 67:7 and *Sib. Or.* 5:143, 159, 434 (possibly 1Pe. 5:13 as well) Rome is called Babylon.]”³⁴ However, such evidence is inconclusive because these other writings date much later than the book of Revelation: “Often supporters of the symbolic view use the *Sibylline Oracles* (V. 143, 159, 434) and the *Apocalypse of Baruch* (11:1; 67:7) to prove that Babylon was a code name for Rome (Swete, Charles, Ladd), but the composition of these two works came in the second century, quite a

while after John wrote Revelation.”³⁵ Some assert that Peter’s use of the term *Babylon* (1Pe. 5:13) must point to Rome. But this is an argument from silence. It is also possible to take Peter’s mention of Babylon as denoting the city on the banks of the Euphrates, which served as a center of Jewry beyond the time of Peter’s writing (see *Babylon’s Historic Fall*^[4.1.2.1]).³⁶

The *Babylon is Rome* view also fails to explain passages in the *OT*^[5.2.51] which designate Babylon as the place of final judgment. Identifying Babylon as Rome implies that God gave numerous prophecies utilizing a code name which would not obtain its true meaning until hundreds of years later. Thus, the prophecies given to the original recipients could not be understood using the normal meaning of terms with which they were familiar. Such a view violates the rules of historical-grammatical interpretation and turns the interpretation of prophetic passages into a guessing game. See *The Importance of Meaning*^[2.7.1].

The mention of “seven mountains” (or hills) in conjunction with the *Harlot*^[5.2.25] (Rev. 17:9) is often seen as an allusion to seven hills known to be associated with Rome:

The Rome view is also built upon the assumption that the seven hills of Revelation 17:9 identify the topography of the ancient city of Rome. Because literature of the ancient world contains dozens of references to the seven hills of Rome, the ancient city of Rome was universally known as the city of the seven hills. Thus, such a topographical reference would immediately suggest Rome in the minds of John’s original audience. This suggestion is especially true given the fact that the seven hills were the nucleus of the city on the left bank of the Tiber River and given the fact that an unusual festival called the septimontium received its name because of this topographical feature.

In addition, the notion that John’s audience would have understood the imagery of Revelation 17 as referring to the topography of Rome seems strengthened by the discovery of the *Dea Roma* Coin minted in A.D. 71 in Asia Minor. One side of the coin contains the portrait of the emperor. The reverse side of the coin depicts Rome, a Roman pagan goddess, sitting on seven hills seated by the waters of the Tiber River. There are obvious similarities between the *Dea Roma* Coin and the imagery of Revelation 17. In both cases, the goddess and the harlot are seated on seven hills and are seated either on or by the waters (Rev. 17:1). In addition, the name of the goddess was thought by many Romans to be Amor, which is Roma spelled backwards. Amor was the goddess of love and sexuality. Thus, both the woman on the coin and the woman in Revelation 17 represent harlotry (Rev. 17:5). Furthermore, the coin equates Roma with the power of the Roman Empire, which was active in persecuting Christians of John’s day. The placement of Vespasian on one side of the coin and Roma on the other makes this connection. . . . The goddess is also pictured as holding a sword, which may depict Rome’s imperial power. This imagery parallels with the woman in Revelation 17 who is said to be drunk with the blood of the saints [Rev. 17:6].³⁷

This association sounds convincing until one studies the text of Revelation 17 more closely. Unfortunately, the KJV translation is misleading here in its inference that the seven mountains are *different* from the seven kings: “And there are seven kings.” This leaves the interpreter with the notion that the seven heads are seven mountains on which the woman sits and there are (*also*, NKJV) seven kings which are not to be identified directly with the hills. As we show in our commentary on *Revelation 17:10*^[3.17.10], the Greek actually says that the “seven heads *are* seven mountains . . . and they *are* seven kings.” Thus, the mountains are to be understood in their typical Scriptural usage as denoting *kingdoms* (Jer. 51:25; Dan. 2:35; Zec. 4:7) and may not be related to topography at all. The Great Harlot is said to *sit* on these mountains. She is also said to *sit* on peoples, multitudes, nations, and tongues. Thus, her sitting probably speaks of the scope of her influence and control rather than a physical location.

Another problem with taking Babylon to be Rome is her relatively late appearance as a major empire. *The Great Harlot*^[4.1.4] is said to be “that great city” (Rev. 17:18). She is also said to be the “mother of harlots and of the abominations of the earth” (Rev. 17:5). She is the *source* and *origin* of harlotry (spiritual idolatry) and abominations. Rome can hardly be said to occupy this role because harlotry occurs in the Biblical record far in advance of the time of Rome. Those who identify Babylon as Rome often point to the undeniable similarities between the history and practices of Roman Catholicism and what is said concerning *The Great Harlot*^[4.1.4]. But does this mean that Babylon *is* Rome? Might it not simply reflect the truth that Rome is one of the Harlot’s most influential *daughter harlots* of history?

The points of correspondence between Rev. 17 and the history of Romanism are too many and too marked to be set down as mere co-incidences. Undoubtedly the Papacy has supplied a fulfillment of the symbolic prophecy found in Rev. 17. And therein has lain its practical value for God's people all through the dark ages. It presented to them a warning too plain to be disregarded. It was the means of keeping the garments of the Waldenses (and many others) unspotted by her filth. It confirmed the faith of Luther and his contemporaries, that they were acting according to the revealed will of God, when they separated themselves from that which was so manifestly opposed to His truth. But, nevertheless, there are other features in this prophecy which do not apply to Romanism, and which compel us to look elsewhere for the complete and final fulfillment. We single out but two of these. . . . In Rev. 17:5 Babylon is termed 'the Mother of harlots and abominations of the earth.' Is this an accurate description of Romanism? Were there no 'harlot' systems before her? . . . The Papacy had not come into existence when John wrote the Revelation, so that she cannot be held responsible for all the 'abominations' which preceded her. . . . Again; in Rev. 17:2 we read of 'the great Whore' that 'the kings of the earth have committed fornication' with her. Is that applicable in its fulness to Rome? Have the kings of Asia and the kings of Africa committed fornication with the Papacy? It is true that the Italian pontiffs have ruled over a wide territory, yet it is also true that there are many lands which have remained untouched by their religious influence. It is evident from these two points alone that we have to go back to something which long antedates the rise of the Papacy, and to something which has exerted a far wider influence than has any of the popes. . . . Papal Rome, was only one of the polluted streams from this corrupt source [Babel] - one of the filthy 'daughters' of this unclean Mother of Harlots.³⁸

The Biblical accounts from the OT give greater attention to Babel, Assyria, Egypt, Babylon, Persia, and Greece because they were great powers far in advance of Rome. Thus, Rome cannot be a *mother* in the sense required of the Harlot on the Beast. Nor can Rome provide the necessary support for the ride of the Harlot throughout history as implied by the *seven heads*^[4.3.2.4] on the Beast she rides (Rev. 17:3 cf. Rev. 13:1) which are associated with the dragon (Rev. 12:3) who has ruled kingdoms throughout history (Luke 4:5-6; John 12:31; 1Jn. 5:19).

Those who identify Babylon as Rome often place great emphasis upon the similarities between what is said of the Harlot and what history records of Roman Catholicism. Yet, taking the Harlot as Rome also conflicts with the Roman connection which Scripture records concerning the Beast (Dan. 7:8, 20; Dan. 9:26):

The identification of the harlot as Rome is problematic because one ends up with two images for Rome; the beast and the harlot. . . . If these two characters represent the same entity, why are they depicted as two separate entities in [Rev. 17:11 and 17:18]? Why is the beast punished in Revelation 19 after the harlot has already been destroyed in Revelation 18? If these two characters represent the same entity, how are they able to interact with one another? Revelation 17:3 depicts the woman as riding on the beast. How can Rome ride upon Rome? Revelation 17:16-17 depicts the beast destroying the woman. How can Rome destroy Rome? Perhaps it is possible to propose that the imagery could be satisfied through Nero^[5.2.46]'s burning of Rome in A.D. 64. However, the destruction of Rome portrayed in Revelation 17:16-17 cannot be a picture of Nero burning Rome because Nero did not destroy Rome in its entirety. Rather he only wanted to destroy part of Rome in order to make room for a building project. In sum, the imagery makes more sense if Rome destroys a rival power. This fact should prevent interpreters from identifying the woman with Rome.³⁹

Although the idea that *Babylon is Rome* may seem intriguing at first, we believe there are significant liabilities attending the view. Chief among them are the problem of language—making OT passages which speak of Babylon be reinterpreted hundreds of years later to denoting an entirely different city—and the lack of the necessary historical significance in Rome's early history to account for her as the mother of harlotry and abominations. See *Old Testament Context*^[4.1.3.5.1].

4.1.3.4 - Babylon is Jerusalem?

Some *preterist interpreters*^[2.12.2], such as Chilton, believe that *Babylon* is a code name for *Jerusalem*:⁴⁰

The primary thrust of the prophecy has been directed against Jerusalem. . . . John gives us no indication that the subject has been changed. As we shall see in Chapters 17 and 18, the evidence that the prophetic Babylon was Jerusalem is nothing short of overwhelming.⁴¹

In his first epistle, presumably written before the Revelation, St. Peter described the local church from which he wrote as "she who is in Babylon" (1Pe. 5:13). Many have supposed this to be Rome, where St. Peter was (according to tradition) later martyred, but it is much more likely that the apostle was in

Jerusalem when he wrote these words. Based on data from the New Testament itself, our natural assumption should be that “Babylon” was Jerusalem, since that was where he lived and exercised his ministry.⁴²

Preterists^[5.2.59] find support for this surprising claim in the great similarity between passages concerning apostate Jerusalem and what is said concerning the *Harlot*^[5.2.25]. But if the Harlot is the mother of all harlots, this is to be expected. It is important to recognize that the Harlot influenced *all nations*, including Israel. For “in her [the Harlot] was found the blood of prophets and saints, and of all who were slain on the earth” (Rev. 18:24). Thus, similarities between apostate Israel and the Harlot are *certain* to occur. But, as we have seen before, similarity does not make identity! An impressive array of OT^[5.2.51] Scriptures can be lined up in an attempt to prove that the Harlot is Jerusalem or Israel. However, this fails to account for another extensive list of passages which prove otherwise (often omitted by the *Babylon is Jerusalem* proponents).

Identifying Babylon as Jerusalem completely contradicts the OT foundation upon which the destruction of Babylon set forth within the book of Revelation stands (Isa. 13, 14, 47; Jer. 50, 51). When we examine these OT passages, we find a consistent distinction between Babylon, the subject of God’s wrath, and Jerusalem and Israel, whom God will avenge:

For the LORD will have mercy on Jacob, and will still choose Israel, and settle them in their own land. The strangers will be joined with them, and they will cling to the house of Jacob. Then people will take them and bring them to their place, and the house of Israel will possess them for servants and maids in the land of the LORD; they will take them captive whose captives they were, and rule over their oppressors. It shall come to pass in the day the LORD gives you rest from your sorrow, and from your fear and the hard bondage in which you were made to serve, that you will **take up this proverb against the king of Babylon**, and say: “How the oppressor has ceased, The golden city ceased!” (Isa. 14:1-4) [emphasis added]

Listen to Me, **O Jacob, And Israel, My called:** I *am* He, I *am* the First, I *am* also the Last. Indeed My hand has laid the foundation of the earth, and My right hand has stretched out the heavens; *When* I call to them, they stand up together. All of you, assemble yourselves, and hear! Who among them has declared these *things*? The LORD loves him; **He shall do His pleasure on Babylon, and His arm shall be against the Chaldeans.** (Isa. 48:12-14) [emphasis added]

“Israel *is* like scattered sheep; the lions have driven *him* away. First the king of Assyria devoured him; now at last this Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon has broken his bones.” Therefore **thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel:** “Behold, **I will punish the king of Babylon and his land**, as I have punished the king of Assyria. **But I will bring back Israel to his home**, and he shall feed on Carmel and Bashan; His soul shall be satisfied on Mount Ephraim and Gilead. In those days and in that time,” says the LORD, “The iniquity of Israel shall be sought, but *there shall be* none; and the sins of Judah, but they shall not be found; for I will pardon those whom I preserve.” (Jer. 50:17-20) [emphasis added]

Thus says the LORD: “Behold, **I will raise up against Babylon, against those who dwell in Leb Kamai**, a destroying wind. And I will send winnowers to Babylon, who shall winnow her and empty her land. For in the day of doom they shall be against her all around. Against *her* let the archer bend his bow, and lift himself up against *her* in his armor. Do not spare her young men; utterly destroy all her army. Thus **the slain shall fall in the land of the Chaldeans**, and *those* thrust through in her streets. **For Israel is not forsaken, nor Judah, by his God, the LORD of hosts**, though their land was filled with sin against the Holy One of Israel. Flee from the midst of Babylon, and every one save his life! Do not be cut off in her iniquity, for this *is* the time of the LORD’S vengeance; He shall recompense her.” (Jer. 51:1-6) [emphasis added]

“**And I will repay Babylon** And all the inhabitants of Chaldea **For all the evil they have done in Zion** in your sight,” says the LORD. (Jer. 51:24) [emphasis added]

“Let the violence *done* to me and my flesh **be upon Babylon**,” the inhabitant **of Zion** will say; “And my blood be upon the inhabitants of Chaldea!” Jerusalem will say. (Jer. 51:35) [emphasis added]

As **Babylon has caused** the slain of **Israel** to fall, so at Babylon the slain of all the earth shall fall. (Jer. 51:49) [emphasis added]

If language means anything, the interpreter cannot simply *reverse* the meaning of numerous passages of Scripture to suit his own predilection! But this is exactly what the preterist does. Between the OT and the NT^[5.2.48], he completely reverses the meaning of words. *Israel* no longer means the nation of Israel, but now is to be read *Church*. *Babylon* no longer means the city on the banks of the Euphrates

River in the land of Shinar, but now is to be read as *Jerusalem!*

This illustrates some of the many dangers of *Replacement Theology*^[5.2.63] as fueled by the preterist interpretation:

- **Scriptural Confusion** - Words are elastic and their meanings can be changed after-the-fact and even be completely inverted. God's numerous OT prophecies and promises concerning *Jerusalem* and *Israel* are now reinterpreted to mean something else entirely. If we were to adopt the preterist interpretation, we could only conclude that *in their original context such prophecies were misleading and even downright misrepresentations*, for the way they were understood in the common language of the prophet and his listeners was not their true meaning.⁴³
- **Dangerous Teachings** - The inversion of meaning associated with various passages results in all sorts of unscriptural beliefs which can lead the believer, without even being aware of it, into a position in opposition to God's will. For example, those who believe that the Church is the *new Israel* are likely to stand opposed to the true Israel in her claims based on God's OT promises. Such believers stand opposed to God's heritage (Jer. 50:11; Joel 3:2)!
- **Denial of God's Word** - God's promises no longer are reliable. If promises concerning the literal city Babylon and the literal nation Israel in the OT no longer apply to these same entities, but now are to be understood in an entirely new way—not just broader, but in a way which *denies the meaning of the original context*, then what confidence can we have in God's promises to us? How do we know that eternal life is really eternal? How do we know the New Jerusalem is in fact a real city and as glorious as the NT describes? If we use similar interpretive techniques as the preterist, we may just find when we get to heaven that what God said in the NT—based upon the common rules of language and the context of the recipients—is not at all what He meant. Assigning such malleable meaning to the words of Scripture undermines the promises of Scripture and maligns the nature of God. It is no small matter!

The confusion of the preterists results in their denial of other things which are revealed concerning Babylon, such as the permanence of her destruction:

If the Babylon = Jerusalem hypothesis is correct then Jerusalem will never be rebuilt again. Revelation 18:21-23 describes the permanent destruction of Babylon. . . . according to the Babylon = Jerusalem view, Jerusalem was destroyed in A.D. 70 and will never be rebuilt again. Yet, how can this be a description of Jerusalem when scripture repeatedly speaks of its return to prominence during the millennial reign (Isa. 2:3; Zec. 14:16; Rev. 20:9)? Scripture is quite plain that God still has a plan for ethnic Israel and yet the Jerusalem view seems to teach the opposite.⁴⁴

We also saw that at her destruction, Babylon will *never be inhabited again*. Clearly, Babylon cannot be Jerusalem, for Jerusalem is currently inhabited and has never been—nor shall ever be—destroyed in the manner which Scripture describes of Babylon. See *The Destruction of Babylon*^[4.1.2].

There is also a problem of pedigree when an attempt is made to identify Jerusalem as Babylon. Babylon is said to be, “the mother of harlots and of the abominations of the earth” (Rev. 17:5). Scripture indicates the Jerusalem, at her worst times, is merely a *daughter* harlot:

Thus says the LORD God to Jerusalem, . . . “Indeed everyone who quotes proverbs will use this proverb against you: ‘Like mother, like daughter!’ **You are your mother’s daughter**, loathing husband and children; and you are the sister of your sisters, who loathed their husbands and children; your mother was a Hittite and your father an Amorite.’ ” (Eze. 16:3, 44-45) [emphasis added]

Son of man, there were two women, The **daughters of one mother**. They committed harlotry in Egypt, They committed harlotry in their youth; Their breasts were there embraced, Their virgin bosom was there pressed. Their names: Oholah the elder and Oholibah her sister; They were Mine, And they bore sons and daughters. *As for their names, Samaria is Oholah, and Jerusalem is Oholibah.* (Eze. 23:2-4) [emphasis added]

God, through Ezekiel, goes on to describe how Oholiah (Samaria, the northern kingdom) derived her harlotry from Egypt (Eze. 23:8) and was given into the hands of her lovers, Assyria (Eze. 23:9). When her sister, Oholibah (Jerusalem, representing the southern kingdom) saw her fate, rather than repenting she became even more corrupt. Then, her eyes lusting after the equivalent of pornographic images:

. . . she increased her harlotry; She looked at men portrayed on the wall, Images of Chaldeans portrayed

in vermilion, Girded with belts around their waists, Flowing turbans on their heads, All of them looking like captains, **In the manner of the Babylonians of Chaldea, The land of their nativity** . (Eze 23:14-15) [emphasis added]

In this significant passage of Ezekiel, Israel's harlotry is repeatedly said to derive from Egypt (Eze. 23:8, 19, 27). Thus, she is a *daughter* harlot. In this same passage describing Jerusalem's harlotry, Ezekiel links the nativity of her partners to *Babylon*. Like Rome, Jerusalem lacks the necessary antiquity to bear the dubious label of *mother of harlots*. See commentary on *Revelation 17:5*^[3.17.5].

Beale notes that evidence is lacking that "Babylon" has ever been a symbolic name for Israel: "There is not one example of 'Babylon' ever being a symbolic name for Israel, either before or after 70 A.D. . . . the burden of proof rests on those maintaining the Babylon = Jerusalem identification."⁴⁵

Another major weakness of the view that Babylon is Jerusalem is found in the *dating*^[2.11] of the book of Revelation. Unless John wrote the book before the fall of Jerusalem in A.D. 70, then it becomes impossible to assign the destruction of Babylon in the book of Revelation to that event:

The view that Babylon is a code name for Jerusalem derives from a worldview that requires the writing and fulfillment of the Apocalypse before A.D. 70. Besides an impossible date for the book's writing, this view goes against the historical fact that Jerusalem is related to the people of God and Babylon to the world at large (Lee).⁴⁶

Nor does it make sense for Jerusalem to be Babylon when the earthly Jerusalem is a type or pattern for the New Jerusalem which is contrasted at every point with Babylon. See *Babylon and the New Jerusalem*^[3.17.18.1].

The view that Babylon means Jerusalem has almost nothing to recommend it and represents a most serious distortion of the word of God.

4.1.3.5 - Babylon is Babylon!

It is our view that *Babylon* simply means . . . *Babylon!* The only problem with taking Babylon in its literal sense is one of timing and faith. Because the modern site of Babylon in no way resembles what is described in the book of Revelation, there is opportunity for doubt concerning what God has said. This is nothing new: "Has God indeed said . . . ?" (Gen. 3:1).

What is the explanation for this reluctance to believe that John meant Babylon when he wrote "Babylon"? Even at the time John was writing, Babylon was still a viable city, with a substantial colony of Jews (the famous Babylonian *Talmud* originated in or near there, about 500 years after the time of Christ) and there was a significant Christian church there as well (1 Peter. 5:13). At the very least, it would be confusing to John's first century readers, as well as to later generations, for him to write so much about Babylon when he really meant Rome . . . or "the false church."⁴⁷

The current situation in regard to the literal city of Babylon reminds us of the position of many earlier interpreters concerning the predictions of the *OT*^[5.2.51] in regard to Israel. Prior to her reestablishment in 1948, it was difficult for many to believe that unfulfilled passages concerning a people who had been dispersed for nearly 2,000 years could ever be taken in a literal fashion as pertaining to a physical nation yet future. Today, we thrill to read those interpreters who held to a literal understanding of Israel over the many years when Israel seemed but a dusty recollection of history. May we be found among a similar cadre of interpreters in our own time concerning the city of Babylon!

4.1.3.5.1 - Old Testament Context

It is our view that the identity of Babylon ultimately rests on the proper interpretation of God's word. We must examine the meaning of words in their historical context. What did they mean to those who spoke them, heard them, and wrote them down? When the *OT*^[5.2.51] says "Babylon," the promises and predictions are made meaningless if they can mean *any other major commercial city in some future age*. This is akin to redefining "Israel" after the fact, to make it mean "Church" or "people of God." It is fair game for God to *add* to His revelation, expand its inclusiveness by way of progressive revelation, but He is not permitted to *change* the original meaning. "Not permitted?," you say. Yes! God is limited by His own character. The reason God cannot change the original meaning is found in His character: He cannot tell a lie (Num. 23:19; Rom. 3:4; Heb. 6:18; Tit. 1:2). For God to say

“Babylon,” hundreds of years before Rome is even a factor in the minds of his people and then later have the same word mean “Rome” is simply unacceptable. How is such action essentially any different than telling a lie? At the very least it is extremely *misleading*, something we would dare not accuse God of. God’s promises and predictions are only as good as language. If Babylon in the OT predictions can be Rome, London, New York, or Tokyo, then what hope have we of knowing our promises are reliable. What if physical resurrection really doesn’t mean physical? Or eternal life isn’t quite eternal?

There are *two* parties in any communication: an *originator* and a *recipient*. Communication involves the participation of *both*. The originator expressing meaning and the recipient understanding that meaning in the current context based upon common rules of language and the accepted meaning of words. Therefore, *the understanding of the recipient* is a significant factor in establishing the meaning of communication. Although a purposefully deceptive communicator may purposely express his communication in a way in which he knows that the recipient will incorrectly interpret his words, this is not our God. It is His intention and pleasure to communicate to His creatures in a reliable manner. Moreover, His very character and the character of His Word are at stake. How could He possibly elevate His word over His own name (Ps. 138:2), the expression of His very character, and at the same time package it in words which don’t mean what they appear to mean, but take on entirely different meanings later on?

This is especially important in the matter before us because the term *Babylon* is not isolated to the book of Revelation. Proving that some have used the term to denote Rome in extra-biblical writings is *totally irrelevant* when we consider God’s word. Even if it could be shown that Babylon in the *NT*^[5.2.48] is supposed to mean something else (and it can’t),⁴⁸ there is still the insurmountable difficulty of making extensive OT passages concerning Babylon mean something entirely different after-the-fact. The problem for interpreters who would attempt to reinterpret Babylon (and the blessing for those of us who do not) is that the meaning and use of the term is *anchored* in the context of the passages in the OT.⁴⁹

This is exactly what is foretold in Jer. 1. There the destruction of Babylon is foretold; for it is “the word that the LORD spake against Babylon” (Jer. 1:1). We have not yet heard of any commentator who thought Jeremiah prophesied this of Rome, or of any other city except the literal Babylon.⁵⁰

Although we believe there are numerous reasons why Babylon in the book of Revelation designates the literal city on the banks of the Euphrates, this issue alone is determinative. The proper historical-grammatical interpretation of the OT passages in their original context precludes all other meanings. As with all passages of Scripture, there will be many different *applications*, but only a single meaning based on the original context.

4.1.3.5.2 - A Literal City

Beyond the interpretive issue mentioned above, which we feel is conclusive, there are many other reasons for taking Babylon in the book of Revelation to denote the literal city. One such reason is the mention of the Euphrates River in conjunction with what is said concerning Babylon.

The best solution is to assign Babylon its literal significance of the city on the Euphrates by that name. Mentions of the Euphrates River at other points (Rev. 9:14; 16:12) corroborate this which is the natural way to understand it. Place names have their literal significance in Revelation 1:9; 2:1, 8, 12, 18; 3:1, 7, 14 and the writer is very clear to point it out when he intends a figurative meaning as in Revelation 11:8. A reference to a literal city does not exclude further implications regarding political and religious systems connected with the city (Walvoord).⁵¹

If Babylon in the book of Revelation is to denote something other than the literal city, we should expect to see significant differences in what is said concerning her. But we do not. Both *OT*^[5.2.51] and *NT*^[5.2.48] speak in concert on the matter of Babylon. It would seem these passages are in agreement concerning their subject—the literal city on the Euphrates:

The imagery of many waters (Rev. 17:1, 15) is reminiscent of the waters of Babylon (Ps. 137:1; Jer. 51:13). . . . The boast of Babylon, “I sit as queen and am no widow, and will not see sorrow” (Rev. 18:7) echoes that of ancient Babylon (Isa. 47:7-9). John also employs imagery from the Tower of Babel. When Revelation 18:5 says, “her sins have piled up as high as heaven,” the allusion is possibly to the use of bricks in building the Tower of Babel. . . . Revelation 17-18 also repeatedly draws imagery from

the description of Babylon and its destruction given in Jeremiah 50-51. For example, both passages describe Babylon as holding a golden cup (Jer. 51:7; Rev. 17:3-4; 18:6), dwelling on many waters (Jer. 51:13; Rev. 17:1), involved with the nations (Jer. 51:7; Rev. 17:2), and having the same name (Jer. 50:1; Rev. 17:5; 18:10). Moreover, both passages illustrate Babylon's destruction the same way (Jer. 51:63-64; Rev. 18:21) and depict Babylon's destruction as sudden (Jer. 51:8; Rev. 18:8), caused by fire (Jer. 51:30; Rev. 17:16; 18:8), final (Jer. 50:39; Rev. 18:21), and deserved (Jer. 51:63-64; Rev. 18:21). Furthermore, both passages describe the response to Babylon's destruction in terms of God's people fleeing (Jer. 51:6, 45; Rev. 18:4) and heaven rejoicing (Jer. 51:48; Rev. 18:20). Other commentators have also noticed how frequently John in Revelation 17-19 draws from the imagery of Jeremiah 50-51. For example, Thomas observes ten parallels between the two sections of Scripture. Aune also observes at least ten parallels between Jeremiah 50-51 and Revelation 18.⁵²

Another piece of evidence in favor of a literal Babylon is a literal Israel. As we saw in our discussion concerning *Babylon is Jerusalem?*^[4.1.3.4], the OT passages dealing with the destruction of Babylon compare and contrast her with Jerusalem. This was one reason why Babylon cannot be Jerusalem. It also provides strong evidence that Babylon is to be taken as the literal city because Jerusalem is taken that way in the same passages. The restoration of the literal, earthly city of Jerusalem (Isa. 62) and the future rule of Messiah from her midst (Jer. 3:17; Zec. 14:16) are as sure as God's word. If Babylon is consistently contrasted with Jerusalem in OT passages, then it is inconsistent to take Jerusalem literally, but Babylon figuratively. If Jerusalem is the literal city on Mount Moriah, then Babylon cannot be said to be New York or merely a commercial or religious system.

Without any spirit of dogmatism, and without entering into the question of the identity and significance of the Babylon in the Revelation—whether mystical or actual—we would express our conviction that there are Scriptures [e.g., Zec. 5] which cannot, according to our judgment, be satisfactorily explained except on the supposition of a revival and yet future judgment of literal Babylon, which for a time will be the centre and embodiment of all the elements of our godless Western “civilisation,” and which especially will become the chief *entrepôt* of commerce in the world, . . . To this conviction we are led chiefly by the fact that there are prophecies in the Old Testament concerning the literal Babylon which have never in the past been exhaustively fulfilled, and that Scripture usually connects the final overthrow of Babylon with the yet future restoration and blessing of Israel.⁵³

One reason some reject a literal interpretation is the picture of “mystery” and harlotry associated with Babylon in the book of Revelation (Rev. 17:5). As we shall see in our discussion of *Mystery Babylon?*^[4.1.4.2], the “mystery” is not related to the identification of the city, but her relationship with the beast upon which she rides. The angel who explains the mystery to John devotes most of the passage talking about her relationship with the seven-headed beast with ten horns (Rev. 17:7-14) and relatively little to the *Harlot*^[5.2.25] herself (Rev. 17:15-18). Even then, he concludes by saying, “And the woman whom you saw is that great city which reigns over the kings of the earth” (Rev. 17:18). He makes sure John understands that the Harlot is a *city*—the literal city of Babylon. The use of harlot imagery does not preclude a related literal meaning, for the angel is showing John that she is both a *city* and a worldwide polluting influence:

The Old Testament uses harlot imagery to depict the Gentile cities of Tyre (Isa. 23:16-17) and Nineveh (Nah. 3:4) while never hinting that these cities are not meant to be understood literally. . . . The same sort of harlot imagery that describes the city in chapter 17 is also employed in chapter 18 (Rev. 18:3, 9). Yet, despite these similarities, Walvoord interprets the city in Revelation 17 non-literally while simultaneously interpreting the city in Revelation 18 literally.⁵⁴

First, [Babylon] signifies a literal city, which shall yet be built in the Land of Shinar, on the banks of the Euphrates. Proof of this was furnished in our last chapter so that we need not pause here to submit the evidence. Six times (significant number!) is ‘Babylon’ referred to in the Apocalypse, and nowhere is there a hint that the name is not to be understood literally. In the second place, the ‘great city’ (unnamed) signifies an idolatrous system - ‘mother of harlots’ a system of idolatry which originated in the Babylon of Nimrod’s day, and a system which is to culminate and terminate in another Babylon in a day soon to come.⁵⁵

Another reason in favor of taking Babylon as a literal city rather than a symbol or figure is found in its representation as the Harlot: “The Whore represents a City. . . . Babylon, must therefore be understood literally, otherwise we should have the anomaly of a figure representing a figure.”⁵⁶

The literal view of Babylon has numerous proponents and was held well in advance of the

circumstances of our own time (the Gulf War and the overthrow of Iraq by the United States). The literal view is not a reaction to these events, as if an attempt to pour prophecy into the politics of our day. In fact, the literal view has just the opposite characteristic: it is far less susceptible to reinterpretation as the movements and situations of history change with time:

The Babylon view has been criticized as being the product of reading current events regarding the present Iraqi crisis back into the text rather than being the product of sound exegetical principles. . . . However, this accusation seems unfair in light of the fact that numerous interpreters held the view long before Saddam Hussein rose to power. Such commentators include Newell (1935), Jennings (1937), Cooper (1942), and Lang (1948). Other commentators held the view even before Iraq became a nation in 1932. Such commentators include Seiss (1909) and Larkin (1919). It is true that Dyer released his book advocating the literal Babylon view on the eve of the Gulf War and recently on the eve of the present war with Iraq. However, it should also be noted that the content of these books is based upon Dyer's master's thesis that was completed in May of 1979 long before Hussein's rise to power and escalating tensions between America and Iraq.⁵⁷

In my limited library, I have found a number of men who taught a future [literal] Babylon from Rev. 17:1-18 and 18. They include the following: B. W. Newton (1853), G. H. Pember (1888), J. A. Seiss (1900), Clarence Larkin (1918), Robert Govett (1920), E. W. Bullinger (1930), William R. Newell (1935), F. C. Jennings (1937), David L. Cooper (1942), G. H. Lang (1945). I am sure that more could be added to the list.⁵⁸

Further evidence for taking Babylon as the literal city is found in the way in which her destruction is illustrated by an angel in the book of Revelation. The angel takes up a stone and throws it into the sea, saying, "Thus with violence the great city Babylon shall be thrown down, and shall not be found anymore" (Rev. 18:21). This is an intentional allusion to a similar prophetic enactment found in Jeremiah:

The word which Jeremiah the prophet commanded Seraiah the son of Neriah, the son of Mahseiah, **when he went with Zedekiah the king of Judah to Babylon** in the fourth year of his reign. And Seraiah *was* the quartermaster. So Jeremiah wrote in a book all the evil that would come upon Babylon, all these words that are written against Babylon. And Jeremiah said to Seraiah, "**When you arrive in Babylon and see it**, and read all these words, then you shall say, 'O LORD, You have spoken against this place to cut it off, so that none shall remain in it, neither man nor beast, but it shall be desolate forever.' Now it shall be, when you have finished reading this book, that you shall **tie a stone to it and throw it out into the Euphrates**. Then you shall say, 'Thus Babylon shall sink and not rise from the catastrophe that I will bring upon her. And they shall be weary.'" Thus far are the words of Jeremiah. (Jer. 51:59-64) [emphasis added]

The angel virtually duplicates the pronouncement and activity of Seraiah in Jeremiah's day. Of particular import is the fact that Jeremiah sent Seraiah with Zedekiah *to Babylon* in order to make his pronouncement of judgment. This is similar to how Jonah was sent to Nineveh. In both cases, the pronounced judgment *concerned a specific geographic location* which God would judge. Moreover, the pronouncement by Seraiah was that of a permanent destruction where neither man *nor beast* would ever remain there. As we have seen, the historical record of literal Babylon does not match the seriousness of this prophecy.

The question proponents of a non-literal Babylon must answer is why did Jeremiah go to the trouble of instructing Seraiah to make such a pronouncement at the *specific geographical location of literal Babylon* if the fulfillment is to be found somewhere else? Either at a different city (e.g., Rome, New York) or in the destruction of a generic system? It would seem that the actions of Jeremiah, entrusting the message to Seraiah who was traveling to Babylon, point to God's intention to judge the specific city over which the pronouncement was made. See commentary on *Revelation 18:21*^[3,18,21].

4.1.3.5.3 - Back to Shinar

Another passage which is often overlooked in establishing the identification of Babylon is the puzzling passage which occupies the last half of Zechariah chapter 5. An angel shows Zechariah a basket containing a woman covered with a lead disk. The angel identifies the woman: "This *is* Wickedness!" (Zec. 5:8). The basket is then transported away by two winged figures.⁵⁹ When Zechariah asks where the basket is bound, the angel responds, "To build a house for it in the land of Shinar; when it is ready, *the basket* will be set there on its base."

First, the prophet sees as “ephah” (or bath) which was the largest measure for dry goods among the Jews. It would, therefore, be the natural symbol for Commerce. Next, we note that twice over it is said that the ephah “goeth forth” (Zec. 5:5, 6). As the whole of the preceding visions concern Jerusalem and her people, this can only mean that the center of Jewish commerce is to be transferred from Palestine elsewhere. Next, we are told that there was a “woman” concealed in the midst of the ephah (Zec. 5:7). We say “concealed,” for in Zec. 5:5 and Zec. 5:6 the “woman” is not seen - the leaden cover (cf. Zec. 5:8) had to be lifted before she could be beholden. The writer is satisfied that this hidden woman in the ephah is “the Woman” which is fully revealed in Revelation 17 and 18. Next, we are told that “wickedness” (lawlessness) was cast into the ephah, before its cover was closed again. Then, in what follows, we are shown this ephah, with the “woman” and “wickedness” shut up therein, being rapidly conveyed from Palestine to “the land of Shinar” (Zec. 5:11). The purpose for this is stated to be, “to build a house,” i.e. a settled habitation. Finally, we are assured, “it shall be established, and set there (in the land of Shinar) upon her own base.” This vision or prophecy contains the germ which is afterwards expanded and developed in such detail in Rev. 17 and 18, where it is shown that “the house” which is established for this system of commerce is “Babylon the great.”⁶⁰

When the woman attempts to escape, she is thrown back into the ephah, which becomes, so to say, the chariot in which she is carried away as something which is defiled and defiling, from the land in which God shall dwell; and the talent with which she carries on her unrighteous trade becomes the heavy weight by which she is held down till she is landed safely “in her own place,” where, after a season of lawless liberty in which she will allure men to their own destruction by her seductive attractiveness and luxury, she will be judged and destroyed, together with him who is pre-eminently styled “The Wicked One,” by the brightness of the Lord’s *parousia* (2Th. 2:8).⁶¹

One of the helpful aspects of this passage is the mention made of the destination: “the land of Shinar.” This locale is mentioned only a handful of times (Gen. 10:10; 11:2; 14:1, 9; Isa. 11:11; Dan. 1:2; Zec. 5:11) and is clearly established as the region of Babel and Babylon. It points to the geographical location of Babel and, later, Babylon:⁶²

Shinar: the ancient name of the great alluvial tract through which the Tigris and Euphrates pass before reaching the sea—the tract known in later times as Chaldea or Babylonia. It was a plain country, where brick had to be used for stone and slime for mortar. Gen. 11:3. Among the cities were Babel (Babylon), Erech or Orchoe (Orchoe), Calneh or Calno (probably Niffer), and Accad, the site of which is unknown. It may be suspected that Shinar was the name by which the Hebrews originally knew the lower Mesopotamian country where they so long dwelt, and which Abraham brought with him from “Ur of the Chaldees.”⁶³

We believe the transport of “Wickedness!” back to the land of Shinar is another piece of evidence that Babylon of the end is a rebuilt literal city in the same geographic location as Babel, the site of man’s *original rebellious city ruled by Nimrod*^[4.1.1]. The history of man is to be brought full circle: in the same place where the first king rebelled against God, so too will the last king rule before his demise and the institution of the *Millennial Kingdom*^[5.2.39]:

It shows from actual facts and events which are before us the very strong probability that “the land of Shinar”—which in the past was so “prominent in connection with the manifestation of evil on the part of man, and of judgment on the part of God, that it stands peculiarly as a memorial of proud ungodliness met by the visitation of righteous vengeance from above”—will yet, as Scripture forecasts, play a very important part in the consummation of human “wickedness” in the final anti-Christian apostasy, in which a godless Judaism and a corrupt, unbelieving Christianity will be united for the sake of the false peace, and pomp, and luxury, and a humanitarianism dissociated from God and the truth, which the system, outwardly symbolized by the ephah, will for a time minister to them, but which, as Scripture also warns us, will end in the most terrible judgment which has yet befallen man upon the earth.⁶⁴

There are significant similarities between the woman in the basket and what John sees concerning Babylon in Revelation 17 and 18. We believe these similarities are intentional and that the two are to be connected. The transport of the basket to the land of Shinar establishes the location of end-time Babylon. She will be right where God said! The correlation between Zechariah’s vision and that of John is more than uncanny:

Zechariah 5 and Revelation 17-18

Zechariah 5:5-11	Revelation 17-18⁶⁵
Woman sitting in a basket.	Woman sitting on the beast, seven mountains, and many waters (Rev. 17:3, 9, 15).
Emphasis on commerce (a basket for measuring grain).	Emphasis on commerce.
Woman's name is wickedness.	Woman's name is Babylon the Great, Mother of Harlots and Abominations of the Earth.
Focus on false worship (a temple is built for the woman).	Focus on false worship (Rev. 17:5).
Woman is taken to Babylon.	Woman is called Babylon.

It is our view that the only obstacle to taking Babylon in the book of Revelation as the literal city on the banks of the Euphrates River is one of timing and faith. Obviously, if Babylon is the literal city, then the events of the book of Revelation are still some distance off from the time of our writing. It will take time for events to conspire such that the city will be rebuilt to become a global hub for world trade. This is really the only obstacle between the Scriptural passages before us and a literal fulfillment. Fortunately, the One Who wrote the predictions also has all the time in the world and is faithful to keep His word!

And the LORD answered me, and said, write the vision, and make *it* plain upon tables, that he may run that readeth it. **For the vision is yet for an appointed time, but at the end it shall speak, and not lie: though it tarry, wait for it; because it will surely come, it will not tarry.** (Hab. 2:2-3) [emphasis added]

4.1.4 - The Great Harlot

Having examined some of the views concerning the identity of Babylon in the book of Revelation, we now turn our attention to the identity of the *Harlot*^[5.2.25] whom John is shown in Revelation 17.

4.1.4.1 - Her Harlotry

The woman which John sees riding the *Beast*^[5.2.9] of *seven heads*^[4.3.2.4] and *ten horns*^[4.3.2.22] is called a *harlot*, indicating certain practices and priorities which stand opposed to God. She is not just a harlot, but is said to be the *mother* of harlots and of abominations of the earth (Rev. 17:5). Thus, she has an *originating role* in the harlotry and abominations which God so hates.

As early as the Law of Moses, certain practices of the Israelites were prohibited and identified by God as *abominations* (Lev. 7:18; 11 cf. Deu. 18:9-12). Many of these practices (e.g., homosexuality, Lev. 18:22) were obviously considered as abominations from the very beginning—far in advance of Babylon of Nebuchadnezzar's day or even the kingdom of Egypt. Since the *Harlot*^[5.2.25] is considered the *mother* of the abominations of the earth, she must predate both Egypt and Nebuchadnezzar's Babylon.

This is also reflected in her ride upon the seven-headed beast (Rev. 17:3) who is empowered by the seven-headed dragon (Rev. 12:3) which we saw was Satan exercising authority over all the kingdoms of history (Luke 4:5-6). Since Satan's dominion began when man forfeited his at the rebellion in the Garden of Eden, we should expect that the seven heads denote a group of kingdoms spanning a sufficient period of history to reach the earliest kingdom. As we saw in our discussion of *Babylon of Old*^[4.1.1], the first king was Nimrod who presided over the kingdom of Babel, the precursor to Babylon. See #4 - *Seven Heads/Kings*^[4.3.2.4].

These facts argue against any primary identification of the Harlot as a system, city, or government which is a relative newcomer *from a Biblical perspective* upon the stage of world history. Roman Catholicism is one such candidate. To be sure, the Harlot can be identified in a *secondary* way with

such systems because she is their *mother* and they are her *daughters*. As in any family relationship, we expect great similarity between a mother and her daughters. Therefore, in any exploration of the identity of the Harlot, it is insufficient to make the case on similarity alone. All this proves is a mother-daughter relationship. To be the true *mother* requires a historic pedigree that many suggested candidates lack.

Was there no idolatry before Pagan Rome? Whence then came the worship of “Moloch” and “Remphan,” and “Chiun,” in the wilderness (Acts 7:43; Amos 5:25-26); and the worship of Ashtoreth, the abomination (*i.e.*, *idol*) of the Zidonians, and Chemosh, the abomination of the Moabites, and Milcom, the abomination of the children of Ammon, which were introduced by Solomon (1K. 11:5; 2K. 13:11). Was Rome the mother of these?⁶⁶

Now we turn to the matter of her harlotry. *Harlot* (Rev. 17:16) is πόρνης [*pornēs*], denoting a prostitute⁶⁷ and used of Rahab (Jos. 2:1; 6:17, 23, 25—*LXX*^{15.2.38}]; Heb. 11:31; Jas. 2:25). Harlotry often describes spiritual idolatry—forsaking the One True God:

Take heed to yourself, lest you make a covenant with the inhabitants of the land where you are going, lest it be a snare in your midst. But you shall destroy their altars, break their *sacred* pillars, and cut down their *wooden* images (for you shall worship no other god, for the LORD, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God), lest you make a covenant with the inhabitants of the land, and they play the **harlot** with their gods and make sacrifice to their gods, and *one of them* invites you and you eat of his sacrifice, and you take of his daughters for your sons, and his daughters play the **harlot** with their gods and make your sons play the **harlot** with their gods. You shall make no molded gods for yourselves. (Ex. 34:12-17) [emphasis added]

And the LORD said to Moses: “Behold, you will rest with your fathers; and **this people will rise and play the harlot with the gods of the foreigners of the land**, where they go *to be* among them, and they will forsake Me and break My covenant which I have made with them.” (Deu. 31:16) [emphasis added]

And if the people of the land should in any way hide their eyes from the man, when he gives some of his descendants to Molech, and they do not kill him, then I will set My face against that man and against his family; and I will cut him off from his people, and all who prostitute themselves with him to commit **harlotry** with Molech. (Lev. 20:4-5) [emphasis added]

But come here, you sons of the sorceress, **You offspring of the adulterer and the harlot!** Whom do you ridicule? Against whom do you make a wide mouth *And* stick out the tongue? *Are* you not children of transgression, offspring of falsehood, **Inflaming yourselves with gods under every green tree**, slaying the children in the valleys, under the clefts of the rocks? (Isa. 57:3-5) [emphasis added]

“But you trusted in your own beauty, played the **harlot** because of your fame, and poured out your **harlotry** on everyone passing by who *would have* it. You took some of your garments and adorned multicolored high places for yourself, and played the **harlot** on them. *Such* things should not happen, nor be. You have also taken your beautiful jewelry from My gold and My silver, which I had given you, and made for yourself male images and played the **harlot** with them. You took your embroidered garments and covered them, and you set My oil and My incense before them. Also My food which I gave you—the pastry of fine flour, oil, and honey *which* I fed you—you set it before them as sweet incense; and *so* it was,” says the Lord GOD. “Moreover you took your sons and your daughters, whom you bore to Me, and these you sacrificed to them to be devoured. *Were* your **acts of harlotry** a small matter, that you have slain My children and offered them up to them by causing them to pass through *the fire*? And in all your abominations and acts of **harlotry** you did not remember the days of your youth, when you were naked and bare, struggling in your blood. Then it was so, after all your wickedness—‘Woe, woe to you!’ says the Lord GOD—*that* you also built for yourself a shrine, and made a high place for yourself in every street. You built your high places at the head of every road, and made your beauty to be abhorred. You offered yourself to everyone who passed by, and multiplied your acts of **harlotry**. You also committed **harlotry** with the Egyptians, your very fleshly neighbors, and increased your acts of **harlotry** to provoke Me to anger.” (Eze. 16:15-26) [emphasis added]

As the mother of Harlots, she is the originator of an idolatrous influence which was passed on to her daughters. Her priorities and intent are such that she distracts those she influences away from a right recognition of God and suggests that they turn their attention to other things, *any other thing* than the one true God.⁶⁸

The figure of harlotry, expressing forgetfulness of God in selfish preoccupation with worldly gain, appropriately describes covetousness, which was the besetting sin of Tyre, and is closely allied with idolatry and licentiousness (Eph. 5:5; Col. 3:5). . . . [Such] operate upon the principle of “do anything

for worldly gain,” which is what, in a spiritual sense, harlotry is [Isa. 23:16-18].⁶⁹

She is said to sit on many waters (Rev. 17:1). The many waters are said to be “peoples, multitudes, nations, and tongues.” The woman is also said to be a great city (Rev. 17:18). These two characteristics of her description are in tension. How can she be sitting on (supported by or influencing and controlling) a global community—including diverse nations spanning separate geographic regions—and at the same time be *a* great city? The answer would seem to be found in recognizing her primary identity as a single city, yet one that historically has influenced the global community, much like Nineveh: “Because of the multitude of harlotries of the seductive harlot, The mistress of sorceries, Who sells nations through her harlotries, And families through her sorceries” (Nah. 3:4). Her global influence is also seen in her global guilt, for “in her was found the blood of prophets and saints, and of all who were slain on the earth” (Rev. 18:24 cf. Rev. 17:6).

As the celebrated worldly Harlot, she is to be contrasted with the persecuted virgin of Revelation 12 who brought forth the male child (see *A Virgin and a Harlot*^[3.12.1.1]) and the Lamb’s Wife (*Babylon and the New Jerusalem*^[3.17.18.1]).

4.1.4.2 - Mystery Babylon?

The primary issue among interpreters in regard to the *Harlot*^[5.2.25] is whether she is to be understood as being a *separate but related entity* to Babylon, the city. Many interpreters take her to be a separate ecclesiastic system at the time of the end which undergoes a separate judgment and destruction than Babylon, the city. This view is based on a number of points:

1. “Mystery” is written on the woman’s forehead (Rev. 17:5). Some take this as part of her title, denoting her mysterious nature and identity.
2. Religious aspects of the harlot are thought to be more strongly emphasized in Revelation 17, whereas Revelation 18 emphasizes commercial aspects.
3. If modern ecumenical liberalism continues, then it seems likely that disparate religious systems will eventually amalgamate into a one-world global religion at the time of the end.

We discuss the merits of each of these points below.

One other matter which we should mention regarding the identification of the Harlot: the tendency of unevenly emphasizing interpretive clues provided by the text. Scripture gives us some clear and definite sign-posts to help guide us in our task of interpretation. When we fail to heed those sign-posts, but drive right by them, we miss the main fork in the road leading in the proper direction and drive down the wrong road which takes us miles from the proper destination. It does not matter how many small back-alleys we investigate in the local neighborhood if we are already in the wrong city! Ignoring very clear and definite statements, interpreters often spend great effort analyzing other less-clear passages in attempting to identify her.

In the case of the Harlot, several definitive statements are given to us about her identity. She is explicitly said to be a *city*: “And the woman whom you saw is that great city which reigns over the kings of the earth” (Rev. 17:18). The phrase, *the great* (Rev. 17:3), is reminiscent of *the great city*, Babylon (Rev. 16:19; 17:4; 18:2, 21; 19:2), although the phrase is also used of Jerusalem (Rev. 11:8; 16:19) and the New Jerusalem (Rev. 21:10). We are not left to wonder which city is meant, whether Jerusalem, the New Jerusalem, Babylon (or even Rome, New York, or Tokyo!). It is *Babylon* which is explicitly identified with “the great harlot” (Rev. 19:2 cf. Rev. 18:21). Whatever else the Harlot denotes, we must not lose sight of these simple, clear sign posts: she is a *city* and that city is *Babylon*.

4.1.4.2.1 - Mystery as a Title?

The question as to whether the word *mystery* is to be understood as describing what is related concerning the woman or whether it forms part of her title cannot be dogmatically settled by the underlying Greek. However, evidence is in favor of excluding *mystery* from her title:

Although translators disagree, it seems best to understand the word *mystery* as describing what is related *about* the woman and not being part of her title:

The first question is whether *musterion* should be interpreted as being in apposition with *onoma*? If not, John would be saying that the name on the woman's forehead is "Mystery Babylon the Great." If so, John would be saying that the name "Babylon the Great" written upon the woman's forehead is a mystery. . . . The repetition of the woman's title as "Babylon the Great" (Rev. 14:8; 16:19; 18:2) rather than "Mystery Babylon the Great" favors the appositional relationship.⁷⁰

By printing (on its own authority) the word "mystery" in large capital letters, the AV^[5.2.8] has made it appear as part of the name. The Revisers have followed this example, printing the name in small capitals instead of large. But they have, in the margin, said "or, a mystery, *BABYLON THE GREAT*," as though the word "mystery" did not form part of the title. We believe this to be the case.⁷¹

We also observe that in the immediate context, the angel offers to tell John "the mystery of the woman and of the beast which carries her" (Rev. 17:7). This provides further evidence against taking *mystery* as her title for the mystery pertains to understanding the vision, not her character. Moreover, the mystery extends beyond the woman herself to include the seven-headed beast with ten horns. In fact, an examination of the remainder of the chapter will show that the angel spends more time discussing the mystery of the heads and horns (Rev. 17:8-14) than the woman (Rev. 17:15-18). Although the *Beast*^[5.2.9] predominates in the explanation of the mystery, he has no such title.

Thus, we disagree with the terminology "Mystery Babylon," which is often used to define a *second Babylon* of sorts which bears little, if any, relationship to the city. This we believe is a misreading of the text and an unfortunate side-effect of how several translations have chosen to render Revelation 17:5.

4.1.4.2.2 - One or Two Babylons?

Many conclude that the *Harlot*^[5.2.25] (Rev. 17) represents a religious system, whereas the city (Rev. 18) represents a commercial system. This view holds that what is said concerning the Harlot, and the very fact that she is said to be a *Harlot*, necessitates a purely religious role for her. Conversely, the commercial emphasis of Revelation 18 speaks more of a commercial system and a city. An unfortunate contributor to this separation into two parts is the chapter division between Revelation 17 and 18 which masks the unity of the entire passage. Since chapter divisions are not part of the *inspired*^[5.2.33] text, we need to be cognizant of their placement and the implicit effects they have on our interpretation. In the case of Revelation 17 and 18, it is true that Revelation 17 speaks more of the spiritual aspects of the Harlot. Similarly, Revelation 18 emphasizes commercial aspects. But this is not the full story because both chapters emphasize both aspects and overlap to a much greater degree than many interpreters are willing to admit.⁷²

The Harlot versus The City

Attribute	The Harlot (Revelation 17)	The City (Revelation 18, 19)
Named “Babylon the Great.”	Rev. 17:5	Rev. 18:2
Called “The Great Harlot.”	Rev. 17:1	Rev. 19:2
Holding a cup.	Rev. 17:4	Rev. 18:6
Fornicating with kings.	Rev. 17:2	Rev. 18:3
Drunk with wine of immorality.	Rev. 17:2	Rev. 18:3
Persecuting believers.	Rev. 17:6	Rev. 18:20, 24; 19:2
Destroyed by fire.	Rev. 17:16	Rev. 18:8, 18
Destroyed by God.	Rev. 17:17	Rev. 18:5, 8
Clothed with purple, scarlet, gold, precious stones, pearls.	Rev. 17:4	Rev. 18:16
Wealthy.	Rev. 17:4	Rev. 18:3, 7, 12-14
Sitting.	Rev. 17:1, 7, 15	Rev. 18:7
Global influence.	Rev. 17:1-2, 15, 18	Rev. 18:3, 9, 11, 19:2
Spiritual wickedness.	Rev. 17:5	Rev. 18:23

Revelation 17, while speaking of her harlotry, abominations, and being drunk with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus, also relates her great commercial wealth: “arrayed in purple and scarlet, and adorned with gold and precious stones and pearls, having in her hand a golden cup” (Rev. 17:4). Moreover, Revelation 18 speaks of her spiritual aspects: “For all nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication, the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her” (Rev. 18:3a) and “for by your sorcery all the nations were deceived. And in her was found the blood of prophets and saints, and of all who were slain on the earth” (Rev. 18:24). When the *city* of Babylon is finally overthrown, as predicted by the angel (Rev. 18:21), it is said, “He has judged **the great harlot** who corrupted the earth with her fornication; and He has avenged on her the blood of His servants *shed* by her” [emphasis added] (Rev. 19:2).

The question is, how different from the Babylon of chapter 17 is the Babylon of chapter 18? Undoubtedly the city is the same in both instances. Both have the name “Babylon the great” (Rev. 17:5; 18:2). Both are guilty of fornication (Rev. 17:1, 2, 4, 5, 16; 18:3) and of causing the kings of the earth and the earth-dwellers to imbibe of the wine (of the anger) of the city’s fornication (Rev. 17:2; 18:3). The destiny of both is to be burned with fire (Rev. 17:16; 18:8, 9, 18) and to become an utter desolation (Rev. 17:16; 18:17, 19). In both chapters Babylon is “the great city” (Rev. 17:18; 18:10, 16, 18, 19, 21) and wears the apparel and adornment of a harlot (Rev. 17:4; 18:16). Both are responsible for the martyrdom of the faithful (Rev. 17:6; 18:20, 24 [cf. 19:2]).⁷³

We also note that in the prediction of Babylon’s demise by the flying angel there is not the slightest intimation of two systems or two destructions. Moreover, in the angel’s description of Babylon, he calls it a “great city” (commercial) which is guilty of “fornication” (spiritual idolatry) (Rev. 14:8). There the self-same Babylon is described using both commercial and spiritual attributes. This unity is also evidenced under the seventh bowl where “Babylon was remembered before God, to give her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of His wrath” (Rev. 16:19). Only one Babylon is in view and its destruction is associated with a single judgment—the pouring forth of the last bowl of the wrath of God. We see no evidence of a separate judgment for the Harlot and a subsequent judgment of the city—as if they were two different entities.

Another factor favoring the unity of Revelation 17 and 18 is the announced mission of the angel sent to

John: “I will show you the judgment of the great harlot who sits on many waters” (Rev. 17:1). This angel is with John from Revelation 17:1 throughout both chapters and speaks to him again in Revelation 19:19.⁷⁴ The act of showing John *the judgment* (singular) of *the great harlot* (singular) spans Revelation 17:1 through Revelation 19:4. The same event is in view the entire time. The angel gives not the slightest indication that John is being shown two entities and two destructions.

If we look at these two chapters carefully [Rev. 17 and 18], we fail to find the distinction so persistently affirmed. Some one states a thing as a fact; and then others think they see it. There is no such thing as “Mystic Babylon.” The Babylon mentioned in chapter 17 is the same as that in chapter 18. It is the “Woman” which is a secret symbol or sign. But that means only that we are not to take it literally as a woman, but as “that great city,” as is explained in [Rev. 17:18].⁷⁵

The idea that the Harlot is something other than the city of Babylon is difficult to maintain if Scripture alone is our guide. The Harlot is called a city (Rev. 17:18) while the city is described as a harlot (Rev. 18:3, 9, 23-24) and called “the great harlot” (Rev. 19:2). The Harlot is that great city Babylon!

4.1.4.2.3 - An End-Time Religious System?

Although the *Harlot*^[5.2.25] includes both commercial and religious aspects, many have minimized her commercial aspects and placed greater emphasis on her religious aspects. The Harlot is then seen to be the end-time religious system which precedes the rise of the *Beast*^[5.2.9] as sole object of worship.

What is found in these verses is the final form of religious apostasy, ending in a one-world super-church. It is the final form of the woman *Jezebel*^[5.2.35] cast into the Great Tribulation (Rev. 2:20-22) and united with the Laodicean Church. This is the counterfeit bride of messiah, presented as a prostitute, in contrast with the true Bride of Messiah, presented as a pure virgin (2Cor. 11:2; Eph. 5:25-27; Rev. 19:6-8).⁷⁶

During the Tribulation, all the world’s diverse false religions will be reunited into one great world religion. That ultimate expression of false religion will be an essential element of *Antichrist*^[5.2.3]’s final world empire, in holding together his military, economic, and political structure. Only religion can unite the world in the most compelling way.⁷⁷

The current trend of ecumenical liberalism, which places unity and relationship above doctrinal distinctions, is seen as evolving into a one-world super church. This global system of unified worship is suggested as the source from which the *False Prophet*^[5.2.20] arises (Rev. 13:11).

The modern ecumenical movement, active first among apostate Protestant churches in the first half of the twentieth century, then essentially combining (or at least fellowshiping) with the Catholic and Orthodox churches in the second half of the twentieth century, will eventually amalgamate with all other world religions, especially after the departure of all true churches to be with Christ. The second beast, or false prophet, will most likely emerge as the patriarch (or pope, or ayatollah, or guru or, more likely, simply “prophet”) of this universal religion.⁷⁸

At a critical juncture, probably the revival of the Beast from the dead, the one-world “worship-what-you-will” system of religion is thought to be put down in order to direct all worship to the Beast (Rev. 13:15). The Beast, elevating himself over all that is called god (2Th. 2:4) and empowered by the worship-hungry dragon, will not allow competition so the worldwide ecumenical movement which rode him as the Harlot will then be viciously turned upon and destroyed (Rev. 17:16-18).

Having used the false religious system to help him gain control of the world, Antichrist will discard it. In his rampant megalomania, he will want the world to worship only him. He will also no doubt covet the vast wealth of the false religious system. Thus, he will turn on the harlot.⁷⁹

Thus, the religious state of the end-time is thought to be characterized by two phases. During the first phase, ecumenical globalism is pervasive. During the second phase, only the Antichrist is worshiped.

Just as there will be two political systems during the Tribulation, one during the first half (the ten kings) and one during the second half (the Antichrist), there will also be two religious systems, one for each half of the Tribulation. This passage describes the religious system of the first half of the Tribulation.⁸⁰

As plausible sounding as such a scenario might be, the Scriptures themselves provide precious little detail to support such ideas. If Scripture speaks for itself, the Harlot is seen to be one-and-the-same as the city Babylon. Just as Tyre and Jerusalem are described as harlots, so too is Babylon. If the Harlot is

a city (Rev. 17:18) and the city is a harlot (Rev. 19:2) and their characteristics overlap as we've shown above, then there is little room for making the Harlot a separate ecclesiastical system.

It is indeed surprising how any mistake could have been made in the identification of this woman. For the Holy Spirit first shows us her very name upon her forehead. Then in [Rev. 17:18], He tells us as plainly as words can tell anything that “the woman which thou sawest is that great city, which reigneth over the kings of the earth”; and [Rev. 16:19], as well as [Rev. 17:5] identifies this city with Babylon. God says it is a “city.” He does not say a *system* or a *religion*, but a “CITY.”⁸¹

The woman is identified as the great city (Rev. 17:18) whose fall is described in chapter 18. From internal evidence, the identity of Babylon the woman (ch. 17) with Babylon the great city (ch. 18) is so unmistakable that it would be inappropriate to make them different entities.⁸²

We believe a better solution is to recognize the essential unity concerning all that is related about Babylon. The Harlot and the city are *one*. But the city has *two* aspects: both a religious aspect and a commercial aspect. Both of these date back to the time of Nimrod and the tower of Babel (Gen. 11:4). These streams of influence have spanned both history and geography: she “sits on many waters” which are “peoples, multitudes, nations, and tongues” (Rev. 17:1, 15). Therefore, what Scripture relates concerning her harlotry we should expect, and indeed do see, in any number of the centers of civilization of our age. In that sense, there is some truth and overlap between the views that *Babylon is the World?*^[4.1.3.1] and *Babylon is Babylon!*^[4.1.3.5]

It is certainly possible that an ecumenical one-world religion will unite the people of the world prior to the rise of Antichrist. Such a movement would be a valuable tool for the forces of globalism which will prevail prior to the *ten-horn kingdom*^[4.3.2.22] out of which the *little horn*^[4.3.2.25] eventually arises. Although Scripture does not preclude such a development, *neither does it predict it*. For it is equally possible that a single repressive faith, such as Islam, could gain ascendancy and bring a forced unity by the sword—Scripture simply does not say.⁸³

What is most important to recognize is the dual aspect of Babylon of the end, that it will unite both commercial and religious aspects into a powerful force which has always proven too great a temptation in the hands of fallen men:

Various astute rulers in the long history of human government, rightly estimating the tremendous power of religion over the minds of men, have been greatly intrigued with the idea of some kind of union between church and state, in which the government would establish and support some widely accepted religion and this religion in turn would lend its influence to the state. All such alliances thus humanly originated have been based on selfish motives and opportunist policies on both sides, and hence must always break down in the end. Since each side pays a price for the unnatural union, and the price is ever increasing, the break becomes inevitable (cf. Rev. 17:1-18). A union between church and state is safe only when inaugurated and controlled by the one true God in a kingdom of His own (Zec. 14:9, 14:16-21).⁸⁴

This is why Scripture relates that only when Messiah comes will the function of both *priest* and *king* be safely united in a single person as predicted by Zechariah:

Then take silver and gold, and **make crowns**, and set *them* upon the head of Joshua the son of Josedech, the high priest; and speak unto him, saying, thus speaketh the LORD of hosts, saying, behold the man whose name *is* The BRANCH; and he shall grow up out of his place, and he shall build the temple of the LORD: Even he shall build the temple of the LORD; and he shall bear the glory, and **shall sit and rule upon his throne**; and he **shall be a priest upon his throne**: and **the counsel of peace shall be between them both** [the two crowns or roles]. (Zec. 6:11-13, KJV) [emphasis added]

The American policy of complete separation of church and state, which most sensible men fully approve under present conditions, is not however the ideal policy. It is rather a policy of precaution in a sinful world, where political and ecclesiastical power too often get into the wrong hands, and the result is intolerable oppression. But under the personal rule of the Messianic King the union of church and state will not only be safe; it will also be the highest possible good.⁸⁵

Notes

¹ Image courtesy of the *Perry-Castañeda Library Map Collection*, University of Texas at Austin. [www.lib.utexas.edu/maps]

- ² Translations differ as to whether Nimrod established Nineveh: “From that land Asshur went forth and built Nineveh. . . .” [*Tanakh: The Holy Scriptures: A New Translation of the Holy Scriptures According to the Traditional Hebrew Text* (Philadelphia, PA: Jewish Publication Society, 1997, c1985), Gen. 10:11-12], [Scherman, ed., *Tanach* (New York, NY: Mesorah Publications, Ltd., 2001), Gen. 10:11]. If “the land of Nimrod” means “Assyria” in Micah 5:5-6, then that would lend support for the view that Nimrod established Nineveh.
- ³ John MacArthur, *Revelation 12-22 : The MacArthur New Testament Commentary* (Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 2000), Rev. 14:8.
- ⁴ Flavius Josephus, *The Complete Works of Josephus* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 1981), s.v. “Antiquities I, iv 1.”
- ⁵ Scherman, *Tanach*, Gen. 11:1-9n.
- ⁶ Donald Grey Barnhouse, *Revelation* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1971), 294.
- ⁷ Merrill F. Unger, *Unger's Commentary on the Old Testament* (Chattanooga, TN: AMG Publishers, 2002), Isa. 14:13.
- ⁸ Unger, *Unger's Commentary on the Old Testament*, Jer. 50:23.
- ⁹ D. J. Wiseman, “Babylon,” in Geoffrey W. Bromiley, ed., *International Standard Bible Encyclopedia* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1979, 1915), 1:389.
- ¹⁰ *Britannica CD 99 Multimedia Edition*, s.v. “Babylon.”
- ¹¹ Merrill K. Unger, R. Harrison, Frederic F Vos, and Cyril J. Barber, *The New Unger's Bible Dictionary* (Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 1988), s.v. “Babylon.”
- ¹² Wiseman, “Babylon,” 1:390.
- ¹³ “Dated cuneiform texts up to A.D. 110 show that the site was still occupied.”—Wiseman, “Babylon,” 1:390.
- ¹⁴ Moshe Beere, “Judaism (Babylonian Judaism),” in David Noel Freeman, ed., *The Anchor Bible Dictionary* (New York, NY: Doubleday, 1996, c1992), 3:1080.
- ¹⁵ Beere, “Judaism (Babylonian Judaism),” 3:1082.
- ¹⁶ “According to Septimius Severus the site was deserted by A.D. 200.”—Wiseman, “Babylon,” 1:390.
- ¹⁷ Wiseman, “Babylon,” 1:390.
- ¹⁸ Image courtesy of the *Perry-Castañeda Library Map Collection*, University of Texas at Austin. [www.lib.utexas.edu/maps]
- ¹⁹ How strange then to find Barnhouse commenting: “What we have seen of the state of the ruins of literal Babylon satisfies us that the prophecies of Isaiah and Jeremiah have been fulfilled.”—Barnhouse, *Revelation*, Rev. 18:1-3. Barnhouse essentially suggests that God’s language of prophecy is “sloppy.”
- ²⁰ Some hold that it is neither possible nor important to identify Babylon: “There is no way to be really sure of the identity of the city, nor is its identity important.”—Alan F. Johnson, *Revelation: The Expositor's Bible Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1966), Rev. 14:20. We would ask why God gave such a large body of information concerning her, if we were not to be concerned about her identity?
- ²¹ Andy Woods, *What is the Identity of Babylon In Revelation 17-18?*.
- ²² Woods, *What is the Identity of Babylon In Revelation 17-18?*.
- ²³ Barnhouse, *Revelation*, 265.
- ²⁴ Walter Scott, *Exposition of The Revelation* (London, England: Pickering & Inglis, n.d.), Rev. 14:8.
- ²⁵ Unger, *Unger's Commentary on the Old Testament*, Isa. 13:6.
- ²⁶ Johnson, *Revelation: The Expositor's Bible Commentary*, 158.
- ²⁷ Barnhouse, normally a very reliable commentator, is interesting in this regard. After a lengthy and informative exposition of most of Revelation 17 wherein he holds the Harlot to be an ecclesiastical system, he concludes some *nineteen pages* of discussion with an exposition of the *17th verse*. There the commentary ends and runs off into a blank page! Not only doesn’t he comment on the last verse, verse 18, *he doesn't even mention it!* MacArthur is similarly silent at the end of his commentary on Revelation 17, commenting on verse 17 but not

18. Why? We can only guess because this verse stands as a contradiction to their schemes of interpretation which take the Harlot to be an ecclesiastical system. For verse 18 tells us that the woman is “that great city.”
- 28 Barnhouse, *Revelation*, 335.
- 29 M. R. Vincent, *Vincent's Word Studies* (Escondido, CA: Ephesians Four Group, 2002), Rev. 17:5.
- 30 A. W. Fortune, “*Babylon in the NT*,” in Geoffrey W. Bromiley, ed., *International Standard Bible Encyclopedia* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1979, 1915), 1:391.
- 31 “David S. Clark . . . takes the view of many others (Moses Stuart, Jay Adams, etc.) that the increased attention to Babylon in the second half of Revelation should be taken as a mystic reference to Rome, the persecuting city after the fall of Jerusalem: ‘Rome was called Babylon because [she was] sort of a duplicate of old Babylon, in that she was a persecutor of God’s people, she was intensely idolatrous, and she was doomed to overthrow for her sins.’”—Steve Gregg, *Revelation Four Views: A Parallel Commentary* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 1997), Rev. 14:8.
- 32 Fortune, “*Babylon in the NT*,” 1:391.
- 33 A. R. Fausset, “*The Revelation of St. John the Divine*,” in Robert Jamieson, A. R. Fausset, and David Brown, *A Commentary, Critical and Explanatory, on the Old and New Testaments* (Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc., 1997, 1877), Rev. 17:5.
- 34 Robert H. Mounce, *The Book of Revelation* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1977), Rev. 14:8.
- 35 Robert L. Thomas, *Revelation 8-22* (Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 1995), Rev. 14:8.
- 36 We believe this view is bolstered by the many aspects of his epistle which indicate he is ministering primarily to Jewish Christians of the Diaspora (1Pe. 1:1). Although Fortune favors the Roman identification, he offers two alternatives to understanding Peter’s use of *Babylon* as denoting Rome: “(1) That the Egyptian Babylon, or Old Cairo, is meant. Strabo (xvii.1.30), who wrote as late as A.D. 18, says the Egyptian Babylon was a strong fortress, founded by certain refugees from the Mesopotamian Babylon. But during the 1st cent this was little more than a military station, and it is quite improbable that Peter would have gone there. There is no tradition that connects Peter in any way with Egypt. (2) That the statement is to be taken literally and Babylon in Mesopotamia is meant. Many good scholars hold to this view, among them Weiss and Thayer; but there is no evidence that Peter was ever in Babylon, or that there was even a church there during the 1st century. Mark and Silvanus are associated with Peter in the letter and there is no tradition that connects either of them with Babylon. According to Josephus (Ant. xviii.9.5-9), the Jews at this time had largely been driven out of Babylon and were confined to neighboring towns, and it seems improbable that Peter would have made that his missionary field.”—Fortune, “*Babylon in the NT*,” 1:391.
- 37 Woods, *What is the Identity of Babylon In Revelation 17-18?*
- 38 Arthur Walkington Pink, *The Antichrist* (Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, 1999, 1923), s.v. “Antichrist and Babylon.”
- 39 Woods, *What is the Identity of Babylon In Revelation 17-18?*
- 40 “J. Stuart Russell and others (Terry, Chilton, etc.) believe Babylon to be a symbolic designation for Jerusalem.”—Gregg, *Revelation Four Views: A Parallel Commentary*, Rev. 14:8.
- 41 David Chilton, *The Days of Vengeance* (Tyler, TX: Dominion Press, 1987), Rev. 14:8.
- 42 Chilton, *The Days of Vengeance*, Rev. 14:8.
- 43 We are not talking here about progressive revelation which is a matter altogether different. Progressive revelation *adds* information and understanding to broaden an original prediction or promise. It does not deny the original content or understanding, nor does it reverse or drastically change its meaning to something that denies the basic understanding of the original recipients.
- 44 Woods, *What is the Identity of Babylon In Revelation 17-18?*
- 45 Gregory K. Beale, *The Book of Revelation: A Commentary on the Greek Text* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1999), 25.
- 46 Thomas, *Revelation 8-22*, Rev. 14:8.
- 47 Henry Morris, *The Revelation Record* (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 1983), 323.
- 48 All but one reference to Babylon in the NT outside the book of Revelation are obviously literal: Mtt. 1:11-12,

- 17; Acts 7:43; 1Pe 5:13. The reference at 1Pe. 5:13 is disputed, but there is no real reason for taking Peter's use as non-literal since there was a significant contingent of Jews who remained in Babylon at the time of the NT.
- 49 We reject the idea of a *complementary hermeneutic*^[5.2.26] as embraced by proponents of progressive *dispensationalism*^[5.2.15] which attempts to provide a mechanism by which the original meaning can be modified and even changed.
- 50 E. W. Bullinger, *Commentary On Revelation* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 1984, 1935), Rev. 18:4.
- 51 Robert L. Thomas, *Revelation 1-7* (Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 1992), Rev. 14:8.
- 52 Woods, *What is the Identity of Babylon In Revelation 17-18?*.
- 53 David Baron, *Zechariah: A Commentary On His Visions And Prophecies* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 1918), 167-168.
- 54 Woods, *What is the Identity of Babylon In Revelation 17-18?*.
- 55 Pink, *The Antichrist*, s.v. "Antichrist in Babylon."
- 56 Pink, *The Antichrist*, s.v. "Antichrist."
- 57 Woods, *What is the Identity of Babylon In Revelation 17-18?*.
- 58 Ice, "Babylon in Bible Prophecy," in Thomas Ice, ed., *Pre-Trib Perspectives*, vol. 7 no. 11 (Dallas, TX: Pre-Trib Research Center, March 2003), 5.
- 59 Having wings of a *stork*, an unclean bird.
- 60 Pink, *The Antichrist*, s.v. "Antichrist and Babylon (Rev. 18)."
- 61 Baron, *Zechariah: A Commentary On His Visions And Prophecies*, 164.
- 62 "The Beast^[5.2.9] is a man (Rev. 13:18); therefore his throne is in a definite place: rebuilt Babylon on the Euphrates, we believe,—Satan's ancient capital, in the 'land of Shinar,' where 'wickedness' is to be set on its base in the end-time (Zec. 5:5-10)."—William R. Newell, *Revelation: Chapter by Chapter* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 1994,c1935), Rev. 16:10.
- 63 William Smith, *Smith's Bible Dictionary* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 1997), s.v. "Shinar."
- 64 Baron, *Zechariah: A Commentary On His Visions And Prophecies*, 170.
- 65 Mark Hitchcock, *The Second Coming of Babylon*. (Sisters, OR: Multnomah Publishers, 2003), p. 109, cited by [Woods, *What is the Identity of Babylon In Revelation 17-18?*].
- 66 Bullinger, *Commentary On Revelation*, Rev. 17:5.
- 67 Frederick William Danker, and Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 693.
- 68 Concerning spiritual harlotry: Ex. 34:15; Lev. 17:16; Deu. 31:16; Jdg. 2:18; 1Chr. 5:25; 2Chr. 21:13; Ps. 106:39; Isa. 57:3-8; Jer. 2:20; 3:1-13; 13:27; Eze. 6:9; 16:15-41; 23:5, 19, 30, 44; Hos. 2:5; 3:3; 4:12, 14; 9:1; Mic. 1:7; Nah. 3:4; Mtt. 12:39; Rev. 17:1, 15; Rev. 19:2.
- 69 Unger, *Unger's Commentary on the Old Testament*, Isa. 23:16.
- 70 Woods, *What is the Identity of Babylon In Revelation 17-18?*.
- 71 Bullinger, *Commentary On Revelation*, Rev. 17:5.
- 72 "A strong exegetical case can be made to support the proposition that Revelation 17 and 18 should be viewed as a unit speaking of one Babylon rather than two separate units speaking of two Babylons. The notion of viewing Revelation 17 and 18 as a unit is buttressed by noting the similarities between the chapters. Both chapters refer to Babylon as having the same name (Rev. 17:5; 18:2), holding a cup (Rev. 17:4; 18:6), fornicating with kings (Rev. 17:2; 18:3), being drunk with the wine of immorality (Rev. 17:2; 18:3), persecuting believers (Rev. 17:6; 18:24), experiencing destruction by fire (Rev. 17:16; 18:8), and experiencing destruction by God (Rev. 17:17; 18:5, 8)."—Woods, *What is the Identity of Babylon In Revelation 17-18?*.
- 73 Thomas, *Revelation 8-22*, Rev. 18:1.
- 74 "The speaker [at Rev. 19:9] is one of the angels of the seven last plagues who initiated his role as John's guide in Rev. 17:1."—Thomas, *Revelation 8-22*, Rev. 19:9.

- 75 Bullinger, *Commentary On Revelation*, Rev. 18:2.
- 76 Arnold G. Fruchtenbaum, *The Footsteps of Messiah*, rev ed. (Tustin, CA: Ariel Ministries, 2003), 237.
- 77 John MacArthur, *Revelation 1-11 : The MacArthur New Testament Commentary* (Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 1999), Rev. 17:1.
- 78 Morris, *The Revelation Record*, Rev. 13:11.
- 79 MacArthur, *Revelation 12-22 : The MacArthur New Testament Commentary*, Rev. 17:16.
- 80 Fruchtenbaum, *The Footsteps of Messiah*, 236.
- 81 Bullinger, *Commentary On Revelation*, Rev. 17:5.
- 82 Johnson, *Revelation: The Expositor's Bible Commentary*, 158.
- 83 Because of the Roman origin of the *prince to come*^[4.3.2.13] (Dan. 9:26), we think the Islamic scenario to be less likely. We offer it only to underscore the possibility of other scenarios quite different than those frequently proposed.
- 84 Alva J. McClain, *The Greatness Of The Kingdom* (Winona Lake, IN: BMH Books, 1959), 75.
- 85 McClain, *The Greatness Of The Kingdom*, 245.

4.2 - The Beast

Elsewhere, we discuss reasons why *Nero*^[4.12] cannot be the *Beast*^[5.2.9] of Revelation. Here, we consider the real Beast of Revelation—a future figure who has yet to appear. A person who will far surpass anything *Nero*^[5.2.46] exhibited in the way of Christian persecution and worldwide influence.

4.2.1 - Man of Many Names

The title “*Beast*^{[5.2.9]”} is used of the evil individual who figures large in various passages of the book of Revelation (Rev. 11:7; 13:1-4, 11-12, 14-15, 17-18; 14:9, 11; 15:2; 16:2, 10, 13; 17:3, 7-8, 11-13, 16-17; 19:19-20; 20:4, 10). This title reflects his vicious character and appears to form an intentional contrast against that of Christ as the “Lamb” (Rev. 5:6, 8, 12-13; 6:1, 16; 7:9-10, 14, 17; 12:11; 13:8, 11; 14:1, 4, 10; 15:3; 17:14; 19:7, 9; 21:9, 14, 22-23, 27; 22:1, 3). As parallels between the book of Revelation and Daniel make plain, this individual is also connected with the final beastly kingdom described in Daniel (Dan. 7:4-11, 19-20 cf. Rev. 13:2). A systematic study across Scripture reveals many names which are applied to this individual.

Among the more obvious epithets are: *little horn*^[5.2.37] (Dan. 7:8), insolent king (Dan. 8:23), prince who is to come (Dan. 9:26), one who makes desolate (Dan. 9:27), despicable person (Dan. 11:21), strong-willed king (Dan. 11:36), worthless shepherd (Zec. 11:16-17), man of lawlessness, and the son of destruction (2Th. 2:3); the lawless one (2Th. 2:8), the beast (Rev. 11:7; 13:1; 14:9; 15:2; 16:2; 17:3; 13; 19:20; 20:10).¹

These various names, titles or descriptions simply portray the various facets of his character. Taken together, these names portray him as the epitome of evil in the human realm, just as Satan is the epitome of evil in the angelic realm. The various names are as follows: The Seed of Satan (Gen. 3:15); The Little Horn (Dan. 7:8); The King of Fierce Countenance (Dan. 8:23); The Prince That Shall Come (Dan. 9:26); The Desolator (Dan. 9:27); The Willful King (Dan. 11:36); The Man of Sin (2Th. 2:3); The Son of Perdition (2Th. 2:3); The Lawless One (2Th. 2:8); The *Antichrist*^[5.2.3] (1Jn. 2:22); The Beast (Rev. 11:7).²

Among all these titles, his most commonly known title is “the Antichrist.” Although this title appears in only one passage (1Jn. 2:22), it is an apt description of his character and ministry.

The vast majority of prophetic scholars have used a single name for this future world dictator: the Antichrist. Although this may not be his most common name in Scripture, it is a well-chosen title. It is a title that describes his true intent, which is to be against Messiah. All the other names essentially portray the various characteristics which he will use in his opposition to Messiah.³

Since that is his most widely-used name, we will refer to the Beast as the Antichrist throughout this discussion.

4.2.2 - A Pre-Christian Concept

Some have thought the *Antichrist*^[5.2.3] to be a Christian invention, but it predates Christianity. This is to be expected since the Old Testament reveals considerable detail concerning this individual.

David Flusser. . . an expert on Second *Temple*^[5.2.73] Judaism and the origins of Christianity, . . . categorically states: “The idea of Antichrist is strictly Jewish and pre-Christian.” This is evident from the expression itself, for just as the Greek word *Christos* (Christ) is the translation of the Hebrew word *Mashiach* (Messiah), so “Antichrist” is in fact “Anti-Messiah.”⁴

Among the Dead Sea Scrolls is found the description of an individual who *sounds* like the promised Messiah, but is said to be an opponent of Israel. This is the role of Anti-Messiah.

In a fragmentary pseudo-Daniel text from Qumran Cave 4, the description of an evil end-time king who oppresses Israel includes the words: “[]he shall be great on earth . . . [all] will worship and all will serve [him] . . . great . . . he shall be called and by His name he shall be designated. He shall be named son of God and they shall call him son of the Most High.” (4Q246 1:8-10) This might appear to be a reference to the Messiah rather than the Antimesiah if it were not describing an opponent of Israel.⁵

Among the legends of Judaism, he is known as *Armilus* (also *Armilius*):

Armilus: legendary name of the Messiah's antagonist or anti-Messiah. Armilus appears frequently in the later Apocalyptic Midrashim, such as Midrash Va-Yosha, Sefer Zerubbavel, and Nistarot shel R. Shimon b. Yohai. He is also mentioned in the Targum pseudo-Jonathan, Isa. 11:14 and in the Targum Yerushalmi A (Deu. 34:3). Armilus is first mentioned otherwise in Saadia Gaon's *Emunot ve-De'ot* (Ma'amar 8), apparently under the influence of Sefer Zerubbavel.⁶

Armilus is first mentioned in the Targum pseudo-Jonathan: "The earliest reference to Armilus dates from the seventh century. It is found in the Targum to Isaiah 11:4 . . . which it renders, 'And with speech of his lips he shall slay the wicked Armilus.'"⁷ Notice how similar this passage is to Paul's comments in 2Th. 2:8. One reference to Armilus even calls him "Antichrist."⁸ Although there are many aspects of the Armilus legend which are unbiblical and fanciful, other aspects of the legend reflect Scriptural truths such as his claim to worship (Dan. 11:36). "He will say to them: 'I am your god, I am your Messiah and your god!' . . . (T'fillat R. Shim'on ben Yohai, BhM 4:124-26)."⁹ In contrast to the claims of the *preterists*^[5.2.59], Judaism understands this coming figure as ruling the *entire world*, not just first-century Rome. "the whole earth, . . . will tell him that he is the Messiah, . . . and the whole earth will submit to him, and he will slay those who do not submit. . . (Ma'ase Daniel, pp. 222-25)."¹⁰ He was also expected to banish Israel into the wilderness (Rev. 12:6-15).

Works such as *Sefer Zerubbavel* and those by Saadia Gaon reveal . . . Armilus will deceive the whole world into believing that he is God and will reign over the whole world. . . . Armilus is expected to persecute and banish Israel to the wilderness and it will be a time of unprecedented distress for Israel . . . and the Gentiles will expel the Jews from their lands.¹¹

Whereas some expect the Antichrist to arise from Dan (see below), others suggest Armilus will arise from Ephraim:¹² Interestingly, both of these tribes are omitted in the list of tribes which are sealed for protection during the Tribulation (Rev. 7:4-8). See commentary on *Revelation 7:4*^[3.7.4].

4.2.3 - Jewish or Gentile?

Some have held that the *Antichrist*^[5.2.3] will be Jewish in origin. Among the reasons cited for this view are:

1. His acceptance by Israel is thought to imply a Jewish connection (Dan. 9:27; John 5:43).
2. His role as a "false" Messiah (pseudo-Christ).
3. The omission of the tribe of Dan from the 144,000 of Revelation 7 is inferred as a hint as to his possible origin.¹³
4. He may be key in initiating the rebuilding of the *Tribulation Temple*^{[5.2.73]/[5.2.78]} and interpreted as the Messiah who fulfills Zechariah 6:12.
5. The KJV translation refers to "the **God** of his fathers" [emphasis added] (Dan. 11:37) which is thought to be a reference to the true God of the Jews.

There are numerous problems with the reasons given: *First*, they are all *inferences* and not direct statements by Scripture; *Second*, the reference by the KJV to "the God (singular) of his fathers" is a translation of the Hebrew word *elohim* which is plural. Depending upon the context, it can be rendered as either "gods" or as "God" (a plural of majesty, possibly hinting at the Trinity). Many other translations (e.g., ASV, NASB, KJ2000, NIV) render it as "gods" in Daniel 11:37 so it is not sound to place undue emphasis upon this detail of the text.

Price gives additional reasons against supposing a Jewish origin.

Does the person who rebuilds the Temple have to be considered the Messiah? Note that neither the Jewish governor Zerubbabel nor the Judean king Herod—both of whom rebuilt the Second Temple—were thought by the Jewish people to be the Messiah. . . the Gentile Persian emperor Cyrus. . . made possible the rebuilding of the Second Temple through his edict. . . It is an outsider who has to sign a legal document [Dan. 9:27] with the Jewish people, not one of their own. . . since the object of Satan's attacks during the Tribulation are all ethnic Jews (Rev. 12:13), it would seem unlikely that the one Satan empowers would also be Jewish (Rev. 13:2). . . it would be contrary to the prophetic sequence of Daniel

to have a Jewish kingdom (Dan. 2:32-45; Rom. 11:25). . . to say that the Antichrist is to be a Jew would contradict the very nature of the times of the Gentiles. . . two different beasts are described as arising from the 'sea' and the 'earth.' The 'sea' is a literary image that often indicates the 'Gentile nations' (Dan. 7:2-3). This would mean that its opposite term here, 'earth,' would refer to 'the Jews.' There is support for this in that the Greek word can be used as a technical expression for 'the land of Israel.' If this is so, then the first beast, which is from the sea, the Antichrist, is Gentile. And the second beast, the false prophet, is Jewish. . . . While Zec. 6:12 indicates that the Messiah ('the Branch') will build the Temple, Zechariah is referring to the *Millennial Temple*^[5.2.40]. This allows for the Third (Tribulation) Temple to be built by someone else. . . the text of Rev. 11:2 that identifies the Antichrist with the Temple in its desecration does so in terms of Gentile occupation of the site.¹⁴

But the main reason to oppose this notion is found in a direct deduction from an explicit statement of Scripture which supports his Gentile origin (Dan. 9:27 coupled with the facts of the Roman overthrow of Jerusalem in A.D. 70).

That the Antichrist is to be a Gentile is seen first by looking at *biblical typology*. The only biblical type of the Antichrist is given in the person of Antiochus Epiphanes, a Gentile. . . . Another argument for the Gentile nature of the Antichrist is found in *biblical imagery*. Whenever the word *sea* is used symbolically in the Scriptures, especially in the book of Revelation, it is a symbol of the Gentile nations. Since the *Beast*^[5.2.9] of Revelation 13:1-10 rises out of the sea, and since the sea represents the Gentile nations (Rev. 17:15), this points to the Antichrist as being of Gentile origin. . . . It is agreed by most *Premillennialists*^[5.2.58] that the Times of the Gentiles does not end until the Second Coming of Messiah. It is further agreed that the Antichrist is the final ruler of the Times of the Gentiles. . . . if this is so, how then can a Jew be the last ruler when only the Gentiles can have the pre-eminence? . . . not only does the Bible reveal the fact that the Antichrist is to be a Gentile, **it also reveals the very nationality of the Antichrist. The nationality of the Antichrist can be deduced from Daniel 9:26-27.** . . . The obvious conclusion, then, is that the Antichrist is a Gentile of Roman origin. [emphasis added]¹⁵

4.2.4 - Highly Intelligent

A notable characteristic of the *Beast*^[5.2.9] will be his great intelligence. Daniel describes him as a horn (kingly power) which had "eyes like the eyes of a man" (Dan. 7:8, 20). Eyes are often mentioned in connection with *intelligence* (Eze. 1:18; 10:12; Rev. 1:14; 2:18; 5:6).

Being empowered by Satan (2Th. 2:9; Rev. 13:4), he may be the most intelligent man, with the exception of Jesus, ever to have walked the planet. Scripture records, "Through his cunning He shall cause deceit to prosper under his rule" (Dan. 8:24). These are characteristics common to many of the ruthless personalities who have squandered the lives of millions upon the stage of history, but in the beast we find the ultimate effort that Satan can put forth in the way of cunning.¹⁶

4.2.5 - Master Imitator

In keeping with his title of "*Antichrist*^[5.2.3]," he will be an imitator of Christ (e.g., the object of worship, worldwide dominion, a throne). This tendency to imitate must be seen as an indicator of his Satanic empowerment (Dan. 8:24; 2Th. 2:9; Rev. 13:2). Pink masterfully contrasts Christ and Satan providing an indication of the extent of the devil's tendency toward imitation.

Do we read of Christ going forth to sow the 'good seed' (Mtt. 13:24), then we also read of the enemy going forth to sow his 'tares' - an imitation wheat (Mtt. 13:25). Do we read of 'the children of God,' then we also read of 'the children of the wicked one' (Mtt. 13:38). Do we read of God working in His children 'both to will and to do of His good pleasure' (Php. 2:13), then we are also told that the Prince of the power of the air is 'the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience' (Eph. 2:2). Do we read of the Gospel of God, then we also read that Satan has a gospel - 'Another gospel, which is not another' (Gal. 1:6, 7). Did Christ appoint 'apostles,' then Satan has his apostles too (2Cor. 11:13). Are we told that 'the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God' (1Cor. 2:10), then Satan also provides his 'deep things' (see Greek of Rev. 2:24). Are we told that God, by His angel, will 'seal' His servants in their foreheads (Rev. 7:3), so also we read that Satan, by his angels, will set a mark in the foreheads of his devotees (Rev. 13:16). Does the Father seek 'worshippers' (John 4:23), so also does Satan (Rev. 13:4). Did Christ quote scripture, so also did Satan (Mtt. 4:6). Is Christ the Light of the world, then Satan also is transformed as an 'angel of light' (2Cor. 11:14). Is Christ denominated 'the Lion of the tribe of Judah' (Rev. 5:5), then the Devil is also referred to as 'a roaring lion' (1Pe. 5:6). Do

we read of Christ and ‘His angels’ (Mtt. 24:31), then we also read of the Devil and ‘his angels’ (Mtt. 25:41). Did Christ work miracles, so also will Satan (2Th. 2:9). Is Christ seated upon a ‘Throne,’ so also will Satan be (Rev. 2:13, Gk.). Has Christ a Church, then Satan has his ‘synagogue’ (Rev. 2:9). Has Christ a ‘bride,’ then Satan has his ‘whore’ (Rev. 17:16). Has God His ‘Vine,’ so has Satan (Rev. 14:19). Does God have a city, the new Jerusalem, then Satan has a city, Babylon (Rev. 17:5; 18:2). Is there a ‘mystery of godliness’ (1Ti. 3:16), so also there is a ‘mystery of iniquity’ (2Th. 2:7). Does God have an only-begotten Son, so we read of ‘the Son of Perdition’ (2Th. 2:3). Is Christ called ‘the Seed of the woman,’ then the Antichrist will be ‘the seed of the serpent’ (Gen. 3:15). Is the Son of God also the Son of Man, then the son of Satan will also be the ‘Man of Sin’ (2Th. 2:3). Is there a Holy Trinity, then there is also an Evil Trinity (Rev. 20:10).¹⁷

The Antichrist occupies the role of “the son” in the ultimate mimic, the so-called “unholy trinity.”

Is there a Holy Trinity, then there is also an Evil Trinity (Rev. 20:10). In this Trinity of Evil Satan himself is supreme, just as in the Blessed Trinity the Father is (governmentally) supreme: note that Satan is several times referred to as a father (John 8:44, etc.). Unto his son, the Antichrist, Satan gives his authority and power to represent and act for him (Rev. 13:4) just as God the Son received “all power in heaven and earth” from His Father, and uses it for His glory. The Dragon (Satan) and the *Beast*^[5.2.9] (Antichrist) are accompanied by a third, the *False Prophet*^[5.2.20], and just as the third person in the Holy Trinity, the Spirit, bears witness to the person and work of Christ and glorifies Him, so shall the third person in the Evil Trinity bear witness to the person and work of the Antichrist and glorify him (see Rev. 13:11-14).¹⁸

4.2.6 - Christ versus Antichrist

Pink provides an extensive comparison between Christ and *Antichrist*^[5.2.3].¹⁹

Contrasts between Christ and Antichrist

Christ	Antichrist
called the Christ (Mtt. 16:16)	called the Antichrist (1Jn. 4:3)
the Man of Sorrows (Isa. 53:3)	the Man of Sin (2Th. 2:3)
the Son of God (John 1:34)	the Son of Perdition (2Th. 2:3)
the Seed of woman (Gen. 3:15)	the seed of the Serpent (Gen. 3:15)
the Lamb (Isa. 53:7)	the <i>Beast</i> ^[5.2.9] (Rev. 11:7)
the Holy One (Mark 1:24)	the Wicked One (2Th. 2:8)
the Truth (John 14:6)	the Lie (John 8:44)
Prince of Peace (Isa. 9:6)	profane Prince (Eze. 21:25)
glorious Branch (Isa. 4:2)	abominable Branch (Isa. 14:19)
the Mighty Angel (Rev. 10:1)	the Angel of the Bottomless Pit (Rev. 9:11)
the Good Shepherd (John 10:11)	the Idol Shepherd (Zec. 11:17)
the number of His name (the <i>gematria</i> ^[5.2.21] of “Jesus” in the Greek) 888	the number of his name 666 (Rev. 13:18)
came down from heaven (John 3:13)	comes up out of the bottomless pit (Rev. 11:7)
came in Another’s Name (John 5:43)	comes in his own name (John 5:43)
came to do the Father’s will (John 6:38)	will do his own will (Dan. 11:36)
energized by the Holy Spirit (Luke 4:14)	energized by Satan (Rev. 13:4)
submitted Himself to God (John 5:30)	defies God (2Th. 2:4)

Christ	Antichrist
humbled Himself (Php. 2:8)	exalts himself (Dan. 11:37)
honored the God of His fathers (Luke 4:16)	refuses to (Dan. 11:37)
cleansed the temple (John 2:14, 16)	defiles the temple (Mtt. 24:15)
ministered to the needy (Isa. 53:7)	robs the poor (Ps. 10:8, 9)
rejected of men (Isa. 53:7)	accepted by men (Rev. 13:4)
leads the flock (John 10:3)	leaves the flock (Zec. 11:17)
slain for the people (John 11:51)	slays the people (Isa. 14:20)
glorified God on earth (John 17:4)	blasphemes the name of God in heaven (Rev. 13:6)
received up into heaven (Luke 24:51)	goes down into the Lake of Fire (Rev. 19:20)

4.2.7 - Supernatural Origin?

The most controversial aspect of the *Antichrist*^[5.2.3] concerns his origin. Clearly he is empowered by Satan (Dan. 8:24; 2Th. 2:9). Scripture also records his ascent from the bottomless pit (Abyss, Rev. 11:7; 17:8). As Pink notes above, there is also a striking contrast between the “seed of the woman” and the “seed of the serpent” in various passages. Fruchtenbaum notes his ascent from the bottomless pit and suggests a connection with fallen angels which are also associated with the Abyss: “[The Abyss] is never associated with human beings; it is always associated with fallen angels with the exception of the Antichrist. Since the Antichrist will be conceived by the power of Satan, he is connected with angelic beings and therefore also with the *Abyss*.”²⁰

The nature of the Antichrist’s connection with Satan, his origin, and his supernatural powers, have led some to conclude his origin will *mimic* the incarnation of Christ.²¹

If the Seed of the Woman is Messiah, the seed of Satan can only be the Antichrist. From this passage [Gen. 3:15], then, it can be deduced that Satan will counterfeit the virgin conception and will some day impregnate a Roman woman who will give birth to Satan’s seed who is going to be the Antichrist. The woman herself may not be a virgin, but the conception of Antichrist will be through the supernatural power of Satan. By this means, the Antichrist will have a supernatural origin. Another passage dealing with this is II Thessalonians 2:9. . . The Greek word translated *working* is the word *energeo*, which means “to energize.” His coming, then, will be brought about by the energizing of Satan. . . . A time is coming when the situation of Genesis six [Gen. 6:4] will be repeated. A fallen angelic being, this time Satan himself, will impregnate a Gentile woman of Roman origin who will then give birth to Satan’s son. The end-product will be a counterfeit god-man.²²

Perhaps the most radical view concerning his emergence from the abyss is that it denotes the possible reincarnation of Judas Iscariot or *Nero*^[5.2.46].²³

4.2.7.1 - The Timing of His Ascent

Although the previous views are provocative, it seems more likely that the ascent of the beast from the Abyss denotes his revival rather than his conception. His ascent from the Abyss (Rev. 11:7; 17:8) is related as one of a series of events concerning His life history (Rev. 17:8):

1. The beast *was*.
2. The beast *is not*.
3. The beast *will ascend out of the bottomless pit*.
4. The beast *will go into perdition* (Rev. 17:11; 19:20; 20:10).

If the grammatical sequence of Revelation 17:8 reflects his actual history, it implies that the beast comes into existence, receives a deadly wound, ascends from the Abyss, and is finally destroyed. His ascent from the Abyss may be connected with his *reappearance* upon the stage of history rather than his initial origin. Scripture indicates that the beast will receive a serious wound which results in his death. His miraculous revival from the wound contributes to his worship:

Woe to the worthless shepherd, who leaves the flock! A sword *shall be* against his arm and against his right eye; his arm shall completely wither, and his right eye shall be totally blinded. (Zec. 11:17)

And *I saw* one of his heads as if it had been mortally wounded, and his deadly wound was healed. And all the world marveled and followed the beast. (Rev. 13:3)

And he deceives those who dwell on the earth by those signs which he was granted to do in the sight of the beast, telling those who dwell on the earth to make an image to the beast who was wounded by the sword and lived. (Rev. 13:14)

The beast that you saw was, and is not, and will ascend out of the bottomless pit and go to perdition.

And those who dwell on the earth will marvel, whose names are not written in the *Book of Life*^[5.2.10] from the foundation of the world, when they see the beast that was, and is not, and yet is. (Rev. 17:8)

It seems best to understand the ascent of the beast from the Abyss as denoting the demonic supernatural means by which he returns from the dead. His restoration from a fatal wound will parallel the resurrection of Christ from the dead and result in even greater worship: “So they worshiped the dragon who gave authority to the beast; and they worshiped the beast, saying, ‘Who *is* like the beast? Who is able to make war with him?’ ” (Rev. 13:4)

After his death he will come to life again. When he does, he will come back in a demonic rather than a purely human form to establish his world domination. This explains why the abyss, the abode of demons (Luke 8:31; Rev. 9:1, 2, 11) is his origin.²⁴

If the restoration of the beast is to result in the greatest impression upon the global population, then it seems his fatal wound must have also been witnessed by these same individuals and that both his initial appearance on the stage of history and his subsequent peril and restoration must take place during the last time. This would preclude the idea that his personal restoration involves the resurrection (or even reincarnation) of the likes of Judas or *Nero*^[5.2.46] who both died many centuries ago and whose restoration would be difficult, if not impossible, to validate.

Preterist interpreters^[2.12.2] connect the beast’s recovery with the *Nero Redivivus Myth* which arose some time after the suicide of Caesar Nero in A.D. 68, but this connection is problematic. See *Revival Myth*^[4.12.1].

The mystery surrounding his origin, the nature of his ministry and works, and the extent to which Satan is a Great Imitator will all play a factor in how the beast comes upon the scene. Only time will tell if the imitation will extend to matters of the conception or resurrection of *Antichrist*^[5.2.3].

4.2.8 - Relation to the Pope

If the identity of the *Antichrist*^[5.2.3] were established by popular vote throughout history, the reigning Pope of any given time would undoubtedly be the most popular candidate:

Following Augustine’s lead the Reformers took the Scriptures pertaining to the antichrist and the mark of the beast as an allegory of either the Pope, Islam (Constantinople had fallen to the Turks in A.D. 1412), or both. The Waldenses held the Pope to be the antichrist. Wycliffe also was of this opinion as was Tyndale. Luther regarded the Pope and the Turks both as antichrist, . . . Calvin took the Antichrist’s desecration of the *Temple*^[5.2.73] to be an allegory of the Church and the Pope to be the desecrator, . . . Arminius also held “that the Roman pontiff, who calls himself the head and spouse, though under Christ, is Antichrist.”²⁵

Although the Papal system is an ever-popular candidate for the beast, we believe that this view falls short of serious consideration on at least two counts:

1. The Antichrist is an *individual* and not a position or system (Dan. 7:8; 7:11, 20-26; 8:23-25; 9:26-27; 11:36-45; John 5:43; 2Th. 2:3-9; 1Jn. 2:18; Rev. 11:7; 13:1-8, 12-18; 14:9-11; 15:2; 16:2, 10, 13; 17:8-13; 19:19-20; 20:4, 10).

2. It appears the Antichrist will be an emerging political leader rather than the existing leader of an established system of religion (Dan. 7:20-25; 8:25; 11:36-39; 2Th. 2:8; Rev. 13:4-5).

Although the last Pope will undoubtedly play an important role—along with all other false religions—in helping to establish the Antichrist and his political system, it is unlikely that the Pope himself will occupy the role of Antichrist. If anything, the last Pope will more likely be related to the *False Prophet*^[4.3.2.18] (Rev. 13:11), although there are reasons for questioning this association too.²⁶

Throughout history, the Scriptural teaching regarding Antichrist has continually suffered perversion in service of near-term political or polemic motivations of Christian interpreters of the day who have readily filled the shoes of Antichrist with their opponents. Not mindful of the fact that the church will not be present to watch for the Antichrist (see *Rapture*^[4.14]), this trend continues to our own day.

If we learn anything from the history of interpretation, we learn that *great patience* is necessary in relation to prophetic passages. Rather than attempting to shoe-horn prophecy into our own near-term experience, we must patiently wait for *God's timing* which alone is sure:

Then the LORD answered me and said: "Write the vision and make it plain on tablets, that he may run who reads it. For the vision is yet for an appointed time; but at the end it will speak, and it will not lie. Though it tarries, wait for it; because it will surely come, it will not tarry." (Hab. 2:2-3)

4.2.9 - A Statesmen's Dream

When the *Beast*^[5.2.9] finally appears on the world stage, he will present an irresistible solution to the troubles of his age. So much so that he will be worshiped by those whose names are not written in the *Book of Life*^[4.4] (Rev. 13:4, 8, 12, 15; 14:9, 11; 19:20).

One cannot assert that the "beast" is finally to be equated with any single person or power that has yet appeared. Expositors have identified him with almost every sinister figure known, from *Nero*^[5.2.46] to Mussolini. . . . But as the concept of world government becomes more popular, and as world powers gain more territorial influence in every succeeding generation, it is easy to see that the Revelation points the way in which civilization is traveling. One government, materialistic in philosophy and absolutist in character, ruled by a single political and economic genius, is predicted in Revelation. Such a government, unthinkable a generation or two ago, now seems not too remote a possibility. The dictatorship of one man over the world might be welcomed if he could offer some assurance of universal peace and prosperity. What seemed like a dream to statesmen of yesterday is prophesied in this book, and as the years roll by it comes closer and closer to fulfillment.²⁷

For additional information on the Beast and his relationship to other kings and kingdoms, see *Beasts, Heads, and Horns*^[4.3] and *#16 - Beast*^[4.3.2.16].

Notes

- ¹ Randall Price, "Antichrist," in Mal Couch, ed., *Dictionary of Premillennial Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 1996), 43.
- ² Arnold G. Fruchtenbaum, *The Footsteps of Messiah*, rev ed. (Tustin, CA: Ariel Ministries, 2003), 207.
- ³ Fruchtenbaum, *The Footsteps of Messiah*, 207.
- ⁴ Randall Price, "Jewish Views of the Antichrist," in Mal Couch, ed., *Dictionary of Premillennial Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 1996), 47.
- ⁵ Price, "Jewish Views of the Antichrist," 48.
- ⁶ *Encyclopedia Judaica - CD-ROM Edition Version 1.0* (Jerusalem: Judaica Multimedia, 1997), s.v. "Armilus."
- ⁷ Raphael Patai, *The Messiah Texts* (Detroit, MI: Wayne Statue University Press, 1979), 156.
- ⁸ "Remarkable in the statement of one version of the Midrash that he is called 'Antichrist.'"—Patai, *The Messiah Texts*, 157.
- ⁹ Patai, *The Messiah Texts*, 158-159.
- ¹⁰ Patai, *The Messiah Texts*, 163.

- 11 Price, "Jewish Views of the Antichrist," 49.
- 12 "That man will be of the Children of Ephraim. . . . who says, 'I am the Messiah your king and your prince. . . . (Ma'ase Daniel, pp. 222-25)'. "—Patai, *The Messiah Texts*, 163.
- 13 "Hippolytus (*Commentary on the Benedictions of Isaac and Jacob* [Gen. 49:14]) . . . began the Christian tradition that the Antichrist originates from the Israelite tribe of Dan . . . [He] apparently made this connection from the Jewish Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs . . . which states that evil spirits would be active in the tribe . . . that Satan was their prince . . . and that they would be hostile in the future to the tribes of Levi and Judah."—Price, "Jewish Views of the Antichrist," 49.
- 14 Randall Price, *The Coming Last Days Temple* (Eugene, OR: Harvest House Publishers, 1999), 477-480.
- 15 Fruchtenbaum, *The Footsteps of Messiah*, 212-213.
- 16 "In Dan. 7:20 he is represented as 'A horn that had eyes.' It is a double symbol. The 'horn' prefigures strength; 'eyes' speak of intelligence. Again, in Dan. 8:23 he is referred to as 'A King of fierce countenance.' who shall 'understand dark sentences.' That which baffles others shall be simple to him. The Hebrew word here translated 'dark sentences' is the same as the one rendered 'hard questions' in 1 Kings 10:1, where we read of the Queen of Sheba coming to Solomon with her 'hard questions' in order to test his wisdom. It is also the word that is used in Samson's riddle in Judges 14. It indicates that the *Antichrist*^[5.2.3] will be master of all the secrets of occult science. Eze. 28:3 declares of him 'Beholding, thou art wiser than Daniel; there is no secret that they can hide from thee.' This will be one of his most alluring attractions. His master mind will captivate the educated world. His marvelous store of knowledge, his acquaintance with the secrets of nature, his superhuman powers of perception, will stamp him as an intellectual genius of the first magnitude."—Arthur Walkington Pink, *The Antichrist* (Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, 1999, 1923), s.v. "The Genius and Character of the Antichrist."
- 17 Pink, *The Antichrist*, s.v. "The Antichrist Will be the Son of Satan."
- 18 Pink, *The Antichrist*, s.v. "The Antichrist Will be the Son of Satan."
- 19 [Pink, *The Antichrist*, s.v. "Comparisons between Christ and the Antichrist"] (We do not necessarily agree with every Scriptural identification of the Antichrist made by Pink.)
- 20 Fruchtenbaum, *The Footsteps of Messiah*, 749.
- 21 The word *mimic* is supremely important in this statement. For it appears that only the *Creator* has the necessary power to bring forth *creatures*. God alone has true life-giving power: Job 27:3; 33:4; Eze. 37:9, 14; John 6:63; Rev. 11:11. Whatever Satan achieves will not be the true creation of life, but the perversion of that which God has already established as part of the system of life. "Satan does not have the power to give life. Since Christ alone has the power of resurrection, Satan could not bring one back to life."—J. Dwight Pentecost, *Things to Come: A Study in Biblical Eschatology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1958), 335. However, "The question of whether Satan has the power to restore a dead person to life (Walvoord) requires no answer here. Whether the beast performs this marvelous feat through deception or through power permitted by God, it still brings him into the limelight as never before."—Robert L. Thomas, *Revelation 8-22* (Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 1995), Rev. 13:3.
- 22 Fruchtenbaum, *The Footsteps of Messiah*, 215-216.
- 23 "We have the first reference to 'the *Beast*^[5.2.9]' in the Apocalypse: 'The Beast that ascendeth out of the bottomless pit.' Here the Antichrist is seen issuing forth from the Abyss. What is the Abyss? It is the abode of lost spirits, the place of their incarceration and torment - see Rev. 20:1-3, and Luke 8:31, 'deep' is the 'abyss' and cf. Mtt. 9:28. The question naturally arises, How did he get there? and when was he sent there? We answer, When Judas Iscariot died! The Antichrist will be Judas Iscariot reincarnated. In proof of this we appeal to Acts 1:25 where we are told, 'that he may take part of this ministry and apostleship from which Judas by transgression fell, that he might go to his own place.' Of no one else in all the Bible is it said that at death he went 'to his own place.' Put these two scriptures together: Judas went 'to his own place,' the Beast ascends out of the Abyss."—Pink, *The Antichrist*, s.v. "The Antichrist Will Be Judas Reincarnated." "Some have held that the Beast will be the reincarnation of Nero."—Pentecost, *Things to Come: A Study in Biblical Eschatology*, 335. "But there would be little point in a resurrected Judas; how would anyone recognize him, since no one would know what he looked like?"—John MacArthur, *Revelation 12-22: The MacArthur New Testament Commentary* (Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 2000), Rev. 13:2. "Victorinus, voicing an impression that was very common in early Christian centuries, says, 'Nero will be raised from the dead, appear again at Rome and persecute the Church once more, and finally be destroyed by the Messiah.' Augustine first mentioned this idea concerning Nero. Even Tacitus, the Roman historian, spoke of many believing rumors about Nero's possible return . . . Sulpicius Severus said, 'It is current opinion of many that he (Nero) is yet to come as

Antichrist.’ Note carefully, we are not insisting at all that Nero will be the Antichrist, but that the early Christians believed that a Roman imperial persecutor, possibly Nero, would be the Antichrist.”—William R. Newell, *Revelation: Chapter by Chapter* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 1994,c1935), 200.

²⁴ Thomas, *Revelation 8-22*, Rev. 17:8.

²⁵ Hal Harless, “666: The Beast and His Mark in Revelation 13,” in *The Conservative Theological Journal*, vol. 7 no. 22 (Fort Worth, TX: Tyndale Theological Seminary, December 2003), 347.

²⁶ “The second beast which is described, Rev. 13:11-17, as coming out of the earth, and having two horns like unto a lamb, and speaking as a dragon, and exercising all the authority of the first beast in his sight, is referred to the papacy. The false prophet receives a similar application. So Luther, Vitranga, Bengel, Auberlen, Hengstenberg, Ebrard, and many English divines.”—Philip Schaff, and David Schley Schaff, *History of the Christian Church* (Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, 1997, 1916), 1.xii.101. Some commentators interpret the reference to the false prophet “coming up out of the earth [or land]” (Rev. 13:11) as a possible reference to his Jewish origin. If the last Pope were to be the false prophet, then a Jewish Pope is always a possibility.

²⁷ Merrill C. Tenney, *Interpreting Revelation* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1957), 189.

4.3 - Beasts, Heads, and Horns

Both Daniel and John are given important information concerning the identity of various symbols employed in the book of Revelation. In his night vision, Daniel sees four beasts, one of which has ten horns (Dan. 7:1-28). In John's vision, he sees two beasts, one of which has seven heads and ten horns (Rev. 13:1; 17:3, 7) and another which has a single head with two horns (Rev. 13:11). Although the fact that both Daniel and John saw beasts and horns does not necessarily mean their visions are related, there are a number of other characteristics concerning their visions which indicate that God was showing each of them different aspects of the same kings and kingdoms related to Gentile dominion throughout history and the final form of Gentile power at the return of Messiah (Dan. 7:13-14, 26-27; Rev. 19:11-20).

Perhaps the single most difficult aspect for interpreters of passages involving the beasts, heads, and horns is accounting for their differences while at the same time appreciating their similarities. In various passages, all three symbols—beasts, heads, and horns—are said to be “kings” (Dan. 7:14, 24; Rev. 17:10). In addition, sometimes kings represent sequential rulers and their representative kingdoms and other times contemporaneous kings within a single kingdom (Dan. 7:6; 8:8; Rev. 17:10). And if that were not enough, the distinction between an individual *king* and the *kingdom* which he represents is not always readily discerned.

4.3.1 - Nebuchadnezzar's Dream and Daniel's Vision

In order to understand the significance of the symbols which John saw in the book of Revelation, we need to first become familiar with some of the things which Daniel was shown pertaining to Gentile dominion and the time of the end. Although the book of Daniel contains a tremendous amount of material which bears upon the book of Revelation and the activities of the *Antichrist*^[4.2], we will limit our examination to two main passages which deal with the sequence of kingdoms leading to the second return of Christ. (See our discussion of *The 70th Week of Daniel*^[2.13.5] elsewhere.) The first of these is Nebuchadnezzar's dream consisting of an image made up of differing metals which Daniel interprets (Dan. 2:31-45). The second is Daniel's night vision of four vicious beasts which arise from the sea (Dan. 7:1-28).

When these two passages are compared, it becomes evident that they represent two different perspectives on the same subject: four major world kingdoms which constitute the *times of the Gentiles* during which Israel will be precluded from full control of her land and her promised blessing in the *Messianic Kingdom*^[5.2.39]. Each of the passages begins with a description of the Babylonian kingdom of which Daniel was currently a captive (having been deported from Jerusalem, Dan. 1:1-6) and closes with the final Gentile kingdom being destroyed by God's kingdom on earth.

Several aspects are seen from a comparison of the related passages:

- **Perspective** - Nebuchadnezzar's dream describes the series of kingdoms from *man's perspective*. They appear as a beautiful image comprised of various metals, some precious. Daniel's night vision describes the same kingdoms from *God's perspective*. They appear as a series of vicious beasts.¹
- **Downward Trend** - In both passages, the sequence shows a downward trend. In Nebuchadnezzar's dream, the head of the image is *gold*, the chest and arms of *silver*, the belly and thighs of *bronze*, the legs of *iron*, and the feet of iron and partly *clay*. The value of each metal reduces as the kingdoms advance. At the same time, the strength of each metal grows stronger with each kingdom until the last kingdom which contains two extremes: the strength of iron and the weakness of clay. In Daniel's night vision, the last beast is uniquely terrible compared with the preceding beasts and much additional information is given concerning this last beast.²
- **Broken by God** - Both the image and the last beast are destroyed directly by God. This tells us that the kingdoms represented by the series of precious metals and the ferocious beasts spans from Daniel's time until God's kingdom comes on earth. (See *The Arrival of God's*

Kingdom^{[2.4.3].})

Most conservative interpreters, who believe the book of Daniel to be *inspired*^[5.2.33] (Mtt. 24:15; Mark 13:14), interpret the four metals and four beasts as representing the kingdoms of Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, and Rome.³

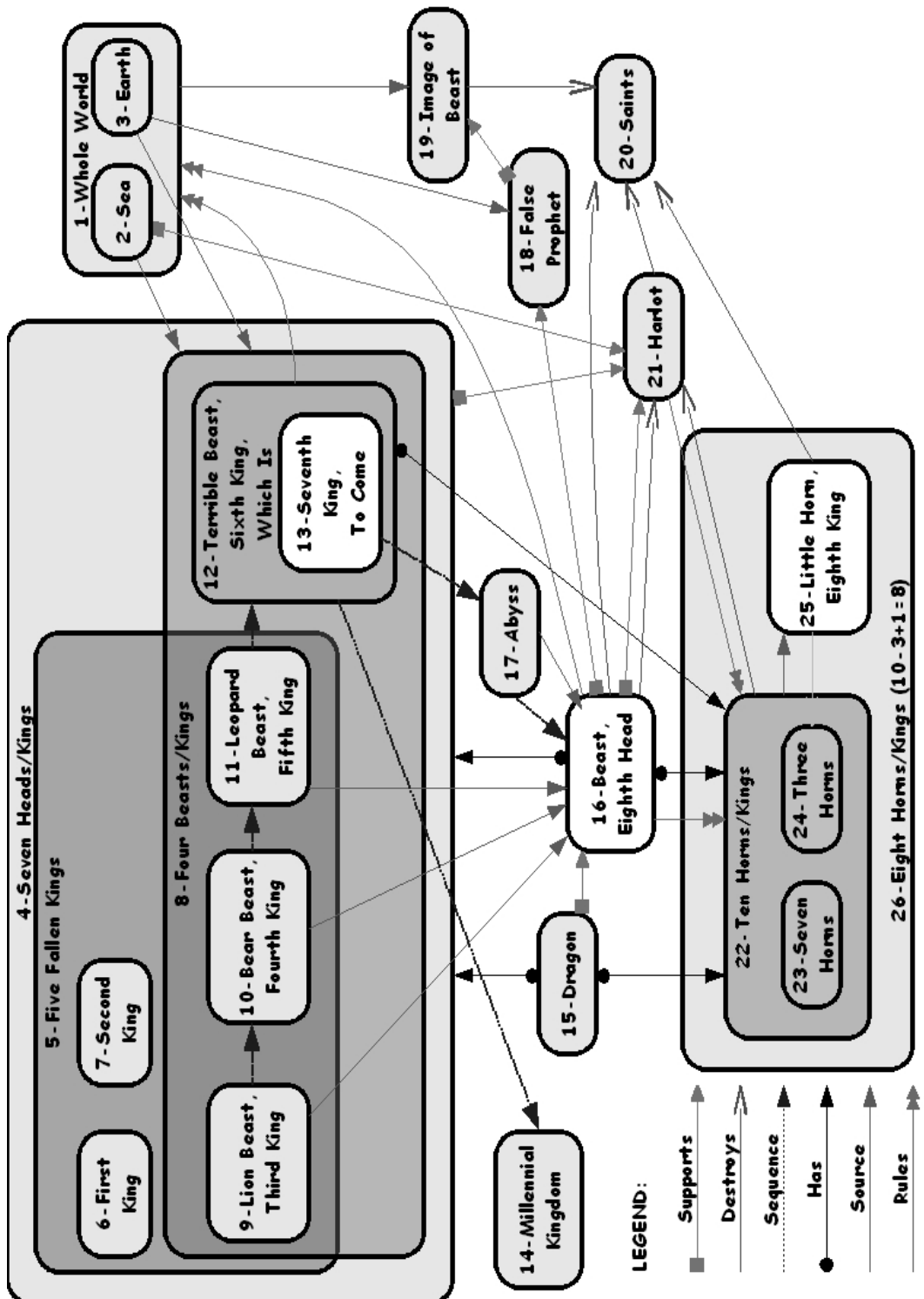
*Gentile Kingdoms*⁴

Kingdom	Beautiful Statue (Seen by Nebuchadnezzar: Man's Perspective) Dan. 2:31-35	Vicious Beast^[5.2.9] (Seen by Daniel: God's Perspective) Dan. 7:1-28
Babylon (Dan. 2:38).	Head of gold (Dan. 2:32, 37).	<i>Like</i> a lion with eagle's wings (Dan. 7:4). ⁵
Medo-Persia (Dan. 2:39).	Chest and arms of silver (Dan. 2:32).	<i>Like</i> a bear with three ribs (Dan. 7:5). ⁶
Greece (Macedonian, Dan. 2:39).	Belly and thighs of bronze (Dan. 2:32).	<i>Like</i> a leopard with four wings and four heads (Dan. 7:6). ⁷
Rome (Dan. 2:40).	Legs of iron (Dan. 2:33).	A <i>unique</i> beast dreadful and terrible (Dan. 7:7, 19-20, 23-25). ⁸
Rome divided and dispersed (Dan. 2:41-43).	Feet partly of iron and partly of clay, [ten] toes (Dan. 2:33, 41).	Ten horns, a <i>little horn</i> ^[5.2.37] , slain (Dan. 7:8, 11; Rev. 19:20).
Millennial Kingdom (Dan. 2:44-45). ⁹	Stone cut without hands, strikes image, fills entire earth (Dan. 2:32).	Son of Man (Dan. 7:13-14, 18, 22, 26).

4.3.2 - Symbols of Kingdoms

Having compared Nebuchadnezzar's dream and Daniel's night vision, we are now better prepared to take in the "big picture" concerning the various beasts, heads, and horns seen by John in the book of Revelation. The diagram below illustrates the major symbols in the visions given to Daniel and John concerning the beasts, heads, and horns which contribute to an understanding of the book of Revelation. The beasts, heads, and horns represent kings and kingdoms.

Seven Heads and Ten Horns of Daniel and Revelation



The chart above is called an *entity-relationship* diagram. It contains *entities* (within rounded rectangles) and *relationships* (shown as arrows between entities). The main purpose of the diagram is to identify each entity from the prophetic Scriptures and to show how it relates to the other entities. Each entity is numbered for identification.

When reading the diagram, the following points should be born in mind:

- **Numbers** - Each symbol is identified by a unique sequential number. For example, the *Sea* (upper right) is #2. This number can be used to locate the description pertaining to the item below: #2 - *Sea*^[4.3.2.2]. In some cases, symbols are grouped within a larger symbol which is described by its own sequence number. For example, both the #2 - *Sea*^[4.3.2.2] and the #3 - *Earth*^[4.3.2.3] are within the #1 - *Whole World*^[4.3.2.1].
- **Relationships** - Arrows indicate relationships between symbols. The type of relationship depends upon the type of arrow, as seen in the legend.
- **Identifying Arrows** - In the descriptions which follow, arrows are identified by a pair of numbers within brackets separated by a dash. The first number identifies the symbol where the arrow originates and the second number identifies the symbol where the arrow terminates. For example, the arrow between #2 - *Sea* and #8 - *Four Beasts/Kings* is designated by [#2-#8].
- **Identity** - With the exception of symbols colored gray, symbols which appear in the same color are understood to represent different aspects of the *same entity*. In our diagram, #13 - *Seventh King*^[4.3.2.13], #16 - *Beast*^[4.3.2.16], and #25 - *Little Horn*^[4.3.2.25] all appear in the same color since each symbol denotes different aspects of the reign of the same individual: *Antichrist*^[4.2].

The descriptions follow in the numeric order given in the diagram.

4.3.2.1 - #1 - Whole World

The whole world consists of the *sea*^[4.3.2.2] which the *four beasts*^[4.3.2.8] rise out of [#2-#8] (Dan. 7:3) and the *earth or land*^[4.3.2.3] from which the *four kings*^[4.3.2.8] [#3-#8] (Dan. 7:17) and the *False Prophet*^[4.3.2.18] [#3-#18] (Rev. 13:11) arise. The *Harlot*^[4.3.2.21] “who sits on many waters” (Rev. 17:17) is supported, in some sense, by the “peoples, multitudes, nations, and tongues” upon which she sits [#2-#21] (Rev. 17:15).¹⁰

The *False Prophet*^[4.3.2.18] causes the whole world to make an *image of the beast*^[4.3.2.19] [#1-#19] (Rev. 13:14). The *terrible beast*^[4.3.2.12] is said to devour the whole earth [#12-#1] (Dan. 7:23) and the *beast*^[4.3.2.16] is given authority over every tribe, tongue, and nation [#16-#1] (Rev. 13:7).

See *Symbols of Kingdoms*^[4.3.2].

4.3.2.2 - #2 - Sea

Together with the *earth*^[4.3.2.3], the sea makes up the *whole world*^[4.3.2.1]. Both land and sea together denote all regions of the earth. At times, the sea denotes *Gentile nations* whereas the earth (or land) denotes *the Jews*. See commentary on *Revelation 10:2*^[3.10.2]. See *Symbols of Kingdoms*^[4.3.2].

4.3.2.3 - #3 - Earth

Together with the *sea*^[4.3.2.2], the earth makes up the *whole world*^[4.3.2.1]. Both land and sea together denote all regions of the earth. At times, the earth (or land) denotes *the Jews* whereas the sea denotes *the Gentile nations*. See commentary on *Revelation 10:2*^[3.10.2]. See *Symbols of Kingdoms*^[4.3.2].

4.3.2.4 - #4 - Seven Heads/Kings

In the book of Daniel, all we find mentioned in relation to the sequence of kingdoms is the *four beasts* and the corresponding *four metals* of *Nebuchadnezzar's dream*^[4.3.1]. There, we find that the fourth beast has *ten horns*, but nowhere is there explicit mention of *seven heads* (but see *Daniel saw Seven Heads*^[4.3.2.4.1]). We do find one helpful bit of information related to our topic because the ten horns were said to be on the *head* of the fourth beast. This is helpful when we come to the book of Revelation because it hints at a correlation between *beasts* and *heads* and indicates that the ten horns are found upon the head of the last beast, not distributed across several heads. When Daniel sees his vision, the duration of all four beast/kings is yet future. Thus, he was shown *four beasts*, which are said

to be “four kings *which* arise out of the earth” (Dan. 7:17).¹¹

At the time John wrote Revelation, all four beasts had already arisen. Babylon, Medo-Persia, and Greece had already come and gone and the initial phase of the Roman empire was in progress. Thus, John’s vision in relation to the *identity* of the kings is from a perspective of his day, taking in the entire sweep of history—past, present and future. John’s *beast*^[4.3.2.16] has seven heads ^[#16-#4] (Rev. 13:1; 17:3, 7).

Daniel makes the number less; but he started with his own times, and looked only down the stream. Here the account looks backward as well as forward. That which is first in Daniel is the third here, and that which is the sixth here is the fourth in Daniel. Only in the commencing point is there any difference. The visions of Daniel and the visions of John are of the same Divine Mind, and they perfectly harmonize, only that the latest are the amplest.¹²

John’s view takes in *seven* heads which are said to be seven kings (Rev. 17:9-10). John is told:

Here *is* the mind which has wisdom: The seven heads are seven mountains on which the woman sits. They are (ἑπτὰ [eisin]) seven kings. Five have fallen, one is, *and* the other has not yet come. (Rev. 17:9-10).¹³

The heads are *mountains* upon which the woman sits. They are also *kings*. Some attempt to identify these as literal kings or emperors of Rome:

The view is promising only until one tries to apply it to specific kings. Does one begin counting with Julius Caesar or with Caesar Augustus? The answer to this is purely arbitrary. Are all the emperors counted or just the ones that emphasized emperor worship? This, too, is arbitrary. Are Galba, Otho, and Vitellius excluded because of the shortness of their reigns? If so, this is quite arbitrary. For those who resort to counting emperors, the text is enigmatic beyond hope. If John wrote Revelation during Nero^[5.2.46]’s reign, the Roman emperors are too few. If he wrote it during Domitian’s reign, they are too many.¹⁴

Aune enumerates nine different schemes for counting the kings. Beale designates five such schemes.¹⁵

We have seen elsewhere in Scripture that *kingdoms* are often represented by their *kings* or as *mountains* (e.g., Jer. 51:25; Dan. 2:35).¹⁶ We also note that the *Harlot*^[4.3.2.21], who sits on the heads is considered to be the “mother of harlots and of the abominations of the earth” (Rev. 17:5). This implies her origin in distant history past and argues for an understanding of the kings as kingdoms spanning long periods of time.

Yet wisdom is required to identify the heads which are kings: which kings or kingdoms do they represent? We take the heads/mountains/kings to represent *kingdoms* rather than individual kings associated with a single kingdom. Regardless of the identity of the first two of the fallen kingdoms (Babel and Egypt or Egypt and Assyria, see #5 - *Five Fallen Kings*^[4.3.2.5]), the next four are identified by Daniel’s vision (#8 - *Four Beasts/Kings*^[4.3.2.8]) making Rome the sixth which ruled at the time of the Revelation. John is shown *two* additional kings yet future, a seventh *and an eighth*:¹⁷

These are **seven** kings. Five have fallen, one is, *and* the other has not yet come. And when he comes, he must continue a short time. The beast that was, and is not, is himself also the **eighth**, and is of the seven, and is going to perdition. (Rev. 17:10-11)¹⁸ [emphasis added]

The eighth king is not one of the seven heads/mountains/kings, but arises from the seven (Rev. 17:11). This passage is somewhat confusing because it is accounting for the fact that a single king will represent both of the kingdoms which are future to John’s vision. The Antichrist, the *Beast*^[4.3.2.16], arises out of the *seventh* kingdom, but also suffers a wound and is revived to rule as an undisputed *eighth* king:

The preferred scheme is that the five who have fallen are the kingdoms of the past which have persecuted God’s people [see #5 - *Five Fallen Kings*^[4.3.2.5]] . . . The one that remains is Rome, the persecutor of God’s people when John was writing. The seventh is the final great persecutor, the reunited Roman Empire headed up by Antichrist, and the eighth is the final form of Gentile world rule—the final empire of Antichrist, which will arise from the seventh after the Antichrist dies and comes back to life.¹⁹

The seven heads are said to have names of blasphemy (Rev. 13:1; 17:3). “The ‘names of blasphemy’ . . . on the beast’s heads are names that amounted to words or conduct injurious to God’s honor and holiness.”²⁰ The heads themselves—the kingdoms they represent—blasphemed God. The tendency of great kings to regard themselves as divine, their rule having been gained by their own hand, and their opposition to God and his people is legend (e.g., 2K. 19:6; Ps. 74:10; Isa. 37:6; 52:5; Dan. 4:30; 5:23).

4.3.2.4.1 - Daniel saw Seven Heads

There is another possibility for understanding the seven heads which removes the need for John’s vision backward in history to take in vistas earlier than Daniel’s day. How can that be? John sees *seven* heads which are said to represent seven kings, but Daniel only sees *four beasts*. Yet one of Daniel’s beasts, the *leopard*^[4.3.2.11], is said to contain four heads. We also are told that the fourth beast has a single head (Dan. 7:20). If we add the heads of the other two beasts, then this would account for *seven* heads: one each on the first, second, and fourth beasts, and four heads on the third. This view has the advantage of removing the need to identify kingdoms prior to the time of Daniel to account for all seven heads which John sees. It seems to provide a solution which allows both John’s and Daniel’s visions to have the same historic scope, but from different perspectives—John looks backward in time, but no further back than the time of Daniel.

Unfortunately, there are several problems with taking the seven heads implicitly seen by Daniel as the seven heads explicitly shown to John:

1. **Five Fallen** - John is told, concerning the seven heads: “They are seven kings. **Five have fallen**, one is, and **the other has not yet come**” [emphasis added] (Rev. 17:10). If we understand the first three beasts of Daniel to represent kingdoms which had passed from view in John’s day (e.g., Babylon, Medo-Persia, and Greece) and the fourth beast to be Rome, then we would have expected John to be told, “**Six have fallen**, one is, and **none is to come!**” For at the time of John, three of the four beasts had passed from the stage of history and *six* of the seven heads should have been accounted for.
2. **Beasts are Kings** - Daniel is explicitly told that the *four beasts* (having seven implicit heads) are *four kings* (Dan. 7:17). John is told that his *seven heads* are *seven kings* (Rev. 17:10). If each of Daniel’s beasts is a king, how can we take the four heads of one of the beasts and make them kings in the same sense as the beasts? John’s seven heads cannot be the same as the seven heads on Daniel’s beasts because the seven heads implicitly seen by Daniel only represent *four* kings. For Daniel, it is the *beasts* which represent kingdoms, whereas for John, it is the *heads*. The four heads seen upon Daniel’s third beast provide additional information concerning the internal workings of the third beast kingdom (e.g., correspond to the four notable horns, Dan. 8:8), but are not to be included in a tally of heads as seen by John.
3. **Sequential Kingdoms** - Another problem with this view is the inconsistency of treating the four heads of the third beast—which are typically understood to be four contemporaneous rulers who follow upon Alexander the Great (Dan. 8:8)—the same as John’s seven heads which appear to be sequential in their relationship.
4. **Historical Span** - This view limits the historical span of the seven heads which the *Harlot*^[4.3.2.21] sits upon to extend no earlier than the reign of Nebuchadnezzar, the first beast. If so, then the Scripturally-significant kingdoms of Babel, Egypt, and Assyria cannot be accounted for in the ride of the *Harlot*^[4.3.2.21]. Yet aspects of her identity argue for her ride to extend back to very early history, for she is the “**mother** of harlots and of abominations of the earth” [emphasis added]. How could she be considered the true mother if she only began to ride as late as Babylon (in the sense of excluding the kingdom of Babel under Nimrod, Gen. 10:8-10)? In that case, she too would be *a daughter* rather than *the mother*.

While there is great attraction in the potential simplification of finding all seven of John’s heads upon Daniel’s four beasts, there are significant hurdles to doing so. It seems better to take the seven heads, which are found upon both the *Beast*^[4.3.2.16] and upon the dragon, as denoting seven historic kingdoms under the sway of Satan:

Then the devil, taking Him up on a high mountain, showed Him **all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time**. And the devil said to Him, “All this authority I will give You, and their glory; for *this has been delivered to me, and I give it to whomever I wish*. Therefore, if You will worship before me, all will be Yours.” (Luke 4:5-7) [emphasis added]

See #16 - *Beast*^[4.3.2.16]. See the commentary on *Revelation 17:10*^[3.17.10]. See *Symbols of Kingdoms*^[4.3.2.1].

4.3.2.5 - #5 - Five Fallen Kings

The five kings which had fallen by John’s day (Rev. 17:10) appear to represent kingdoms (see #4 - *Seven Heads/Kings*^[4.3.2.4]). Assuming Rome is the kingdom which “is” at the time of John, then five kingdoms precede it and one will follow. We know from the book of Daniel that the three kingdoms which precede Rome are Greece, Medo-Persia, and Babylon (see #8 - *Four Beasts/Kings*^[4.3.2.8]). Yet two more are required.

If we limit our scope of inquiry to kingdoms of special relevance to Israel, then two additional candidates immediately come to mind: Assyria and Egypt. Since Israel was born as a nation in the Exodus from Egypt, the five fallen kings represent all fallen kingdoms of significance which oppressed Israel from her birth to John’s time—the time of Rome. The most likely candidates are Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, Medo-Persia, and Greece.

The five kingdoms of the past are the ones who have persecuted God’s people (Egypt, Eze. 29-30; Nineveh or Assyria, Nah. 3:1-19; Babylon, Isa. 21:9 and Jer. 50-51; Persia, Dan. 10:13 and 11:2; Greece, Dan. 11:3-4). The persecutor of God’s people during John’s lifetime was Rome. . . . So the angel’s clarifying word to John about the seven heads [Rev. 17:9-11] spans essentially the entire history of Gentile world empires.²¹

Five empires ruled the known world in succession before John the Apostle wrote his book of Revelation. The empires of Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, Media-Persia and Greece each ruled the known world. . . The Roman Empire ruled in John’s day.²²

At the moment John wrote, Israel was in subjection to Rome. It had been in subjection to Greece, Persia and Babylon. But in its still earlier history, Israel had been in slavery to Assyria, and, in its beginnings was in slavery to Egypt. So Isaiah writes, “For thus saith the Lord God, My people went down aforetime into Egypt to sojourn there; and the Assyrian oppressed them without cause” (Isa. 52:4).²³

The view which takes Egypt as the first kingdom is based, in part, on understanding the seven heads as *Gentile* kingdoms and the context of Revelation 17 as favoring a Jewish/Gentile distinction. Evidence for such an emphasis can be found in the broader context of Revelation, especially chapters 7, 11-12, and 14. It also recognizes the well-documented *opposition* each of these kingdoms represented to God’s people. But limiting the kingdoms to only those which existed after the calling of Abraham, the father of the Jews, has the weakness of being unable to account for the full history of the *Harlot*^[4.3.2.21]. If it can be shown that she predates the Jewish nation, then upon what head can she be said to have ridden upon prior to Egypt and the events of the Exodus?

Taking the first two kingdoms to be Egypt and Assyria does not seem to do full justice to the description of the *Harlot*^[4.3.2.21] who sits on the seven heads which are the seven kings (Rev. 17:7-10). She is given the name *Babylon* and is identified as the “mother of harlots and of the abominations of the earth” (Rev. 17:5). In order to be the *mother* of harlots and abominations (which denote spiritual idolatry), she would have to be the *source* from which her daughter harlots were born. Thus, it seems best to see the *Harlot*^[4.3.2.21] as having ridden upon the *Beast*^[4.3.2.16], sitting upon its *seven heads*^[4.3.2.4], throughout history. This would argue for understanding the five fallen kingdoms as stretching back beyond Egypt to the time of the construction of the first major city recorded in Scripture: Babel (Gen. 11:1-9).²⁴

Cush begot Nimrod; he began to be a mighty one on the earth. He was a mighty hunter before the LORD; therefore it is said, “Like Nimrod the mighty hunter before the LORD.” And **the beginning of his kingdom was Babel**, Erech, Accad, and Calneh, **in the land of Shinar**. From that land he went to Assyria and built Nineveh, Rehoboth Ir, Calah, and Resen between Nineveh and Calah (that [is] the principal city). (Gen. 10:8-12) [emphasis added]

If the kingdom of Babel²⁵ is taken to be the first kingdom and the five kingdoms span from the time of the tower of Babel through the initial appearance of Rome, the most likely candidates for the second kingdom would be either Egypt or Assyria. Of the two, Egypt had a greater significance as a repressor of God's people and introducing them to idolatry (Ex. 32:4; Eze. 23:2-4). The view that Babel is the first kingdom has the advantage of providing a head for the *Harlot*^[4.3.2.21] to sit upon all the way back to the initial rebellion of mankind manifested by the great city: Babel.

Just as impossible was it [as Rome] for the Babylon of Nebuchadnezzar's day [to be the mother of harlots, Rev. 17:5]; and for the same reason. It does not date back far enough. We must go further back, and find it in Gen. 10:8-10 and 11:9. There we find it in the land of Shinar. Under Nimrod began the work in the spirit of Anti-christ; his object being to build a city, and make for his People a name, so that they might not be scattered. Babylon [Babel] was founded in rebellion against God.²⁶

This would accord with the identification of the *Harlot*^[5.2.25] as "that **great city** which reigns over the kings of the earth" [emphasis added] (Rev. 17:18).²⁷

See commentary on *Revelation 17:10*^[3.17.10]. See *Symbols of Kingdoms*^[4.3.2].

4.3.2.6 - #6 - First King

The first of the five fallen kings probably represents either the kingdom of Babel or Egypt. See #5 - *Five Fallen Kings*^[4.3.2.5]. See #7 - *Second King*^[4.3.2.7]. See *Symbols of Kingdoms*^[4.3.2].

4.3.2.7 - #7 - Second King

The second of the five fallen kings probably represents Egypt or Assyria. If the first king is taken as representing the kingdom of Babel, then the second king is most likely Egypt. If the first king represents Egypt, then the second king is most likely Assyria. See #5 - *Five Fallen Kings*^[4.3.2.5]. See #6 - *First King*^[4.3.2.6]. See *Symbols of Kingdoms*^[4.3.2].

4.3.2.8 - #8 - Four Beasts/Kings

Daniel sees these four beasts in his night vision in the first year of the reign of Belshazzar (Dan. 7:1-28). Daniel's vision pertains to the future, not the past, and so the first of the four beasts he is shown represents Babylon, the kingdom within which he found himself captive at the time of the vision. Daniel is shown a sequence of beasts with differing characteristics culminating in a unique and particularly terrible final fourth beast. The four beasts of Daniel's vision appear to represent four major kingdoms which dominate the history of the Jews from Daniel's day until the time Messiah sets up His kingdom (Dan. 2:34-35, 44-45). The four beasts are said to originate from the *sea*^[4.3.2.2] [#2-#8] (Dan. 7:2). They are also said to be four kings which arise out of the *earth*^[4.3.2.3] [#3-#8] (Dan. 7:17). Each *king* represents a *kingdom*. The four beasts of Daniel's night vision correspond to the four metals of the image in *Nebuchadnezzar's dream*^[4.3.1] (Dan. 2:32-45).

The four beasts Daniel sees are a subset of the *seven heads*^[4.3.2.4] which John sees throughout Revelation (Rev. 12:3; 13:1; 17:3, 7, 9). Three of the beasts/kings shown to Daniel had already fallen by the time John saw his vision. These three beasts/kings, along with two other kings which predate Daniel's vision, form the *five fallen kings*^[4.3.2.5] shown John (Rev. 17:10).

See #9 - *Lion Beast*^[4.3.2.9], #10 - *Bear Beast*^[4.3.2.10], #11 - *Leopard Beast*^[4.3.2.11], and #12 - *Terrible Beast*^[4.3.2.12]. See *Symbols of Kingdoms*^[4.3.2].

4.3.2.9 - #9 - Lion Beast

The first beast of Daniel's night vision: "The first *was* like a lion, and had eagle's wings. I watched till its wings were plucked off; and it was lifted up from the earth and made to stand on two feet like a man, and a man's heart was given to it" (Dan. 7:4). This beast appears to correspond to the head of gold in *Nebuchadnezzar's dream*^[4.3.1] (Dan. 2:32, 38). "Interpreters of the book of Daniel, whether liberal or conservative, generally have agreed that chapter 7 is in some sense a recapitulation of chapter

2 and covers the same four empires. Likewise, there is agreement that the first empire represents the reign of Nebuchadnezzar or the Neo-Babylonian Empire. . . . Daniel in his vision sees the wing's plucked and the lion made to stand upon his feet as a man, with a man's heart given to it. This is most commonly interpreted as the symbolic representation of Nebuchadnezzar's experience in chapter 4 when he was humbled before God and made to realize that, even though he was a great ruler, he was only a man."²⁸ The lion beast is the third of *seven kingdoms*^[4.3.2.4] which oppressed God's people through history.

Dominion is taken from this beast, but its life is prolonged "for a season and a time" (Dan. 7:12). This is reflected in the contribution of its attributes to the final *Beast*^[4.3.2.16] who is the eighth head ^[#9-#16] (Rev. 13:2). See *Symbols of Kingdoms*^[4.3.2].

4.3.2.10 - #10 - Bear Beast

"And suddenly another beast, a second, like a bear. It was raised up on one side, and *had* three ribs in its mouth between its teeth. And they said thus to it: 'Arise, devour much flesh!' " (Dan. 7:5). This beast appears to correspond to the chest and arms of silver in *Nebuchadnezzar's dream*^[4.3.1] (Dan. 2:32, 39). "Taken as a while, the prophecy of the second beast accurately portrays the characteristics and history of the Medo-Persian Empire which, although beginning in Daniel's day, continued for over 200 years until the time of Alexander the Great, 336 B.C."²⁹ The kingdom represented by the bear beast follows upon the overthrow of the lion beast: Medo-Persia overthrew Babylon ^[#9-#10]. The bear beast is the fourth of *seven kingdoms*^[4.3.2.4] which oppressed God's people through history.

Dominion is taken from this beast, but its life is prolonged "for a season and a time" (Dan. 7:12). This is reflected in the contribution of its attributes to the final *Beast*^[4.3.2.16] who is the eighth head ^[#9-#16] (Rev. 13:2). See *Symbols of Kingdoms*^[4.3.2].

4.3.2.11 - #11 - Leopard Beast

"After this I looked, and there was another, like a leopard, which had on its back four wings of a bird. The beast also had four heads, and dominion was given to it" (Dan. 7:6). This beast appears to correspond to the belly and thighs of bronze in *Nebuchadnezzar's dream*^[4.3.1] (Dan. 2:32, 39). "The third beast is commonly identified as the empire of Greece. . . . On the face of it, . . . the history of Greece under Alexander the Great corresponds precisely to what is here revealed. . . . It is a well-established fact of history that Alexander had four principle successors. . . . Lysimachus, who held Thrace and Bithynia; Cassander, who held Macedonia and Greece; Seleucus, who controlled Syria, Babylonia, and territories as far east as India; and Ptolemy, who controlled Egypt, Palestine, and Ariba Petrea."³⁰ The kingdom represented by the leopard beast follows upon the overthrow of the bear beast: when Alexander overthrew Medo-Persia ^[#10-#11]. The leopard beast is the fifth of *seven kingdoms*^[4.3.2.4] which oppressed God's people through history.

Dominion is taken from this beast, but its life is prolonged "for a season and a time" (Dan. 7:12). This is reflected in the contribution of its attributes to the final *Beast*^[4.3.2.16] who is the eighth head ^[#10-#16] (Rev. 13:2). See *Symbols of Kingdoms*^[4.3.2].

4.3.2.12 - #12 - Terrible Beast

This beast appears to correspond to the legs of iron, its feet partly of iron and partly of clay in *Nebuchadnezzar's dream*^[4.3.1] (Dan. 2:33, 40-43). The beast is said to be uniquely dreadful and terrible (Dan. 7:7, 19, 23). It is said to have *iron* teeth (the fourth metal in Nebuchadnezzar's dream was *iron*) and great emphasis is placed upon its trampling and breaking to pieces—corresponding to the feet in Nebuchadnezzar's dream (Dan. 7:7, 19). The beast is said to have ten horns, which correspond to the ten toes of Nebuchadnezzar's dream ^[#12-#22] (Dan. 7:7, 20). At the demise of this beast, when its dominion is taken away and its body is destroyed and burned (Dan. 7:11, 26), the saints will possess the kingdom ^[#12-#14] (Dan. 7:18). This kingdom devours the whole earth ^[#12-#1] (Dan. 7:23). Although some interpreters take this beast to be Greece (the kingdom of Alexander the Great), most conservative

scholars (who believe in the *inspiration*^[5.2.33] of Daniel) identify the fourth beast as Rome:

Probably the most decisive argument in favor of interpreting the fourth empire as Roman is the fact . . . that the New Testament seems to follow this interpretation. Christ, in His reference to the “abomination of desolation” (Mtt. 24:15) clearly pictures the desecration of the temple, here prophesied as a future event. . . . the Grecian view would require fulfillment in the second century B.C. The New Testament also seems to employ the symbolism of Daniel in the book of Revelation, presented as future even after the destruction of the temple.³¹

From the standpoint of history the identification of the fourth empire as Rome can be traced to early times: Josephus (*The Antiquities of the Jews* 11:7); 4 Ezra 12:10-12 in A.D. 80-120; the Assumption of Moses, chapters 8-9 in A.D. 7-30; 2 Baruch 39:3-4 before A.D. 70; and later Jewish writings cited in the *Jewish Encyclopedia*, 10.394.³²

A problem arises in relation to the ten kings and the description of how the fourth beast is overthrown as this does not correspond with the demise of the Roman empire. This difference explains why we are discussing the beasts of Daniel in our treatment of the book of Revelation. Aspects of the prophetic passages both in Daniel and Revelation suggest that this fourth beast continues beyond its initial appearance, but in a fragmented form:

Whereas you saw the feet and toes, partly of potter’s clay and partly of iron, **the kingdom shall be divided**, yet the strength of the iron shall be in it, just as you saw the iron mixed with ceramic clay. And as the toes of the feet *were* partly of iron and partly of clay, so the kingdom shall be partly strong and partly fragile. As you saw iron mixed with ceramic clay, they will mingle with the seed of men; but they will not adhere to one another, just as iron does not mix with clay. **And in the days of these kings** the God of heaven will setup a kingdom which shall never be destroyed. (Dan. 2:41-44a). [emphasis added]

For an unspecified period of time after the breakup of the fourth kingdom, it continues in a distributed form until the time of the end when God establishes his kingdom on earth—when the stone smashes the feet of the image, including its ten toes (Dan. 2:34-35, 44-45). “The destruction of the fourth beast here described refers to a time yet future in connection with the second advent of Christ.”³³ The kingdom represented by the terrible beast follows upon the demise of the leopard beast: when the Roman empire obtained control of the areas previously under the control of Alexander and the four kings who arose after his death^[#11-#12]. John was told that the seven heads of the beast of Revelation 17 were seven mountains and seven kings: “They are seven kings. Five have fallen, one is, **and the other has not yet come**” [emphasis added] (Rev. 17:10).³⁴ As we discussed above, the five that have fallen are five kings representing five kingdoms prior to Rome. The king that “is” probably represents the form of the Roman empire which existed at the time of John’s vision.

The terrible beast is the sixth of *seven kingdoms*^[4.3.2.4] which oppressed God’s people through history and follows upon the *five kings*^[4.3.2.5] who had fallen prior to John’s vision (Rev. 17:10). This final beast Daniel sees is the same beast which John sees rising from the sea in Revelation 13:

Preterists^[5.2.59] are correct in relating the beast of Revelation 13 with the fourth beast of Daniel 7. Many interesting parallels exist between the two. For example, both have a worldwide empire (Daniel 7:7, 23; Revelation 13:8), both rule for three-and-one-half years (Daniel 7:25; Revelation 13:5), both dominate the saints for three-and-one-half years (Daniel 7:25; Revelation 12:14; 13:7), and both are characterized by their arrogant and blasphemous words (Daniel 7:8, 11, 20, 25; Revelation 13:5). Because of these parallels, many scholars have concluded that both beasts are one and the same.³⁵

They both will come out of the sea (Dan. 7:3; Rev. 13:1), both will have ten horns (Dan. 7:7, 20; Rev. 13:1), and both will be succeeded by the kingdom of Christ (Dan. 7:11, 26, 27; Rev. 17:14; 19:20; 20:4-6). . . . the symbolism of the lion, the bear, and the leopard (Dan. 7:4-6) is evident in the beast in Revelation 13:2.³⁶

See *Symbols of Kingdoms*^[4.3.2].

4.3.2.13 - #13 - Seventh King

The seventh king is the last of *seven kingdoms*^[4.3.2.4] which oppressed God’s people through history and follows upon the last *terrible beast*^[4.3.2.12] shown to Daniel (Dan. 7:7, 19-20). The seventh king is the king which had “not yet come” at the time of John’s vision (Rev. 17:10). Concerning the seven

heads which are seven kings, John is told, “They are seven kings. Five have fallen, one is, *and* the other has not yet come. And when he comes, he must continue a short time” (Rev. 17:10).³⁷ The seventh king is said to be future to John’s day, but when he arrives, he will only continue a short time. This probably corresponds to the relatively short period between the rise of the *Antichrist*^[5.2.3] and his initial demise by a fatal wound (Rev. 13:3 cf. Zec. 11:17). Thereafter, he is revived as an *eighth head or king*^[4.3.2.16] (Rev. 17:11).

In our diagram of *Symbols of Kingdoms*^[4.3.2], we have drawn the seventh king within the *sixth king*^[4.3.2.12] because it is evident from the revelation given Daniel concerning the *fourth beast*^[4.3.2.12] (which corresponds to the sixth king) that after its initial appearance and rule, the kingdom of the fourth beast fragments but continues to exist until the time of its ultimate overthrow to establish the *Millennial Kingdom*^[4.3.2.14] (Dan. 2:35, 44-45). Therefore, in some sense, the seventh king is a continuation of the sixth king, represented by the *terrible beast*^[4.3.2.12]. This understanding requires the emergence of an empire at the time of the end which is in some way a continuation of the Roman empire of John’s day (Dan. 2:40-44).

The seventh king is related to the eighth head, the *Beast*^[4.3.2.16]. “The beast that was, and is not, is himself also the eighth, and is of the seven, and is going to perdition” (Rev. 17:11). It appears the seventh king, having received a fatal wound, enters the *abyss*^[4.3.2.17] [#13-#17] (Rev. 17:18) prior to his revival as *Beast*^[4.3.2.16] (Rev. 13:3, 14). This view recognizes that the passage which describes the relationship between the seventh king and the *Beast*^[5.2.9] (the eighth head), employs the phrase, “that was, and is not,” which is associated with the wounding and subsequent ascent of the beast from the abyss (Rev. 17:11 cf. Rev. 17:8).

See #16 - *Beast*^[4.3.2.16]. See *Symbols of Kingdoms*^[4.3.2].

4.3.2.14 - #14 - Millennial Kingdom

The *Millennial Kingdom*^[5.2.39] is the kingdom of God on earth which, when it comes, destroys all previous kingdoms (Dan. 2:35, 44-45; 7:14, 22, 26-27; Rev. 19:11-21). In Daniel’s vision of the *four beasts*^[4.3.2.8] which were said to be kings (representing kingdoms), God’s kingdom on earth follows upon the destruction of the fourth, *terrible beast*^[4.3.2.12] [#12-#14]. Thereafter, Christ will reign on the throne of David for one thousand years from Jerusalem (Rev. 20:4-6). See *The Arrival of God’s Kingdom*^[2.4.3]. See *Millennial Temple*^[4.16.5.10]. See *Millennial Kingdom*^[4.11]. See *Symbols of Kingdoms*^[4.3.2].

4.3.2.15 - #15 - Dragon

We are told that the dragon is, “that serpent of old, called the Devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world” (Rev. 12:9). The dragon is said to have *seven heads*^[4.3.2.4] and *ten horns*^[4.3.2.22] [#15-#4] [#15-#22] (Rev. 12:3). The heads of the dragon are said to wear diadems (Rev. 12:3), a further indication that the heads represent kings (Rev. 17:9-10). The *Beast*^[4.3.2.16], who also has seven heads and ten horns (Rev. 13:1; Rev. 17:3, 7), is closely identified with the dragon. This reflects the dragon’s empowerment of the *Beast*^[5.2.9] [#15-#16] (Rev. 13:2-4). This empowerment is likely related to the healing of the fatal wound resulting in the Beast’s rise from the Abyss to be marveled at by the world (Rev. 13:3; 17:8). See *Supernatural Origin?*^[4.2.7]. See commentary on *Revelation 20:4*^[3.20.4]. See *Symbols of Kingdoms*^[4.3.2].

4.3.2.16 - #16 - Beast

The *Beast*^[5.2.9] is probably the most confusing entity in a consideration of the symbols representing kingdoms and individuals of the visions given to both Daniel and John. This confusion stems from several overlapping aspects of the revelation concerning the Beast:

1. The term “beast” is used by Daniel to describe *several* kings (Dan. 7:17). Of these four, the

last is unique and especially terrible.

2. The term “beast” is used both to denote the final kingdom and the final king which leads the kingdom among the *ten horns*^[4.3.2.22] (Dan. 7:11; Rev. 16:10; 17:11-13).
3. The revival of the Beast makes him both a ruler of the *seventh kingdom*^[4.3.2.13] (Rev. 16:10) and the final eighth head. The Beast is said to *have* seven heads and ten horns, yet he is also “of the seven” heads and “himself also an eighth” (Rev. 17:11).
4. Sometimes the term “beast” denotes a *kingdom* (Dan. 7:7, 11, 19; Rev. 13:1-2). Other times an *individual* (Rev. 11:7; 13:4, 12-14, 17-18; 16:10, 14; 19:19-20). Elsewhere, the same individual is represented as a *horn* (Dan. 7:8) and a *head* (Rev. 17:11).
5. John sees two “beasts,” one rising from the sea (Rev. 13:1) and another from the earth (Rev. 13:11). The first, more prominent beast is the one whom we describe here. We refer to the second beast from the earth using his alternate title as the *False Prophet*^[4.3.2.18].

Because of these complexities, our diagram of *Symbols of Kingdoms*^[4.3.2] is necessarily imprecise in some aspects because it is nearly impossible to accurately capture all the relationships between the various symbols which denote the Beast and his kingdom in a diagram. In our diagram, #13 - *Seventh King*^[4.3.2.13], #16 - *Beast*, and #25 - *Little Horn*^[4.3.2.25] all appear with the same color since we believe each symbol denotes different aspects of the reign of the same individual: *Antichrist*^[4.2].

The Beast has *seven heads*^[4.3.2.4] and *ten horns*^[4.3.2.22] [#16-#4] [#16-#22] (Rev. 13:1; 17:3, 7). In this characteristic, he is identical with the *dragon*^[4.3.2.15] who gives him his power, throne and authority [#16-#15] (Rev. 13:2-4; 16:10). This empowerment likely also includes the healing of the fatal wound resulting in the Beast’s rise from the Abyss to be marveled at by the world (Rev. 13:3; 17:8). He also is identified closely with the dragon in that he and the dragon both receive worship (Rev. 13:4).

The beast is, “like a leopard, his feet were like *the feet of a bear*, and his mouth like the mouth of a lion” (Rev. 13:2). The *leopard* denotes attributes of the *leopard beast*^[4.3.2.11] [#11-#16], the *bear* denotes attributes of the *bear beast*^[4.3.2.10] [#10-#16], and the *lion* denotes attributes of the *lion beast*^[4.3.2.9] [#9-#16] (Dan. 7:12; Rev. 13:2). Two aspects should be noted:

- **Terrible Beast Missing** - In Revelation 13, no mention is made of the *terrible beast*^[4.3.2.12] which followed these three beasts in Daniel’s vision (Dan. 7:2-7). This is an indication that the Beast is an embodiment of that final terrible beast—consisting of the revival of the *seventh king*^[4.3.2.13] from his fatal wound out of the *abyss*^[4.3.2.17] [#17-#16] (Rev. 13:3; 17:8, 11, 14). The Beast ascends from the Abyss both temporally and physically (see *Supernatural Origin?*^[4.2.7]).
- **Sequence of Beasts Reversed** - In Daniel’s vision of the *four beasts*^[4.3.2.8] which are said to be kings, the sequence is first *lion*^[4.3.2.9], then *bear*^[4.3.2.10], then *leopard*^[4.3.2.11], and finally the *terrible beast*^[4.3.2.12]. John relates the first three in opposite order. This reflects the different vantage points of Daniel and John. In Daniel’s day, the lion, bear, and leopard had not yet fallen. In John’s day, they have all fallen, but contribute to the final Beast. Daniel looks forward in time, whereas here John looks back.

The Beast is said to have *ten horns*^[4.3.2.22], which are ten kings, but will rule over them: they are of one mind and give their authority to the beast [#16-#22] (Rev. 17:12-13, 17). The ruler of this final beastly kingdom was seen by Daniel as a *little horn*^[5.2.37] (Dan. 7:8). See #25 - *Little Horn*^[4.3.2.25]. The description of the Beast is remarkably similar to the little horn.³⁸

This is because the Beast is the final eighth *head* (kingdom) and the little horn is the prominent *horn* (king) of the time of the end. The final kingdom is ruled by the prominent king of the end:

Daniel's Little Horn versus The Beast of Revelation

Characteristic	Daniel's Little Horn	Beast of Revelation
Mouth	Speaks pompous words (Dan. 7:8, 11, 20, 25; 11:36).	Blasphemes against God, His name, His <i>tabernacle</i> ^[5.2.69] , and those who dwell in heaven (Rev. 13:6).
Duration of Authority ³⁹	Saints given into his hand for time, times, and half a time (Dan. 7:25).	Given authority for 42 months (Rev. 13:5).
Persecutes the Saints	Prevails over saints ^[#25-#20] (Dan. 7:21, 25).	Overcomes saints ^[#16-#20] (Rev. 12:11; 13:7, 15; 20:4).
Global Rule	Dan. 7:21-25	Rev. 13:7 ^[#16-#1]
A King	Dan. 7:24	Rev. 17:10-11
A Man	Eyes like a man (Dan. 7:8, 20).	The number of a man (Rev. 13:18).
Destined for Perdition	Dan. 7:11	2Th. 2:3; Rev. 17:8, 11; 19:20; 20:10
Time of Destruction	When saints receive kingdom (Dan. 7:26-27).	When saints receive kingdom (Rev. 20:4-6).

A key difference between what John sees concerning the Beast and what Daniel is shown about the little horn is the relationship between the Beast and the *False Prophet*^[4.3.2.18] (or second beast from the earth, Rev. 13:11). The Beast supports the *False Prophet*^[4.3.2.18] and apparently is the source of his power (ultimately derived from the *dragon*^[4.3.2.15]). Scripture mentions that the *False Prophet*^[5.2.20] “exercises all the authority of the first beast **in his presence**” [emphasis added] ^[#16-#18] (Rev. 13:12a).

Although initially, the *Harlot*^[4.3.2.21] is supported by (rides upon) the Beast ^[#16-#21] (Rev. 17:3, 7) and she rules over the kings of the earth (Rev. 17:18), the *ten horns*^[4.3.2.22] who receive authority with the Beast (Rev. 17:12) eventually join forces to turn on her and consume her ^[#22-#21] (Rev. 17:16). (The *MT*^[5.2.45] and *NU*^[5.2.49] texts indicate that the Beast also turns on her ^[#16-#21]. See commentary on *Revelation 17:16*^[3.17.16].) If she includes an apostate religious system (as her title as mother of harlots and of abominations infers), then this opens the way for the Beast to garner all worship in her absence. As the final form of all world kingdoms, the Beast receives global worship (Dan. 11:37; 2Th. 2:4; Rev. 13:4, 8, 12; 14:9; 16:2; 19:20; 20:4) which involves his subjects taking his number, the infamous *mark of the beast* (Rev. 13:17; 14:9, 11; 15:2; 16:2; 19:20; 20:4; see commentary on *Revelation 13:18*^[3.13.18].) This probably occurs shortly after he overcomes the two Jewish witnesses (see commentary on *Revelation 11:7*^[3.11.7]) and installs himself within the Holy Place in the *Temple*^[5.2.73] (2Th. 2:4). See *Temple of God*^[4.16].

In the reign of the Beast, the heads (sequential kingdoms spanning history) and the horns (contemporary kings of the last kingdom) intersect in a single individual. He is Daniel's *little horn*^[4.3.2.25] which puts down the *three horns*^[4.3.2.24], but is also “the eighth *head*, and is of the seven *heads*,” having been wounded as the seventh and revived as the eighth (Rev. 17:11).

So as one of the seven, the beast is a kingdom, but as an eighth, he is the king of that kingdom who sustains the wound and ascends from the abyss after his wound (cf. Rev. 17:8). When this occurs, he is king over an eighth kingdom because his reign following his ascent from the abyss will be far more dynamic and dominant than before. This is the sense in which he is one of the seven, but also an eighth.⁴⁰

When destroyed, he is bound for perdition (Dan. 7:11, 26; 8:25; 9:27; 11:25; 2Th. 2:3-8; Rev. 17:8, 11; 19:20; 20:10).⁴¹

For additional background concerning the Beast, see *The Beast*^[4.2] and *Nero*^[4.12]. See commentary on *Revelation 13*^[3.13].

4.3.2.17 - #17 - Abyss

The Abyss, the “bottomless pit,” is a deep compartment within the earth where fallen angels are held (Rev. 9:1-2, 11). See commentary on *Revelation 9:1*^[3.9.1]. The *Beast*^[4.3.2.16] is said to ascend from the Abyss ^[#17-#16] (Rev. 11:7; 17:8), probably after being revived from his deadly wound as the *seventh king*^[4.3.2.13] ^[#13-#17] (Rev. 17:11). See *Supernatural Origin?*^[4.2.7]

The Abyss is also the holding place for the *dragon*^[4.3.2.15] (Satan) during the *Millennial Kingdom*^[4.3.2.14] (Rev. 20:1-3).

See *Symbols of Kingdoms*^[4.3.2].

4.3.2.18 - #18 - False Prophet

The *False Prophet*^[5.2.20] is the second beast which John sees which comes up out of the earth ^[#3-#18] having two horns like a lamb and who spoke like a *dragon*^[4.3.2.15] (Rev. 13:11). His appearance is benign, like that of a lamb, but his prophecies and commands have their source in the devil. This is why Scripture refers to him as the “False Prophet” (Rev. 19:20; 20:10).

The False Prophet performs great signs and miracles which are used to witness to the *Beast*^[4.3.2.16] from which he derives his power. “He exercises all the authority of the first beast in his presence and causes the earth and those who dwell in it to worship the first beast” ^[#16-#18] (Rev. 13:12). He causes those on the earth to worship the *Beast*^[5.2.9] and to make an *image to the beast*^[4.3.2.19] ^[#18-#19] (Rev. 13:14). He is even granted power “to give breath to the *image of the beast*^[5.2.29]” (Rev. 13:15). It appears that the miracles he performs are *genuine*, but *what they attest to is false*. It is the False Prophet who causes all men to receive a mark in order to be able to buy or sell (Rev. 13:16-17).

Along with the *dragon*^[4.3.2.15] and the *Beast*^[4.3.2.16], he forms an *antitrinity* wherein the dragon occupies a position like that of the Father, the Beast like that of the Son, and the False Prophet like that of the Holy Spirit, but testifies to the *false son*. All three are the source of demons which gather the kings of the earth to battle (Rev. 16:13-14). (See *Campaign of Armageddon*^[4.5].) Both the False Prophet and the *Beast*^[4.3.2.16] are taken at the Second Coming of Christ and cast into the Lake of Fire as its first populace (Rev. 19:20). They are still there one thousand years later when joined by the devil (Rev. 20:10).⁴²

No doubt the False Prophet plays a key role in the deception which Paul described in his letter to the church at Thessalonica:

The coming of the *lawless* one is according to the working of Satan, with all power, signs, and **lying wonders**, and with all **unrighteous deception** among those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this reason God will send them **strong delusion**, that they should believe the lie, that they all may be condemned who did not believe the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness. (2Th. 2:9-12) [emphasis added]

He is an instrument of both the dragon and the Beast, but ultimately of God. See *Symbols of Kingdoms*^[4.3.2]. See commentary on *Revelation 13:11*^[3.13.11].

4.3.2.19 - #19 - Image of Beast

Scripture indicates that the *Beast*^[4.3.2.16] who attains worldwide worship (Rev. 13:8) “opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God or that is worshiped, so that he sits as God in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God” (2Th. 2:4). But there is a catch—the *Beast*^[5.2.9] is *not* God. In particular, he lacks God’s unique attribute of *omnipresence*. So as long as he himself remains sitting in

the *Temple*^[5.2.73], he is unable to venture forth on the various campaigns which are associated with his activities at the time of the end. This seems to be the motivation behind the instructions by the *False Prophet*^[4.3.2.18] that the *earth dwellers*^[5.2.18] should “make an image to the beast who was wounded by the sword and lived” ^[#1-#19] (Rev. 13:14b). Having established the image, the *False Prophet*^[5.2.20] is “granted *power* to give breath to the *image of the beast*^[5.2.29], that the image of the beast should both speak and cause as many as would not worship the image of the beast to be killed” ^[#18-#19] (Rev. 13:15 cf. 14:9). This is perhaps one of the most remarkable statements in all of Scripture as it appears that the False Prophet is allowed, by the sovereignty of God’s permissive control of evil, to give the image life.

Although we can’t be sure, it seems reasonable to think that one purpose of the image is to continue to occupy the holy place within the Temple allowing the Beast to venture forth to attend to his many responsibilities—leaving an icon present as the focal point of worship. Notice that both the Beast *and his image* are the objects of worship (Rev. 13:15; 19:20). Those who refuse to worship the *image* are killed ^[#19-#20]!

Although the man of sin himself first sits in the Temple (2Th. 2:3-4), Jesus infers that something inanimate is set up in the holy place: “Therefore, when you see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet standing in the holy place. . .” (Mtt. 24:15). The *abomination* in this verse is not a person (masculine or feminine) but a *thing* (neuter). Perhaps it is the image of the Beast?⁴³ It is impossible to know for certain. Yet, this would help explain one purpose of the image of the Beast.

Following the judgments of the sixth trumpet “the rest of mankind, who were not killed by these plagues, did not repent of **the works of their hands**, that they should not worship demons, and **idols** . . .” [emphasis added] (Rev. 9:20). Interestingly, the image of the Beast is the ultimate *work of their hands* since the *False Prophet*^[4.3.2.18] “deceives those who dwell on the earth . . . to make an image to the beast” (Rev. 13:14). Thus, they themselves make the ultimate *idol* (icon) of their own worship!

The image of the Beast is typified by Nebuchadnezzar’s gold image which his subjects were required to worship on penalty of death:

Nebuchadnezzar spoke, saying to them, “*Is it true, . . . that you do not serve my gods or worship the gold image which I have set up? . . . if you do not worship, you shall be cast immediately into the midst of a burning fiery furnace. And who is the god who will deliver you from my hands?*” (Dan. 3:14-15)

In the same way that Nebuchadnezzar’s *image* received worship on his behalf, so will the image of the beast receive worship together with the Beast himself.

See *Tribulation Temple*^[4.16.5.9]. See commentary on *Revelation 13:14*^[3.13.14]. See *Symbols of Kingdoms*^[4.3.2].

4.3.2.20 - #20 - Saints

At the time of the end, the saints consist of Jewish believers who are hidden in the wilderness (see commentary on *Revelation 12:6*^[3.12.6]), the 144,000 sealed from the Jewish tribes (see commentary on *Revelation 7:4*^[3.7.4] and *Revelation 12:17*^[3.12.17]), and other Jews and Gentiles who come to faith after the *rapture of the church*^[4.14]. These saints will live in the midst of a time of intense persecution. Many will be martyred (Rev. 6:9-10; 7:14; 12:11; 13:7; 20:4). They will be persecuted by the *little horn*^[4.3.2.25] [#25-#20] (Dan. 7:21, 25), the *Harlot*^[4.3.2.21] [#21-#20] (Rev. 17:6; 19:2), the *Beast*^[4.3.2.16] [#16-#20] (Rev. 13:7), and the *image of the Beast*^[4.3.2.19] [#19-#20] (Rev. 13:15). The church will not be among these saints. See commentary on *Revelation 3:10*^[3.3.10]. See *Rapture*^[4.14]. See *Symbols of Kingdoms*^[4.3.2].

4.3.2.21 - #21 - Harlot

The Great *Harlot*^[5.2.25] rides upon the *Beast*^[4.3.2.16] who has *seven heads*^[4.3.2.4] and *ten horns*^[4.3.2.22] [#16-#21] (Rev. 17:1, 7). The seven heads of the *Beast*^[5.2.9] are said to be seven mountains upon which the Harlot sits ^[#4-#21] (Rev. 17:9). The Great Harlot sits upon “peoples, multitudes, nations, and tongues” ^[#2-#21] (Rev. 17:15). She rules over the kings of the earth ^[#21-#22] (Rev. 17:18), but the *ten*

kings^[4.3.2.22] of the *last kingdom*^[4.3.2.13] will hate her and eventually turn on her, making her desolate and naked, eating her flesh, and burning her with fire ^[#22-#21] (Rev. 17:16). (The *MT*^[5.2.45] and *NU*^[5.2.49] texts indicate that the *Beast*^[4.3.2.16] also turns on her ^[#16-#21]. See commentary on *Revelation 17:16*^[3.17.16].) The Great Harlot is an incessant persecutor of the *saints*^[4.3.2.20] throughout history, being “drunk with the blood of the saints and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus” ^[#21-#20] (Rev. 17:6).

See *The Great Harlot*^[4.1.4]. See commentary on *Revelation 17*^[3.17]. See commentary on *Revelation 12:1*^[3.12.1]. See *Symbols of Kingdoms*^[4.3.2].

4.3.2.22 - #22 - Ten Horns/Kings

The ten horns first appear in Daniel’s night vision—arising from the fourth, *terrible beast*^[4.3.2.12] ^[#12-#22] (Dan. 7:24). From these horns an eleventh *little horn*^[4.3.2.25] arises ^[#22-#15] (Dan. 7:8). This *little horn*^[5.2.37] overcomes three of the previous ten horns (Dan. 7:8, 24).

John sees the same ten horns upon the *dragon*^[4.3.2.15] ^[#15-#22] (Rev. 12:3) and upon the *Beast*^[4.3.2.16] ^[#16-#22] (Rev. 13:1; 17:3, 7). Indicating:

1. The horns are empowered by the dragon for the ultimate purpose which the dragon has for the *Beast*^[5.2.9]. This is seen in their submission to the *Beast*^[4.3.2.16].
2. The *Beast*^[4.3.2.16] is the final stage of Daniel’s fourth *terrible beast*^[4.3.2.12] out of which the ten horns arose ^[#12-#22] (Dan. 7:24).

The ten horns are ten kings (Rev. 17:12) of the time of the end who had not received authority by the time of John’s vision “but they receive authority for one hour as kings with the beast. These are of one mind, and they give their power and authority to the beast.” ^[#16-#22] (Rev. 17:12-13). Although the *Harlot*^[4.3.2.21] reigns over the kings of the earth ^[#21-#22] (Rev. 17:18), these kings hate the *Harlot*^[5.2.25] and destroy her in accordance with God’s will ^[#22-#21] (Rev. 17:16-17). (The *MT*^[5.2.45] and *NU*^[5.2.49] texts indicate that the *Beast*^[4.3.2.16] also turns on her ^[#16-#21]. See commentary on *Revelation 17:16*^[3.17.16].)

Although both the *seven heads*^[4.3.2.4] and the ten horns are said to be “kings,” there is an important distinction between the two. The seven heads span a long period of history whereas the ten horns are contemporaries at the time of the end:

While both the ten horns and seven heads are representative of kings, there is a difference between them. The ten horns are kings that are *contemporary* with each other. They all rise and reign at the same time. But the seven heads are *chronological* or *sequential*. One follows the other in chronological sequence, and no two are ever contemporary.⁴⁴

There is an intentional correlation between the horns of Daniel’s night vision and the feet and toes of the image in Nebuchadnezzar’s dream (Dan. 2:22-34, 41-42):

1. Both horns and toes are ten in number.
2. Both are outgrowths of the last Gentile kingdom (Dan. 2:41-42; 7:8; Rev. 17:12).
3. Both are destroyed by the arrival of God’s kingdom on earth, the *Millennial Kingdom*^[4.3.2.14] (Dan. 2:34; Rev. 17:14 cf. Rev. 16:14).

See *Nebuchadnezzar’s Dream and Daniel’s Vision*^[4.3.1].

See #4 - *Seven Heads/Kings*^[4.3.2.4]. See #25 - *Little Horn*^[4.3.2.25]. See *Symbols of Kingdoms*^[4.3.2].

4.3.2.23 - #23 - Seven Horns

Of the *ten horns*^[4.3.2.22], seven are not overcome by the *little horn*^[4.3.2.25] (Dan. 7:8, 24). See #26 - *Eight Horns/Kings*^[4.3.2.26]. See *Symbols of Kingdoms*^[4.3.2].

4.3.2.24 - #24 - Three Horns

Of the *ten horns*^[4.3.2.22], three are overcome by the *little horn*^[4.3.2.25] [#25-#24] (Dan. 7:8, 24). See #26 - *Eight Horns/Kings*^[4.3.2.26]. See *Symbols of Kingdoms*^[4.3.2].

4.3.2.25 - #25 - Little Horn

In Daniel's night vision, an eleventh "*little horn*^[5.2.37]" rises up among the *ten horns*^[4.3.2.22] of the fourth and final *terrible beast*^[4.3.2.12] (Dan. 7:8, 24). This eleventh, little horn, has an appearance greater than the other horns (Dan. 7:20). He eventually overcomes three of the ten horns [#25-#24] (Dan. 7:8, 24), leaving only seven horns with himself as an eighth (Dan. 7:8). The little horn which was eleventh—now eighth—corresponds to the *eighth head*^[4.3.2.16]. Although the heads represent sequential kingdoms of history and the horns represent contemporary kings of the last kingdom, these are one and the same in the little horn. For he is both the ruler of the final kingdom (head) *and* the primary king (horn) among the kings of the end.

Since the *Beast*^[4.3.2.16] and little horn are one and the same individual, we are not surprised to observe that the little horn has a number of personal attributes which identify him with the final *Beast*^[4.3.2.16] who is the revived ruler from among the *seventh kingdom*^[4.3.2.13], the form of the *terrible beast*^[4.3.2.12] at the time of the end. See #16 - *Beast*^[4.3.2.16]. See *Symbols of Kingdoms*^[4.3.2].

4.3.2.26 - #26 - Eight Horns/Kings

Even though the #22 - *Ten Horns/Kings*^[4.3.2.22] give their authority to the *Beast*^[4.3.2.16] (Rev. 17:13, 17), the *Beast*^[5.2.9] still overthrows *three horns*^[4.3.2.24]. This reduces the number of horns to 7 to which the *little horn*^[4.3.2.25] is added for a total of eight horns (Dan. 7:8).

See *Symbols of Kingdoms*^[4.3.2].

Notes

- ¹ "How sobering a thought that God sees the nations of the earth as wild beasts."—Donald Grey Barnhouse, *Revelation* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1971), 236.
- ² "The preciousness of the metal deteriorates from the top of gold to the clay of the feet, and there is a corresponding lower specific gravity; that is, the gold is much heavier than the silver, the silver than the brass, the brass than the iron, and the clay in the feet is the lightest material of all. The approximate specific gravity of gold is 19, silver 11, brass 8.5, and iron 7.8. . . . While the materials decrease in weight, they increase in hardness with the notable exception of the clay in the feet. The image is obviously top heavy and weak in its feet."—John F. Walvoord, *Daniel: The Key to Prophetic Revelation* (Chicago, IL: Moody Bible Institute, 1971), 63.
- ³ "The interpretation of the royal image of Nebuchadnezzar (Dan. 2:31-43) and of the four corresponding beast figures of the night vision of Daniel (Daniel 7) as the Babylonian, Persian, Grecian, and Roman world empires is found as early as *Irenaeus*^[5.2.34] (died A.D. 202) and in Josephus and the Jewish Rabbis. Luther says: 'Upon this interpretation and the meaning all the world is harmonious, and fact and history strongly prove it.'"
—Erich Sauer, *The Dawn of World Redemption* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1951, c1964), 172. Although no longer popular with Roman Catholic interpreters, this was the interpretation of Jerome: "Formerly the four kingdoms of Dn were commonly understood as being the Babylonian, the Medo-Persian, the Greco-Seleucid, and the Roman empires. Although this theory, defended by Jerome, was once regarded as the 'traditional' Catholic interpretation (in connection with the attempt to explain the 'seventy weeks of years' in 9:24-27 as culminating in the death of Jesus Christ), it would now find few modern Catholic exegetes to support it."—R. E. Brown, J. A. Fitzmyer, and R. E. Murphy, *The Jerome Biblical Commentary* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1996, c1968), Dan. 2:33.
- ⁴ See [Tim LaHaye, and Thomas Ice, *Charting the End Times* (Eugene, OR: Harvest House Publishers, 2001), 88].
- ⁵ See also Rev. 13:2.

- 6 See also Dan. 8:20; Rev. 13:2.
- 7 See also Dan. 8:21-22; 10:20; 11:2-4; Rev. 13:2.
- 8 See also Dan. 9:26.
- 9 See also Rev. 20:4-6.
- 10 We have denoted this relationship as between the *sea*^[4.3.2.2] and the *Harlot*^[4.3.2.21], but that which she sits upon is called “many waters” (Rev. 17:1, 15) rather than “sea.” Perhaps a subset of the sea is meant.
- 11 It is significant that the text does not say “four kings which *shall* arise out of the earth.” The first king (Nebuchadnezzar) had already arisen at the time of the vision.
- 12 J. A. Seiss, *The Apocalypse: Lectures on the Book of Revelation* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1966), Rev. 17:10.
- 13 Concerning inaccuracies in the KJV and NKJV, see commentary on *Revelation 17:10*^[3.17.10].
- 14 Robert L. Thomas, *Revelation 8-22* (Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 1995), Rev. 17:10.
- 15 Andy Woods, *What is the Identity of Babylon In Revelation 17-18?*
- 16 “Adding to the case for identifying these as kingdoms is the appropriateness of the verb ἔπεσαν [*epesan*] to speak of a kingdom’s fall (e.g., Rev. 14:8; 18:2) (Alford).”—Thomas, *Revelation 8-22*, Rev. 17:10.
- 17 Fruchtenbaum offers a unique interpretation of the seven heads as *types* of Roman Government: the Tarquin Kings (753-510 B.C.); the Censors (510-494 B.C.); the Plebians or Dictators (494-390 B.C.); the Republicans or Decemvirs (Oligarchy of Ten, 390-59 B.C.); the Triumvirate (59-27 B.C.); imperialism (27 B.C. - present); absolute imperialism (the *Antichrist*^[5.2.3]). [Arnold G. Fruchtenbaum, *The Footsteps of Messiah*, rev. ed. (Tustin, CA: Ariel Ministries, 2003), 42] Scott offers a related view, “The seven heads on the *Beast*^[5.2.9] represent seven successive forms of government from the rise of the fourth universal empire on through its history till its end. ‘Five have fallen.’ These are Kings, Consuls, Dictators, Decemvirs, and Military Tribunes. ‘One is.’ This is the sixth, or imperial form of government set up by Julius Caesar, and under which John was banished to Patmos under Domitian.”—Walter Scott, *Exposition of The Revelation* (London, England: Pickering & Inglis, n.d.), Rev. 17:9-13. Neither view provides a head for the beast which the *Harlot*^[5.2.25] sits upon if she is a *mother* of harlots that predates the early Rome.
- 18 Concerning inaccuracies in the KJV and NKJV, see commentary on *Revelation 17:10*^[3.17.10].
- 19 Mark Hitchcock, “*The Stake in the Heart—The A.D. 95 Date of Revelation*,” in Tim LaHaye, and Thomas Ice, eds., *The End Times Controversy* (Eugene, OR: Harvest House Publishers, 2003), 145.
- 20 Thomas, *Revelation 8-22*, Rev. 13:1.
- 21 Thomas, *Revelation 8-22*, Rev. 17:10.
- 22 James O. Combs, *Rainbows From Revelation* (Springfield, MO: Tribune Publishers, 1994), 184.
- 23 Barnhouse, *Revelation*, 329.
- 24 Mal Couch, ed., *A Bible Handbook to Revelation* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 2001), Rev. 17:9-10.
- 25 “Sumeria: Under Nimrod, Babel in the land of Shinar became the first postdiluvian center for human rebellion.”—Henry Morris, *The Revelation Record* (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 1983), Rev. 13:2.
- 26 E. W. Bullinger, *Commentary On Revelation* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 1984, 1935), Rev. 17:5.
- 27 To be sure, there is a sense in which the kingdom of *Babel* (under Nimrod) and the kingdom of *Babylon* (under Nebuchadnezzar) share identity for they are in the same region and much that became Babylon undoubtedly originated in Babel.
- 28 Walvoord, *Daniel: The Key to Prophetic Revelation*, Dan. 7:4.
- 29 Walvoord, *Daniel: The Key to Prophetic Revelation*, Dan. 7:5.
- 30 Walvoord, *Daniel: The Key to Prophetic Revelation*, Dan. 7:6.
- 31 Walvoord, *Daniel: The Key to Prophetic Revelation*, Rev. 7:7-8.

- 32 Daniel K. Wong, “*The Beast From The Sea in Revelation 13*,” in *Bibliotheca Sacra*, vol. 160 no. 639 (Dallas, TX: Dallas Theological Seminary, July-September 2003), 341.
- 33 Walvoord, *Daniel: The Key to Prophetic Revelation*, Dan. 7:11-12.
- 34 Concerning inaccuracies in the KJV and NKJV, see commentary on *Revelation 17:10*^[3.17.10].
- 35 Andy Woods, “*Revelation 13 and the First Beast*,” in Tim LaHaye, and Thomas Ice, eds., *The End Times Controversy* (Eugene, OR: Harvest House Publishers, 2003), 238.
- 36 Wong, “*The Beast From The Sea in Revelation 13*,” 339.
- 37 Concerning inaccuracies in the KJV and NKJV, see commentary on *Revelation 17:10*^[3.17.10].
- 38 “Both will have a worldwide kingdom (Dan. 7:7, 23; Rev. 13:8); both will speak blasphemies against God (Dan. 7:8, 11, 20, 25; Rev. 13:5); both will have victory over the saints for forty-two months (Dan. 7:25; Rev. 12:14; 13:5); both will be destroyed by Christ at the Second Advent (Dan. 7:11, 26; Rev. 17:14; 19:20); and immediately after their destruction the kingdom will be given to God’s saints (Dan. 7:22, 27; Rev. 20:4-6).”—Wong, “*The Beast From The Sea in Revelation 13*,” 338.
- 39 See *Prophetic Year*^[2.13.5.2].
- 40 Thomas, *Revelation 8-22*, Rev. 17:10.
- 41 “Destruction, ruin, or waste, especially through the eternal destruction brought upon the wicked by God (Heb. 10:39; 2Pe. 3:7). Jesus contrasted the broad way that leads to life with the difficult way that leads to destruction (Mtt. 7:13). The apostle Paul contrasted perdition with salvation (Php. 1:28).”—Ronald F. Youngblood, and R. K. Harrison, eds., *Nelson's New Illustrated Bible Dictionary* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 1997, c1995), s.v. “Perdition.”
- 42 Their continued existence in the lake one thousand years later provides irrefutable evidence against annihilationism. Those whose destiny is the Lake of Fire are not consumed, but continue to suffer forever.
- 43 The gender of the words used is not a foolproof means of determining the nature of the image because the gender of words does not always match their object. For example, although Jesus says to watch for the *abomination* (neuter), that which the earth dwellers make is an *image* (feminine) of the *Beast* (neuter). Still, Jesus’ words imply that an *object* rather than a person will stand in the holy place.
- 44 Fruchtenbaum, *The Footsteps of Messiah*, 41-42.

4.4 - Book of Life

The ultimate purpose of the *Book of Life*^[5.2.10] is to record the names of those who have trusted in Jesus Christ for salvation and have His righteousness imputed to their account (Gen. 15:6; Rom. 3:22; 4:3, 6, 9, 11; 2Cor. 5:21). Since Christ's atoning sacrifice is the basis for redemption, it is also referred to as "the Lamb's Book of Life" (Rev. 13:8; 21:27).

4.4.1 - Its Ultimate Purpose

Those whose names are written in the *Book of Life*^[5.2.10] are said to have their names "written in heaven" (Luke 10:20) or be "registered in heaven" (Heb. 12:23). This implies that the book is kept in heaven and this is where we find it in its ultimate use at the end of history: at the Great White Throne Judgment:

And I saw the dead, small and great, standing before God, and books were opened. And another book was opened, which is *the Book of Life*. And the dead were judged according to their works, by the things which were written in the books. The sea gave up the dead who were in it, and Death and Hades delivered up the dead who were in them. And they were judged, each one according to his works. Then Death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire. (Rev. 20:12-15)

This is the judgment which attends the second resurrection.¹ These are the resurrected dead who were *not* part of the first resurrection. *Over such the second death has power*. Their ultimate destiny is the Lake of Fire. Several books are involved in their judgement:

- **The Book of Life** - This book is consulted to verify they have *not* trusted in Christ and therefore must stand before God *on their own merit*. Since *the books*, which record their works, will indicate the presence of sin in their lives and that they have not been credited with the righteousness of Christ by trusting in Him, they have a major problem: they stand condemned as sinners before a Holy God and are now without recourse.
- **The Books** - These books record their life's works. Every good and bad deed of every moment of their life prior to death is recorded in these books. The degree of punishment is based upon their works, but there is no possibility of rescue from the Lake of Fire which awaits because their name fails to appear in the Book of Life.

God is a just God and will provide unbelievers what they so frequently say they desire: the opportunity to be judged by their own merit. Their merit, falling short of perfection and lacking the covering of Christ, will result in just condemnation by degrees in the Lake of Fire. They will realize too late that God does not "grade on a curve."

4.4.2 - When are Names Written?

Several passages indicate that the names of the redeemed are written in the book *while they are still alive—prior to death* (Luke 10:20; Php. 4:3). An additional passage indicates that the names of those who worship the beast were never recorded in the book:

The beast that you saw was, and is not, and will ascend out of the bottomless pit and go to perdition. And those who dwell on the earth will marvel, whose **names are not written in the Book of Life**^[5.2.10] **from the foundation of the world**, when they see the beast that was, and is not, and yet is. (Rev. 17:8) [emphasis added]

The phrase "from the foundation of the world" could be understood as describing either "the book" or the "names . . . written," emphasizing that either the *Book of Life itself existed* from the foundation of the world or that *the names have been absent* since then. If the former, the verse may only be conveying that the book has itself existed from the foundation of the world. If the latter, the verse would imply that the names of the redeemed were written from the foundation of the world. This latter meaning appears to be compatible with what is revealed concerning the election of the believer which

took place “before the foundation of the world” (Eph. 1:4).

When these facts are taken together, they indicate:

1. The Book of Life existed before the foundation of the world.
2. According to the eternal electing purposes of God, the names of the redeemed were written in the book before the foundation of the world whereas the names of the beast worshipers were omitted.

4.4.3 - Names Blotted Out

Having established that the names of the redeemed appear to have been recorded in the book at the time of their election (Eph. 1:4), but that the names of the beast worshippers were not, we encounter a difficulty. Certain passages imply that names are *blotted out* (removed) from the book (Ex. 32:32-33; Ps. 69:28; Rev. 3:5; 22:19). But we’ve just seen that the names of the beast worshipers were not written in the book. So who is it that is being blotted out? If it were the redeemed that could be blotted out, then how does this square with predestination and God’s electing purposes which result in the security of the believer? Various solutions have been proposed to reconcile the blotted names with what Scripture teaches elsewhere regarding the perseverance of the saints. We turn now to a brief survey of some of these. The question we want to answer is *who is it* that is “blotted out” from the *Book of Life*^[5.2.10]?

The solution to the logical predicament attending the various passages regarding the Book of Life generally results in the proposal that Scripture describes at least two and as many as *three* books associated with life:

1. **Book of the Living** - A book which records all those who attain a long life physically. Being blotted out of this book results in premature *physical* death (Ex. 32:32-33; Ps. 69:28).
2. **Book of Life** - A book which records the name of every individual ever born. Those who fail to exercise faith prior to death are “blotted out” of the book. Being blotted out of this book results in *spiritual* death and eternal damnation.
3. **Book of Life of the Lamb** - A book which records only those individuals who are predestined to salvation. None of the names written in this book is ever blotted out (Rev. 13:8; 21:27).

It is our view that attempting to explain the various passages by using two or three different books is overly complicated and imposes distinctions between the books which are not derived strictly from the Biblical text. We believe a simpler solution comes by understanding all these passages as describing the self-same book, but also recognizing the unique soteriological category of *those who dwell on the earth* in the last days and who worship the beast and take his mark. Rather than requiring two or even three books for logical consistency, all that is needed is a single book but two categories of people—where the *earth dwellers*^[5.2.18] of the end are treated uniquely from all other people of history.

Let’s take a look at some of the solutions which have been proposed for understanding all that Scripture teaches concerning the Book of Life.

4.4.3.1 - Book of the Living versus Book of Life

One solution which has been proposed is to understand *God’s book, the book of the living* (Ex. 32:32-33; Ps. 69:28) as being a different book than the *Book of Life*^[5.2.10]. Proponents of this view hold that this book records those who are afforded a full life due to righteousness. The sinner is then “blotted out” of the book by judgment resulting in his *physical* death. The remaining passage which indicates names may be blotted out (Rev. 3:5) is seen as a literary device—coupled with a strong adversative—intended to illustrate the impossibility of being blotted out from the other book—the Book of Life.

Thomas suggests that John used a figure of speech known as a litotes. “Interpreters . . . could take the ‘blotting out’ as an example of litotes, a figure of speech in which an affirmative is expressed by the negative of a contrary statement. Coming by way of denial of the opposite, this is an understatement to express emphatically the assurance that the overcomer’s name will be retained in the book of life.”²

But understanding Christ's warning in Revelation 3:5 as a figure of speech doesn't seem to do justice to the context:

The promise to the overcomer is an empty one unless the possibility exists that such a blotting out could occur. What incentive is furnished by being promised deliverance from something that could not happen? Furthermore, the psalmist prays for the blotting out of the names from the book of life (Ps. 69:28), and in so doing indicates that such is a distinct possibility. The "not blotting" referred to in this verse [Rev. 3:5] must be more than a figure of speech.³

The difficulties attending this view are:

1. Moses' offer to be blotted out of God's book (Ex. 32:32) appears to be parallel to that of Paul (Rom. 9:3). This view trivializes Moses' offer to be blotted out with God's people (only involving physical death) and fails to recognize the parallel of Paul's comment in Romans which concerns *spiritual death*, not physical.
2. Understanding the warning of being blotted out in Revelation 3:5 as a literary device doesn't do justice to the context of the letter to the church at Sardis.
3. The terms "book of the living" (Ps. 69:28) and "Book of Life" (Rev. 20:12, 15) are so similar as to call into question any view which maintains they are different books.

4.4.3.2 - Lamb's Book of Life a Unique Book?

Another solution holds that the *Lamb's Book of Life*^[5.2.10] differs from the *Book of Life*. The *Book of Life* contains the names of every person who ever lived. Those who believe have their names retained in the book (Rev. 3:5). Those who are unsaved are blotted out of the book (Ps. 69:28). Another book, the *Lamb's Book of Life* contains the name of every individual who is born again, and *only* those who are born again (Rev. 13:8; 21:27). Names are never blotted out of this book.⁴

The difficulties with this view are:

1. Taking these as two different books when their titles are so similar.
2. Allowing names to be recorded and blotted out in one book but never recorded in the second book when God's eternal election applies equally to both.
3. The beast worshipers are said to have never had their names written in the *Book of Life* (not the *Lamb's Book of Life*) in Revelation 17:8.
4. Those who are not blotted out of the *Book of Life* are one and the same as those who are written in the *Lamb's Book of Life*. What then is the purpose of having two books if election applies to all the saved listed in both books and their ultimate destiny is exactly the same—the New Jerusalem (Rev. 21:27; 22:19)? Similarly, the result of being *omitted* from either book, either by never having been written in or by being blotted out, is essentially the same—eternal damnation (Rev. 20:15).

4.4.3.3 - Beast Worshipers Blotted Out?

Another proposed solution is to understand Revelation 17:8 as merely indicating that the *Book of Life*^[5.2.10] has existed from the foundation of the world and that the names of the beast worshipers "are not written" in the book *at the time of their worship of the beast*. Their names were previously recorded, but they had *already been blotted out*. Therefore, the names blotted out are the beast worshipers not the redeemed.

This view recognizes the unlimited atonement of Christ (John 1:29; 3:16; 6:51; Rom. 5:18; 1Ti. 2:6; 4:10; Heb. 2:9; 1Jn. 2:2) and holds that Christ's atoning work established the *potential* that all men might be saved. Thus, the Book of Life initially contained the names of every individual who would ever be born.⁵

If the book of life contains the names of all those for whom Christ died (Caird), Christ must in some sense have died for all men because at the beginning the names of all men were in the book. In the words of Johannine theology outside the Apocalypse, He died for "the world," no one excluded (cf. John

1:29; 3:16; 4:42; 1 John 2:2; 4:14). This provision for eternal life for everyone is only potential, however. It becomes actual only when appropriated by each person. If a person experiences physical death, never having trusted Christ for forgiveness, his name is erased from the book of life.⁶

Those who are the elect, by definition, are never blotted out. Only the non-elect, as in the church at Sardis (Rev. 3:5) are blotted out.

A difficulty with this view is that the names of the beast worshipers which “are not written” is more accurately translated as names “not having been written” (γέγραπται [*gegraptai*], perfect tense) which implies that the names *never* were written to be subsequently blotted out. Moreover, another passage indicates the names of the beast worshipers were *never written*:

All who dwell on the earth will worship him, whose names have not been written in the Book of Life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. (Rev. 13:8)

We are closer to a solution here, but we still haven’t explained how all of mankind could be recorded in the book with the unredeemed being blotted out at their death when two passages (Rev. 13:8; 17:8) explain that one category of the unredeemed, the beast worshipers, were never written in the book.

4.4.3.4 - Beast Worshipers are Unique

Another possible explanation is to understand the references to *God’s book* (Ex. 32:32-33), *the book of the living* (Ps. 69:28), *the book* (Dan. 12:1), the *Book of Life*^[5.2.10] (Php. 4:3; Rev. 3:5; 17:8; Rev. 20:12, 15; 22:19), and the *Lamb’s Book of Life* (Rev. 13:8; 21:27) as all describing the same book. This book:

1. Records the names of all people to be born *with the exception of those who will worship the beast during the Tribulation*.
2. The names of the unsaved are blotted out of the book.
3. The names of the beast worshipers are uniquely omitted (Rev. 13:8; 17:8).

The difficulty with this view is explaining why those who worship the beast are omitted from the book entirely rather than being written in and then blotted out with the rest of the unredeemed? Perhaps the answer can be found in the uniqueness of the historic role and attributes which attend this particular group of the unredeemed? As we noted elsewhere, the phrase “those who dwell on the earth” is used in a very special sense in the book of Revelation—describing a moral category rather than a geographical position. Consider these facts concerning the *earth dwellers*^[5.2.18]:

- They directly worship Satan himself (Rev. 13:4).
- They worship the beast who claims to be God (2Th. 2:4).
- They are provided with overwhelming evidence of God’s existence (Rev. 6:16-17).
- They are afforded the benefit of hearing the gospel message from an angel (Rev. 14:6).
- They are uniquely warned of the consequences of taking the mark by another angel (Rev. 14:9).
- They continue in steadfast rebellion, all the while blaspheming God (Rev. 16:9, 11, 21).
- Scripture uniquely records the irredeemable status of these who venture to take the mark of the beast (Rev. 14:9-11) and the special status of those who resist (Rev. 14:13; 20:4).
- Their unique, irredeemable status is seen in God’s sending upon them a “strong delusion that they should believe the lie” (2Th. 2:11).
- The serious nature of their worship of the *Beast*^[5.2.9] can be seen in the unique treatment which they share with the Beast and the *False Prophet*^[5.2.20], who deceives them to worship the Beast. The Beast and the False Prophet are cast into the Lake of Fire *without opportunity of judgment at the Great White Throne*. They are cast directly into the Lake of Fire at the Second Coming of Christ (Rev. 19:20). Similarly, following Christ’s return, the *goats* among the nations—nonbelieving Beast worshipers who survive the Tribulation—are sent “into the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels” (Mtt. 25:31, 41). Their treatment

appears to differ from the rest of the unsaved who are resurrected after the *Millennial Kingdom*^[5.2.39] to stand in judgment before the Great White Throne (Rev. 20:11-13) prior to being cast into the Lake of Fire (Rev. 20:15). See commentary on *Revelation 19:20*^[3.19.20].

Perhaps divine disgust for this ultimate global expression of human idolatry and blasphemy at the end of history will be the occasion for the total omission of any record of these individuals, the “earth dwellers” of the end (Rev. 21:4).

4.4.3.5 - What about Election?

In our discussion, we saw passages which recognized the potential for persons to be blotted out of the *Book of Life*^[5.2.10] (Ex. 32:32-33; Ps. 69:28; Rev. 3:5). Some have difficulty reconciling this with the security of the believer.⁷ But this is only a difficulty if it is possible for one of the *elect* to be blotted out of the book. If the names of all the living are written and those *who never attain salvation* are blotted out, then being blotted out does not correspond to *losing salvation*:

To assume that remaining in the book of life rests upon continuing loyalty to Christ ignores the fact that before all human faith or striving lie the divine choice and the divine initiative. The worthiness of the faithful . . . is based on divine grace (cf. Rev. 7:14). It is incomprehensible that it could be lost through human unfaithfulness. Couple with these considerations the fact that Ps. 69:28 has the names of the wicked in the book of life, and the basis for an assumption that [being blotted out] refers to a loss of one’s salvation is eliminated.⁸

Thus, the warning Jesus gives to the church at Sardis (Rev. 3:5) is an admonition to those who are not yet overcomers to become overcomers or else their names will be blotted out. The double negative found there, οὐ μὴ [*ou mē*], indicates that those who overcome will *never be blotted out*—which is the substance of the promise Jesus makes.

Notes

- ¹ See commentary on *Revelation 2:11*^[3.2.11] and *Revelation 20:12*^[3.20.12].
- ² Mal Couch, “Soteriology in the Book of Revelation,” in Mal Couch, ed., *A Bible Handbook to Revelation* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 2001), 168.
- ³ Robert L. Thomas, *Revelation 1-7* (Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 1992), 261.
- ⁴ Arnold G. Fruchtenbaum, *The Footsteps of Messiah*, rev ed. (Tustin, CA: Ariel Ministries, 2003), 523-524.
- ⁵ “The book of life, as its very name implies, probably contains the names of all those for whom Christ died—in other words, all who have ever been conceived in the womb.”—Henry Morris, *The Revelation Record* (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 1983), Rev. 3:5.
- ⁶ Thomas, *Revelation 1-7*, 263.
- ⁷ Concerning the security of the believer, see: Luke 10:20; 15:21; John 3:36; 5:24; 6:39, 47; 10:28-29; 17:12; Rom. 8:29-30; 1Cor. 1:7-8; 10:13; 2Cor. 1:21-22; Eph. 1:13-14; 4:30; Php. 1:6; 1Th. 5:23; 1Ti. 1:12; Heb. 7:25; 10:14; 1Pe. 1:3-5; 1Jn. 2:19; 5:13; Jude 1:1; 1:24; Rev. 7:4; Rev. 14:1.
- ⁸ Thomas, *Revelation 1-7*, 261.

4.5 - Campaign of Armageddon

The words “the Battle of Armageddon” are almost a household phrase. Like the “number of the *Beast*^{[5.2.9]”} and “666,” it is a phrase which is familiar to many people who have almost no knowledge of anything else recorded in Scripture.¹ The reason these phrases are so widely known is because of the seemingly sensational aspects of what Scripture records concerning the Tribulation, and especially its conclusion, when the kings of the earth are gathered “to the place called in Hebrew, Armageddon” (Rev. 16:16). The events are of such magnitude that they are difficult to conceive of, even in our day of powerful weaponry and great potential for devastation. They would seem to record the end of history as we know it.

Along with a widespread familiarity with the phrase “the Battle of Armageddon” are some common misconceptions concerning what the phrase entails. The two most notable misconceptions are: (1) the phrase describes a battle; (2) the battle is fought exclusively at *Armageddon*. The student of Scripture will find that neither of these common beliefs are accurate: rather than being a single battle at a single location, a more lengthy military engagement is involved spanning a region nearly 200 miles long.

So where did the idea of a “battle” come from? It originates from an unfortunate translation of a passage in the book of Revelation: “For they are spirits of demons performing signs, *which* go out to the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the **battle** of that great day of God Almighty” [emphasis added] (Rev. 16:14, NKJV cf. KJV). The term for *battle* in this verse is πόλεμον [*polemon*], which more correctly denotes an extended engagement rather than a single battle.² This is reflected in the more accurate rendering found in the NASB: “For they are spirits of demons performing signs, which go out to the kings of the whole world to gather them together for the **war** of the great day of God, the Almighty” [emphasis added] (Rev. 16:14, NASB95).

The “battle” of Armageddon is in fact a more lengthy “war.” In order to emphasize its broader scope, a number of commentators have taken to referring to it by the phrase we have used, the military “campaign of Armageddon.” Even in this phrase there is some imprecision because significant battles which comprise the campaign take place elsewhere than the site associated with Armageddon:

While the term “Battle of Armageddon” has been commonly used, it is really a misnomer, for more than one battle will be taking place. For this reason, many prophetic teachers have stopped employing that term and are using the term “Campaign of Armageddon” . . . But this too, is a misnomer because there will be no fighting in Armageddon itself; all of the fighting will take place elsewhere. . . . It should be noted that the passage says nothing of a battle in this valley, for no fighting will take place here. The valley of Jezreel, guarded by the Mountain of Megiddo, will merely serve as the gathering ground for the armies of the *Antichrist*^[5.2.3].³

4.5.1 - The Motivation

To understand the Campaign of Armageddon, we need to grasp the full sweep of the pattern of rebellion against God which characterizes the history of man. Beginning with the rebellion of Adam in the Garden of Eden (1Ti. 2:14)⁴ and the expulsion of the human family from God’s presence (Gen. 3:24), God has sought after man to restore full fellowship, but man has continued to reject God. Not every man, but *most* men (see *Hide and Seek*^[4.16.1]). This pattern has repeated itself throughout history. Having been expelled from the Garden, the sin of the majority eventually became so offensive that it caused God to cleanse the surface of the planet with a global flood (Gen. 7). After the flood, as in the days of Adam and Eve, *every human being knew of God personally*. Yet this did not stop the people of the earth from asserting their independence of God at Babel, which God responded to by bringing the judgment of languages (Gen. 11:7-9). Afterward, God chose an individual, Abraham, to which He made unconditional promises (Gen. 12:1-3; 15). From his seed, he raised up the nation of Israel who promised to follow after Him (Ex. 24:7) but they too were disobedient (Jer. 31:32), even crucifying their own Messiah (Acts 2:22-23). Relating the long history of the disobedience of Israel contributed to the death of Stephen (Acts 7). Having rejected their own Messiah, the gospel went to the Gentiles—the entire world (Rom. 11:15, 30). And now we are in that period of time where history shall prove, once again, that the overwhelming majority will continue to reject God. To be sure, an

important thread of redemption stretches along in the midst of this sad tale. Countless people through history have turned to God and accepted His offer of salvation. These are the redeemed from among men. But overall, the pattern is one of rejection.

Will this pattern of rejection by man and patience by God extend indefinitely? No. At some point in the future—only known to God—He will know that no more will turn to Him and the curtain of history as we know it will come down. This point in history is the Campaign of Armageddon—when God dramatically intervenes in history to overthrow the rebellion of man in his imagined independence from the Creator. This momentous event is the subject of Psalm 2, which provides a backdrop for understanding the book of Revelation.

Why do the nations rage, and the people plot a vain thing? The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the LORD and against His Anointed, *saying*, “Let us break Their bonds in pieces and cast away Their cords from us.” He who sits in the heavens shall laugh; the Lord shall hold them in derision. Then He shall speak to them in His wrath, and distress them in His deep displeasure: “Yet I have set My King on My holy hill of Zion. I will declare the decree: the LORD has said to Me, ‘You *are* My Son, today I have begotten You. Ask of Me, and I will give *You* the nations *for* Your inheritance, and the ends of the earth *for* Your possession. You shall break them with a rod of iron; You shall dash them to pieces like a potter’s vessel.’ ” (Ps. 2:1-9)

Although the nations rage on an ongoing basis in their rejection of God and His Anointed (Messiah, Christ), there is a specific point in history when they will be given as an inheritance to Jesus Christ. They imagine themselves to be independent: “Let us break Their bonds in pieces and cast away Their cords from us.” This was the motivation of Babel: “let us make a name for ourselves *lest we be scattered abroad over the face of the whole earth*” (Gen. 11:4). Their motivation was direct disobedience to God’s command to “fill the earth” (Gen. 9:1). This continues in our own day with institutions such as the United Nations which imagine they can bring world peace and unity while denying God. Their plan for peace does not acknowledge the “Prince of peace” (Isa. 9:6) nor the *Millennial Kingdom*^[5.2.39] during which He will reign:

Many people shall come and say, “Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob; He will teach us His ways, and we shall walk in His paths.” For out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem. **He shall judge between the nations, and rebuke many people**; they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war anymore. (Isa. 2:3-4) [emphasis added]

The U.N. Building displays these words: “And they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more” (Isa. 2:4). A verse taken out of its context is only a pretext however. The first part of this verse reads, “And he shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people.” Until Christ the Messiah sits upon the throne of His glory and rebukes and judges the nations, there will be no permanent peace.⁵

Psalm 2 records God’s response to the rebellion of man: He laughs at their puny plans, will hold them in derision (subject them to contemptuous ridicule), and distress them in His deep displeasure. This distress is the Tribulation period which culminates with the Campaign of Armageddon. His plan is to install “My king on My holy hill of Zion.” Jesus Christ, the very One whom they reject, will be installed as King on the throne of David reigning from the hotly contested city of Jerusalem! Such a plan will not come about by the *will of man*, but only by the *zeal of God*:

Of the increase of *His* government and peace *There will be* no end, upon the throne of David and over His kingdom, to order it and establish it with judgment and justice from that time forward, even forever. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this. (Isa. 9:7)

This bid by man to throw off his dependence upon God is empowered at the time of the end by Satan himself in the person of his final king, the *Beast*^[5.2.9]. Thus, the sinful will of man’s flesh will combine with the will of demonic powers in a last desperate attempt to thwart God’s plan.⁶ Since men will not willingly obey what God has foreordained, it becomes necessary to resort to force. “I will give *You* the nations *for* Your inheritance, and the ends of the earth *for* Your possession. You shall break them with a rod of iron; You shall dash them to pieces like a potter’s vessel.” This dashing of the rebellious nations—empowered by Satanic forces—is the purpose of the Campaign of Armageddon. See *Trouble Ahead*^[2.13.1].

When the Lamb took the scroll from the right hand of the Father (Rev. 5:6-7), He initiated a series of events which ultimately lead to the fulfillment of His title to the earth. The Campaign of Armageddon represents the last great effort of Satan and the rulers of the world to forestall the inevitable—the Millennial Reign of Christ (Rev. 20:4). See commentary on *Revelation 5:1*^[3.5.1].

4.5.2 - The Preparation

As has often been the case in the past, the nations will be led of God to participate in the campaign which leads to their ultimate demise. Believing themselves to be shrewd, they will be deceived by unclean spirits—all the more effective since they themselves are deceived—to walk straight into God’s trap which He has prepared for them. In a similar way to how Cyrus and Gog, neither of whom knew God, were instruments of His will (Isa. 44:28-4; Eze. 38:16; 39:2), so too will the rebellious kings of the end be mere puppets in their own destruction.

First, the Euphrates river is dried up prior to the gathering of the kings, so that those from the east can more easily be led to the slaughter (Rev. 16:12). Then God allows the spirits of demons to go out and deceive the kings of the earth to gather them to do battle (Rev. 16:14). They are gathered “to the place called in Hebrew, Armageddon” (Rev. 16:16). See commentary on *Revelation 16:16*^[3.16.16]. The force will include the *ten kings*^[4.3.2.22] which ally themselves with the *Beast*^[5.2.9]. “These will make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb will overcome them, for He is Lord of lords and King of kings” (Rev. 17:12a). “And I saw the beast, the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against Him who sat on the horse and against His army” (Rev. 19:19).

Numerous passages record the *gathering* of the forces which will eventually be fed to the wild birds as carrion (Rev. 19:17-18):

For behold, in those days and at that time, when I bring back the captives of Judah and Jerusalem, I will also gather all nations, and bring them down to the Valley of Jehoshaphat; and I will enter into judgment with them there on account of My people, My heritage Israel, whom they have scattered among the nations; they have also divided up My land. (Joel 3:2)

In this passage set within the context of *The Day of the Lord*^[2.13.3] (Joel 2:2, 31), Joel indicates all nations will be gathered to the Valley of Jehoshaphat (a compound from Hebrew *Yahweh* and *shaphat*, meaning “Jehovah has judged”⁷) where He will enter into judgment with them. For what reason will God gather the nations at this time—yet future to our day? “**On account of My people, My heritage Israel, whom they have scattered among the nations; they have also divided up My land.**” [emphasis added] This point is extremely important to understand: this passage is not talking about the Church! God is not talking about defending the faithful in general—in terms of some sort of “spiritual land” which the nations have trespassed! No, He is talking about **His heritage Israel (cf. Jer. 50:11)**! Notice that there will already be a gathering of Israel back into the land, but God is furious with all nations on account of their opposition to Israel’s God-given right to **His land**! We can hardly overemphasize the importance of understanding the issues surrounding possession of the land which God gave Israel. Our modern age is moving rapidly to embrace the mindset of Babylon of the end: “All who found them [the lost sheep of Israel] have devoured them; and their adversaries said, “**We have not offended, because they have sinned against the Lord, the habitation of justice, the Lord, the hope of their fathers.**”” [emphasis added] (Jer. 50:7) Even evangelical Christians, who should know better, embrace such a view. Many stand opposed to Israel’s struggle for her Promised Land. They see Israel’s rejection of her Messiah, Jesus Christ, to warrant her implacable opposition by God and as justification for their own latent *anti-Semitism*^[5.2.64]^[5.2.4]. They believe all her promises have passed or been forfeited and the secular state she is now is to be opposed. But Almighty God says otherwise: “For Israel is not forsaken, nor Judah, by his God, the Lord of hosts, though their land was filled with sin against the Holy One of Israel” (Jer. 51:5).

A few verses later, Joel gives more detail as to the gathering of the nations. It will involve mighty men who are prepared for war:

Proclaim this among the nations: “Prepare for war! Wake up the mighty men, let all the men of war draw near, let them come up. Beat your plowshares into swords and your pruning hooks into spears; let the weak say, ‘I am strong.’ ” Assemble and come, all you nations, and gather together all around. Cause Your mighty ones to go down there, O LORD. Let the nations be awakened, and come up to the Valley of

Jehoshaphat; for there I will sit to judge all the surrounding nations. Put in the sickle, for the harvest is ripe. Come, go down; for the winepress is full, the vats overflow-for their wickedness *is* great. Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision! For the day of the LORD *is* near in the valley of decision. The sun and moon will grow dark, and the stars will diminish their brightness. The LORD also will roar from Zion, and utter His voice from Jerusalem; the heavens and earth will shake; but the LORD will be a shelter for His people, and the strength of the children of Israel. (Joel 3:9-16)

Notice the motif of the harvest and especially the winepress. These are the themes of Revelation 14:17-20. (See commentary on *Revelation 14:17*^[3.14.17] and *Blood Stained Garments*^[4.5.5.1].) Notice too the *nationalistic* aspect of the passage. God will roar from *Zion* (Jerusalem) while he promises to be a shelter for *Israel*.

Zephaniah also discusses an assembly of kingdoms in preparation for the campaign:

“Therefore wait for Me,” says the LORD, “Until the day I rise up for plunder; My determination *is* to gather the nations to My assembly of kingdoms, to pour on them My indignation, all my fierce anger; all the earth shall be devoured with the fire of My jealousy. For then I will restore to the peoples a pure language, that they all may call on the name of the LORD, to serve Him with one accord. From beyond the rivers of Ethiopia My worshipers, the daughter of My dispersed ones, shall bring My offering. In that day you shall not be shamed for any of your deeds in which you transgress against Me; for then I will take away from your midst those who rejoice in your pride, and you shall no longer be haughty in My holy mountain. I will leave in your midst a meek and humble people, and they shall trust in the name of the LORD.” (Zep 3:8-12)

The context is prior to the *Millennial Kingdom*^[5.2.39] when God will restore to the peoples a pure language and when offerings will be brought and shame will be gone. He also mentions a purging where the prideful and haughty will be taken from their midst and humility shall prevail.

Here not only giving the millennial nations “cleansed” or “purified” lips, as regenerated peoples, but apparently also in the sense that “lip” signifies “language” (Gen. 11:1, 6-7, 9), and possibly indicating that the Hebrew language will be the one universal language of the Kingdom age (Zec. 14:9). That would be not all that surprising, since Israel will be the chief nation in that economy (Deu. 28:13) and Jerusalem in that day will be the religious and governmental capital of the millennial earth (Isa. 2:2-3; Zec. 8:20-23). Moreover, it is all the more probable since the judgment of the nations at the second advent will eventuate in the destruction of the satanic world system . . . That system had its beginning in ancient Babylon with its pride, idolatry, and rebellion (Gen. 10:8-10; 11:1-6). The gift of a pure speech will remove the curse of Babel, and it will anticipate the great millennial outpouring of the Spirit (Joel 2:28-32), of which Pentecost (Acts 2:1-11) was an illustration.⁸

The nations will assemble with their own agenda. Being ignorant of the Scriptures, and rebellious in any case, they will not be aware that they have already begun to drink from the cup of God’s wrath. They are already intoxicated and on their way to fulfill their own destruction.

Since all nations are involved, and the world is controlled by a ten-nation confederacy allied with the Beast, Scripture does not offer a great deal of additional information concerning the identity of specific nations. Nevertheless, some information can be gleaned from passages such as Daniel 11 and Revelation 16 which make general mention of some of the players:

There will be four great world powers: (1) the ten kingdom federation of nations under the Beast which constitutes the final form of the fourth great world empire; (2) the northern federation, Russia and her allies; (3) the Kings of the East, the Asiatic peoples from beyond the Euphrates; and (4) the King of the South, a north African power or powers. Another great power must be added, because of His active participation in the campaign; (5) the Lord and His armies from heaven. While the animosity of the first four is vented against each other and against Israel (Zec. 12:2-3; 14:2), it is particularly against the God of Israel that they fight (Ps. 2:2; Isa. 34:2; Zec. 14:3; Rev. 16:14; 17:14; 19:11, 14-15, 19, 21).⁹

The degree to which Russia plays a part depends upon whether one views Ezekiel 38 and 39 as being part of the Campaign of Armageddon and on whether one takes “prince of Rosh” to describe the leader of Russia or a “chief prince.”¹⁰ It is our view that Ezekiel 38 and 39 describe a different conflict which is not part of the Campaign of Armageddon. See *Gog Attacks Israel*^[4.5.6]. Even if the Ezekiel passage is unrelated, Russia could still be involved since Daniel mentions a “king of the North” who attacks *Antichrist*^[5.2.3] at the time of the end (Dan. 11:40).¹¹

4.5.3 - Locations

The Campaign of Armageddon occurs in stages and involves a number of locations in modern day Israel and Jordan.

4.5.3.1 - Megiddo

The campaign is said to be in a place called in Hebrew, “Armageddon” (Rev. 16:16). Ἀρμαγεδών [*Harmagedōn*] is “a Hebrew place-name meaning *Mount or Hill of Megiddo* and generally identified as the fortress overlooking a pass through the Carmel Range into Galilee.”¹² The word is derived from a combination of Hebrew הָר [hār], *mountain*, and מְגִדּוֹן [m^egiddōn], *Megiddo* (Zec. 12:11).

Megiddo was known for its strategic location. The battle which Deborah and Barak fought against Sisera, the commander of the Canaanite army, was at Taanach, by the waters of Megiddo (Jdg. 5:19). “Taanach, located five miles southeast of Megiddo, was an ancient fortress town guarding one of the pivotal passes to Esdraelon. The Wadi Kishon and its tributaries are referred to poetically as *the waters of Megiddo*. Megiddo commanded the pass between Esdraelon and the Plain of Sharon, and the nearby plain was the scene of other great battles (Jdg. 6:33; 1S. 29:1; 31:2; 2K 23:28-30).”¹³ King Josiah was killed by Pharaoh Necho in a battle at Megiddo (2K. 23:29; 2Chr. 35:22).

The hill of Megiddo, located west of the Jordan River in north central Palestine, some ten miles south of Nazareth and fifteen miles inland from the Mediterranean seacoast, was an extended plain on which many of Israel’s battles had been fought. There Deborah and Barak defeated the Canaanites (Judges 4 and 5). There Gideon triumphed over the Midianites (Judges 7). There Saul was slain in the battle of the Philistines (1S. 31:8). There Ahaziah was slain by Jehu (2K. 9:27). And there Josiah was slain in the invasion by the Egyptians (2K. 23:29-30; 2Chr. 35:22).¹⁴

The mourning of Israel when they realize they have pierced their own Messiah, is likened to the mourning associated with a historical event from Megiddo’s past: “In that day there shall be a great mourning in Jerusalem, like the mourning at Hadad Rimmon in the plain of Megiddo” (Zec. 12:11).

Hadad-Rimmon is not mentioned in Scripture in the brief account of Josiah’s defeat and death, but evidently tradition preserved the exact locality of the good king’s fatal wounding, here recorded by *inspiration*^[5.2.33]. It has been identified with the village of Rummaneh, located four miles southeast of Megiddo.¹⁵

The reference can be nothing else than to the national mourning over the pious young king Josiah, who was slain by Pharaoh Necho “in the valley of Megiddo,” as recorded in 2K. 23:29-30 and more fully in 2Chr. 35:20-27. His death was the greatest sorrow which had till then befallen Judah, inasmuch as he was “the last hope of the declining Jewish kingdom, and in his death the last gleam of the sunset of Judah faded into night.” In that great mourning for Josiah the prophet Jeremiah took part, and wrote dirges for it (2Chr. 35:25), and the national lamentations over him continued and became “an ordinance” in Israel, which survived the seventy years’ captivity and continued “to this day,” when the chronicles were closed.¹⁶

Megiddo overlooks the western part of the *Jezreel Valley*^[4.5.3.3] and controls a strategic access point to the plain below.

The plain of Megiddo has five gates. One is the defile leading to the Bay of Acco, and another the threefold gate to the plain of Sharon, formed by narrow valleys across Carmel and guarded by the three fortresses of Jokneam, Megiddo, and Taanach. Of these Megiddo was by far the most important, because it controlled also the narrow volcanic causeway leading across the easily flooded plain.¹⁷

Megiddo was in the plain of Esdraelon, “which has been a chosen place for encampment in every contest carried on in Palestine from the days of Nabuchodonozor king of Assyria, unto the disastrous march of Napoleon Bonaparte from Egypt into Syria. Jews, Gentiles, Saracens, Christian crusaders, and anti-Christian Frenchmen; Egyptians, Persians, Druses, Turks, and Arabs, warriors of every nation that is under heaven, have pitched their tents on the plain of Esdraelon, and have beheld the banners of their nation wet with the dews of Tabor and Hermon” [“Clarke’s Travels,” cited by Lee.]¹⁸

See *Jezreel Valley*^[4.5.3.3]. See commentary on *Revelation 16:16*^[3.16.16].

4.5.3.2 - Valley of Jehoshaphat

A key passage associated with the Campaign of Armageddon mentions that God will assemble all nations in the “Valley of Jehoshaphat” (Joel 3:2, 12). Some hold that the Valley of Jehoshaphat (“Yahweh shall judge”¹⁹) refers to the valley situated between Jerusalem and the Mount of Olives to the east.²⁰ It was in this valley where king Jehoshaphat is thought to have overthrown the enemies of Israel, the “valley of Beracah” (2Chr. 20:26).²¹

Its identification with the Kidron Valley, which began in the fourth century, is somewhat uncertain since no actual valley of this name is known to pre-Christian antiquity. *Eusebius*^[5.2.19] in the *Onomasticon* (ed. Klostermann, p. 70) located the valley of Jehoshaphat in the Valley of Hinnom, possibly because of the judgments that were associated with that place in connection with the idolatrous kings of Judah (cf. Jer. 7:31f; 19:5f, where it is called “the valley of Slaughter”). Since the time of the Pilgrim of Bordeaux (A.D. 333), however, the Kidron has become increasingly the site popularly accepted.²²

Others suggest the name is descriptive of what God will accomplish (judgment) at the location rather than any association with an event in the life of King Jehoshaphat. Perhaps it is to be associated with the plain of Esdraelon:

It is clear both from the contexts of Joel 3:2, 12 and from the term used twice in Joel 3:14, “the valley of decision” (cf. Zep. 3:8), that the name is to be interpreted as the scene of judgment, and not taken from the king of the same name. Eze. 39:11 and Rev. 16:16 seem to locate it in the plain of Esdraelon (Armageddon).²³

4.5.3.3 - Jezreel Valley

The Jezreel Valley is what many call the *Valley of Armageddon*. “So what is know as the Valley of Armageddon in Christian circles is actually the biblical Valley of Jezreel. The term *Armageddon* is never applied to the valley itself, but only to the mount at the western end.”²⁴

*Jezreel Valley*²⁵



“The Valley of Jezreel is a lowland corridor extending southeastward from the Bay of Acco (modern Haifa Bay) to the edge of the Jordan Valley at Beth-shean. It is known today as *Emek Yizreel*, or more simply the *Emek*.”²⁶ The town of Jezreel divides it into two regions, to the west is the central plain of *Megiddo*^[4.5.3.1]. “The hill of Megiddo, overlooks the Valley of Jezreel in northern Israel. It was the site of numerous biblical conflicts (cf. Jos. 12:12; Jdg. 5:19; 2K. 23:29). Megiddo itself served as a military stronghold for several generations (cf. Jdg. 1:27; 2K. 8:27).”²⁷

4.5.3.4 - City of Babylon

It appears that Babylon, on the banks of the Euphrates, will be rebuilt and become a commercial power at the time of the end. It may function for a time as the location of the throne of the *Beast*^[5.2.9] (Rev. 16:10), but will be destroyed as part of the Campaign of Armageddon during the seventh bowl judgment (Rev. 16:19).²⁸ Fruchtenbaum believes *Antichrist*^[5.2.3] to be the king of Babylon who is away at war when the city is destroyed.²⁹

The very fact that messengers must be sent out to inform the king of Babylon that his city is destroyed [Jer. 50:43; 51:31-32], is a clear-cut indication that he will not be there when it happens. . . . So where is he? . . . it would appear that while the Antichrist is meeting his forces in the Valley of Jezreel, his enemies take the opportunity to gather and destroy his capital city.³⁰

Unger assumes these texts describe the delivery of the news of the surprise capture in the day of Cyrus: “Couriers and messengers scurried to report Cyrus’s surprise capture of the city to the king of Babylon.”³¹ But the king of Babylon at the time of Cyrus was Belshazzar who resided in Babylon on the night of its capture and was slain (Dan. 5:30-31))

See *The Identity of Babylon*^[4.1.3].

4.5.3.5 - Edom

Edom is the name given to Esau (Gen. 25:30) and the name of the country settled by his descendants (the Edomites). The area they settled is within what is now southern Jordan. In the region of Edom, both Sela and Bozrah are connected with the wilderness region to which the Jewish remnant flees for protection. Thus, *Antichrist*^[5.2.3] advances here in an attempt to destroy the Jews. Several passages (including Isa. 34, 36, see below) indicate that God will intervene on behalf of His people in Edom at the time of the end. See *Sheep in Bozrah*^[3.12.6.1].

4.5.3.6 - Jerusalem

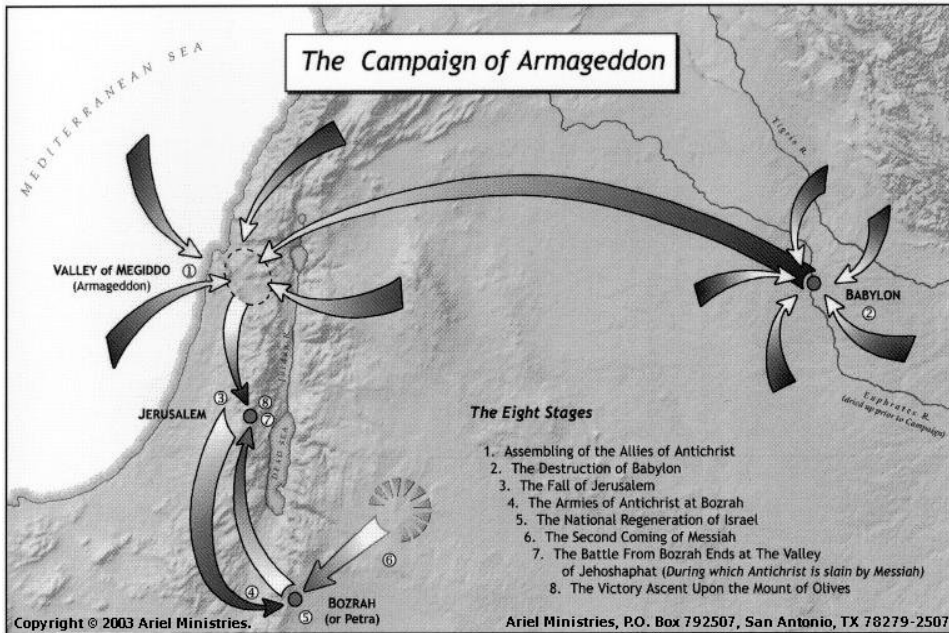
The city which stands upon Mount Moriah, where *Abraham offered Isaac*^[4.16.3.1] and where *Solomon’s Temple*^[4.16.5.3] was built. This is where Messiah Jesus was crucified and where He will return to overthrow the nations who gather against her in the time of the end (Zec. 12:2-11; 14:2).

4.5.4 - Sequence of Events

Scripture does not give great detail concerning the sequence of events during the Campaign of Armageddon. Most of the passages concerning this time are sprinkled in various prophetic passages which combine both a near-term and a far-future referent. This complicates matters for the interpreter because he must determine which portions of the passage are clearly fulfilled in historic events near the time of the prophet and whether portions of the passage speak down the corridor of prophetic vision to the time of the end—remaining yet unfulfilled. In some cases, such as the final and complete destruction of Babylon, it is not too difficult to see that aspects of the destruction described by the prophets have not yet come to pass. In other cases, things are more complex. Because of these difficulties, we should approach any proposal concerning the sequence of events with caution and an open mind, for there are a considerable variety of views on this matter:

There are a number of theories as to the events in the campaign of Armageddon: (1) Armageddon will be a conflict between the Roman empire and the northern confederacy [Sale-Harrison]; (2) it will be a conflict between the Roman empire and the kings of the east, or the Asiatic powers [Ironsides]; (3) Armageddon will be a conflict between all nations and God [Pettingill]; (4) it will be a conflict between four great world powers [McClain]; (5) it will be a conflict between the Roman empire, Russia, and the Asiatic powers [Lindberg]; (6) it will exclude Russia, but will take place between the Roman, eastern, and northern powers which will exclude Russia [Feredy], based on the theory that Ezekiel 38 and 39 takes place in the millennium; (7) Russia is the only aggressor at Armageddon [Rimmer], based on the theory that there will be no revived form of the Roman empire. One can see what a wide divergence of opinion there is as to the chronology of events in this campaign.³²

The Campaign of Armageddon³³



Fruchtenbaum suggests a sequence of events as follows:³⁴

1. **The Assembling of the Allies of Antichrist**^[5.2.3] - When the sixth bowl is poured out, the Euphrates river is dried up and the kings of the earth are gathered to the valley of Jezreel (Rev. 16:12-16; Joel 3:9-11).
2. **The Destruction of Babylon** - Babylon is rebuilt on the banks of the Euphrates to become the world economic capital (Zec. 5:5-11). While the Antichrist is away at Megiddo, Babylon undergoes catastrophic destruction (Isa. 13, 14; Jer. 50, 51; Rev. 15:8; 17:18; 18; 19:2).
3. **The Fall of Jerusalem** - The Antichrist receives news that his capital city has been destroyed and moves south against Jerusalem (Zec. 12:1-3; 14:1-9; Mic. 4:11-5:1). The Jews will put up a mighty defense, but Jerusalem will eventually fall (Zec. 14:2).
4. **The Armies of the Antichrist at Bozrah** - The Jewish remnant flees to the mountains (Mtt. 24:15) and then to the wilderness in Edom (see *Sheep in Bozrah*^[3.12.6.1]). The armies under Antichrist will move against the Jews in Bozrah (Mic. 2:12).³⁵
5. **The National Regeneration of Israel** - The Jews confess their national sin, the rejection and crucifixion of Messiah Jesus (Lev. 26:40-42; Jer. 3:11-18; Hos. 5:15). They then plead for His return (Ps. 79:1-13; Isa. 64:1-12; Hos. 6:1-3; Zec. 12:10-13:1; 13:7-9; Mtt. 23:39).
6. **The Second Coming of Messiah** - Christ returns to Bozrah, where the remnant have been preserved (Isa. 34:1-7; Isa. 63:1-6; Mic. 2:12-13; Hab. 3:1-19; Zec. 12:7; Rev. 19:11-18).³⁶
7. **The Battle from Bozrah to the Valley of Jehoshaphat** - Christ fights the forces of Antichrist from Bozrah continuing all the way back to the eastern walls of Jerusalem, which overlook a section of the Kidron Valley, also known as the *Valley of Jehoshaphat*^[4.5.3.2]. Antichrist is destroyed. (Joel 3:12-13; 2Th. 2:8; Zec. 14:12-15; Rev. 14:19-20; 19:20).³⁷
8. **The Victory Ascent Up the Mount of Olives** - This is not the initial return of Christ, for He will save the tents of Judah first (Zec. 12:7). Nor will his initial return be to the same *place* He ascended, the Mount of Olives, but merely in the same *manner* (Acts 1:11). His ascent to the Mount is attended by cataclysmic events associated with the seventh bowl judgment (Mtt. 24:29; Zec. 14:4b-5; Rev. 16:17-21).

Pentecost suggests a less detailed sequence of events as follows:³⁸

1. **Covenant with Antichrist** - Prince of Roman empire [the Antichrist] makes a covenant with Israel for a seven year period (Dan. 9:26-27). (Although this covenant is broken three and one-half years later.) See *Events of the 70th Week of Daniel*^[2.13.5.4].
2. **Invasion of Palestine** - The King of the North and the King of the South invade Palestine (Dan. 11:40).
3. **Antichrist Responds** - Because of his covenant with Israel, the Antichrist will come to Israel's defense (Dan. 11:40-45).
4. **News from East and North** - News from the east and the north troubles the Antichrist (Dan. 11:44). Perhaps it is the approach of the kings of the east (Rev. 16:12). (The troubling news may be the destruction of Babylon, although Pentecost does not mention this.)³⁹
5. **Headquarters in Palestine** - The Antichrist moves his headquarters into the land of Palestine and assembles his armies there (Dan. 11:45).
6. **Christ Returns** - Before he can engage the kings from the east, Christ returns. All the armies combine to fight against God (Rev. 19:19).
7. **Antichrist and Armies Overthrown** - The armies and the Antichrist are destroyed without human means (Dan. 9:25; 11:45; Rev. 19:20).

4.5.5 - Grapes of Wrath

From the many passages in Scripture which provide insights into the Campaign of Armageddon⁴⁰, we have chosen those which are perhaps the most significant. A careful study of these passages, in their context, will show that aspects of what they describe have yet to be fulfilled.

Isaiah describes a judgment against *all nations* which will take place in Bozrah, in the land of Edom.

Come near, you nations, to hear; and heed, you people! Let the earth hear, and all that is in it, the world and all things that come forth from it. For the indignation of the LORD *is* against all nations, and *His* fury against all their armies; He has utterly destroyed them, He has given them over to the slaughter. Also their slain shall be thrown out; their stench shall rise from their corpses, and the mountains shall be melted with their blood. All the host of heaven shall be dissolved, and the heavens shall be rolled up like a scroll; all their host shall fall down as the leaf falls from the vine, and as *fruit* falling from a fig tree. "For My sword shall be bathed in heaven; indeed it shall come down on Edom, and on the people of My curse, for judgment. The sword of the LORD is filled with blood, it is made overflowing with fatness, with the blood of lambs and goats, with the fat of the kidneys of rams. For the LORD has a sacrifice in Bozrah, and a great slaughter in the land of Edom. The wild oxen shall come down with them, and the young bulls with the mighty bulls; their land shall be soaked with blood, and their dust saturated with fatness." For *it is* the day of the LORD'S vengeance, the year of recompense for the cause of Zion. Its streams shall be turned into pitch, and its dust into brimstone; its land shall become burning pitch. It shall not be quenched night or day; its smoke shall ascend forever. From generation to generation it shall lie waste; no one shall pass through it forever and ever. (Isa. 34:1-10)

This is not a judgment against the Edomites, but against all nations. It is attended by cosmic signs, "all the host of heaven shall be dissolved, and the heavens shall be rolled up like a scroll," which brings to mind the cataclysmic convulsions which were previewed in the opening of the sixth seal (Rev. 6:12-14). The reason for the slaughter is "recompense for the cause of Zion," God will be defending His chosen nation in this time of the end. The destruction which comes upon Edom is described in the strongest possible terms, the land will become burning pitch, never to be quenched, and shall lie waste *forever*. Every reader of the text now has a choice: does God mean literally what He says? Or is He employing *hyperbole*^[5.2.27] and exaggeration for effect in these scenes of judgment?⁴¹ A related question: if God really meant to describe absolute devastation, how would it be portrayed differently? We believe this speaks of a final literal eschatological judgment. "The call is worldwide and can refer ultimately only to the judgment of the nations (Mtt. 25:31-46), Israel's enemies (Rev. 16:13-16), preceding the establishment of the Kingdom (Rev. 20:4-6)."⁴²

Micah speaks of a time of threshing, a theme of judgment throughout Scripture. The motive for the nations which shall be threshed is their desire to interfere in God's plans concerning Zion:

Now also many nations have gathered against you, who say, "Let her be defiled, and let our eye look upon Zion." But they do not know the thoughts of the Lord, nor do they understand His counsel; for He will gather them like sheaves to the threshing floor. "Arise and thresh, O daughter of Zion; for I will make your horn iron, and I will make your hooves bronze; you shall beat in pieces many peoples; I will consecrate their gain to the Lord, and their substance to the Lord of the whole earth." (Mic. 4:11-13)

Notice the ignorance of the nations in regard to God's plans concerning Zion: "They do not know the thoughts of the Lord, nor do they understand his counsel." This is evident even in our own day. We study the book of Revelation and these related passages which make it abundantly clear that God has a future plan for the nation Israel and that plan includes her ownership of *His land* with Jerusalem as her eternal capital. Yet, the daily news indicates great confusion on the part of the nations as to the status of Jerusalem and the Promised Land in general. People the world over wonder what the big fuss is about the Jews and Jerusalem, but it is *all so clear* to any student of the Scriptures. Alas, the nations of the world are almost completely ignorant of God's Word concerning the subject—as they will be in the day of their demise seen by Micah. "This prophecy envisioned Nebuchadnezzar's armies that were composed of many nations, but it is to be fulfilled in the armed forces of the nations gathered at Armageddon (Rev. 16:13-16), who will be determined to destroy Israel and do away with God's plan and take over the earth."⁴³

Most puzzling of all are the *preterist interpreters*^[2.12.2] who twist clear passages so that instead of relating God's overthrow of the nations in the *defense* of Jerusalem, they are said to indicate just the opposite: God's *judgment and overthrow* of Jerusalem. Although it is true that Jerusalem will undergo great casualty and turmoil during the time of *Jacob's Trouble*^[2.13.4], ultimately, Jerusalem will be the *victor* with the help of God. Such passages can in no way be contorted to describe the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70:

The burden of the word of the LORD against Israel. Thus says the LORD, who stretches out the heavens, lays the foundation of the earth, and forms the spirit of man within him: "Behold, I will make Jerusalem a cup of drunkenness to all the surrounding peoples, when they lay siege against Judah and Jerusalem. And it shall happen in that day that I will make Jerusalem a very heavy stone for all peoples; all who would heave it away will surely be cut in pieces, though all nations of the earth are gathered against it." "In that day," says the LORD, "I will strike every horse with confusion, and its rider with madness; I will open My eyes on the house of Judah, and will strike every horse of the peoples with blindness. And the governors of Judah shall say in their heart, 'The inhabitants of Jerusalem *are* my strength in the LORD of hosts, their God.' In that day I will make the governors of Judah like a firepan in the woodpile, and like a fiery torch in the sheaves; they shall devour all the surrounding peoples on the right hand and on the left, but Jerusalem shall be inhabited again in her own place—Jerusalem. The LORD will save the tents of Judah first, so that the glory of the house of David and the glory of the inhabitants of Jerusalem shall not become greater than that of Judah. In that day the LORD will defend the inhabitants of Jerusalem; the one who is feeble among them in that day shall be like David, and the house of David *shall be* like God, like the Angel of the LORD before them. It shall be in that day *that* I will seek to destroy all the nations that come against Jerusalem. And I will pour on the house of David and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem the Spirit of grace and supplication; then they will look on Me whom they pierced. Yes, they will mourn for Him as one mourns for *his* only son, and grieve for Him as one grieves for a firstborn. In that day there shall be a great mourning in Jerusalem, like the mourning at Hadad Rimmon in the plain of Megiddo. And the land shall mourn, every family by itself: the family of the house of David by itself, and their wives by themselves; the family of the house of Nathan by itself, and their wives by themselves." (Zec. 12:1-12)

When interpreting such passages as this, we must bear two things in mind: (1) this is the time of *Jacob's Trouble*^[2.13.4], Israel is to be disciplined and refined so as to call out to Messiah Jesus; (2) nevertheless, God will judge the surrounding nations by defending Israel because of His eternal promises made to her (see commentary on *Revelation 12:1*^[3.12.1]). Zechariah's passage opens as "the Word of the LORD against Israel," yet in the midst of the passage, it is the nations gathered against Jerusalem who will "surely be cut to pieces." In that day the LORD will *defend* the inhabitants of Jerusalem. If this was A.D. 70, then Titus overthrew our Almighty God! Hardly! And when did the Jews experience a national repentance and convert to Messiah Jesus, whom they pierced, as predicted here? No, this is yet future, during the Campaign of Armageddon.

The battle involving Jerusalem involves several stages. During the first stage, the city is taken, the houses rifled, and the women ravished:

Behold, the day of the LORD is coming, and your spoil will be divided in your midst. For I will gather all the nations to battle against Jerusalem; the city shall be taken, the houses rifled, and the women ravished. Half of the city shall go into captivity, but the remnant of the people shall not be cut off from the city. Then the LORD will go forth and fight against those nations, as He fights in the day of battle. And in that day His feet will stand on the Mount of Olives, which faces Jerusalem on the east. And the Mount of Olives shall be split in two, from east to west, *making* a very large valley; half of the mountain shall move toward the north and half of it toward the south. Then you shall flee *through* My mountain valley, for the mountain valley shall reach to Azal. Yes, you shall flee as you fled from the earthquake in the days of Uzziah king of Judah. Thus the LORD my God will come, *and* all the saints with You. (Zec. 14:1-5)

But, before the smoke clears: “the LORD my God will come, *and* all the saints with you.” He will “fight against those nations” and stand upon the Mount of Olives. When this occurs, all His saints (holy ones) will be with Him. Again, this has not been fulfilled, but concerns the Second Coming (cf. Rev. 19:14).

4.5.5.1 - Blood Stained Garments

One reason this intervention of Christ will come upon an unsuspecting world is because much teaching concerning Jesus reduces Him from His full three-dimensional Godhood into a one-dimensional purveyor of peace. In our modern age of self-esteem and psychobabble, talk of judgment is unwelcome. Study of prophetic passages, especially those from the *OT*^[5.2.51], is both unpopular and considered largely irrelevant. As a result, we have created a loving Savior who judges not and condemns none. Yet Jesus Himself said, “Do not think that I came to bring peace on earth. I did not come to bring peace but a sword. For I have come to ‘set a man against his father, a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law’; and ‘a man’s enemies will be those of his *own* household.’ ” (Mtt. 10:34-36). Here, Jesus alludes to the scene Moses faced upon descending from Mount Sinai when he found the children of Israel had lapsed into idolatry and immorality:

Then Moses stood in the entrance of the camp, and said, “Whoever *is* on the LORD’S side-*come* to me.” And all the sons of Levi gathered themselves together to him. And he said to them, “Thus says the LORD God of Israel: ‘Let every man put his sword on his side, and go in and out from entrance to entrance throughout the camp, and let every man kill his brother, every man his companion, and every man his neighbor.’ ” So the sons of Levi did according to the word of Moses. And about three thousand men of the people fell that day. (Ex. 32:26-28)

Those who followed Moses’ instructions were approved and highly honored of God. Because of their zeal in this matter, the tribe of Levi was selected for the highest honor of ministering to God. We would do well to remember that the God who spoke through Moses and commanded the slaughter of family members is the same unchanging God Who went to the cross in mercy, but is also coming again in judgment! Jesus is not a peacenik, but the Everlasting, Holy, Eternal One (Rev. 1:17-18). His return in judgment is a major theme of Scripture to which we should pay close attention. Scripture records that Jesus Himself is intimately involved in the great blood-letting of this time of judgment, for mention is made of the blood of His enemies staining His robes. Jacob, in prophesying over his sons prior to his death, included an intriguing statement concerning Judah, the tribe from which Jesus would come forth (see commentary on *Revelation 5:5*^[3.5.5]):

Binding his donkey to the vine, and his donkey’s colt to the choice vine, He washed his garments in wine, and his clothes in the blood of grapes. (Gen. 49:11)

Although many have taken this prophecy to denote the great abundance of vineyards which Judah was to enjoy, others understand this passage to be consistent with Isaiah 63 which describes the blood-letting associated with the coming of Messiah. The *Targum Pseudo-Jonathan* states, “How beautiful is the King Messiah who is destined to arise from the house of Judah! He has girded his loins and gone down to battle against his enemies, destroying kings and their power, and there is neither king nor power that can withstand him. He reddens the mountains with the blood of their slain. His garments are saturated with blood, like those of him who presses the grapes.”⁴⁴ Whether this is what Jacob meant is uncertain, but Isaiah’s passage is undeniable on this point:

Who *is* this who comes from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah, This *One who is* glorious in His apparel, traveling in the greatness of His strength? -“I who speak in righteousness, mighty to save.” Why *is* Your apparel red, and Your garments like one who treads in the winepress? “I have trodden the winepress alone, and from the peoples no one *was* with Me. For I have trodden them in My anger, and trampled them in My fury; their blood is sprinkled upon My garments, and I have stained all My robes. For the day of vengeance *is* in My heart, and the year of My redeemed has come. I looked, but *there was* no one to help, and I wondered that *there was* no one to uphold; therefore My own arm brought salvation for Me; and My own fury, it sustained Me. I have trodden down the peoples in My anger, made them drunk in My fury, and brought down their strength to the earth.” (Isa. 63:1-6)

Notice the mention of *Edom*^[4.5.3.5] and *Bozrah* as His place of origin. This speaks of His sheep, the Jewish remnant which fled from Jerusalem and are now in their place which was prepared by God. (See *Sheep in Bozrah*^[3.12.6.1].) God is seen coming from there, having already trodden the winepress. His garments are red, having been stained with their blood. These are His garments of vengeance worn when He repays His adversaries in judgment:

He saw that *there was* no man, And wondered that *there was* no intercessor; Therefore His own arm brought salvation for Him; And His own righteousness, it sustained Him. For He put on righteousness as a breastplate, And a helmet of salvation on His head; He put on the garments of vengeance for clothing, And was clad with zeal as a cloak. (Isa. 59:16-17)

The winepress motif of Isaiah is also familiar to us, having seen it in the second judgment described in Revelation 14 (see commentary on *Revelation 14:18*^[3.14.18]):

And another angel came out from the altar, who had power over fire, and he cried with a loud cry to him who had the sharp sickle, saying, “Thrust in your sharp sickle and gather the clusters of the vine of the earth, for her grapes are fully ripe.” So the angel thrust his sickle into the earth and gathered the vine of the earth, and threw it into the great winepress of the wrath of God. And the winepress was trampled outside the city, and blood came out of the winepress, up to the horses’ bridles, for one thousand six hundred furlongs. (Rev. 14:18-20)

John sees an angel harvest the grapes from the earth and throw them into the winepress of the wrath of God. Then the winepress is trampled. But no mention is made of *who* it is that tramples the grapes. From the previous passage in Isaiah, we know that it is God Himself who tramples. Yet the question still remains, is it the *Father* or the *Son* who tramples? Later in a series of visions, the identity of the One treading is revealed. It is Jesus Himself:

Now I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse. And He who sat on him *was* called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He judges and makes war. His eyes *were* like a flame of fire, and on His head *were* many crowns. He had a name written that no one knew except Himself. He *was* clothed with a robe dipped in blood, and His name is called The Word of God. And the armies in heaven, clothed in fine linen, white and clean, followed Him on white horses. Now out of His mouth goes a sharp sword, that with it He should strike the nations. And He Himself will rule them with a rod of iron. He Himself treads the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. And He has on *His* robe and on His thigh a name written: KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS. Then I saw an angel standing in the sun; and he cried with a loud voice, saying to all the birds that fly in the midst of heaven, “Come and gather together for the supper of the great God, that you may eat the flesh of kings, the flesh of captains, the flesh of mighty men, the flesh of horses and of those who sit on them, and the flesh of all *people*, free and slave, both small and great.” (Rev. 19:11-18)

The one on the white horse is called “Faithful and True” and mention is made of His righteous judgment. He is specifically identified as “The Word of God” which we know to be the unique title of Jesus Christ (John 1:1; 1Jn. 1:1; 2:14; Rev. 1:2; 19:13). Out of His mouth goes a sharp sword, another identifying characteristic of Jesus (Rev. 1:16). He is also the One destined to rule with a rod of iron—the Anointed One Whom the Father said would inherit the nations (Ps. 2:8-9, see commentary on *Revelation 2:27*^[3.2.27]). He has a name which no one knew except Himself, yet another identifying aspect of the Son of God (Pr. 30:4 cf. Gen. 32:29; Jdg. 13:6, 18; Rev. 3:12). His robe is “dipped in blood.” Is it His own blood, the atoning blood of the perfect Lamb shed upon the cross (Lev. 14:51)? This seems unlikely, for that would speak of His *first* coming whereas this is a scene of great judgment and bloodshed more directly tied to the previous passage in Isaiah. It is the blood from the grapes in the winepress for “He Himself treads the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God.”⁴⁵

See commentary on *Revelation 19:11*^[3.19.11].

4.5.6 - Gog Attacks Israel

Some interpreters take Ezekiel's prophecy of the attack of Gog upon Israel (Eze. 38 and 39) as finding fulfillment during the Tribulation— that Gog's invasion is related to the "king of the North" who troubles the *Antichrist*^[5.2.3] (Dan. 11:40). We do not believe this to be the case. There are numerous details in Ezekiel's revelation which do not agree with the scenario of the Campaign of Armageddon and which seem to speak of a different event at a different time:

First, in Ezekiel there are definite allies mentioned and they are limited in number, while other nations stand in opposition. In the Campaign of Armageddon, all nations are allied together against Jerusalem without exception. *Second*, the Ezekiel invasion comes from the north, but the Armageddon invasion comes from the whole earth. *Third*, the purpose of the Russian invasion is to take the spoil; the purpose of the Armageddon Campaign is to destroy the Jews. *Fourth*, in the Ezekiel invasion, there is a protest against the invasion; in the Armageddon Campaign, there is no protest because all the nations are involved. *Fifth*, the Ezekiel invasion is destroyed through convulsions of nature; the Armageddon invasion is destroyed by the personal Second Coming of Jesus the Messiah; *Sixth*, the Ezekiel invasion is destroyed on the mountains of Israel; the Armageddon Campaign is destroyed in the area between Petra and Jerusalem. *Seventh*, the Russian invasion takes place while Israel is living securely in the Land; the Armageddon Campaign takes place while Israel is in flight and in hiding.⁴⁶

There are a number of considerations that make it clear that this invasion by Gog (Eze. 38) is not the same as the battle of Armageddon (Rev. 16:16). (1) In the battle of Gog definite allies are mentioned, while in Armageddon all nations are engaged (Joel 3:2; Zep. 3:8; Zec. 12:3; 14:4). (2) Gog comes from the north (Eze. 38:6, 15; 39:2), while at Armageddon the armies come from the whole earth. (3) Gog comes to take spoil (Eze. 38:11-12), while at Armageddon the nations assemble to destroy the people of God. (4) There is protest against Gog's invasion (Eze. 38:13), but at Armageddon there is no protest for all nations are joined against Jerusalem. (5) Gog is the head of the armies in his invasion (Eze. 38:7 R.V.), but at Armageddon the *Beast*^[5.2.9] is the head of the invasion (Rev. 19:19). (6) Gog is overthrown by convulsions of nature (Eze. 38:22), but the armies at Armageddon are destroyed by the sword that goes out of Christ's mouth (Rev. 19:15). (7) Gog's armies are arrayed in the open field (Eze. 39:5), while at Armageddon they are seen in the city of Jerusalem (Zec. 14:2-4). (8) The Lord calls for assistance in executing judgment on Gog (Eze. 38:21), while at Armageddon He is viewed as treading the winepress alone (Isa. 63:3-6). Two diverse movements must then be acknowledged.⁴⁷

It is our view that Gog does not contribute to the campaign at the Second Coming of Christ, but takes place some time before the Tribulation. For a more extended treatment of this subject, see [Fruchtenbaum, *The Footsteps of Messiah*, 106-125].

Notes

- ¹ At the time of writing, a search on the phrase "battle of Armageddon" on the website www.google.com yielded about 21.300 hits on web pages across the internet.
- ² "The difference between *polemos* and *mache* is the same as that between the English words *war* and *battle*."—Richard Chenevix Trench, *Commentary on the Epistles to the Seven Churches in Asia* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 1861), 337.
- ³ Arnold G. Fruchtenbaum, *The Footsteps of Messiah*, rev ed. (Tustin, CA: Ariel Ministries, 2003), 317-318.
- ⁴ Only Adam rebelled, Eve was *deceived*.
- ⁵ *The Christian Research Journal*, vol. 24 no. 2, p. 38. [<http://www.equip.org>]
- ⁶ "By the end of the 70th week, Satan and his forces will have drawn all the rulers and armies of the world into the land of Israel for the battle of Armageddon (Rev. 16:12-16), which will take place at Christ's Second Coming and will pit Satan and his ungodly allies against Christ and His forces (Rev. 19:11-20:3). This will be Satan's ultimate challenge to Christ's right to take tenant possession of the earth and rule it. The combined military might of rebellious mankind will be gathered to the precise location to which Christ will return to take possession of the earth, because Satan will want all the help he can get to try to prevent Christ from exercising His right (Ps. 2:1-3)."—Renald E. Showers, *Maranatha, Our Lord Come* (Bellmawr, NJ: The Friends of Israel Gospel Ministry, 1995), 94.
- ⁷ James Strong, *The Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible* (Ontario: Woodside Bible Fellowship, 1996), H3092.
- ⁸ Merrill F. Unger, *Unger's Commentary on the Old Testament* (Chattanooga, TN: AMG Publishers, 2002),

- Zep. 3:9.
- ⁹ J. Dwight Pentecost, *Things to Come: A Study in Biblical Eschatology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1958), 342.
- ¹⁰ *Rosh* means *head, chief, or leader* in Hebrew.
- ¹¹ “The chronology of Daniel 11:36-39 refers to the period of world rule, and, therefore, is later than Ezekiel 38 and 39. Hence, it may be concluded that the battle described here, beginning with verse 40, is a later development, possibly several years later than the battle described in Ezekiel. If a Russian force is involved in the phrase, ‘the king of the north,’ it would indicate that, in the period between the two battles, Russia is able to reassemble an army and once again participate in a military way in this great war.”—John F. Walvoord, *Daniel: The Key to Prophetic Revelation* (Chicago, IL: Moody Bible Institute, 1971), 278.
- ¹² Timothy Friberg, Barbara Friberg, and Neva F. Miller, *Analytical Lexicon of the Greek New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2000), 74.
- ¹³ Unger, *Unger's Commentary on the Old Testament*, Jdg. 5:19.
- ¹⁴ Pentecost, *Things to Come: A Study in Biblical Eschatology*, 340-341.
- ¹⁵ Unger, *Unger's Commentary on the Old Testament*, Zec. 12:11.
- ¹⁶ David Baron, *Zechariah: A Commentary On His Visions And Prophecies* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 1918), 451.
- ¹⁷ D. Baly, “*Jezreel, Valley Of,*” in Geoffrey W. Bromiley, ed., *International Standard Bible Encyclopedia* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1979, 1915), 2:1060.
- ¹⁸ M. R. Vincent, *Vincent's Word Studies* (Escondido, CA: Ephesians Four Group, 2002), Rev. 16:16.
- ¹⁹ W. S. Lasor, “*Jehoshaphat, Valley Of,*” in Geoffrey W. Bromiley, ed., *International Standard Bible Encyclopedia* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1979, 1915), 2:979.
- ²⁰ “Joel 3:2, 13 speaks of events taking place in ‘the valley of Jehoshaphat,’ which seems to be an extended area east of Jerusalem.”—Pentecost, *Things to Come: A Study in Biblical Eschatology*, 341.
- ²¹ Merrill K. Unger, R. Harrison, Frederic F Vos, and Cyril J. Barber, *The New Unger's Bible Dictionary* (Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 1988), s.v. “Jehoshaphat, Valley of.”
- ²² Lasor, “*Jehoshaphat, Valley Of,*” 2:979.
- ²³ Lasor, “*Jehoshaphat, Valley Of,*” 2:979.
- ²⁴ Fruchtenbaum, *The Footsteps of Messiah*, 318.
- ²⁵ Jezreel Valley from Muhraqa to Moreh and Gilboa. Copyright ©003 www.BiblePlaces.com. This image appears by *special permission*^[1.3] and may not be duplicated for use in derivative works.
- ²⁶ Baly, “*Jezreel, Valley Of,*” 2:1060.
- ²⁷ Edward Hindson, “*Battle of Armageddon,*” in Mal Couch, ed., *Dictionary of Premillennial Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 1996), 56.
- ²⁸ The gathering in preparation for the Campaign takes in response to the pouring of the sixth bowl (Rev. 16:12-16), but the destruction of Babylon and the Second Coming are probably associated with the seventh bowl (Rev. 16:19). Perhaps the Campaign begins during the sixth bowl judgment and ends at the seventh. Or perhaps only the gathering takes place during the sixth bowl with the actual warfare occurring during the seventh.
- ²⁹ The passages cited by Fruchtenbaum could also find fulfillment in the events of the capture of Babylon by Cyrus in 539 B.C. At that time, Belshazzar was ruling as a *co-regent* king in Babylon (cf. Dan. 5:29), while the primary king, Nabonidus, was absent: “The new evidence confirming the theory that Nabonidus was absent is found in the statement in the ‘Prayer of Nabonidus’ that Nabonidus was at the oasis of Teima in Arabia at this time.”—Walvoord, *Daniel: The Key to Prophetic Revelation*, 115n. If so, Jeremiah may be describing the runners which journeyed from Babylon to Teima in Arabia to notify Nabonidus concerning the capture of Babylon. Either way, it is clear that in the fall of Babylon to Cyrus, it was not destroyed as it will be at the time of the end. See *The Destruction of Babylon*^[4.1.2]. See commentary on *Revelation 17:16*^[3.17.16].
- ³⁰ Fruchtenbaum, *The Footsteps of Messiah*, 327.

- 31 Unger, *Unger's Commentary on the Old Testament*, Jer. 51:30.
- 32 Pentecost, *Things to Come: A Study in Biblical Eschatology*, 343.
- 33 Copyright ©003 Ariel Ministries (www.ariel.org), P.O. Box 3723, Tustin, CA 92781. This image appears by *special permission*^[1.3] and may not be duplicated for use in derivative works. [Fruchtenbaum, *The Footsteps of Messiah*, 314].
- 34 Fruchtenbaum, *The Footsteps of Messiah*, 315-364.
- 35 “Since the main purpose of the Campaign of Armageddon is the annihilation of the Jews, the armies of the world will move southward from Jerusalem to Bozrah, as Jeremiah 49:13-14 makes clear.”—Fruchtenbaum, *The Footsteps of Messiah*, 336.
- 36 “It must be noted that the angels did not prophesy that Jesus would return to the same *place* [Acts 1:9-11], but rather in the same *manner* in which He had left. Jesus left in the clouds of Heaven and according to Matthew 24:30, He will return in the clouds of Heaven.”—Fruchtenbaum, *The Footsteps of Messiah*, 349.
- 37 “Zechariah 14:12-15 describes the manner in which these massive hordes of Antichrist’s armies will be destroyed . . . the fight continues all the way back to Jerusalem, coming to an end in the Valley of Jehoshaphat (Joel 3:12-13). The nations that have gathered against the Jews (Joel 3:9-11) will now find themselves being trodden by the King of the Jews. It is of this treading in the Valley of Jehoshaphat that Revelation 14:19-20 speaks . . . The city spoken of in these verses is Jerusalem, and the winepress is just outside the city, meaning it is in the Valley of Jehoshaphat. From here the armies of Antichrist will leave for Bozrah, and they will return here as the conflict comes to an end.”—Fruchtenbaum, *The Footsteps of Messiah*, 359.
- 38 Pentecost, *Things to Come: A Study in Biblical Eschatology*, 343-358.
- 39 The ultimate destruction of Babylon would appear to involve forces from the north (Isa. 13:17; Jer. 50:3, 9; 51:11, 27-28, 48). Although Babylon was captured “from the north” (by the Medes, Jer. 51:28) in 539 B.C. (Dan. 5:31), her fall did not involve physical destruction as these passages indicate.
- 40 See [Fruchtenbaum, *The Footsteps of Messiah*, 315-363].
- 41 “If any be deposed to ask why we look upon the present chapter [Rev. 16] as literal when we have given rules for understanding previous chapters as symbolical, we would answer that the symbols always point to passages in the Old Testament which clarify them. The concordance takes us back to literal judgments, whether we look at ‘plague,’ ‘sore,’ ‘blood,’ ‘darkness,’ or other words in the passage while there will be two or three words which will take us back to symbolism.”—Donald Grey Barnhouse, *Revelation* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1971), 288.
- 42 Unger, *Unger's Commentary on the Old Testament*, Isa. 34:1.
- 43 Unger, *Unger's Commentary on the Old Testament*, Mic. 4:11.
- 44 Tom Huckel, *The Rabbinic Messiah* (Philadelphia, PA: Hananeel House, 1998), Gen. 49:11.
- 45 A related typological association may be found in the dipping of Joseph’s tunic in blood (Gen. 37:31). This most likely speaks of the death of Messiah at His First Coming rather than the blood of His enemies at His Second Coming.
- 46 Fruchtenbaum, *The Footsteps of Messiah*, 119.
- 47 Pentecost, *Things to Come: A Study in Biblical Eschatology*, 344.
- 48 Fruchtenbaum, *The Footsteps of Messiah*, 106-125.

4.6 – Crowns

There are two types of crowns mentioned in the NT^[5.2.48], στέφανος [*stephanos*] and διάδημα [*diadēma*]. Most discussions of these two words indicate that the *stephanos* is a *victor's crown*, whereas the *diadema* is a *royal crown*. “The *stephanos* was the usual crown of exaltation for victors of games, achievements in war, and places of honor at feasts (AV^[5.2.8] 1Cor. 9:25; RSV, NEB ‘wreath’).”¹ “Probably the widest NT use of the word [*stephanos*] is in conjunction with the Greek games as parallels to the Christian life (cf. 1Cor. 9:24, 25; Gal. 2:2; Php. 3:14; 2Ti. 2:5; 1Pe. 5:4).”² “In each biblical use the diadem is a badge of royalty.”³ However, when one analyzes the context within which these two terms appear, it appears that they are not as clearly distinguished as these definitions would imply.

4.6.1 - Stephanos

The Greek word for *crown* is *Stephanos* in the following passages:

1. Jesus' crown of thorns (Mtt. 27:29; Mark 15:17; John 19:2, 5).
2. Man crowned with glory and honor (Heb. 2:7).
3. Jesus crowned with glory and honor (Heb. 2:9).
4. Paul's Philippian believers (Php. 4:1).
5. Paul's Thessalonian believers (1Th. 2:19).
6. The Twenty-Four Elders (Rev. 4:4, 10).
7. The rider on the white horse (Rev. 6:2).
8. Locusts from the abyss (Rev. 9:7).
9. Woman with twelve stars (Rev. 12:1).
10. One like the Son of Man (Rev. 14:14).
11. *Believer's Crowns*^[4.6.3].

Significantly, in instances where the *royalty* of Jesus is plainly in view (Mtt. 27:29; Mark 15:17; John 19:2, 5), the crown used is *not diadema*, but *stephanos*.

When they had twisted a crown of thorns [*stephanos*], they put *it* on His head, and a reed in His right hand. And they bowed the knee before Him and mocked Him, saying, “Hail, **King** of the Jews!” (Mtt. 27:29) [emphasis added]

Here the Roman soldiers clearly are mocking Jesus as *royalty*, yet He is wearing the *stephanos*. This use is contrary to the assertion that *stephanos* is a *victor's crown* whereas *diadema* represents *royalty*. Hemer explains the use of *stephanos* for *royalty* in this situation because the crown of thorns is literally a wreath: “There is certainly no reason for denying στέφανος [*stephanos*] its most usual sense here. It is ‘wreath’, not “diadem”, *Kranz*, not *Krone*. The “crown of thorns” is admittedly στέφανος [*stephanos*] in the evangelists (Mtt. 27:29; Mark 15:17; John 19:2, 5), but that was literally a garland. To the soldiers it meant mock *royalty*; perhaps to the writers it also implied *victory*.”⁴ But this fails to explain why Jesus is crowned with a *stephanos* in other contexts where a wreath is not in view (Heb. 2:9; Rev. 14:14).

The evidence that the Romans understood Jesus as claiming to be a *king* and not a *victor* is overwhelming (Mtt. 27:11, 29, 37; Mark 15:2, 9, 12, 18, 26; Luke 23:3, 37, 38; John 18:33, 39; 19:3, 12, 14, 19, 21). Moreover, Jesus is *frequently* found wearing the *stephanos*. Those who assert that the horseman of Rev. 6:2 cannot be Christ because he is wearing a *stephanos* need to make this determination from other factors.

4.6.2 - Diadema

The Greek word for *crown* is διάδημα [*diadēma*] in the following passages:

1. Crowns on the seven heads of the fiery red dragon (Rev. 12:3).
2. Crowns on the ten horns of the beast rising up from the sea (Rev. 13:1).
3. Crowns upon the head of the one called Faithful and True (Rev. 19:12).

The “royal crown” is found upon the head of Jesus in only one passage. In the other two passages, it is upon the heads of the enemies of God.

4.6.3 - Believer’s Crowns

The crowns associated with the reward of the believer are always *stephanos*. Paul associates this crown with the reward of *victory* in competition (1Cor. 9:25). Trench argues that Paul’s use of *stephanos* may not be consistent with that of John in the book of Revelation. Given Paul’s Roman background, he frequently drew from the imagery of Greek athletic competition, but these games were offensive to Palestinian Jews like John and hence unlikely to provide a backdrop for the use of *stephanos* in Revelation. Therefore, *stephanos* may denote rule or royalty when used by John.⁵

Crowns for Believers

Crown	Verse	Description
stephanos	1Cor. 9:25	Incorruptible Crown
stephanos	2Ti. 4:8	Crown of Righteousness
stephanos	Jas. 1:12; Rev. 2:10	Crown of Life
stephanos	1Pe. 5:4	Crown of Glory ⁶

4.6.4 - Not Technical Terms

Our short survey of the Greek terms underlying the word *crown* indicates that it is best not to take these terms in a technical sense (as if their meaning consistently differentiate between victory and rule). It is best to let the *context* be the deciding factor in determining the sense which either term conveys.

It is doubtful whether the distinction between στεφανος [*stephanos*] and διαδῆμα [*diadema*], the victor’s “wreath” and the kingly “crown,” was strictly observed in Hellenistic Greek. “The crown of thorns” στεφανος [*stephanos*] placed on our Lord’s head, was indeed woven, but it was the caricature of a royal crown.⁷

Notes

- ¹ W. E. Raffety, “Crown,” in Geoffrey W. Bromiley, ed., *International Standard Bible Encyclopedia* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1979, 1915), 1:831.
- ² Robert L. Thomas, *Revelation 1-7* (Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 1992), 172-173.
- ³ Geoffrey W. Bromiley, “Diadem,” in Geoffrey W. Bromiley, ed., *International Standard Bible Encyclopedia* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1979, 1915), 941.
- ⁴ Colin J. Hemer, *The Letters to the Seven Churches of Asia in Their Local Setting* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1989), 72.
- ⁵ Richard Chenevix Trench, *Commentary on the Epistles to the Seven Churches in Asia* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 1861), 109-110.
- ⁶ Incorruptible: “that does not fade away.”

⁷ M. R. Vincent, *Vincent's Word Studies* (Escondido, CA: Ephesians Four Group, 2002), Rev. 4:4.

4.7 - Four Gospels

Many have wondered why there are four gospels? Especially if three of the four (the *synoptic gospels*¹) have so much in common. There are at least two primary answers which can be given to this question:²

1. Multiple Witnesses
2. Multiple independent eye-witness accounts establishes the reliability of the testimony concerning the life and ministry of Jesus.
3. Varied Perspectives
4. Each author recorded the events of Jesus' life and ministry from a different perspective with different goals and objectives.

Both of these answers explain why there are four gospels. It is to the second of these reasons that we now direct our attention.

Throughout history, students of Scripture have recognized a correlation between the four gospels and four different roles of Christ. This is reflected in works such as the *Book of Kells*, an ornately illustrated work containing the four gospels written in approximately A.D. 800.³ The artwork of the cover page of the *Book of Kells* shows that the monks recognized a correspondence between the faces of the cherubim seen by Ezekiel and John and the four gospels (Eze. 1:10; 10:14; Rev. 4:7; 21:13).⁴

*The Book of Kells - The Four Gospels*⁵



The Fathers identified them with the four Gospels, Matthew the lion, Mark the ox, Luke the man, John the eagle: these symbols, thus viewed, express not the personal character of the Evangelists, but the manifold aspect of *Christ* in relation to the world (*four* being the number significant of world-wide

extension, for example, the four quarters of the world) presented by them severally: the lion expressing *royalty*, as Matthew gives prominence to this feature of Christ; the ox, *laborious endurance*, Christ's prominent characteristic in Mark; man, *brotherly sympathy* with the whole race of man, Christ's prominent feature in Luke; the eagle, *soaring majesty*, prominent in John's description of Christ as the Divine Word.⁶

These creatures represent four aspects of Christ Jesus as the Lion, the Ox, the Man, and the Eagle. In all four of these aspects Christ Jesus is supreme Lord. As the lion, the Lord Jesus is the King of kings and Lord of lords. . . . Matthew describes Christ in this aspect. As the ox, Christ is the servant of God, and the servant of men. . . . Mark describes Christ in this respect. As the man, the Lord Jesus is a lover, a friend, a companion, an associate, and a leader. . . . Luke describes Christ in this aspect. As the eagle, the Lord Jesus is God Himself, He is Deity, eternal, all-powerful, . . . His deity is fully described in the Gospel of John. These four aspects of the Savior are revealed again in Ezekiel 10:14; Revelation 4:6.⁷

Some have criticized the correlation of the gospel messages with the four faces of the cherubim as if it were merely the contrivance of an overactive imagination. Yet a close study of the Scriptural evidence makes their correspondence difficult to deny. We believe the table below provides compelling evidence of the divine superintendence of the various biblical authors to achieve this intentional result.

For example, the gospel recorded by Matthew has as its primary audience the *Jews*. Jesus is presented primarily as *King of the Jews*. His genealogy is given in relation to the father of the Jews, *Abraham*. This role corresponds to the *lion* face of the cherubim, the camp of *Judah* around the *tabernacle*^[5.2.69] (Jesus is the "lion of the tribe of Judah," Gen. 49:9; Rev. 5:5), and the "branch" from David who will be "king" (Jer. 23:5-6). Similar correlations occur for the other gospels.

The Gospels Compared

Gospel	Focus ⁸	Portrait ⁹	Key Verses ¹⁰	Lineage	Face ¹¹	Camp of Israel ^[4.7.2]	The Branch ¹²
Matthew	Jews	King Messiah	Mtt. 1:1; 16:16; 20:28	From Abraham (Mtt. 1:1)	Lion (Gen. 49:9; Rev. 5:5)	Judah (East)	King (Jer. 23:5-6)
Mark	Romans	Lowly Servant	Mark 1:8; 8:27; 10:45; 15:34	None ¹³	Ox	Ephraim (West)	Servant (Zec. 3:8)
Luke	Hellenists	Son of Man	Luke 19:10	From Adam (Luke 3:23)	Man (Dan. 7:13)	Reuben (South)	Man (Zec. 6:12)
John	Greek World	Son of God (Ps. 2:7; Pr. 30:4)	John 20:31	From Eternity (John 1:1)	Eagle (Gen. 49:16)	Dan (North)	Lord (Isa. 4:2) ¹⁴

4.7.1 - Which Face, Which Gospel?

In criticism of this association, some note the variations found among the church fathers in assigning the faces to the gospels:

The church Father *Irenaeus*^[5.2.34] said the human face of the third beast represented Matthew, the eagle of the fourth the gospel of Mark, the ox of the second Luke, and the lion of the first being John.

Victorinus said the man pictured Matthew, the lion Mark, the ox Luke, and the eagle John. Augustine identified the lion with Matthew, the man with Mark, the ox with Luke, and the eagle with John.

Athanasius^[5.2.7] referred the man to Matthew, the calf (i.e., ox) to Mark, the lion to Luke, and the eagle to John. Seemingly, almost every combination has been suggested.¹⁵

From this passage is derived the familiar symbolism of the four Evangelists; Mark seated on a lion, Luke

on a steer, Matthew on a man, and John on an eagle.¹⁶

But should these variations be taken as evidence of the bankruptcy of any view which correlates the faces with the gospels? We think not. For there is more than subjective guess-work behind our results:

- Although the Church Fathers differed in the accuracy with which they understood the correlation and therefore reached differing conclusions, it is significant that they all saw some sort of correlation between the faces and the gospels: “The unanimity of the early church regarding acceptance of some combination of such symbolism is remarkable.”¹⁷
- There is objective evidence found within Scripture itself which reliably establishes the intended emphasis of each gospel. This evidence is found in the genealogies of Christ which establish the line of Jesus from *Abraham* (Matthew), *Adam* (Luke), and *eternity* (John). Thus we know with some certainty that Matthew presents Jesus as King of the Jews, Luke as the Son of Man, and John as the Son of God. The only remaining question is that of the presentation of Mark. There being no genealogy in Mark, it seems plain that the emphasis of *servant* fits his gospel.
- The fourfold identification of “the BRANCH” in the Old Testament provides additional objective Scriptural support for the fourfold correlation: King (Jer. 23:5-6); Servant (Zec. 3:8); Man (Zec. 6:12); Lord (Isa. 4:2).

4.7.2 - Camp of Israel

Scripture informs us that the earthly patterns given by God are often a shadow of a greater heavenly reality (Col. 2:17; Heb. 8:5; 9:8, 23; 10:1; Rev. 15:5). So it is not a great surprise when we find similarities between Israel’s encampment in the wilderness around the *tabernacle*^[5.2.69] of meeting and the heavenly realm surrounding God’s throne. Given the level of detail which attends God’s instructions concerning the encampment (Num. 2), it would be unusual if there were no symbolism to be found in it.

The camp was to be set up as follows:

- The tabernacle of meeting was in the center.
- The camp of Judah, consisting of the tribes of Judah (74,800), Issachar (84,400), and Zebulun (57,400), a total of 186,400 men, camped to the east (Num. 2:3-7).
- The camp of Reuben, consisting of the tribes of Reuben (46,500), Simeon (59,300), and Gad (45,650), a total of 151,450 men, camped to the south (Num. 2:10-16).
- The camp of Ephraim, consisting of the tribes of Ephraim (40,500), Manasseh (32,200), and Benjamin (35,400), a total of 108,100 men, camped to the west (Num. 2:18-24).
- The camp of Dan, consisting of the tribes of Dan (62,700), Asher (41,500), and Naphtali (53,400), a total of 157,600 men, camped to the north (Num. 2:25-31).
- Each group was to “camp by his own **standard**, beside the **emblems** of his father’s house” [emphasis added] (Num. 2:2).
- The tribe of Levi was unnumbered and camped around all sides of the tabernacle (Num. 2:17, 33). “Between these camps and the court surrounding the tabernacle, the three leading mishpachoth of the Levites were to be encamped on three sides, and Moses and Aaron with the sons of Aaron (i.e., the priests) upon the fourth, i.e., the front or eastern side, before the entrance (Num. 3:21-38).”¹⁸

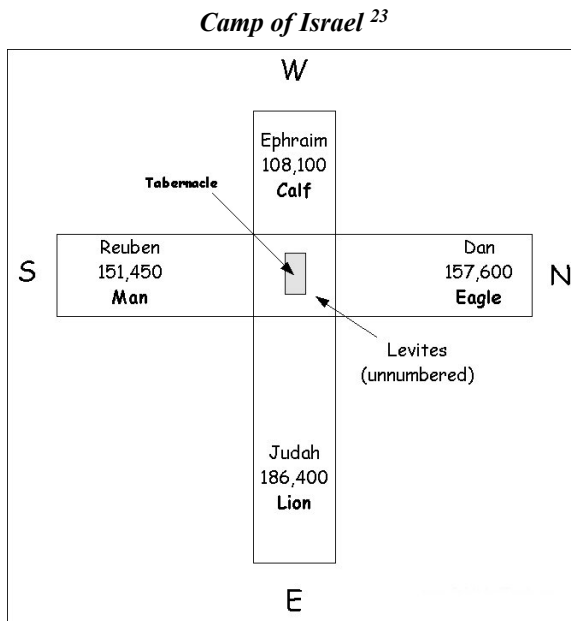
The word for *his own standard* is דָגֵל [Diglō], means “to put up the flag” and is used of “a troop with banners.”¹⁹ It is derived from the word דָגַל [Dāgal] meaning *look, behold*.²⁰ The standards provided a visual rallying symbol for each camp when stationary and on the move (Num. 2:2-3, 10, 17-18, 25, 31, 34; 10:14, 18, 22, 25). *Ensign* is אֹת [’ōt] “This is the general word for ‘sign,’ and it covers the entire range of the English term and the Greek word *semeion*. On the pedestrian end of the scale it includes what amounts to a ‘signboard’ or ‘standard’ (Num 2:2). It also includes such important concepts as the rainbow ‘sign’ to Noah (Gen. 9:12-13, 17).”²¹

דָּגָל [*Degel*], a standard, banner, or flag, denotes primarily the larger *field sign*, possessed by every division composed of three tribes, which was also the banner of the tribe at the head of each division; and secondarily, in a derivative signification, it denotes the army united under one standard, like σήμηια [*sēmeia*], or vexillum. It is used thus, for example, in Num. 2:17, 31, 34, and in combination with מַחֲנֵה [*machāneh*] in Num. 2:3, 10, 18, and 25, where “standard of the camp of Judah, Reuben, Ephraim, and Dan” signifies the hosts of the tribes arranged under these banners. אוֹתוֹת [*ōtōt*], the signs (ensigns), were the smaller flags or banners which were carried at the head of the different tribes and subdivisions of the tribes (the fathers’ houses).²²

Both *standard* and *ensign* speak of flags which uniquely signify each camp or tribe. In order for the camps to be differentiated, such standards would necessarily differ in *color*, *insignia*, or both.

Since the tabernacle was quite small, it seems impractical for the four cardinal directions to have been restricted in width by the dimensions of the tabernacle itself. It seems likely that the Levites, who were not numbered, camped around the tabernacle equally in all four directions and then the other four camps extended outward from there. Given Levitical attention to detail, whoever camped outside of the clear directions of east, south, west, and north (e.g., northwest) would be violating these directional instructions (e.g., by being both north and west).

Using the populations given for the four camps, the ratios of their relative sizes would have been: Judah (1.0); Reuben (0.81); Ephraim (0.58); and Dan (0.85). Assuming the Levites encamped in a square and a uniform width for each camp extending strictly outward in the four cardinal directions, the view from above, as Balaam saw it (Num. 23:9) *may have* resembled a cross:



This assumes a uniform width for each camp—which cannot be known with certainty. If the boundary between each camp was taken to be on a diagonal (e.g., northwest, northeast, etc.) then the formation of the camp would have not been that of a cross. Even so, this does not adversely affect our main point—that the camp of Israel is a shadow of the heavenly throne.

As to the contents of each camp’s standard, tradition tells us that each camp had a different symbol upon its standard:

Neither the Mosaic law, nor the Old Testament generally, gives us any intimation as to the form or character of the standard (*degel*). According to rabbinical tradition, the standard of Judah bore the figure of a lion, that of Reuben the likeness of a man or of a man’s head, that of Ephraim the figure of an ox, and that of Dan the figure of an eagle; so that the four living creatures united in the cherubic forms described by Ezekiel were represented upon these four standards.²⁴

Jewish tradition says the “four standards” under which Israel encamped in the wilderness, to the east, Judah, to the north, Dan, to the west, Ephraim, to the south, Reuben, were respectively a lion, an eagle, an ox, and a man, while in the midst was the tabernacle containing the Shekinah symbol of the Divine Presence.²⁵

The Talmud saw in these four creatures the four primary forms of life in God’s creation. It also noted that the twelve tribes of Israel camped under these four banners; some with Reuben (symbolized by a man), others with Dan (symbolized by an eagle), others with Ephraim (symbolized by the calf, or ox), and the rest with Judah (symbolized by a lion).²⁶

The Jewish writers tell us, that the standard of each tribe of Israel took the colour of the stone which represented it in the high priest’s breastplate, and that there was wrought upon each a particular figure—a lion for Judah, a young ox for Ephraim, a man for Reuben, and an eagle for Dan.²⁷

No further information is provided about the size, color or representation on these standards. Jewish tradition, however, does provide a clue to the way in which later generations of Jews viewed the standards. The Aramaic paraphrase of the Torah, called *Targum Jonathan*, and the ancient commentary on Numbers, called *Bemidbar Rabbah*, suggest that each tribe was assigned a color corresponding to the color of its respective stone in the high priest’s breastplate. Thus, the color of Dan would be blue because a sapphire is blue. The four standards, therefore, were composed of the colors of the three tribes of each triad. The tradition continues that each of the four standards depicted a living being. Judah’s animal was a lion, Reuben’s a man, Ephraim’s an ox and Dan’s an eagle. This tradition may have been influenced by the cherubim in Ezekiel’s vision who also had four faces (Ezek. 1:10; see also Rev. 4:7). It should be emphasized that there is no solid biblical or historical basis for these descriptions of the standards. The Jewish tradition, however, does provide the most logical suggestion for their descriptions, particularly in the case of Judah and Ephraim (see Gen. 49:9 and Deu. 33:17).²⁸

Jewish tradition holds that the standards contained the very symbols Scripture reveals in association with the four living creatures (Eze. 1:10; 10:14; Rev. 4:7).

In opposition to this tradition, some have noted the adverse reaction of the Jews of NT^[5.2.48] times to the images on the Roman standards:

Every tribe had its particular standard, probably with the name of the tribe embroidered with large letters. It seems highly improbable that the figures of animals should have been painted on them, as the Jewish writers assert; for even in after ages, when Vitellius wished to march through Judea, their great men besought him to march another way, as the law of the land did not permit images (such as were on the Roman standard) to be brought into it. Josephus Ant. 1. xviii. c. 7.²⁹

It is not clear that the Jews would have allowed images on their standards: In the time of Augustus, Roman legionaries would leave their standards in the Judean port city of Caesarea, so that the images drawn upon them would not offend the sensitive Jews.³⁰

In response to this proposed difficulty, it may be observed:

1. *Jewish writers* and *rabbinical tradition* maintain the standards *did* have images of animals upon them. Of all people least likely to suggest that animal insignias were upon the standards (due to Ex. 20:4), it is the *Jews themselves* who give us this tradition.
2. The opposition of the Jews of Josephus’ day to the Roman standards may have been due to the *particular images* they contained, not the mere fact that they contained images. Concerning Jewish opposition to the Roman standards, Josephus relates, “for that the laws of their country would not permit them to overlook those images which were brought into it, **of which there were a great many in their ensigns.**” [emphasis added]³¹
3. The Israelites were instructed to decorate the tabernacle, and later the temple, with various images, including lions, oxen, and cherubim (Ex. 26:1; 36:8, 35; 1K. 6:32; 1K. 7:29; 2K. 16:17; 2Chr. 4:3-4, 15). If these images were so offensive to the Jews that they dare not have them upon their standards, how is it that cherubim (of which some have four faces) appear in the tabernacle along with lions and oxen in the temple?

If Jewish opposition to unbiblical images upon the Roman standards is seen in light of the biblical symbolism allowed within the tabernacle and temple, the view that their ensigns could not have contained insignia of the four faces is less convincing, especially in the light of Jewish tradition itself.

It seems likely that Adam and Eve would have seen cherubim when they were driven out of Eden (Gen. 3:24). Perhaps their knowledge of the faces of these incredible angelic beings, though not recorded in Scripture until Ezekiel's time, was preserved by tradition.

Jerome Prado provides additional background correlating the images with the camps:

Jerome Prado, in his commentary upon Ezekiel (Ezekiel 1 p. 44), gives the following minute description according to rabbinical tradition: "The different leaders of the tribes had their own standards, with the crests of their ancestors depicted upon them. On the east, above the tent of Naasson the first-born of Judah, there shone a standard of a green colour, this colour having been adopted by him because it was in a green stone, viz., an emerald, that the name of his forefather Judah was engraved on the breastplate of the high priest (Ex. 25:15ff.), and on this standard there was depicted a lion, the crest and hieroglyphic of his ancestor Judah, whom Jacob had compared to a lion, saying, 'Judah is a lion's whelp.' Towards the south, above the tent of Elisur the son of Reuben, there floated a red standard, having the colour of the sardus, on which the name of his father, viz., Reuben, was engraved upon the breastplate of the high priest. The symbol depicted upon this standard was a human head, because Reuben was the first-born, and head of the family. On the west, above the tent of Elishamah the son of Ephraim, there was a golden flag, on which the head of a calf was depicted, because it was through the vision of the calves or oxen that his ancestor Joseph had predicted and provided for the famine in Egypt (Gen. 41); and hence Moses, when blessing the tribe of Joseph, i.e., Ephraim (Deu. 33:17), said, 'his glory is that of the first-born of a bull.' The golden splendour of the standard of Ephraim resembled that of the chrysolite, in which the name of Ephraim was engraved upon the breastplate. Towards the north, above the tent of Ahiezer the son of Dan, there floated a motley standard of white and red, like the jaspis (or, as some say, a carbuncle), in which the name of Dan was engraved upon the breastplate. The crest upon this was an eagle, the great doe to serpents, which had been chosen by the leader in the place of a serpent, because his forefather Jacob had compared Dan to a serpent, saying, 'Dan is a serpent in the way, an adder (cerastes, a horned snake) in the path;' but Ahiezer substituted the eagle, the destroyer of serpents as he shrank from carrying an adder upon his flag."³²

In relation to the eagle being associated with the tribe of Dan, we note that *Dan* means *judge* (Gen. 30:6; 49:16) and the symbolism of the eagle is often connected with judgment (Deu. 28:49; Job 9:26; Pr. 30:17; Jer. 4:13; 48:40; 49:22; Lam. 4:19; Eze. 17:3; Hos. 8:1; Hab. 1:8; Mtt. 24:28; Luke 17:37).

4.7.3 - A Shadow of the Heavenly

Even if some of the details of the camp of Israel differ from those shown above, it would appear that the camp is intended as a shadow of the heavenly throne room. God's *shekinah* glory dwells between the cherubim over the mercy seat above the Ark in the *tabernacle*^[5.2.69]. Around the tabernacle the Levites (priests) are camped. Around the Levites are the four camps of Israel, each with a standard bearing one of the faces of the cherubim seen by Ezekiel. These picture aspects of heaven.

Camp of Israel as a Shadow of Heaven

Earthly	Heavenly
Tabernacle in the Wilderness (Ex. 25:9; 26:1)	Temple ^[5.2.73] in Heaven (Rev. 7:15; 11:19; 14:15-17; 15:5-6, 8; 16:1, 17)
Ark of the Testimony (Ex. 25:10)	Ark of the Testimony (Rev. 11:19)
Cherubim upon the Ark (Ex. 25:18)	Cherubim in Heaven around the Throne (Eze. 1:10; Rev. 4:6-7)
Levites (priests) around the Tabernacle (Num. 1:52; 2:17)	Elders (priests) around the Throne (Rev. 4:4)
Standards of the Camps around the Tabernacle (Lion, Ox, Man, Eagle)	Faces of the Cherubim around the Throne (Eze. 1:10; Rev. 4:7)

It is our view that the camp of Israel in the wilderness is an intentional shadow of the four faces of Ezekiel's cherubs (Eze. 1:10) and the likenesses of John's living creatures (Rev. 4:7) which, in turn, reflect the four primary roles of the Messiah which the gospels record. In their proximity to the throne

of God, the faces of the cherubim provide an “echo” or “reflection” of these roles.

Notes

- 1 “1. Of or constituting a synopsis; presenting a summary of the principal parts or a general view of the whole. 2.a. Taking the same point of view.”—*American Heritage Online Dictionary*, Ver. 3.0A, 3rd ed. (Houghton Mifflin, 1993), s.v. “synoptic.”
- 2 Another reason for *four* gospels can be found in the symbolic meaning of the number four. In our discussion concerning *Interpreting Symbols*^[2.7], we mentioned that the number four conveys a symbolic of global completeness denoting *the entire world, the earth*^[2.7.5.3.3]. The message of the gospels is intended for *worldwide* dissemination.
- 3 “As best we can determine, the *Book of Kells* was copied by hand and illuminated by monks around the year 800 A.D. Although it was probably begun on the island of Iona, between Scotland and Ireland, its name is derived from the Abbey of Kells, in the Irish Midlands, where it was kept from at least the 9th century to 1541. One theory has it that portions of the book were made at Kells, after Viking raids on Iona forced the monastery to retreat to the more isolated location, is uncertain. The book consists of a Latin text of the four Gospels, calligraphed in ornate script and lavishly illustrated in as many as ten colors. Only two of its 680 pages are without color. Not intended for daily use or study, it was a sacred work of art to appear on the altar for very special occasions. Since 1661 the *Book of Kells* has been kept in the Library of Trinity College in Dublin.”—Jerry B. Lincecum, Fort Worth Star Telegram, 3/29/90
<http://artemis.austincollege.edu/acad/english/jlincecum/jbl.bk.kells.page.html>.
- 4 “The church Fathers connected the living creatures with the Gospels: the lion, Matthew; the ox, Mark; the man, Luke; the eagle, John.”—Charles Feinberg, *The Prophecy of Ezekiel: The Glory of the Lord* (Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 1969), 19. “The gospels give a fourfold manifestation of Christ: He is seen in His sovereignty (Matthew), ministry (Mark), humanity (Luke), and deity (John).”—Norman L. Geisler, and William E. Nix, *A General Introduction to the Bible* (Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 1986), 28.
- 5 Source: Brian Keller, www.snake.net/people/paul/kells.
- 6 A. R. Fausset, “*The Revelation of St. John the Divine*,” in Robert Jamieson, A. R. Fausset, and David Brown, *A Commentary, Critical and Explanatory, on the Old and New Testaments* (Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc., 1997, 1877), Rev. 4:8.
- 7 Walter L. Wilson, *A Dictionary of Bible Types* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1999), 180.
- 8 W. A. Criswell, and Paige Patterson, eds., *The Holy Bible: Baptist Study Edition* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1991), 1328.
- 9 [Criswell, *The Holy Bible: Baptist Study Edition*, 1328] [Graham W. Scroggie, *A Guide to the Gospels* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 1995, 1948), 95].
- 10 Criswell, *The Holy Bible: Baptist Study Edition*, 1328.
- 11 Eze. 1:10; 10:14; Rev. 4:7; 21:13.
- 12 “The identification of the ‘Branch’ (Hebrew, *zemach*) with the Messiah is as least as old as the Targum Jonathan (50 B.C.), which at both Zec. 3:8 and 6:12 translated *zemach* ‘Branch’ as *mashiach* ‘Messiah.’” —Randall Price, *The Coming Last Days Temple* (Eugene, OR: Harvest House Publishers, 1999), 230. “The epithet ‘Branch’ (צֶמַח [tsemach] derives from the verb used here (צָמַח [yitsmch], ‘will sprout up’) to describe the rise of the Messiah. . . . In the immediate context this refers to Zerubbabel, but the ultimate referent is Jesus.”—*New Electronic Translation : NET Bible*, electronic edition (Dallas, TX: Biblical Studies Press, 1998), Zec. 6:12.
- 13 The genealogy of a servant is unimportant.
- 14 *LORD* here is יהוה [yhwah], God.
- 15 Robert L. Thomas, *Revelation 1-7* (Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 1992), 355.
- 16 M. R. Vincent, *Vincent's Word Studies* (Escondido, CA: Ephesians Four Group, 2002), Rev. 4:7.
- 17 Thomas, *Revelation 1-7*, 355.
- 18 Carl Friedrich Keil, and Franz Delitzsch, *Commentary on the Old Testament* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson,

- 2002), 1:659.
- ¹⁹ Ludwig Koehler, Walter Baumgartner, M. Richardson, and Johann Stamm, *The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament* (New York, NY: E. J. Brill, 1999, c1994-1996).
- ²⁰ Robert Laird Harris, Gleason Leonard Archer, and Bruce K. Waltke, *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament* (Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 1999, c1980).
- ²¹ Harris, *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*.
- ²² Keil, *Commentary on the Old Testament*, 1:660.
- ²³ See also [John MacArthur, *The MacArthur Study Bible* (Nashville, TN: Word Publishing, 1997), 199] and [Criswell, *The Holy Bible: Baptist Study Edition*, 192].
- ²⁴ Keil, *Commentary on the Old Testament*, 1:660.
- ²⁵ Fausset, “*The Revelation of St. John the Divine*,” Rev. 4:8.
- ²⁶ John MacArthur, *Revelation 1-11 : The MacArthur New Testament Commentary* (Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 1999), Rev. 4:8.
- ²⁷ J. A. Seiss, *The Apocalypse: Lectures on the Book of Revelation* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1966), 106.
- ²⁸ William Varner, *Jacob's Dozen: A Prophetic Look at the Tribes of Israel* (Bellmawr, NJ: Friends of Israel Gospel Ministry, 1987), s.v. “The Tribal Encampment.”
- ²⁹ R. Torrey, *The Treasury of Scripture Knowledge* (Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, 1995), Num. 2:2.
- ³⁰ Chaim Potok, *Wanderings* (New York, NY: Ballantine Books, 1978), 268.
- ³¹ Flavius Josephus, *The Complete Works of Josephus* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 1981), s.v. “Ant. XVIII, v3.”
- ³² Keil, *Commentary on the Old Testament*, 1:660n11.

4.8 – Imminency

Imminence^[5.2.30] is “The quality or condition of being about to occur.”¹ In Scripture, the coming of Jesus Christ is portrayed as an imminent event.² This means that Jesus can come *at any moment*: there is no event which must transpire *before* He comes. Imminency makes it impossible to know *when* He might come so the believer must remain constantly on the lookout in case the Lord were to return and find him unprepared (Mtt. 24:43; Luke 12:37-39; 1Th. 4:15-17; Rev. 3:3). Many passages which teach the imminency of events utilize phrases such as “soon,” “quickly,” and “is near.” These events are described from the perspective of God Who “declares the end from the beginning” (Isa. 46:10). From His perspective, these events are certain but their timing is unspecified. They are “imminent”:

Just as “quickly” is used in Revelation to teach imminence, so also is “near” or “at hand” (*engus*) used to mean imminency and thus its usage does not support a first-century fulfillment. Philip E. Hughes rightly says, “*The time is near*, that is to say, the time of fulfillment is imminent. This interval between the comings of Christ is the time of the last days, and the last of these last days is always impending.” . . . It is better to see *engus* as a term that teaches the imminency of a period of time that could begin to happen without the warning of signs.³

4.8.1 - The Present Value of Future Events

These passages convey that the predicted events are *certain* and that they may occur *at any moment* and are intended to evoke in the reader the ongoing expectation that the event is “about to happen” and thereby provide motivation for godly living (2Pe. 3:10-14):

The Impending Advent is the theme which pervades [the book of Revelation] from its commencement to its close. And just in proportion as he who is awake to the great truth of the Saviour’s speedy coming, and is engaged in waiting and preparing himself accordingly, is a better man, and in a safer condition, and really more happy, than the half-Christian and lukewarm,—in that same proportion is he who reads, hears, and keeps the words of this prophecy blessed beyond all other people.⁴

What a check, what an incentive, what a bridle, what a spur, such thoughts as these would be to us! Take this for the guide of your whole life. Act as if Jesus would come during the act in which you are engaged; and if you would not wish to be caught in that act by the Coming of the Lord, let it not be your act.—Charles Spurgeon, “Watching for Christ’s Coming” in *Sermons on the Second Coming of Christ*, 137-138.⁵

4.8.2 - Certainty versus Uncertainty

An *imminent*^[5.2.30] event is characterized by both certainty and uncertainty:

1. The event is *certain* to take place. It is not a matter of “if,” but “when.”
2. The timing of the event is *uncertain*. The event may take place *immediately*, or it may be delayed *indefinitely*.

It is important to differentiate between the words *immediate* and *imminent*. *Immediate* speaks of taking effect without delay, which does not allow for any intervening events. But *imminent* speaks of impending—that is, it may happen at any time. Some other events can intervene, but this does not affect the fact of the return. In the New Testament, the coming of Christ is set forth as imminent rather than immediate.⁶

This tension between certainty and uncertainty leads to several important observations:

A. T. Pierson stated, ‘Imminence is the combination of two conditions, viz.: certainty and uncertainty. By an imminent event we mean one which is certain to occur at some time, uncertain at what time.’ . . . Since we never know exactly when an imminent event will occur, three things are true. First, we cannot count on a certain amount of time transpiring before the imminent event happens; therefore, we should always be prepared for it to happen at any moment. Second, we cannot legitimately set a date for its happening. As soon as we set a date for an imminent event, we destroy the concept of imminency because we thereby say that a certain amount of time must transpire before that event can happen. A specific date for an event is contrary to the concept that the event could happen at any moment. Third,

we cannot legitimately say that an imminent event will happen soon. . . . an imminent event may take place within a short time, but it does not have to do so in order to be imminent. Thus ‘imminent’ is not equal to ‘soon.’⁷

Events which are seen as imminent can never be said to follow upon some other non-imminent event, for that would establish a precursor to the imminent event thereby destroying its imminency. This is a key factor in favor of the *pretribulation*^[5.2.60] *rapture*^[5.2.62] of the Church. For if the Church remains to witness the signing of the 7-year covenant by *Antichrist*^[5.2.3] (Dan. 9:27) or the abomination of desolation (Dan. 12:11; Mtt. 24:15) as pre-wrath and post-tribulation rapture positions teach, then the coming of Jesus for His church (1Th. 4:17) is no longer imminent and the Church will begin to watch for Antichrist rather than Christ!

No other prophecy in the Bible remains to be fulfilled before the imminent event occurs. Therefore, if two prophesied events are imminent [the rapture and the beginning of the *Day of the Lord*^[5.2.14]], neither can precede the other... If both the rapture of the church and the beginning of the day of the Lord are occurrences that could come at any moment, the timing of the rapture is not open for debate. The only way that both events could be imminent is for them to be simultaneous. If one preceded the other even by a brief moment, the other would not be imminent because of the sign provided by the earlier happening. This fact constitutes strong biblical support for the pretribulation rapture.⁸

The doctrine of imminence forbids the participation of the church in any part of the seventieth week. The multitude of signs given to Israel to stir them to expectancy would then also be for the church, and the church could not be looking for Christ until these signs had been fulfilled. The fact that no signs are given to the church, but she, rather, is commanded to watch for Christ, precludes her participation in the seventieth week.⁹

The writers of Scripture anticipated that many would scoff at the delay in promise of His “soon” coming: “Although Christ’s coming is the next event, it may be delayed so long that people begin to question whether He will ever come (cf. Mtt. 24:36, 39; 2Pe. 3:3, 4).”¹⁰

Notes

- ¹ *American Heritage Online Dictionary*, Ver. 3.0A, 3rd ed. (Houghton Mifflin, 1993).
- ² Mtt. 24:42-48; Mark 13:33-37; Luke 12:35-40; Rom. 13:12; 1Cor. 7:29; Php. 3:20-21; 4:5; 1Th. 1:10; Tit. 2:13; Heb. 9:28; Jas. 5:8; 1Pe. 4:7; 1Jn. 2:18; Jude 1:21; Rev. 3:11; Rev. 22:7, 10, 20.
- ³ Thomas Ice, “*Preterist ‘Time Texts’*,” in Tim LaHaye, and Thomas Ice, eds., *The End Times Controversy* (Eugene, OR: Harvest House Publishers, 2003), 106.
- ⁴ J. A. Seiss, *The Apocalypse: Lectures on the Book of Revelation* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1966), 28.
- ⁵ Renald E. Showers, *Maranatha, Our Lord Come* (Bellmawr, NJ: The Friends of Israel Gospel Ministry, 1995), 147.
- ⁶ Mal Couch, “*The War Over Words*,” in Tim LaHaye, and Thomas Ice, eds., *The End Times Controversy* (Eugene, OR: Harvest House Publishers, 2003), 294.
- ⁷ Showers, *Maranatha, Our Lord Come*, 127.
- ⁸ Robert L. Thomas, “*Imminence in the NT, Especially Paul’s Thessalonian Epistles*,” in Richard L. Mayhue, ed., *The Master’s Seminary Journal*, vol. 13 no. 1 (Sun Valley, CA: The Master’s Seminary, Spring 2002), 191,213.
- ⁹ J. Dwight Pentecost, *Things to Come: A Study in Biblical Eschatology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1958), 204.
- ¹⁰ John MacArthur, *The MacArthur Study Bible* (Nashville, TN: Word Publishing, 1997).

4.9 - Jezebel

4.9.1 - Her Origin

Her name means either “dunghill,” or “without cohabitation, un-husbanded.”¹ Jezebel was the daughter of a Phoenician king, Ethbaal of Sidon (1K. 16:13).

The identity of this Ethbaal and Εἰθώβαλος [*Eithōbalos*], mentioned in a fragment of the *Tyrian Annals* of Menander, . . . is sufficiently made out, and is not, I believe, called in question by any. Of this Ethbaal we there learn that he was a priest of Astarte, and, by the murder of his predecessor Pheles, made his own way to the throne and kingdom. Jezebel, so swift to shed blood (1K. 18:4; 19:2; 21:10), is a worthy offshoot of this evil stock.²

Ahab, the sinful king over the Northern Kingdom of Israel, took her in marriage as an accommodation with the pagan culture of the Sidonians:

And it came to pass, as though it had been a trivial thing for him to walk in the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, that he took as wife Jezebel the daughter of Ethbaal, king of the Sidonians; and he went and served Baal and worshiped him. Then he set up an altar for Baal in the temple of Baal, which he had built in Samaria. And Ahab made a wooden image. Ahab did more to provoke the LORD God of Israel to anger than all the kings of Israel who were before him. (1K. 16:31-33)

4.9.2 - Her Sins

Jezebel^[5.2.35] is perhaps the most evil female personage appearing within the Old Testament. She promoted Baal worship (1K. 18:19) and practiced spiritual harlotry and witchcraft (2K. 9:22). She actively sought to exterminate the prophets of God (1K. 18:4, 13) while supporting 450 prophets of Baal and 400 prophets of the goddess Asherah at her royal table (1K. 18:19). Upon hearing of her husband’s desire for Naboth’s vineyard, she wrote a warrant in Ahab’s name to have Naboth unjustly accused and killed so that Ahab could take the vacant property (1K. 21:1-16). Eventually, her sins caught up with her and she was consumed by dogs as Elijah had prophesied (1K. 21:23; 2K. 9:30-37).

Jezebel’s sin of promoting the worship of *other gods* was particularly noteworthy:

Idolatry in the Northern Kingdom began with Jeroboam I, the first king. But there was a difference between the sin of Jeroboam and the sin of Baal worship introduced by Jezebel. The sin of Jeroboam was a corruption of the true religion. Jeroboam set up a golden calf in Dan and Bethel, but these golden calves represented the God that brought them out of the land of Egypt. This was idolatry, but it was a corruption of the true Jehovah worship (1K. 12:25-33). Furthermore, Jeroboam could cite a precedent in the worship of the golden calf built by Aaron. His words concerning the golden calf in 1 Kings 12:28 are a quotation of Aaron’s words in Exodus 32:4. With Jezebel, it was not merely a corruption of the true religion; a whole new god and system of worship were introduced in Israel (1K. 16:29-33). Through Jezebel, Baal worship came into the Land, resulting in more idolatry than ever before. Involved in the worship of Baal was sexual immorality. In the corruption of Jehovah worship morality was still present, but in the worship of Baal there was complete immorality.³

Throughout the Scriptural record concerning Jezebel, one sees an overbearing woman who constantly exerted her strong will over the weak will of her husband, a role reversal common in our day.

4.9.3 - Jezebel of Thyatira

The letter to the church at Thyatira mentions a self-proclaimed “prophetess” named *Jezebel*^[5.2.35]. Some have taken her mention as a symbol, one of several of female figures personifying evil (Zec. 5:7; Mtt. 13:33; Rev. 17):⁴

Conceivably there may have been a woman by that name in the local Church at Thyatira, but this is highly unlikely. The name Jezebel is a Phoenician name, and by this time the Phoenicians had disappeared as a separate ethnic identity and had become part of the Greek-speaking world.

Furthermore, Thyatira was not located in Phoenicia, but in Asia Minor (modern-day Turkey).⁵

Yet, there are reasons for understanding Jezebel to be a real woman within the Thyatiran church:

Many think Jezebel is a symbolic rather than real name, as the biblical Jezebel (I Kings 16:31; 18:13, 19,

21; II Kings 9:22) was the sort of woman after whom no parent would be likely to name their child. However, as the name means “chaste,” like the English name “Agnes,” this argument is not all that forceful. Furthermore, Scripture does not portray Jezebel, Ahab’s wife, as licentious, for II Kings 9:22 seems to refer to idolatry rather than immorality. On the other hand, this woman achieved the same results as did her infamous namesake (I Kings 21:25). Finally, Rev. 2:23, “kill with death,” is very emphatic in Greek; so again it seems more appropriate to preserve the literal threat of physical death rather than favor some allegorical or symbolic meaning. Physical death would be a crystal-clear sign of God’s obvious disapproval, and that is exactly what the text says.⁶

In favor of a personal identification of Jezebel is that she is distinguished from her followers (Rev. 2:22-23). The solution may be that a woman by a different name with characteristics matching those of the Phoenician Jezebel resided at Thyatira, but she is given the name Jezebel in the letter to call attention to and condemn her practices as being like those of Jezebel of old. “The approach that has the least objection to it is to take Jezebel as a symbolical name for some prominent woman in the church of Thyatira. She was like the infamous wife of Ahab.”⁷

Jezebel of Thyatira not only taught error, but exercised teaching authority over men in opposition to role distinctions set forth by Paul (1Ti. 2:12). As Paul explains, such role distinctions are not cultural, but grounded in God’s created order (1Ti. 2:13-14).⁸ The error of the Thyatiran church was not just that Jezebel was allowed to promote unbiblical concepts, but that she evidently held a position as a *teacher over men*. This is another point of identification with the strong-willed, domineering Jezebel of the OT^[5.2.51].

No doubt, both her *position of influence* and the *content* of her teaching were repugnant to God.

The . . . Thyatiran Jezebel . . . taught her followers ‘to eat things sacrificed to idols’. The syncretism exemplified in the city is in point here, but the particular problem seems to have been the guild-feasts, as the occasions when the Christian may have been particularly pressed by the need to conform to his environment. . . . Presumably Jezebel argued that a Christian might join a guild and participate in its feasts without thereby compromising his faith. He was initiated into a superior wisdom. he knew the idol was nothing and he could not be defiled by that which did not exist. . . . The local situation favoured the accommodation of incompatible beliefs and practices: the letter insists on individual devotion to a Lord who searches the hearts of men and demands a consistency of life. The love and faith commended in the church might easily be corrupted by compromise with pagan society: the guilds themselves were devoted to good works.⁹

Here is the similarity between Jezebel, queen of Ahab, and Jezebel of Thyatira: both led the people of God in accommodating pagan influences resulting in syncretistic practices and sexual immorality. See *The Great Harlot*^[4.1.4].

Notes

- 1 “Jezebel^[5.2.35], i.e. a dunghill; without cohabitation.”—Jerome Smith, *The New Treasury of Scripture Knowledge* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1992), Rev. 1:20. “Noncohabited, un-husbanded.”—Merrill K. Unger, R. Harrison, Frederic F Vos, and Cyril J. Barber, *The New Unger's Bible Dictionary* (Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 1988), s.v. “Jezebel.”
- 2 Richard Chenevix Trench, *Commentary on the Epistles to the Seven Churches in Asia* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 1861), 138.
- 3 Arnold G. Fruchtenbaum, *The Footsteps of Messiah*, rev ed. (Tustin, CA: Ariel Ministries, 2003), 59.
- 4 “When a woman is used symbolically in Scripture, she represents a religious entity. This might be either positive or negative. On the positive side, there is Israel as the Wife of Jehovah and the Church as the bride of Messiah. On the negative side, there is the woman with the leaven (Mtt. 13:33), the Great Harlot^[5.2.25] of Rev. 17, and here, the woman Jezebel.”—Fruchtenbaum, *The Footsteps of Messiah*, 58.
- 5 Fruchtenbaum, *The Footsteps of Messiah*, 58.
- 6 Monty S. Mills, *Revelations: An Exegetical Study of the Revelation to John* (Dallas, TX: 3E Ministries, 1987).
- 7 Robert L. Thomas, *Revelation 1-7* (Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 1992), 214.
- 8 Much like the members of the Trinity are equal in value and standing, but occupy different roles in the plan of

God, so too male and female believers are equal in standing and access to God, but are to occupy different roles according to His will.

- ⁹ Colin J. Hemer, *The Letters to the Seven Churches of Asia in Their Local Setting* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1989), 120, 123.

4.10 - Marriage of the Lamb

Let us be glad and rejoice and give Him glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and His wife has made herself ready. (Rev. 19:7)

To understand the marriage of the Lamb, it is helpful to review what Paul said concerning the role of the Jews in relation to the things of God:

For I could wish that I myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my countrymen according to the flesh, who are Israelites, to whom *pertain* the adoption, the glory, the covenants, the giving of the law, the service of God, and the promises; of whom *are* the fathers and from whom, according to the flesh, Christ *came*, who is over all, *the* eternally blessed God. Amen. (Rom. 9:3-5)

Even after the rejection of their Messiah and His subsequent crucifixion, Paul emphasizes the Jewish aspects of all that God has done. Paul indicates that the Jews, as a nation, had the greater connection with God than the Gentiles because of all of the following:

1. The adoption of the nation of Israel by God.
2. *The Abiding Presence of God*^[4.16.2] dwelt in Israel's midst.
3. The covenants (Abrahamic, Mosaic, Land, Davidic, New) were given to Israel.
4. The Law of Moses was given to Israel.
5. The service of God in the *tabernacle*^[4.16.5.2] and the various *Temples*^[4.16.5] was Israel's.
6. The *OT*^[5.2.51] promises of restoration and blessing were to Israel.
7. The fathers of the faith (Abraham, Isaac, Jacob) were Jews.
8. Jesus Christ, according to the flesh, came in the line of the Jews.

Since all of Scripture, with the exception of the books written by Luke,¹ was written by Jews and Jesus was born in a Jewish lineage, it is not surprising to find that the marriage of the Lamb is patterned after a *Jewish wedding*. By becoming more familiar with Jewish wedding practices, we are in a better position to appreciate aspects of the marriage of the Lamb as taught in Scripture:

In order to fully comprehend what is happening in Revelation 19:6-9, it is first necessary to understand the Jewish wedding system that was common in Jesus' day and was still used among Jews until the beginning of the twentieth century.²

4.10.1 - The Jewish Wedding Analogy

Although various sources describing the practice of Jewish marriage at the time of Christ differ in the details, there is general agreement concerning its major elements. Unlike Western marriage practices, the Jewish marriage has a greater degree of formalism involving numerous steps:

Jewish marriage included a number of steps: first, betrothal (which involved the prospective groom's traveling from his father's house to the home of the prospective bride, paying the purchase price, and thus establishing the marriage covenant); second, the groom's returning to his father's house (which meant remaining separate from his bride for 12 months, during which time he prepared the living accommodations for his wife in his father's house); third, the groom's coming for his bride at a time not known exactly to her; fourth, his return with her to the groom's father's house to consummate the marriage and to celebrate the wedding feast for the next seven days (during which the bride remained closeted in her bridal chamber).³

First, the father of the groom made the arrangements for the marriage and paid the bride price. The timing of the arrangement varied. Sometimes it occurred when both children were small, and at other times it was a year before the marriage itself. Often the bride and groom did not even meet until their wedding day. The second step, which occurred a year or more after the first step, was the fetching of the bride. The bridegroom would go to the home of the bride in order to bring her to his home. In connection with this step, two other things should be noted. *First*, it was the father of the groom who determined the timing. *Second*, prior to the groom's leaving to fetch the bride, he must already have a place prepared for her as their abode. This was followed by the third step, the wedding ceremony, to

which a few would be invited. Prior to the wedding ceremony, the bride underwent a ritual immersion for ritual cleansing. The fourth step, the marriage feast, would follow and could last for as many as seven days. Many more people would be invited to the feast than were to the marriage ceremony. In the Marriage of the Lamb all four of these steps of the Jewish wedding ceremony are evident.⁴

The major steps of the Jewish wedding analogy are summarized below with related Scriptures:

Steps in a Jewish Wedding

Step	Description	Scriptures
Marriage Covenant	The father pays for the bride and establishes the marriage covenant.	Acts 20:28; 1Cor. 6:19-20; 11:25 Eph. 5:25-27
Bridal Chamber Prepared	The son returns to his father's house and prepares the bridal chamber.	John 6:62; 14:2; Acts 1:9-11
Bride Fetched	At a time determined by the father (Mtt. 24:36), the groom fetches the bride to bring her to his father's house. "Although the bride was expecting her groom to come for her, she did not know the time of his coming. As a result, the groom's arrival was preceded by a shout, which forewarned the bride to be prepared for his coming." ⁵	John 14:3; 1Th. 4:13-18
Bride Cleansed	The bride undergoes ritual cleansing prior to the wedding ceremony.	1Cor. 3:12-15; Rev. 19:7-8
Wedding Ceremony	The private wedding ceremony.	Rev. 19:7
Consummation	In the privacy of the bridal chamber the bride and groom consummate the marriage.	Rev. 19:7
Marriage Feast	The celebratory marriage feast to which many are invited.	Mtt. 22:1-14; 25:1-13; Luke 12:36

At the time of our writing, the first step in the wedding has already taken place. The marriage covenant was established at the First Coming of Christ. Whenever a person places their faith in Jesus Christ, they enter into this covenant (the New Covenant) and become part of His bride. Since the ascension of Jesus following His resurrection, He has been at His Father's house preparing the bridal chamber:

Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father's house are many mansions (μοναί [*monai*], dwelling places); if *it were* not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, *there* you may be also. (John 14:1-3)

As we discussed concerning the *Rapture*^[4.14], passages such as John 14:1-3 are of a completely different character from what is described in Revelation 19 concerning the Second Coming. In John 14, Jesus indicates a heavenly destination for believers. He returns from His Father's house to fetch them and to bring them to heaven. There is an emphasis on intimacy: "that where I am, there you may be also" (John 14:3). How different this is from the scene before us in this chapter (below)! Jesus will ride forth in warfare and vengeance with the armies of heaven. There will be immense bloodshed at His coming and His return is followed by the reign of the saints *on earth* (Rev. 20:4-6). It is irreconcilable differences such as these in various "coming passages" which tell us that His coming for the Church at the *Rapture*^[4.14] is a *different* coming than His Second Coming.⁶

In its description of the Second Coming, Revelation 19 does not mention either a translation (*rapture*^[5.2.62]) of living believers (1Cor. 15:51-52), or a resurrection of dead believers (cf. 1Th. 4:16).⁷

At the time the events of John's vision actually take place—during the Tribulation prior to the Second

Coming—the first *three* of the steps in the wedding ceremony will be complete: the bride has been fetched to the Father’s house in the *Rapture*^[4.14] of the Church.

For an extended treatment of the analogy between Christ and the Church and Jewish marriage practices, see [Showers, *Maranatha, Our Lord Come*, 164-169].

4.10.2 - Roles in the Wedding Party

When we interpret passages which touch on the subject of marriage, we must be careful to distinguish the different roles within the wedding party. There is a groom and a bride, but they are not alone in the marriage party. There are additional men and women who attend the wedding party. If we fail to appreciate these different roles, we confuse those *attending* the bride with the bride herself (e.g., Mtt. 25:1-13). Since the role of the bride and groom are fairly obvious, here we will mention some of the related members of the bridal party.

The *OT*^[5.2.51] describes several different roles in courtship and marriage. In the Song of Solomon, we find repeated mention of *virgins* who are not the bride (The Shulamite): “Because of the fragrance of your good ointments, Your name *is* ointment poured forth; therefore the virgins love you” (Sos. 1:3). Even though the virgins are not the bride, they still love The Beloved (cf. Mtt. 15:1-13). The song also mentions *daughters of Jerusalem* who are friends of the Shulamite who also seek The Beloved (Sos. 2:7; 5:8; 6:1). The Beloved has companions who desire to look upon The Shulamite (Sos. 5:1; 6:13; 8:13). Even though the relationship is between The Shulamite and The Beloved, other persons on the sideline also express interest in the relationship between The Shulamite and The Beloved.

The psalmist records a kingly wedding which involves both the Queen (bride) and King (groom), but also includes her companions, called *virgins*: “Kings’ daughters *are* among Your honorable women; at Your right hand stands the queen in gold from Ophir. . . She shall be brought to the King in robes of many colors; the virgins, her companions who follow her shall be brought to You” (Ps. 45:9-14). Not everyone at a wedding occupies the role of the groom or bride.

The *NT*^[5.2.48] also mentions relationships within the wedding party other than the bride and groom. When John the Baptist’s disciples come to him complaining about Jesus’ rise in popularity, John observes: “He who has the bride is the bridegroom; but the friend of the bridegroom, who stands and hears him, rejoices greatly because of the bridegroom’s voice. Therefore this joy of mine is fulfilled” (John 3:29). From John’s response, we learn several important facts: (1) Christ is a bridegroom; (2) Christ has a bride (those who were coming to Him); (3) John is not of the bride, but is the *friend of the bridegroom*.⁹ Elsewhere, Jesus referred to his disciples as “friends of the bridegroom” (literally: *sons of the bride chamber*, Mtt. 9:15; Mark 2:19; Luke 5:34).

The differences among roles within the bridal party is most evident in the *parable*^[5.2.54] of the foolish virgins (Mtt. 25:1-13). When reading the parable, we need to ask two related questions: (1) is this parable about polygamy? (2) if not, where is the bride? Mention is made of ten virgins and one bridegroom. The virgins are not to be married—they *attend* the wedding party. Notably absent in the parable is any mention of the bride. And where do the wise virgins go? “And while they [the foolish virgins] went to buy, the bridegroom came, and those who were ready went in with him to the wedding; and the door was shut” (Mtt. 25:10). *Wedding* is γάμους [*gamous*], plural, which generally denotes the *wedding feast*: “Josephus distinguishes in *Antiquities* 14, 467f between γάμος [*gamos*]=wedding [singular] and γάμοι [*gamoî*]=wedding celebration [plural]. But for “marriage” he sometimes uses the singular, sometimes the plural.”¹⁰ These virgins are not waiting for the bridegroom in order *to get married*, but *to attend the wedding feast*.¹¹ The groom already has a bride who is not mentioned in the parable. We believe these distinctions are significant and indicate that the coming of the groom for the virgins is at His Second Coming which follows upon the marriage of the Lamb described here. The virgins do not marry, but attend the marriage feast which follows. The context also supports this view:

This parable as well as the next one deals with the Jews in the tribulation period. This is seen from various facts. The context favors this view . . . The subject being discussed is the end time, the final years before the kingdom is established. At this time the church will be absent from the earth.¹²

In summary, there are different roles within the wedding analogy found within Scripture. Not everyone who will be in the kingdom of God is the bride. This is evident from the distinctions found within Scripture. It is also evident because the marriage of the Lamb takes place in heaven prior to Christ's Second Coming—when some saints are still on the earth below and many of the saints in heaven have not yet been resurrected to receive their glorified bodies.

Just as the Bridegroom comes not alone, but with attendants, companions, and a long train of rejoicing ones who make up his party, the whole of whom together are called the Bridegroom's coming, whilst, strictly speaking, there is a wide difference between him and those with him; so it is on the side of the Bride. She has her companions and attendants too,—“virgins which follow her.” They make up her company and train. In coming to wed her the Bridegroom comes also into near and close relation to them. To a blessed degree they share the Bride's honours. . . [but] the Bride has relations to the Bridegroom which belong to her alone.¹³

Having established that not all believers are the Lamb's bride, who is the bride?

4.10.3 - Israel Married to Jehovah

The nation Israel is unlikely to be the Lamb's bride because she has already been wed. God the Father is Israel's husband:¹⁴

“Return, O backsliding children,” says the Lord; “for **I am married to you**. I will take you, one from a city and two from a family, and I will bring you to Zion.” (Jer. 3:14) [emphasis added]

“They say, ‘If a man divorces his wife, and she goes from him and becomes another man's, may he return to her again?’ Would not that land be greatly polluted? But **you have played the harlot with many lovers; yet return to Me**,” says the Lord. (Jer. 3:1) [emphasis added]

Then I saw that for all the causes for which **backsliding Israel had committed adultery, I had put her away and given her a certificate of divorce**; yet her treacherous sister Judah did not fear, but went and played the harlot also. (Jer. 3:8) [emphasis added]

Behold, the days are coming, says the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah—not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt, My covenant which they broke, though **I was a husband to them**, says the Lord. But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the Lord: I will put My law in their minds, and write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people. (Jer. 31:31-33) [emphasis added]

Even though Israel proved to be an unfaithful wife which God put away by divorce, He promises to remain faithful to her in His relationship as husband. Moreover, in order to divorce her, she had to first be married.

Bring charges against your mother, bring charges; **For she is not My wife, nor am I her Husband!** Let her put away her harlotries from her sight, and her adulteries from between her breasts . . . (Hos. 2:2) [emphasis added]

She will chase her lovers, but not overtake them; yes, she will seek them, but not find them. Then she will say, **I will go and return to my first husband**, for then it was better for me than now.’ (Hos. 2:7) [emphasis added]

As unfaithful as Israel has been, God promises to stand by her. Their husband-wife relationship will be reestablished:

“And it shall be, in that day,” says the Lord, “That **you will call Me ‘My Husband,’** And no longer call Me ‘My Master.’” (Hos. 2:16) [emphasis added]

I will betroth you to Me forever; yes, I will betroth you to Me in righteousness and justice, in lovingkindness and mercy; I will betroth you to Me in faithfulness, and you shall know the Lord. (Hos. 2:19-20) [emphasis added]

The LORD's accomplished purpose in Israel's chastening also will result in the reestablishment of her original husband-wife relationship to the LORD.¹⁵

The relationship between Israel and Jehovah is dramatically different than what the *NT*^[5.2.48] records concerning Christ and His bride. Perhaps the most significant difference is that the marriage of Jehovah to Israel occurred in time past, whereas the marriage of Christ with His bride has not yet taken place. This is the subject of the passage before us.

Israel in her land was the wife of Jehovah (Jer. 3:14-20; Isa. 54:1), but the wife was divorced because of her iniquity. Israel, however, is to be reinstated in Jehovah's favour. But a divorced wife can never again be a virgin, and it is not a divorced wife but a virgin whom the Lord marries (Lev. 21:14).¹⁶

4.10.4 - Jerusalem Married to God

The marriage of Israel to Jehovah is seen in promises of God concerning the city, Zion. In her restoration, God will rejoice over the city as a bridegroom rejoices over the bride:

For Zion's sake I will not hold My peace, and for Jerusalem's sake I will not rest, . . . You shall also be a crown of glory in the hand of the LORD, and a royal diadem in the hand of your God. You shall no longer be termed Forsaken, nor shall your land any more be termed Desolate; but you shall be called Hephzibah [*My Delight is in Her*], and your land Beulah [*Married*]; for the LORD delights in you, and your land shall be married. For *as* a young man marries a virgin, *so* shall your sons marry you; and *as* the bridegroom rejoices over the bride, *so* shall your God rejoice over you. (Isa. 62:1a, 3-5)

Thus says the Lord God to Jerusalem: . . . "When I passed by you again and looked upon you, indeed your time was the time of love; so I spread My wing over you and covered your nakedness. Yes, I swore an oath to you and entered into a covenant with you, and you became Mine," says the Lord God. (Eze. 16:1, 8)

"Sing, O barren, you *who* have not borne! Break forth into singing, and cry aloud, you *who* have not labored with child! For more *are* the children of the desolate¹⁷ than the children of the married woman," says the LORD. "For **your Maker is your husband, the LORD of hosts is His name**; and your Redeemer is the Holy One of Israel; He is called the God of the whole earth. For the LORD has called you like a woman forsaken and grieved in spirit, like a youthful wife when you were refused," says your God. "For a mere moment I have forsaken you, but with great mercies I will gather you. . . . O you afflicted one, tossed with tempest, *and* not comforted, behold, **I will lay your stones with colorful gems, and lay your foundations with sapphires. I will make your pinnacles of rubies, your gates of crystal, and all your walls of precious stones.** Indeed they shall surely assemble, *but* not because of Me. Whoever assembles against you shall fall for your sake." (Isa. 54:1, 5-7, 11-12, 15) [emphasis added]

It is in this sense that the New Jerusalem is also said to be the Lamb's wife (Rev. 21:2, 9). Although the marriage of the Lamb takes place in heaven prior to the Second Coming and the *Millennial Kingdom*^[5.2.39], there is an aspect of the marriage involving the New Jerusalem which extends into the eternal state. This aspect is broader than the initial consummation in Revelation 19 and likely involves the redeemed of all ages. The relationship of the New Jerusalem as the wife of the Lamb is founded on these *OT*^[5.2.51] promises which describe God in a marriage relationship with Jerusalem.

In the new heavens and the new earth, the bride concept will be expanded to include not only the church, but also all the redeemed of all ages as the New Jerusalem becomes the bridal city (Rev. 21:1-2).¹⁸

[The New Jerusalem] is called the Bride, because it embraces the Bride, and because it is the Bride's everlasting home and residence. But for the very reason that it is the home and residence of the Lamb's Wife, it must include her retinue, her companions, and her attendants, who share the glory with her, but who are not strictly the Bride herself.¹⁹

See commentary on *Revelation 21:9*^[3.21.9].

4.10.5 - Church Betrothed to Christ

Having seen that the relationship between Israel and God is set forth in terms of a consummated marriage followed by divorce and eventual restoration, we are in a position to examine passages which describe a marriage relationship involving Christ.

If one makes the Wife of Jehovah and the Bride of Messiah one and the same, he is faced with numerous contradictions because of the different descriptions given. Only when one sees two separate entities, Israel as the Wife of Jehovah and the Church as the Bride of the Messiah, do all such contradictions vanish.²⁰

As we saw above, John the Baptist declared himself as the *friend of the bridegroom* (John 3:29). Thus, he indicated that Jesus is a bridegroom and that he, John, was not part of the bride. In numerous other passages, Jesus referred to Himself as a bridegroom (Mtt. 9:15; Mark 2:19; Luke 5:34). Paul describes

the relationship of the Corinthian church as being betrothed as a virgin to Christ: “For I am jealous for you with godly jealousy. For I have betrothed you to one husband, that I may present *you as* a chaste virgin to Christ” (2Cor. 11:2). When teaching of the freedom of the believer from the law, Paul uses the analogy of a woman whose first husband dies who then becomes free to marry another: “Therefore, my brethren, you also have become dead to the law through the body of Christ, that you may be married to another—to Him who was raised from the dead, that we should bear fruit to God” (Rom. 7:4). In his epistle to the Ephesians, Paul makes the analogy between a husband and wife and Christ and the Church (Eph. 5:24). In the same way that husbands ought to love their own wives as their own bodies, so Christ loves believers: “For we are members of His body, of His flesh and of His bones. ‘For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.’ This is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and the church” (Eph. 5:30-32). Paul is saying that in the same way believers are merged with Christ, as the body of Christ, so should husbands consider their wives. “[The Church] is both the body of Christ and the bride of Christ, as Eve was the body of Adam and also his bride.”²¹

Some observe that none of these passages explicitly teach that the Church *is* the bride of Christ. They suggest that the marriage analogy used by these passages is only an instructional aid which is intended to teach relational truths and that the passages are not meant to establish the Church as the bride. While it may be true that the primary intent in these passages is teaching relational truths, this does not necessarily mean that the Holy Spirit chose the marriage analogy by chance. The sheer number of times where the wedding analogy appears is in itself considerable indication that more is afoot than mere analogy:

In the *OT*^[5.2.51], God is the bridegroom of Israel (cf. Isa. 54:6; 62:5; Jer. 31:32; Eze. 16:7-14; Hos. 2:16, 19), and in the *NT*^[5.2.48], Christ is the bridegroom of the church (cf. 2Cor. 11:2; Eph. 5:25 ff.; Rev. 3:20; 19:9; 21:2, 9; 22:17). In the gospels, Christ is the bridegroom a number of times (cf. Mtt. 9:15; Mark 2:19-20; Luke 5:34-35; John 3:29) and parables about marriage occur in Mtt. 22:2-14; 25:1-13; Luke 14:15-24.²²

We believe that the bride/bridegroom analogy in the NT is more than a mere framework for the delivery of relational instruction, but also an indication of the identity of the bride. The bride of Christ consists of the Church—those who have been baptized into His body, the body of Christ. As such, they are “one flesh” with Him, which is the subject of the mystery which Paul related to the Ephesians (Eph. 5:32). There is a unique sense in which the Church is *His*: “on this rock I will build **My church**” [emphasis added] (Mtt. 16:18).

That Abraham or any other Old Testament saint will form part of *the Body of Christ*, we cannot for a moment believe! The great mystery of the Church, His Body, committed to Paul in such a sense that he called himself *minister* thereof (Col. 1:24-27), a ministry so very distinct, definite and exclusive as to call for the great passage of Ephesians 5:23, cannot be merely an opening up to the Old Testament saints of a calling, character and privileged which they possess and of which they did not know! That is unthinkable. No one was “baptized” into that one Body until Pentecost. When that Body, the Church, is presented by Christ to Himself, “a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing,” it will be composed only of the saints from Pentecost to the *rapture*^[5.2.62].²³

Of whom is the bride composed? We answer unhesitatingly, of *all* saints embraced within these two epochs, Pentecost (Acts 2) and the Translation (1Th. 4:17). These two events respectively mark the commencement and the termination of the Church’s sojourn on earth.²⁴

Some may question why the church age believers should be granted the honor of being the bride, while believers from other ages are merely guests. But one may equally ask why God singled out Israel to be the covenant people. The only answer to both questions is that God sovereignly purposed that it be so (cf. Deu. 7:7-8).²⁵

A typological hint as to the bride of the Lamb can also be found in a study of the book of Ruth. The story involves Naomi (a Jew), Ruth (a Gentile), and Boaz (the kinsman-redeemer, see commentary on *Revelation 5:1*^[3.5.1]). Through the sequence of events recorded in the book, Boaz (who represents the Messiah) takes Ruth as his Gentile bride (representing the Church) and Naomi (representing Israel) is restored to her land.

Another consideration when identifying the bride of the Lamb is the matter of resurrection. At the time

of the marriage of the Lamb (Rev. 19:7), there is only one group of saints who have already been resurrected to receive their glorified bodies: the Church at the *Rapture*^[4.14] prior to the Tribulation. It would seem premature for other saints which have not yet been resurrected to be included in the marriage with the Lamb. Nor will they return with Him as part of the army of heaven (Rev. 19:14).

The difficulty of including Israel along with the church as part of the bride is a chronological one. OT saints and dead saints from the period of Daniel's seventieth week will rise in time for the Millennium (Dan. 12:1-2), but not in time to join Christ in His triumphal return (Rev. 19:14). It is also impossible for saints who die during the Millennium to be part of this company, because their resurrection will not come in time (Rev. 20:5-6). Yet it is incontrovertible that Israel will appear with the church in the New Jerusalem which is also Christ's bride. The city's twelve pillars and twelve foundations (Rev. 21:12, 14) prove the presence of both distinctive groups.²⁶

Although they will be resurrected to participate in the wedding *feast* at the *Millennial Kingdom*^[5.2.39] (Isa. 26:19; Dan. 12:2; Rev. 20:4), at the time of the marriage itself they are only soul and spirit. Because they were never joined to the body of Christ by the baptizing work of the Holy Spirit which began on the Day of Pentecost, they are not part of the marriage mystery "concerning Christ and the church" (Eph. 5:30-32). See commentary on *Revelation 17:14*^[3.17.14].

Various identifications of the wife of the Lamb described in Rev. 19:7-8 have included the redeemed of national Israel, the church, and Israel and the church. Portrayal of Israel as a faithless wife of the Lord in the OT is an obstacle to the first and third possibilities, as is the chronology of Israel's resurrection. The redeemed of Israel will not rise until after the Seventieth Week of Daniel (Dan. 12:1-2), so they will not be part of the bride at the time depicted in Revelation 19:7-8, a time before the Second Advent (Rev. 19:11-16).²⁷

According to Daniel 12:1-3 and Isaiah 26:19-21, . . . the resurrection of Israel and the Old Testament saints will not take place until the second advent of Christ. Revelation 20:4-6 makes it equally clear that tribulation saints will not be resurrected until that time also. While it would be impossible to eliminate these groups from the place of observers, they can not be in the position of participants in the event itself.²⁸

4.10.6 - Israel, the Church, the New Jerusalem

As we have seen, the *OT*^[5.2.51] represents Israel as the wife of Jehovah. Although she has been unfaithful and divorced by her Husband, a time is coming when "all Israel will be saved" (Rom. 11:26). At that time, Jehovah will take her back as His wife:

I will call them My people who were not My people, and her beloved, who was not beloved. And it shall come to pass in the place where it was said to them, "You are not my people." There they shall be called sons of the living God. (Rom. 9:25-26 cf. Hos. 2:23; Hos. 1:10)²⁹

In the meantime, those who accept Messiah Jesus are baptized into His body (1Cor. 12:13). In the same way that Eve was literally "one flesh" with Adam, having been taken from his side (Gen. 2:21-24), so believers are joined into the spiritual body of Christ and betrothed to Him. During *Jacob's Trouble and the Great Tribulation*^[2.13.4], the wife of Jehovah is being purified on earth in preparation for her restoration during the *Millennial Kingdom*^[5.2.39] to follow. At the same time, the bride of Christ is in her bridal chamber, having been taken in the *Rapture*^[4.14] and wed to Him at the marriage of the Lamb.

Later, after the Millennial Kingdom has come to a close and a new heavens and new earth are created, the holy city, the New Jerusalem, is prepared by Jehovah as a bride adorned for her husband—the Lamb (Rev. 21:2, 9). The long-unfulfilled promises of the restoration of Jerusalem, which found their initial fulfillment in the Millennial Kingdom (Isa. 62), will come to final fruition in the New Jerusalem where all the redeemed of all ages are in union with God and the Lamb Who are its temple (Rev. 21:22). This is the ultimate consummation of all the redeemed. See *Temple of God*^[4.16].

See commentary on *Revelation 19:7*^[3.19.7], *Revelation 19:8*^[3.19.8], and *Revelation 19:9*^[3.19.9].

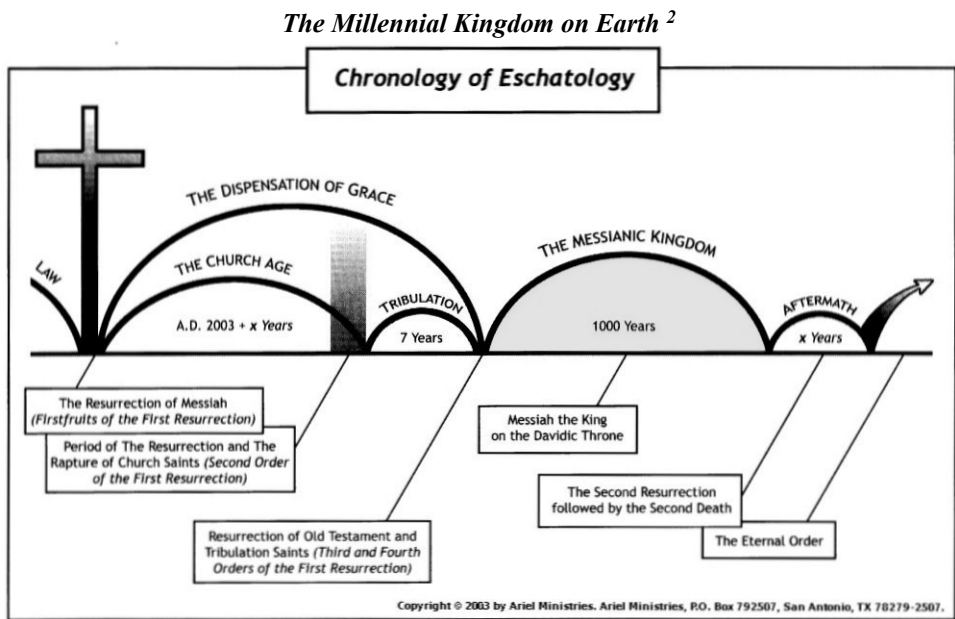
- 1 Some suggest even Luke was Jewish, although evidence seems to point to his Gentile identity.
- 2 Arnold G. Fruchtenbaum, *The Footsteps of Messiah*, rev ed. (Tustin, CA: Ariel Ministries, 2003), 595.
- 3 Charles C. Ryrie, *Come Quickly, Lord Jesus* (Eugene, OR: Harvest House Publishers, 1996), 67.
- 4 Fruchtenbaum, *The Footsteps of Messiah*, 162-163.
- 5 Renald E. Showers, *Maranatha, Our Lord Come* (Bellmawr, NJ: The Friends of Israel Gospel Ministry, 1995), 165.
- 6 We see similar irreconcilable differences in OT^[5.2.51] passages concerning His ministry: He is to reign as king (Isa. 9:6-7), but He is to die for the world (Isa. 53). How can these both be true? The answer is found in *two* separate comings. And so it is with *Rapture*^[4.14] and Second Coming passages.
- 7 John MacArthur, *Revelation 12-22 : The MacArthur New Testament Commentary* (Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 2000), Rev. 19:11.
- 8 Showers, *Maranatha, Our Lord Come*, 164-169.
- 9 “John was martyred before the Church was formed, hence he comes in as one, perhaps the most honoured, of the guests at the marriage supper.”—Walter Scott, *Exposition of The Revelation* (London, England: Pickering & Inglis, n.d.), Rev. 19:9.
- 10 Frederick William Danker, and Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 151.
- 11 The KJV and NKJV have “wedding” in Mtt. 22:1-14 and 25:1-13, whereas the NASB has “wedding feast.” The Greek word is γάμους [*gamous*] (plural) which generally indicates the wedding banquet. The plural form implies the banquet or celebration (as opposed to a smaller, potentially private ceremony)..
- 12 Stanley D. Toussaint, *Behold The King: A Study of Matthew* (Portland, OR: Multnomah Press, 1980), 283.
- 13 J. A. Seiss, *The Apocalypse: Lectures on the Book of Revelation* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1966), 427.
- 14 “Israel in captivity is prefigured as a wife (Isa. 54:5; 62:5 [Jerusalem]) put away for unfaithfulness, who is childless and desolate.”—Merrill F. Unger, *Unger's Commentary on the Old Testament* (Chattanooga, TN: AMG Publishers, 2002), Rev. 54:1.
- 15 Unger, *Unger's Commentary on the Old Testament*, Hos. 2:15.
- 16 Scott, *Exposition of The Revelation*, Rev. 19:6.
- 17 “Jerusalem.”—Scherman, ed., *Tanach* (New York, NY: Mesorah Publications, Ltd., 2001), Isa. 54:1.
- 18 MacArthur, *Revelation 12-22 : The MacArthur New Testament Commentary*, Rev. 19:7.
- 19 Seiss, *The Apocalypse: Lectures on the Book of Revelation*, 428.
- 20 Fruchtenbaum, *The Footsteps of Messiah*, 598.
- 21 Arno C. Gaebelain, *The Revelation* (Neptune, NJ: Loizeaux Brothers, 1961), 116.
- 22 Robert L. Thomas, *Revelation 8-22* (Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 1995), Rev. 19:7.
- 23 William R. Newell, *Revelation: Chapter by Chapter* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 1994,c1935), 297.
- 24 Scott, *Exposition of The Revelation*, Rev. 19:6.
- 25 MacArthur, *Revelation 12-22 : The MacArthur New Testament Commentary*, Rev. 19:7.
- 26 Thomas, *Revelation 8-22*, Rev. 19:7.
- 27 R. L. Thomas, “*Marriage Supper of the Lamb*,” in Mal Couch, ed., *Dictionary of Premillennial Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 1996), 248.
- 28 J. Dwight Pentecost, *Things to Come: A Study in Biblical Eschatology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1958), 226.
- 29 This passage in Romans is often misconstrued as denoting the *Gentiles*, but in the original context it speaks of the divorce and restitution of *Israel*—the very topic Paul is discussing. Although the principles involved can

be used to point to the redemption of the Gentiles, that is an *application* of the passage, not its original meaning.

4.11 - Millennial Kingdom

The phrase “*Millennial Kingdom*”^[5.2.39] refers to a future period when Jesus Christ reigns over an earthly kingdom for 1,000 years.

“The Millennium,” [is] from the Latin words “Mille” (1000) and “Annum” (year). It is to be regretted, however, that the word “Millennium” ever supplanted the Biblical word “Kingdom,” for it is this period that Christ taught His Disciples to pray for in the petition—“Thy Kingdom Come. . .” [Mtt. 6:10].¹



Most agree, when taken at face value, chapter 20 of the book of Revelation reveals there is to be a future earthly kingdom of 1,000 years duration following the Second Coming of Christ. Yet there is great disagreement as to whether this is *actually* what the passage describes. For a variety of reasons, many refuse to interpret passages in the book of Revelation literally using *The Golden Rule of Interpretation*^[5.2.24]. This is especially true concerning Revelation 20 which is the focal point in the *NT*^[5.2.48] for differences between the three main eschatological systems of interpretation: *premillennialism*^[5.2.58], *postmillennialism*^[5.2.56], and *amillennialism*^[5.2.1].

4.11.1 - Views of the Millennium

Each of the three major views concerning the Millennium is summarized below. We believe the Scriptures, when interpreted normally according to the *Golden Rule of Interpretation*^[5.2.24], teach *premillennialism*^[5.2.58]—that after Christ returns He establishes a literal, earthly kingdom lasting one thousand years and rules from the throne of David. After the thousand years, God creates a new heaven and a new earth which is the eternal state that most today would consider as “heaven.” Then, Christ’s throne and the Father’s throne (Rev. 3:21) merge into a single throne, “the throne of God and of the Lamb” (Rev. 22:1).

Views of the Return of Christ and the Millennium³

View	Christ Returns	Characteristics	Interpretation
Premillennialism	Before the 1,000 year kingdom.	Christ returns <i>before</i> establishing His literal kingdom on earth. He will reign with his saints in fulfillment of <i>OT</i> ^[5.2.51] and <i>NT</i> ^[5.2.48] prophecy. The reign on earth will last for 1,000 years.	<i>Futurist</i> ^[2.12.5]
<i>Postmillennialism</i> ^[5.2.56]	After a golden age on earth.	Christ will return <i>after</i> the 1,000 years which represent a golden age of unspecified duration. This age is ushered in by the triumph of the gospel as the world converts, in large part, to Christianity through the efforts of the church.	<i>Idealist</i> ^[2.12.3] or <i>Preterist</i> ^[2.12.2]
<i>Amillennialism</i> ^{[5.2.1]⁴}	(No literal earthly kingdom.)	There is <i>no</i> literal reign of Christ over an earthly kingdom. Christ is <i>presently</i> reigning over a <i>spiritual kingdom</i> in either: (1) the hearts of men; (2) heaven, or (3) the church. The 1,000 years is a symbol representing an extended period of time. ⁵ Many amillennialists believe that the fullness of the kingdom has already arrived on earth and we are presently in the age between the first and second resurrections. “Generally speaking, this view holds that Christ will return in His second coming and immediately usher in the new heaven and the new earth with no intervening thousand-year reign. This view interprets many passages in the Old and New Testaments that refer to the <i>millennial kingdom</i> ^[5.2.39] as being fulfilled in a nonliteral way, either in the present experience of the church on earth or the experience of the church in heaven.” ⁶ For example, Jerome: “The saints will in no wise have an earthly kingdom, but only a celestial one; thus must cease the fable of one thousand years.” ⁷	<i>Idealist</i> ^[2.12.3] or <i>Preterist</i> ^[2.12.2]

4.11.2 - Allegorizing and Spiritualizing the Truth

One reason we spent considerable time discussing topics such as *Systems of Interpretation*^[2.12] before we began our verse-by-verse commentary was because of *the importance of interpretation*^[2.12.1] when reading the Scriptures. Although most believers read the same Bible text and agree that the Scriptures are God’s Word, views concerning the *meaning* of the text vary enormously. These variations in meaning attributed to the text are not the result of differences between different Bible texts, which are

very minor, but are due to *differences in how the text is interpreted*. This is especially true for the book of Revelation and chapter 20.

Although *premillennialists*^[5.2.58] read Revelation 20 and the book of Revelation using *normal* interpretation, which recognizes figures of speech, *amillennialists*^[5.2.1] and *postmillennialists*^[5.2.56] generally do not. They tend to *spiritualize* or *allegorize* elements to fit their own ideas about what the text *should* mean:

The allegorizing trend was also advocated by A. A. Hodge, who writes, “The Old Testament prophecies, . . . which predict this [Davidic] kingdom, must refer to the present *dispensation*^[5.2.15] of grace [the church], and not to a future reign of Christ on earth in person among men in the flesh. The spiritual interpretation of this difficult passage (Rev. 20:1-10) is as follows: Christ has in reserve for his church a period of universal expansion and of pre-eminent spiritual prosperity. The New Testament is entirely silent on the subject of any such return [of the Jews to the land of their fathers]. . . . the literal interpretation of these [Old Testament] passages is inconsistent with what the New Testament plainly teaches as to the abolition of all distinctions between the Jew and Gentile.”⁸

Possibly the most extreme example of how far amillennialists will go in their twisting of the plain meaning of a passage is found in their interpretation of the binding of Satan in Revelation 20:1-3. According to amillennialists, Satan was bound at the cross, but his “binding” is in such a way that *he can still deceive*. Although they play subtle word games in an attempt to mask the illogical implications of their teaching, the result is a denial of the plain reading of the text. The text says Satan is *bound, shut up, and sealed in the bottomless pit*, where he *cannot deceive the nations* for the duration of the thousand years. In contrast to the text, the amillennialist teaches that his binding is incomplete so he can still deceive while “bound.” This sort of binding is no binding at all. See our commentary on *Revelation 20:2*^[3.20.2].

Ultimately, the disagreement between interpreters concerning whether Satan is currently bound and whether Scripture teaches a future *Millennial Kingdom*^[5.2.39] on earth reflects pervasive differences on foundational issues:

1. **Interpreting the OT**^[5.2.51] - How are OT promises to be understood? Must they be fulfilled as they were understood in the context of those who originally received them, using the normal meaning of language in their day? Premillennialists generally say, *yes*, but amillennialists and postmillennialists usually say either, *no* or, *it depends*. Walvoord observed: “A literal promise spiritualized is exegetical fraud.”⁹
2. **Kingdom Now** - Are all of God’s kingdom promises *already* active in the present age? Amillennialists and postmillennialists generally say, *yes*, whereas premillennialists say, *no*—there are major aspects of God’s kingdom which require a future literal reign on earth in the person of Jesus Christ. Amillennialists and postmillennialists will generally say that Christ is reigning from the Davidic throne in heaven *now*, whereas premillennialists say he is seated to the right hand of His Father’s throne and does not take up the Davidic throne until His literal return to earth (Mt. 25:31; Rev. 3:21).¹⁰
3. **Who is Israel** - Amillennialists and most postmillennialists believe that the church is the “new Israel” and has inherited the OT promises originally given to the nation Israel. They minimize any distinctive role for the nation of Israel in the plan of God. Most Premillennialists believe that the church is a new spiritual creation which began on the Day of Pentecost and is separate and distinct from Israel. Also: that the OT promises given to national Israel still await a future literal fulfillment.

There are many other differences between these systems of interpretation, but these are among the most significant.

4.11.3 - Why a Millennial Kingdom?

Why must there be a future thousand-year kingdom on earth? Even in the absence of the book of Revelation, *premillennialists*^[5.2.58] would expect a future kingdom on earth because one is required in order for God to fulfill the many *OT*^[5.2.51] promises which require such a kingdom:

It is to be regretted, however, that the word “millennium” ever supplanted the Biblical word “kingdom.” For we are not dependent on the twentieth chapter of Revelation for our understanding of the kingdom age. It is mentioned and described so many times by the Hebrew prophets that the Bible would not make sense unless there is a literal kingdom. In fact, if there is no kingdom, God’s word cannot be trusted, and many of the promises of God to both Israel and the Gentile nations would go unfulfilled. That is impossible. . . . The kingdom is guaranteed if for no other reason than Jesus promised He would return and set it up and permit His twelve disciples to rule on thrones [Mtt. 19:28; Luke 22:30] and as we shall see, so will His “saints.”¹¹

Due to the superficial knowledge of so many in our day . . . they have not recognized . . . in their study of the Scriptures . . . ‘the 1000 years’ of John are found in the Old Testament prophets, but still keep harping on the old and tuneless string that ‘the Millennium is found in *only one passage* of the Bible, and that in a very obscure book called the Apocalypse!’¹²

None of the promises which God has given are more important than those which are the subject of unconditional formal agreements, called *covenants* which God made in the OT. A plain reading of each of the Biblical covenants¹³ indicates there are elements of the covenants which remain unfulfilled. Since these covenants are *unconditional*, then it follows that they will be fulfilled else God’s word would be broken:

Another basis for the belief in a coming kingdom rests on the four unconditional, unfulfilled covenants [Abrahamic, Land, Davidic, New] God made with Israel. These covenants are unconditional and so rely solely on God for their fulfillment and not on Israel. They are also unfulfilled and since God is One who keeps His promises, they must be fulfilled in the future. They can only be fulfilled within the framework of a messianic age or a *millennial kingdom*^[5.2.39].¹⁴

Another reason there must be a Millennial Kingdom is because there are numerous passages, especially in the OT, which describe conditions which sound a lot like the eternal state,¹⁵ but contain elements which are incompatible with what we know about the eternal state. For example:

For behold, I create new heavens and a new earth; and the former shall not be remembered or come to mind. But be glad and rejoice forever in what I create; for behold, I create Jerusalem *as* a rejoicing, and her people a joy. I will rejoice in Jerusalem, and joy in My people; the voice of weeping shall no longer be heard in her, nor the voice of crying. No more shall an infant from there *live but a few days*, nor an old man who has not fulfilled his days; for **the child shall die one hundred years old, but the sinner being one hundred years old shall be accursed.** (Isa. 65:17-20) [emphasis added]

In the midst of describing a time of tremendous blessing and restoration, Isaiah mentions two facts which are incompatible with the eternal state: *death* and *sin* (cf. Rev. 21:4, 8; 22:15). It is obvious that this passage has never been fulfilled in history *past*. It most certainly doesn’t describe history *present*. And it cannot describe the *eternal state*. So what is an interpreter to do? There are basically two “solutions” to this predicament. Which solution one chooses determines if one winds up a premillennialist or not: (1) take the text at face value and assume there must be a time where conditions are as the text describes—the Millennial Kingdom on earth, or (2) spiritualize or allegorize the text to deny its literal meaning and interpret it as a vague description of general spiritual principles.

But to what part of the history of salvation are we to look for a place for the fulfillment of such prophecies as these of the state of peace prevailing in nature around the church, except in the millennium? A prophet was certainly no fanatic, so that we could say, these are beautiful dreams. . . . The prophet here promises a new age, in which the patriarchal measure of human life will return, in which death will no more break off the life that is just beginning to bloom, and in which the war of man with the animal world will be exchanged for peace without danger. And when is all this to occur? Certainly not in the blessed life beyond the grave, to which it would be both absurd and impossible to refer these promises, since they presuppose a continued mixture of sinners with the righteous, and merely a limitation of the power of death, not its utter destruction. But when then? This question ought to be answered by the anti-millenarians. They throw back the interpretation of prophecy to a stage, in which commentators were in the habit of lowering the concrete substance of the prophecies into mere doctrinal *loci communes* [generalities]. They take refuge behind the enigmatical character of the Apocalypse, without acknowledging that what the Apocalypse predicts under the definite form of the millennium is the substance of all prophecy, and that no interpretation of prophecy on sound principles is any longer possible from the standpoint of an orthodox antichiliasm, inasmuch as the antichiliasmists twist the word in the mouths of the prophets, and through their perversion of Scripture shake the foundation of all doctrines, every one of which rests upon the simple interpretation of the words of

revelation¹⁶

One of the purposes of the Millennial Kingdom is to demonstrate what life on the earth *would have been* had man not rebelled in the Garden of Eden, but instead had exercised his God-given dominion in righteousness. The restoration (Mtt. 19:28; Acts 3:21) of the earth in preparation for the Millennial Kingdom will roll back conditions to be much like they were prior to the flood. Animals will be vegetarian and will no longer fear man. The earth will be highly productive and peace will extend throughout the globe. This is what would have been in the absence of man's rebellion. In the righteous rule of Jesus from Jerusalem, the Millennial Kingdom will be a time of great spiritual *and material* blessing, which was God's intention for the earth from the beginning. It forms a transition between present history, floundering in sin, and the eternal state of perfection.¹⁷

Those who oppose the idea of a literal earthly kingdom often claim that premillennialists hold to this unsophisticated (even crude) idea because they don't understand the spiritual blessings they *already* have and are unsatisfied with their lot. Some even claim that premillennialists are fleshly in their desire for material blessing:

An individual Christian may ask himself this question: "What more could the popular conception of the millennium give me that I already possess? I have a Saviour who is my Prophet, Priest, and King. God the Father is my covenant God. I have the forgiveness of sin. I have the promise of eternal life in heaven. I belong to the Church which is the Lamb's Bride. I have the Holy Spirit as my Teacher, Sanctifier, and Comforter. I have security against my greatest enemies: Death, Hell, and the Devil. I belong to the commonwealth of Israel and am not a stranger from the covenants of promise." What more does a Christian desire?¹⁸

Kik misrepresents the *motivation* behind premillennialism. It has nothing to do whatsoever with what premillennialists want or whether they are unsatisfied. The question is not about what *premillennialists want*, but what is it that *God wants* and, in particular, *what has God said He WILL do?*

Premillennialists believe all that God has said and are not content to spiritualize away the plain meaning of the text in order to support the deluded notion that Satan is now bound and that the Church is ruling and reigning over the nations "to the ends of the earth" while the majority of the peoples on the earth haven't the slightest idea this is so!

Another oft-heard criticism of a literal earthly kingdom is that such a belief is *carnal* and *fleshly*. In their pursuit of holiness, many have embraced the view that material things are *bad* and spiritual things are *good*. This idea is not from Scripture, but derives from the dualism of *gnosticism*^[5.2.23] which holds that the material realm is the seat of sin and the spiritual realm is the seat of pure things, lofty and high. But what does Scripture say? Who was it that created the material realm in the first place? God! What was God's assessment of the material realm? "Then God saw everything that He had made, and indeed *it was very good*" (Gen. 1:31a). Neither material nor spiritual is inherently sinful. There are material things which are pure and there are spiritual things which are pure. There are material things which are sinful and there are spiritual things which are sinful (e.g., unclean spirits). The idea that a future time of *material* blessing is carnal is unsupportable from Scripture. It just so happens to be one aspect of a time of great blessing in *both the material and spiritual realms* which God has said He will bring on the earth.

The problem for those who deny the future earthly kingdom is one of dealing with reality. No matter how triumphant one's theology, there comes a place when the rubber meets the road and practical reality impinges on faulty belief. The problem with those who deny premillennialism is that they confuse *lack of faith* with *faulty interpretation*. They blame the premillennialist for failing to realize the victory and dominion which the Church currently has because he lacks faith. However, the real problem is that the *amillennialist*^[5.2.1] or *postmillennialist*^[5.2.56] is deriving his theology from a faulty interpretation of the text. And in order to support that faulty view, he must continually deny the real facts on the ground. With each abortion, murder, war, or lie that occurs on the earth, the amillennialist—who believes Satan is *currently bound*—must go further and further out on a limb denying reality. The results are predictable: reality is increasingly denied by an incessant posturing of "victory" and "dominion" which is completely out-of-step with the real world.

In its extreme forms, amillennial interpretation has more in common with Mary Baker Eddy's Christian Science—which denies the reality of sickness and pain as a mirage of the mind—than with

Biblical Christianity. If Satan is bound, Amillennialists can only explain the reality of pain and sin and the horrid evidences of darkness all around us as a lack of faith or inadequate perspective on the part of the Church. For all the work has been done and all that remains is for the Church to realize what power she has and to take it up and overcome the sordid reality of darkness with “power theology.” The idea that God prophesied that *Antichrist*^[5.2.3] will be *given* dominion over *faithful* saints during the Great Tribulation, as recorded by the books of Daniel and Revelation, is simply not permissible in their worldview. If Satan is bound and cannot touch believers, what Scripture records as faithful martyrs must in fact be untaught saints who lack faith!

In the end, these spiritualized views do great damage. Not only do they twist the word of God so that it is made to serve up any desired result, but they damage the cause of Christ. The spiritualization of important passages calls into question the very foundation of the faith. Just where does spiritualization end and literal interpretation begin? If the resurrections of Revelation 20 can be spiritualized, then why not our future physical resurrection or the resurrection of Jesus? If Satan is bound now, then perhaps we are also in the new heavens and the new earth? This is the slippery slope to full *preterism*^[5.2.59]—a heretical view.

There is also the issue of our witness in the midst of a skeptical world. If we tell a nonbelieving observer of the nightly news that Satan is *bound*, how likely is he to trust our discernment? And if we can be so wrong about Satan, why should he trust what we have to say concerning *Jesus*?

No, there are numerous reasons to expect a future Millennial Kingdom:

1. It is implied by God’s desire to demonstrate righteous dominion.
2. OT promises, when normally interpreted, require it.
3. *NT*^[5.2.48] prophecies, when normally interpreted, describe it.
4. Scripture and our daily experience affirm that God’s literal kingdom has not yet come on earth (Mtt. 9:10).
5. Our daily experience affirms Satan is not bound.

4.11.4 - Summary of the Millennial Kingdom

It is not our purpose here to describe the *Millennial Kingdom*^[5.2.39] at great length. It is a large topic and the subject of scores of prophecies, especially in the *OT*^[5.2.51]. (See *Additional Resources on the Millennial Kingdom*^[4.11.10].) The chart below provides a summary of the main characteristics of the Millennial Kingdom. As is readily seen, it will be a time unlike any in history. It will also be unlike the conditions in the eternal state (Rev. 21-22).

Imagine a world dominated by righteousness and goodness, a world where there is no injustice, where no court ever renders an unjust verdict, and where everyone is treated fairly. Imagine a world where what is true, right, and noble marks every aspect of life, including interpersonal relations, commerce, education, and government. Imagine a world where there is complete, total, enforced, and permanent peace, where joy abounds and good health prevails, so much so that people live for hundreds of years. Imagine a world where the curse is removed, where the environment is restored to the pristine purity of the Garden of Eden, where peace reigns even in the animal kingdom, so that “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” (Isa. 11:6). Imagine a world ruled by a perfect, glorious Ruler, who instantly and firmly deals with sin. Humanly speaking, that description may seem far-fetched, a utopian fantasy that could never be reality. Yet it accurately describes conditions during the future earthly kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ.¹⁹

Character of the Millennial Kingdom

Attribute	Description	Scriptures
Duration	One thousand years.	Rev. 20:2-5
Theocratic	God will rule in the person of Jesus Christ on the throne of	2S. 7:16; Ps. 89:20-37;

Attribute	Description	Scriptures
Rule	David. King David reigns as a prince under Christ. See <i>Millennial Reign of Messiah</i> ^[4.11.5] .	Isa. 24:23; Jer. 30:9; 33:15-17; Eze. 34:23-24; 37:24-25; 45:22; Dan. 7:13-14; Hos. 3:5; Luke 1:30-33.
Representative Rule	The twelve apostles will represent Christ ruling over the twelve tribes. Church-age and Tribulation saints will represent Christ ruling over the Gentiles. See <i>Millennial Reign of the Saints</i> ^[4.11.6] .	Isa. 32:1; Dan. 7:17-18, 21-22, 27; Mtt. 19:28; Luke 22:30; Rev. 3:21; 5:10.
Universal Rule	Christ's rule will extend both spiritually <i>and literally</i> over the entire earth.	Ps. 2:6-9; 72:8; Dan. 2:44; 4:34; 7:14, 27; Mic. 4:1-2; Zec. 9:10
Seat of Government	The earthly Jerusalem will be restored, blessed, and greatly expanded to serve as the seat of government and worship. See <i>Jerusalem Married to God</i> ^[4.10.4] . ²⁰	Isa. 62; Isa. 65:18-19; Eze. 48:15-19; Luke 21:24; Rev. 11:2.
Global Environment	The heavens and earth will be renewed to restore the creation to Eden-like conditions and repair the damage from man's long reign of abuse and the judgments of the Tribulation period. ²¹	Isa. 65:17; ²² Mtt. 19:28
Populace	Resurrected and glorified saints will rule in the midst of Christ's "brothers" (the faithful Jewish remnant), and the "sheep" (faithful Gentiles) who survive the Tribulation and enter the kingdom to form its initial population. Children will be born to those who enter the kingdom in their natural bodies.	Dan. 12:2; Isa. 26:19; 65:20, 23; Mtt. 25:31; Rev. 20:4
The Curse	Many aspects of the curse (Gen. 3:15-19) will be reversed. People will live to a great age, but death will still occur. ²³ As before the flood, animals will revert to vegetarianism and will no longer fear man. Living waters will flow from beneath the sanctuary of the <i>Millennial Temple</i> ^[4.16.5.10] bringing life to the regions they water.	Isa. 11:6-9; 65:20, 25; Eze. 47:8-12; Zec. 8:4; 14:8; (cf. Rev. 21:1-2)
Productivity	The earth will be fruitful and men will enjoy the fruit of their labors. ²⁴	Ps. 67:6-7; 72:16; Isa. 35:1; 55:13; 65:22; Joel 2:24-26; 3:18; Amos 9:13-14
Mount Zion	The region of Mount Zion will be lifted up to form the Mountain of the Lord's House. ²⁵ See <i>Millennial Temple</i> ^[4.16.5.10] .	Isa. 2:2; 56:7; Eze. 20:40; 40:2; Zec. 14:4, 10-11; Mic. 4:1
Israel	Israel will finally inhabit the Promised Land <i>permanently</i> . She will serve as the focal point of the nations because Jesus will reign from Jerusalem. ²⁶	Gen. 13:15; 17:8; 1Chr. 17:9; Ps. 105:8-11; Isa. 60:21; Jer. 3:18; 7:7; 30:3; 31:8-9; Eze. 37:25; 39:25-29; Amos 9:11-15
Peace	All implements of war will be destroyed in favor of implements of productivity. Nations will no longer go to war. Disagreements between nations will be judged by	Ps. 72:3-7; Isa. 2:5; 9:7; Eze. 37:26; Mic. 4:3

Attribute	Description	Scriptures
	Christ from Jerusalem.	
Worship	A temple will stand in Jerusalem and all the nations will go up to Jerusalem to the Feast of Tabernacles. Sacrificial offerings will be resumed. ²⁷	Isa. 2:3; 56:6-7; 66:20-23; Eze. 43:20, 26; 45:15, 17, 20; Jer. 33:18; Dan. 9:24; Joel 3:18; Hag. 2:7-9; Zec. 6:12-15; 8:20-23; 14:16-21; Mal. 3:3-4. See <i>Millennial Sacrifices</i> ^[4.16.5.10.2] .
Demonic Realm	Satan will be bound in the abyss and demons will be imprisoned in the regions of Babylon, Edom, and possibly, the abyss. See commentary on <i>Revelation 18:2</i> ^[3.18.2] and <i>Revelation 20:1</i> ^[3.20.1] .	Isa. 34:8-17; Rev. 18:2; 20:3
Language	The curse of Babel (Gen. 11:7), the introduction of varied languages, will be reversed. All the earth will have one language.	Zep. 3:8-12 ²⁸

4.11.5 - Millennial Reign of Messiah

The book of Revelation describes saints who are resurrected at the beginning of the *Millennial Kingdom*^[5.2.39]. They sit on thrones and judgment is committed to them. It is said that they reign with Christ for the full thousand years (Rev. 20:4). If they reign *with* Christ during this period, then it follows that He must reign upon the promised throne of David during the Millennial Kingdom. There are many passages which show this is true, only a few of which we've included below.

As we've seen throughout our study of the book of Revelation, Psalm 2 is the bedrock *OT*^[5.2.51] promise around which the grand theme of Revelation develops: the physical placement of Christ over the nations.

I have set My King on My holy hill of Zion. . . . Ask of Me, and I will give *You* the nations for *Your* inheritance, and the ends of the earth for *Your* possession. (Ps. 2:7-8)

Christ will be given the ends of the earth for His possession. If this is to be the case, how can it be true now? Most of the world hasn't the foggiest notion they are being broken by His scepter as potter's vessels, as *amillennialists*^[5.2.1] would have us believe (Ps. 2:9)!

Isaiah tells us of a specific time when Messiah will reign from the throne of David:

Of the increase of *His* government and peace *There will be* no end, upon the throne of David and over His kingdom, to order it and establish it with judgment and justice from that time forward, even forever. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this. (Isa. 9:7)

He also says that the reign will be in Jerusalem and that there will be elders (lesser rulers, see *Millennial Reign of the Saints*^[4.11.6]) who rule with Him.

Then the moon will be disgraced and the sun ashamed; for the Lord of hosts will reign on Mount Zion and in Jerusalem and before His elders, gloriously. (Isa. 24:23)

Isaiah indicates that although He was despised, kings and princes will arise (in honor and worship) for Him:

Thus says the Lord, The Redeemer of Israel, their Holy One, to Him whom man despises, to Him whom the nation abhors, to the Servant of rulers: "Kings shall see and arise, Princes also shall worship, because of the Lord who is faithful, the Holy One of Israel; and He has chosen You." (Isa. 49:7)

Jeremiah tells us that in the time Christ reigns, there will be righteous judgment in the earth and that Israel will dwell safely during His reign:

“Behold, *the* days are coming,” says the LORD, “That I will raise to David a Branch of righteousness; a King shall reign and prosper, and execute judgment and righteousness in the earth. In His days Judah will be saved, and Israel will dwell safely; now this *is* His name by which He will be called: THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS.” (Jer. 23:5-6)

How do we know this is yet future? First, the world cannot be characterized by righteous judgment. Second, Israel is not dwelling safely in her land.²⁹

Zechariah tells of a day when living waters will flow from Jerusalem, both to the east and to the west. In that day, the LORD will be King over all the earth:

And in that day it shall be *That* living waters shall flow from Jerusalem, half of them toward the eastern sea and half of them toward the western sea; in both summer and winter it shall occur. And the LORD shall be King over all the earth. In that day it shall be—“The LORD *is* one,” and His name one. (Zec. 14:8-9)

The extent of His rule is global and is *recognized to be so by all nations*. This is certainly not the case today.

Micah mentions a time of physical healing during which dispersed Israel will no longer be outcast, but will be a strong nation. At that time, Messiah will begin His eternal rule:

I will make the lame a remnant, and the outcast a strong nation; so the LORD will reign over them in Mount Zion from now on, even forever. (Mic. 4:7)

In the *NT*^[5.2.48], Jesus promised his disciples that they would sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel:

So Jesus said to them, “Assuredly I say to you, that in the regeneration, when the Son of Man sits on the throne of His glory, you who have followed Me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.” (Mtt. 19:28)

He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Highest; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David. And He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of His kingdom there will be no end. (Luke 1:32-33)

Of particular interest, both Matthew and Luke record the *future* aspect of His rule. Jesus says this rule will be “in the regeneration,” *παλιγγενεσία* [*palingenesia*]*—again genesis—*when the earth is renovated following the destruction of the Tribulation in preparation for the Millennial Kingdom. This is not a spiritual regeneration, but refers to a physical reconstruction of the earth after His Second Coming.

Additional evidence of the *future* reign of Jesus on His throne can be found in His teaching concerning the Sheep and Goat Judgment.

When the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, **then** He will sit on the throne of His glory. All the nations will be gathered before Him, and He will separate them one from another, as a shepherd divides *his* sheep from the goats. (Mtt. 25:31-32) [emphasis added]

Notice carefully the chronology of what Jesus said: *When* the Son of Man comes in His glory . . . *then* He will sit on *His* throne. How much clearer could it be? Jesus’ reign on His own throne begins when He comes in His glory. This does not occur until the Second Coming, when He arrives with His holy angels. Until then, He is seated with His Father on a throne in heaven which is not the throne of David (Rev. 3:21).

When Paul wrote to Timothy, he explained that Christ would judge at His appearing which would coincide with His kingdom:

I charge *you* therefore before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who will judge the living and the dead at His appearing and His kingdom. . . (2Ti. 4:1)

The book of Revelation indicates that Jesus’ earthly rule is *future*:

To him who overcomes I will grant to sit with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne. (Rev. 3:21)

In the future, Christ will grant the overcomer to sit with Him on His throne, just like He was presently sitting with His Father on *His* throne. Jesus said these words after the crucifixion, resurrection, and several decades of the Church age had already passed. The certainty of a literal, future, earthly reign is

the subject of the declaration at the sounding of the seventh trumpet:

Then the seventh angel sounded: And there were loud voices in heaven, saying, “The kingdoms of this world have become *the kingdoms* of our Lord and of His Christ, and He shall reign forever and ever!” (Rev. 11:15)

This alludes to Psalm 2 (*our Lord and of His Christ*) and indicates that when Jesus rules as King, there will be no mistaking it! You will either be a broken potsherd or a humble servant. The countless authorities in our own day who reject Christ or don’t even know about Him are not in the picture which Scripture paints for the ultimate *physical* dominion of our Lord during His Millennial Kingdom.

4.11.6 - Millennial Reign of the Saints

As we saw above, Revelation 20:4 mentions resurrected saints who rule and reign with Christ. Many other passages, both in the *OT*^[5.2.51] and *NT*^[5.2.48], indicate the saints will co-rule with their Lord.

Isaiah indicates a coming righteous reign where princes will rule with Messiah:

Behold, a king will reign in righteousness, and princes will rule with justice. (Isa. 32:1).³⁰

Daniel received detailed revelation concerning the timing and reality of the rule of the saints. It does not occur until after *the Beast*^[4.2] is destroyed, just as the book of Revelation records (Rev. 19:20). We know from Revelation 19 that the *Beast*^[5.2.9] is destroyed *at the Second Coming of Christ*, therefore the reign of the saints has not yet come:

Those great beasts, which are four, *are* four kings *which* arise out of the earth. But the saints of the Most High shall receive the kingdom, and possess the kingdom forever, even forever and ever. (Dan. 7:17-18)

I was watching; and the same horn was making war against the saints, and prevailing against them, until the Ancient of Days came, and a judgment was made *in favor* of the saints of the Most High, and the time came for the saints to possess the kingdom. (Dan. 7:21-22)

Then the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdoms under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people, the saints of the Most High. His kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey Him. (Dan. 7:27)

Prior to their co-rule with Christ, they will undergo tribulation at the hands of the Beast (Rev. 13:7, 15; 15:2; 20:4). They are not just given a vague spiritual kingdom subject to ridicule by unbelievers who cannot tell it even exists. No! The kingdom and dominion is *both* spiritual and literal and there will be no question on the part of anyone concerning its reality when it arrives!

In the gospels, Jesus indicated that faithful servants would be given authority over cities (Luke 19:17-19). Numerous times James and John sought the position of being on the left and right of Jesus—positions of shared rulership (Mtt. 20:20 cf. Mark 10:37).

In the book of Revelation, Jesus said that overcomers would sit with Him on His throne, even as He then sat on His father’s throne:

To him who overcomes I will grant to sit with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne. (Rev. 3:21)

This particular verse is very important because it shows the high degree of authority believers will have with Jesus. It also indicates that in approximately A.D. 95, when Jesus spoke these words, *He was not on His own throne!* This is a very important point to understand: the throne He will be taking is the throne of David (Mtt. 25:31) and it is on *earth*. Although we have been made kings and priests (or a kingdom, priests to God—see commentary on *Revelation 5:10*^[3.5.10]), our reign is future and initially upon the *earth*:

And have made us kings and priests to our God; and we **shall reign** on the **earth**. (Rev. 5:10) [emphasis added]

One of the criticisms that has been leveled against the *premillennial*^[5.2.58] understanding of the *Millennial Kingdom*^[5.2.39] is that it only lasts 1,000 years, whereas Scripture is replete with passages indicating Christ’s kingdom will be eternal.

The *amillennialist*^[5.2.1] sees a conflict here and insists that the eternity of Christ’s kingdom does not permit any place for a thousand year reign on earth. Calvin’s reason for rejecting the premillennial view

as his concept that the thousand year reign nullified the eternal reign of Christ. Did the premillennialist limit the reign of Christ to a thousand years, his contention that “their fiction is too puerile to require or deserve refutation” would be true. However such is not the case. An important Scripture bearing on the discussion is 1 Corinthians 15:24-28.³¹

The solution to this problem is found in recognizing the transition which Paul records in 1 Corinthians 15:24-28. Christ rules in the millennium until the Great White Throne Judgment, when death itself is finally vanquished (Rev. 20:14 cf. Rev. 21:4). Then, He places His kingdom under the Father. Yet His rule continues into the eternal state, where there is a new heavens and a new earth (Rev. 21:1) and where the saints will continue to co-rule with Him for eternity (Rev. 22:5).

[1Cor. 15:24, 28] does not mean the end of our Lord’s regal activity, but rather that from here onward in the unity of the Godhead He reigns with the Father as the eternal Son. There are no longer two thrones: one His Messianic throne and the other the Father’s throne, as our Lord indicated in Revelation 3:21. In the final Kingdom there is but one throne, and it is “the throne of God and of the Lamb” (Rev. 22:3).³²

4.11.6.1 - Judgment by the Saints

Not only will the saints reign with Christ, they will also judge with Him (Rev. 20:4). It is important to realize that even though the saints will perform judgment, this will not be the dominant activity during the *Millennial Kingdom*^[5.2.39], at least not in the sense of meting out punishments.³³

Note that the term “judge” is used in a broader sense in Scripture than in our common parlance; it is often equivalent to ruler or king. This has an important bearing upon our conception of Christ returning to judge the earth at the Second Advent. The judgeship of Christ is not limited to passing sentence, but constitutes his reign as king over the earth.³⁴

The Psalmist records that all the saints will have the honor of judging rebellious nations. The judgment will be in accord with God’s written word. In their rule with Christ, they will have positions of great authority. They will be over the kings and nobles, leaders among the nations still in their natural bodies:

Let the high praises of God be in their mouth, and a two-edged sword in their hand, to execute vengeance on the nations, and punishments on the peoples; to bind their kings with chains, and their nobles with fetters of iron; to execute on them the written judgment—This honor have all His saints. Praise the Lord! (Ps. 149:6-9)

Do you not know that the saints will judge the world? And if the world will be judged by you, are you unworthy to judge the smallest matters? Do you not know that we shall judge angels? How much more, things that pertain to this life? (1Cor. 6:2-3).

When Paul was advising the Corinthians to judge matters among themselves, he reminded them that the saints will judge the world as well as angels. Paul wrote this during the current Church-age, after the crucifixion and resurrection. Surely it strains the imagination too far to adopt the view that this judging capability is already present and that we are judging angels! No, it pertains to a future time: the Millennial Kingdom and beyond.

It appears that judgment within the Millennial Kingdom will be divided, at its highest levels, between a line of Gentile authority and a line of Jewish authority. Several passages mention judgment of the Jewish tribes during this time:

Where the tribes go up, the tribes of the Lord, to the Testimony of Israel, to give thanks to the name of the Lord. For thrones are set there for judgment, the thrones of the house of David. (Ps. 122:4-5)³⁵

So Jesus said to them, “Assuredly I say to you, that in the regeneration, when the Son of Man sits on the throne of His glory, you who have followed Me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.” (Mtt. 19:28)

“But you are those who have continued with Me in My trials. And I bestow upon you a kingdom, just as My Father bestowed one upon Me, that you may eat and drink at My table in My kingdom, and sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel.” (Luke 22:28-30)

It appears that Jewish saints—the resurrected apostles—will judge over the twelve tribes, the nation of Israel. At that time, all *ten tribes*^[5.2.74] will be present and accounted for. See *Ten Tribes Lost?*^[4.17]

4.11.7 - Millennial Passages

Since it is often said that the *premillennial*^[5.2.58] view of a literal, earthly *Millennial Kingdom*^[5.2.39] rests upon what is held to be an obscure foundation in Revelation 20, we offer the following evidence which demonstrates otherwise. This is by no means a comprehensive collection of the many passages in Scripture which describe the millennium. These are among the most obvious and important passages, although we are sure others could be included. Anyone with an open mind and a sound interpretive foundation for how to read the text can see for themselves that the doctrine of the Millennial Kingdom is hardly obscure or wanting for evidence.

We have emphasized portions of passages which illustrate specific incompatibilities with the eternal state. There is neither death, sin, *Temple*^[4.16] (the “LORD’s house”), or sea in the eternal state (Isa. 60:20; Rev. 21:1, 4, 22, 23, 25; 22:5).³⁶ There is no rebellion or need to judge in eternity. Passages which indicate a time of tremendous blessing, but which include these elements, must be interpreted in one of two ways: (1) as describing the current reality of believers in terms which are flowery rhetoric with little bearing on reality, or (2) as describing a golden age to come which cannot be the eternal state, but when great blessing will flow forth on the earth. It is our belief they are literal descriptions of the Millennial Kingdom on earth.

All the ends of the world shall remember and turn to the LORD, and all the families of the nations shall worship before You. For the kingdom *is* the LORD’S, and He rules over the nations. All the prosperous of the earth shall eat and worship; all those who go down to the dust shall bow before Him, **Even he who cannot keep himself alive.** (Ps 22:27-29) [emphasis added]

Oh, let the nations be glad and sing for joy! For **You shall judge** the people righteously, and govern the nations on earth. Selah let the peoples praise You, O God; let all the peoples praise You. *Then* the earth shall yield her increase; God, our own God, shall bless us. God shall bless us, and all the ends of the earth shall fear Him. (Ps 67:4-7) [emphasis added]

Give the king Your judgments, O God, And Your righteousness to the king’s Son. **He will judge** Your people with righteousness, and Your poor with justice. The mountains will bring peace to the people, and the little hills, by righteousness. He will bring justice to the poor of the people; He will save the children of the needy, **And will break in pieces the oppressor.** They shall fear You as long as the sun and moon endure, throughout all generations. He shall come down like rain upon the grass before mowing, like showers *that* water the earth. In His days the righteous shall flourish, and abundance of peace, until the moon is no more. He shall have dominion also from sea to sea, and from the River to the ends of the earth. Those who dwell in the wilderness will bow before Him, and **His enemies will lick the dust.** The kings of Tarshish and of the isles will bring presents; the kings of Sheba and Seba will offer gifts. Yes, all kings shall fall down before Him; all nations shall serve Him. For He will deliver the needy when he cries, the poor also, and *him* who has no helper. He will spare the poor and needy, and will save the souls of the needy. He will redeem their life from oppression and violence; and **precious shall be their blood in His sight.** And He shall live; and the gold of Sheba will be given to Him; prayer also will be made for Him continually, *and* daily He shall be praised. There will be an abundance of grain in the earth, on the top of the mountains; its fruit shall wave like Lebanon; and *those* of the city shall flourish like grass of the earth. His name shall endure forever; His name shall continue as long as the sun. And *men* shall be blessed in Him; all nations shall call Him blessed. Blessed *be* the LORD God, the God of Israel, Who only does wondrous things! And blessed *be* His glorious name forever! And let the whole earth be filled *with* His glory. Amen and Amen. The prayers of David the son of Jesse are ended. (Ps 72:1-20) [emphasis added]

Now it shall come to pass in the latter days *That* the mountain of the **LORD’S house** Shall be established on the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow to it. Many people shall come and say, “Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the **house of the God of Jacob**; He will teach us His ways, and we shall walk in His paths.” For out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem. **He shall judge between the nations, and rebuke many people**; they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war anymore. O house of Jacob, come and let us walk in the light of the LORD. (Isa. 2:2-5) [emphasis added]

There shall come forth a Rod from the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots. The Spirit of the LORD shall rest upon Him, the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and might, the Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD. His delight *is* in the fear of the LORD, and He shall not judge by the sight of His eyes, nor decide by the hearing of His ears; but **with righteousness He shall judge** the poor, and decide with equity for the meek of the earth; **He shall**

strike the earth with the rod of His mouth, and with the breath of His lips He shall slay the wicked. Righteousness shall be the belt of His loins, and faithfulness the belt of His waist. The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, the leopard shall lie down with the young goat, the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them. The cow and the bear shall graze; their young ones shall lie down together; and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. The **nursing child** shall play by the cobra's hole, and the **weaned child** shall put his hand in the viper's den. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all My holy mountain, for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD as the waters cover the sea. And in that day there shall be a Root of Jesse, Who shall stand as a banner to the people; for the Gentiles shall seek Him, and His resting place shall be glorious. (Isa. 11:1-10) [emphasis added]

Indeed He says, 'It is too small a thing that You should be My Servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved ones of Israel; I will also give You as a light to the Gentiles, that You should be My salvation to the ends of the earth.' Thus says the Lord, The Redeemer of Israel, their Holy One, to Him whom man despises, to Him whom the nation abhors, to the Servant of rulers: "Kings shall see and arise, Princes also shall worship, because of the Lord who is faithful, The Holy One of Israel; and He has chosen You." (Isa. 49:6-7)

In the following passage from Isaiah, the prophet is given a vision which begins with elements of the millennium (sea, altar, *Temple*^[5.2.73], ships, disobedience), but then appears to extend beyond to describe the eternal state (sun or moon not needed for light):

Arise, shine; for your light has come! And the glory of the LORD is risen upon you. For behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and deep darkness the people; but the LORD will arise over you, and His glory will be seen upon you. The Gentiles shall come to your light, and kings to the brightness of your rising. Lift up your eyes all around, and see: They all gather together, they come to you; your sons shall come from afar, and your daughters shall be nursed at *your* side. Then you shall see and become radiant, and your heart shall swell with joy; because the abundance of the **sea** shall be turned to you, the wealth of the Gentiles shall come to you. The multitude of camels shall cover your *land*, the dromedaries of Midian and Ephah; all those from Sheba shall come; they shall bring gold and incense, and they shall proclaim the praises of the LORD. All the flocks of Kedar shall be gathered together to you, the rams of Nebaioth shall minister to you; they shall ascend with acceptance on **My altar**, and I will glorify the **house of My glory**. Who *are* these *who* fly like a cloud, and like doves to their roosts? Surely the coastlands shall wait for Me; and the **ships of Tarshish** *will come* first, to bring your sons from afar, their silver and their gold with them, to the name of the LORD your God, and to the Holy One of Israel, because He has glorified you. The sons of foreigners shall build up your walls, and their kings shall minister to you; for in My wrath I struck you, but in My favor I have had mercy on you. Therefore your gates shall be open continually; they shall not be shut day or **night**, that *men* may bring to you the wealth of the Gentiles, and their kings in procession. For **the nation and kingdom which will not serve you shall perish, and those nations shall be utterly ruined**. The glory of Lebanon shall come to you, the cypress, the pine, and the box tree together, to beautify the place of **My sanctuary**; and I will make the place of My feet glorious. Also the sons of those who afflicted you shall come bowing to you, and all those who despised you shall fall prostrate at the soles of your feet; and they shall call you The City of the LORD, Zion of the Holy One of Israel. Whereas you have been forsaken and hated, so that no one went through *you*, I will make you an eternal excellence, a joy of many generations. You shall drink the milk of the Gentiles, and milk the breast of kings; you shall know that I, the LORD, *am* your Savior and your Redeemer, the Mighty One of Jacob. Instead of bronze I will bring gold, instead of iron I will bring silver, instead of wood, bronze, and instead of stones, iron. I will also make your officers peace, and your magistrates righteousness. Violence shall no longer be heard in your land, neither wasting nor destruction within your borders; but you shall call your walls Salvation, and your gates Praise. The sun shall no longer be your light by day, nor for brightness shall the moon give light to you; but the LORD will be to you an everlasting light, and your God your glory. Your sun shall no longer go down, nor shall your moon withdraw itself; for the LORD will be your everlasting light, and the days of your mourning shall be ended. Also your people *shall* all *be* righteous; they shall inherit the land forever, the branch of My planting, the work of My hands, that I may be glorified. A little one shall become a thousand, and a small one a strong nation. I, the LORD, will hasten it in its time. (Isa. 60:1-22) [emphasis added]

"For behold, I create new heavens and a new earth; and the former shall not be remembered or come to mind. But be glad and rejoice forever in what I create; for behold, I create Jerusalem *as* a rejoicing, and her people a joy. I will rejoice in Jerusalem, and joy in My people; the voice of weeping shall no longer be heard in her, nor the voice of crying. **No more shall an infant from there live but a few days, nor an old man who has not fulfilled his days; for the child shall die one hundred years old, but the sinner being one hundred years old shall be accursed**. They shall build houses and inhabit *them*; they shall plant vineyards and eat their fruit. They shall not build and another inhabit; they shall not plant and another eat; for as the days of a tree, *so shall be* the days of My people, and My elect shall long enjoy the work of their hands. They shall not labor in vain, nor bring forth children for trouble; for they *shall*

be the descendants of the blessed of the LORD, and their offspring with them. It shall come to pass that before they call, I will answer; and while they are still speaking, I will hear. The wolf and the lamb shall feed together, the lion shall eat straw like the ox, and dust *shall be* the serpent's food. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all My holy mountain," says the LORD. (Isa. 65:17-25) [emphasis added]

"I will set a sign among them; and those among them who escape I will send to the nations: *to* Tarshish and Pul and Lud, who draw the bow, and Tubal and Javan, *to* the coastlands afar off who have not heard My fame nor seen My glory. And they shall declare My glory among the Gentiles. Then they shall bring all your brethren for an offering to the LORD out of all nations, on horses and in chariots and in litters, on mules and on camels, to My holy mountain Jerusalem," says the LORD, "as the children of Israel bring an offering in a clean vessel into the **house of the LORD**. And I will also take some of them for priests *and* Levites," says the LORD. "For as the new heavens and the new earth Which I will make shall remain before Me," says the LORD, "So shall your descendants and your name remain. And it shall come to pass *That* from one New Moon to another, and from one Sabbath to another, all flesh shall come to worship before Me," says the LORD. "And they shall go forth and look upon the corpses of the men who have transgressed against Me. For their worm does not die, and their fire is not quenched. They shall be an abhorrence to all flesh." (Isa. 66:19-24) [emphasis added]

Then say to them, 'Thus says the Lord GOD: "Surely I will take the children of Israel from among the nations, wherever they have gone, and will gather them from every side and bring them into their own land; and I will make them one nation in the land, on the mountains of Israel; and one king shall be king over them all; they shall no longer be two nations, nor shall they ever be divided into two kingdoms again. They shall not defile themselves anymore with their idols, nor with their detestable things, nor with any of their transgressions; but I will deliver them from all their dwelling places in which they have sinned, and will cleanse them. Then they shall be My people, and I will be their God. David My servant *shall be* king over them, and they shall have one shepherd; they shall also walk in My judgments and observe My statutes, and do them. Then they shall dwell in the land that I have given to Jacob My servant, where your fathers dwelt; and they shall dwell there, they, their children, and their children's children, forever; and My servant David *shall be* their prince forever. Moreover I will make a covenant of peace with them, and it shall be an everlasting covenant with them; I will establish them and multiply them, and I will set My sanctuary in their midst forevermore. My *tabernacle*^[5.2.69] also shall be with them; indeed I will be their God, and they shall be My people. The nations also will know that I, the LORD, sanctify Israel, when My sanctuary is in their midst forevermore.'" (Eze. 37:21-28)

Then he brought me back to the door of the **temple**; and there was water, flowing from under the threshold of the **temple** toward the east, for the front of the **temple** faced east; the water was flowing from under the right side of the **temple**, south of the altar. He brought me out by way of the north gate, and led me around on the outside to the outer gateway that faces east; and there was water, running out on the right side. And when the man went out to the east with the line in his hand, he measured one thousand cubits, and he brought me through the waters; the water *came up to my ankles*. Again he measured one thousand and brought me through the waters; the water *came up to my knees*. Again he measured one thousand and brought me through; the water *came up to my waist*. Again he measured one thousand, *and it was* a river that I could not cross; for the water was too deep, water in which one must swim, a river that could not be crossed. He said to me, "Son of man, have you seen *this*?" Then he brought me and returned me to the bank of the river. When I returned, there, along the bank of the river, *were* very many trees on one side and the other. Then he said to me: "This water flows toward the eastern region, goes down into the valley, and enters **the sea**. *When it reaches the sea, its waters are healed*. And it shall be *that* every living thing that moves, wherever the rivers go, will live. There will be a very great multitude of fish, because these waters go there; for they will be healed, and everything will live wherever the river goes. It shall be *that* fishermen will stand by it from En Gedi to En Eglaim; they will be *places* for spreading their nets. Their fish will be of the same kinds as the fish of **the Great Sea**, exceedingly many. But its swamps and marshes will not be healed; they will be given over to salt. Along the bank of the river, on this side and that, will grow all *kinds of* trees used for food; their leaves will not wither, and their fruit will not fail. They will bear fruit every month, because their water flows from the sanctuary. Their fruit will be for food, and their leaves for medicine." (Eze 47:1-12) [emphasis added]

For the children of Israel shall abide many days without king or prince, without sacrifice or sacred pillar, without ephod or teraphim. Afterward the children of Israel shall return and seek the Lord their God and David their king. They shall fear the Lord and His goodness in the latter days. (Ho 3:4-5)

"Therefore wait for Me," says the LORD, "Until the day I rise up for plunder; My determination *is* to gather the nations to My assembly of kingdoms, to pour on them My indignation, all my fierce anger; all the earth shall be devoured with the fire of My jealousy. For then I will restore to the peoples a pure language, that they all may call on the name of the LORD, to serve Him with one accord. From beyond the rivers of Ethiopia My worshipers, The daughter of My dispersed ones, shall bring My offering. In

that day you shall not be shamed for any of your deeds in which you transgress against Me; for then I will take away from your midst those who rejoice in your pride, and you shall no longer be haughty in My holy mountain. I will leave in your midst a meek and humble people, and they shall trust in the name of the LORD.” (Zep 3:8-12)

Now it shall come to pass in the latter days *That* the mountain of the **LORD’S house** shall be established on the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and peoples shall flow to it. Many nations shall come and say, “Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to **the house of the God of Jacob**; He will teach us His ways, and we shall walk in His paths.” For out of Zion the law shall go forth, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem. **He shall judge between many peoples, and rebuke strong nations afar off**; they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more. But everyone shall sit under his vine and under his fig tree, and no one shall make *them* afraid; for the mouth of the LORD of hosts has spoken. For all people walk each in the name of his god, but we will walk in the name of the LORD our God forever and ever. “In that day,” says the LORD, “I will assemble the lame, I will gather the outcast and those whom I have afflicted; I will make the lame a remnant, and the outcast a strong nation; so the LORD will reign over them in Mount Zion from now on, even forever. And you, O tower of the flock, the stronghold of the daughter of Zion, to you shall it come, even the former dominion shall come, the kingdom of the daughter of Jerusalem.” Now why do you cry aloud? *Isa. there* no king in your midst? Has your counselor perished? For pangs have seized you like a woman in labor. Be in pain, and labor to bring forth, O daughter of Zion, like a woman in birth pangs. For now you shall go forth from the city, you shall dwell in the field, and to Babylon you shall go. There you shall be delivered; there the LORD will redeem you from the hand of your enemies. Now also many nations have gathered against you, who say, “Let her be defiled, and let our eye look upon Zion.” But they do not know the thoughts of the LORD, nor do they understand His counsel; for He will gather them like sheaves to the threshing floor. “Arise and thresh, O daughter of Zion; for I will make your horn iron, and I will make your hooves bronze; you shall beat in pieces many peoples; I will consecrate their gain to the LORD, and their substance to the Lord of the whole earth.” (Mic 4:1-13) [emphasis added]

Thus says the LORD: ‘I will return to Zion, and dwell in the midst of Jerusalem. Jerusalem shall be called the City of Truth, the Mountain of the LORD of hosts, the Holy Mountain.’ Thus says the LORD of hosts: ‘**Old men and old women** shall again sit in the streets of Jerusalem, **Each one with his staff in his hand because of great age**. The streets of the city shall be full of boys and girls playing in its streets.’ (Zec 8:3-5) [emphasis added]

And in that day it shall be *That* living waters shall flow from Jerusalem, half of them toward **the eastern sea** And half of them toward **the western sea**; in both summer and winter it shall occur. And the LORD shall be King over all the earth. In that day it shall be—“The LORD *is* one,” and His name one. All the land shall be turned into a plain from Geba to Rimmon south of Jerusalem. Jerusalem shall be raised up and inhabited in her place from Benjamin’s Gate to the place of the First Gate and the Corner Gate, and *from* the Tower of Hananeel to the king’s winepresses. *The people* shall dwell in it; and no longer shall there be utter destruction, but Jerusalem shall be safely inhabited. . . . And it shall come to pass *that* everyone who is left of all the nations which came against Jerusalem shall go up from year to year to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, and to keep the Feast of Tabernacles. And it shall be *that* **whichever of the families of the earth do not come up to Jerusalem to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, on them there will be no rain. If the family of Egypt will not come up and enter in, they shall have no rain; they shall receive the plague with which the LORD strikes the nations who do not come up to keep the Feast of Tabernacles. This shall be the punishment of Egypt and the punishment of all the nations that do not come up to keep the Feast of Tabernacles.** In that day “**HOLINESS TO THE LORD**” shall be *engraved* on the bells of the horses. The pots in **the LORD’S house** shall be like the bowls before the altar. Yes, every pot in Jerusalem and Judah shall be holiness to the LORD of hosts. Everyone who sacrifices shall come and take them and cook in them. In that day there shall no longer be a Canaanite in **the house of the LORD of hosts.** (Zec. 14:8-11, 16-21) [emphasis added]

“For from the rising of the sun, even to its going down, My name *shall be* great among the Gentiles; in every place incense *shall be* offered to My name, and a pure offering; for My name shall be great among the nations,” says the LORD of hosts. (Mal 1:11)

So Jesus said to them, “Assuredly I say to you, that in the regeneration, when the Son of Man sits on the throne of His glory, you who have followed Me will also sit on twelve thrones, **judging the twelve tribes of Israel.**” (Mtt. 19:28) [emphasis added]

“But you are those who have continued with Me in My trials. And I bestow upon you a kingdom, just as My Father bestowed one upon Me, that you may eat and drink at My table in My kingdom, and sit on

thrones **judging the twelve tribes** of Israel.” (Luke 22:28-30) [emphasis added]

And I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and judgment was committed to them. Then *I saw* the souls of those who had been beheaded for their witness to Jesus and for the word of God, who had not worshiped the beast or his image, and had not received *his* mark on their foreheads or on their hands. And they lived and reigned with Christ for a thousand years. But the rest of the dead did not live again until the thousand years were finished. This *is* the first resurrection. Blessed and holy *is* he who has part in the first resurrection. Over such the second death has no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years. (Rev. 20:4-6)

4.11.8 - Who Populates the Millennial Kingdom?

An aspect of the *Millennial Kingdom*^[5.2.39] which some initially find surprising is the continuance of birth and death:

No more shall an infant from there *live but a few* days, nor an old man who has not fulfilled his days; for the child shall die one hundred years old, but the sinner *being* one hundred years old shall be accursed. (Isa. 65:20)

This fact poses a substantial problem for those who believe in a *posttribulation*^[5.2.57] *rapture*^[5.2.62]. The problem is as follows. If the Rapture takes place at the Second Coming of Christ, then *all* the righteous are taken at His return. Since the Rapture involves the translation of the living saints, all who participate in the Rapture receive their glorified bodies. If this is so, at the Second Coming of Christ there are only two types of people: believers who have glorified bodies and unbelievers who remain in their natural bodies. Since all the ungodly are purged at the Second Coming, the only ones remaining to enter the Millennial Kingdom would be saints in their glorified bodies. Resurrected saints do not reproduce: “For when they rise from the dead, they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like angels in heaven” (Mark 12:25). The question then becomes, who is it that enters the Millennial Kingdom to produce the children which Scripture records will be born?

[The posttribulation position holds that] at the end of the Tribulation all living believers will be raptured, given resurrection bodies, and return immediately to earth in the single event of the rapture and second coming. This would seem to eliminate all redeemed, unresurrected people from the earth at that point in time so that there would be no one left to populate the millennial kingdom. If the wicked survivors are either killed or consigned to Hades at the end of the Tribulation, then there will be no one left in an unresurrected body to enter the Millennium.³⁷

It is obviously impossible to incorporate a translation of all saints at the end of the tribulation and the beginning of the millennium as it would result in all saints receiving a spiritual body, leaving none to populate the earth in the millennium.³⁸

There is the additional problem of how to explain the Sheep and Goat Judgment (Mtt. 25:31-46) which makes no mention of a resurrection. It is a judgment of the living nations at the time of Christ’s return (Mtt. 25:31). If all the people of faith rise in the Rapture at the *end* of the Tribulation and then return with Christ to earth, who are “my brethren” and the “sheep,” both of which find entry into God’s kingdom?

Furthermore, an adjustment has to be made in the time of the judgment of the sheep and goats in Mtt. 25:31-46 if the posttrib picture is correct. The reason is simple: If the rapture occurs after the Tribulation, then all the sheep (redeemed) will have been removed from the earth; thus, there would be no sheep to be part of that judgment if it occurs at the second coming, which is a single event with the rapture [in the posttribulation view].³⁹

These are weighty arguments against the notion that the Rapture occurs at the Second Coming of Christ—that they are one and the same even. See *Rapture*^[4.14].

4.11.9 - The Millennial Kingdom in the Early Church

Some have tried to malign *premillennialism*^[5.2.58] by suggesting that it is a relatively novel development of recent times—that it is not a view which finds support among the early Church. Nothing could be further from the truth. In fact, in the earliest church, prior to the time of Augustine and Roman Catholicism, premillennialism was the dominant view of the Church. While we do not determine the truth of doctrine from the views of Church Fathers, it can be helpful to study their views

to see how different areas of doctrine developed or what caused them to die away or change. In the case of belief in a literal, earthly kingdom, it is particularly interesting to see that the *earliest* Fathers for which we have record—even those who were only a generation or two away from our beloved John whose book we are studying—held to the same basic view premillennialists espouse. They interpreted God’s promises *literally* and understood a coming kingdom of God on earth which did not correspond with the Church age.

The premillennial view was the first view of the Church:

The most striking point in the eschatology of the ante-Nicene age is the prominent *chiliasm*^[5.2.13], or millenarianism, that is the belief of a visible reign of Christ in glory on earth with the risen saints for a thousand years, before the general resurrection and judgment. It was indeed not the doctrine of the church embodied in any creed or form of devotion, but a widely current opinion of distinguished teachers, such as Barnabas, *Papias*^[5.2.52], *Justin Martyr*^[5.2.36], *Irenaeus*^[5.2.34], *Tertullian*^[5.2.75], Methodius, and Lactantius; while Caius, *Origen*^[5.2.50], Dionysius the Great, *Eusebius*^[5.2.19] (as afterwards Jerome and Augustine) opposed it. . . . It distinguishes, moreover, two resurrections, one before and another after the millennium, and makes the millennial reign of Christ only a prelude to his eternal reign in heaven, from which it is separated by a short interregnum of Satan. The millennium is expected to come not as the legitimate result of a historical process but as a sudden supernatural revelation. The advocates of this theory appeal to the certain promises of the Lord, but particularly to the hieroglyphic passage of the Apocalypse, which teaches a millennial reign of Christ upon this earth after the first resurrection and before the creation of the new heavens and the new earth. In connection with this the general expectation prevailed that the return of the Lord was near, though uncertain and unascertainable as to its day and hour, so that believers may be always ready for it. This hope, through the whole age of persecution, was a copious fountain of encouragement and comfort under the pains of that martyrdom which sowed in blood the seed of a bountiful harvest for the church.⁴⁰

The most explicit reference in Scripture to the thousand-year millennial reign of Christ is found in Revelation 20. It is a significant fact that the early adherents of premillennialism (or chiliasm, as it was first called), either had direct contact with John, the longest living apostle, or with his most famous disciple *Polycarp*^[5.2.55]. . . . Papias (ca. 60-130), one of the earliest premillennialists, has been called by some the “father of millenarianism.” Irenaeus affirmed that Papias was “the hearer of John, and a companion of Polycarp.” Papias furnished the earliest extra-biblical witness to the millennial doctrine taught by the Apocalypse.⁴¹

The premillennial fathers of the ante-Nicene age included church leaders who were contemporary with and in some cases instructed by the apostles and those who were in turn their disciples. . . . In this group are: Clement (fl. ca. 90-100), bishop of Rome; Papias (ca. 60-ca. 130/155), bishop of Hierapolis; Polycarp (ca. 70-155/160), bishop of Smyrna; and *Ignatius*^[5.2.28] (d. ca. 98/117), bishop of Antioch. . . . Premillennialists of the second century included the apologist Justin Martyr (ca. 100-165); the polemicists Irenaeus (ca. 120-ca. 202), bishop of Lyons, and his disciple Hippolytus (d. ca. 236), presbyter and teacher in Rome; and from the African school, Tertullian (150-225), apologist, moralist, and theologian.⁴²

Dr. Whitby (*Treatise on Tradition*) gives us the following often-quoted statement: “The doctrine of the Millennium, or the reign of the saints on earth for a thousand years, is now rejected by all Roman Catholics, and by the greatest part of Protestants; and yet it passed among *the best Christians, for two hundred and fifty years, for a tradition apostolical*; and, as such, is delivered by *many* Fathers of the second and third century, who speak of it as the tradition *of our Lord and His apostles*, and of *all the ancients* who lived before them; who tell us *the very words* in which it was delivered, *the Scriptures* which were then so interpreted; and say *that it was held by all Christians that were exactly orthodox*. It was received not only in the Eastern parts of the Church, by Papias (in Phrygia), Justin (in Palestine), but by Irenaeus (in Gaul), Nepos (in Egypt), Apollinaris, Methodius (in the West and South), Cyprian, Victorinus (in Germany), by Tertullian (in Africa), Lactantius (in Italy), and Severus, and by the Council of Nice” (about A.D. 323).⁴³

George E. Ladd (*Crucial Questions About The Kingdom of God* [Grand Rapids, Eerdmans, 1952] 23) forcefully concludes, “With one exception [Caius] there is no Church Father before Origen who opposed the millenarian interpretation, and there is no one before Augustine whose extant writings offer a different interpretation of Rev. 20:1-15 than that of a future earthly kingdom consonant with the natural interpretation of language.”⁴⁴

All three of these fathers of the Western church, Cyprian, Hippolytus, and Victorinus, subscribed to the

millenarian doctrine.⁴⁵

Among those who can be cited [in support of chiliasm in the third century] are Cyprian (200-258), Commodian (200-270), Nepos (230-280), Coracion (230-280), Victorinus (240-303), Methodius (250-311), and Lactantius (240-330).⁴⁶

Alas, the solid foundation of literal interpretation was about to suffer a devastating setback in the wedding of Church and state. With *The Rise of Allegorical Interpretation*^[2.7.3] and the accommodation of Christianity by the state, belief in a literal kingdom on earth faded into the long night of unsound interpretation which was to last over a thousand years—all the way to the Reformation. The worldly success of the Church as it came into power did not jibe with an expectation of future Tribulation or the need to await the physical presence of the King to inaugurate the kingdom. The idea arose that the “rod of iron” which was to be Messiah’s rule (Rev. 2:27; 19:15; 20:4) was to be found in the rule of the Church in this present age. Two powerful forces, allegorical interpretation and the state Church, combined to produce a steady decline in the ranks of literal interpreters:

The papacy is a false anticipation of the kingdom during the Church-historical period. “When Christianity became a worldly power under Constantine, the hope of the future was weakened by the joy over present success” [Bengel]. Becoming a harlot, the Church ceased to be a bride going to meet her Bridegroom; thus millennial hopes disappeared.⁴⁷

With the rising popularity of the allegorical method, belief in a literal millennial reign of Christ reached a crossroads in the middle of the third century. The Egyptian bishop Coracion, Neops’s successor, buckled under pressure from Alexandria and abandoned the premillennialism of his mentor . . . And Hippolytus, the pupil of Irenaeus, wavered in his stance as well. . . . By the time the literal method of interpretation reached its apex in the school at Antioch, premillennialism was virtually dead. Even though literalism naturally leads to a belief in premillennialism and the Antiochene school emphasized that interpretive approach to Scripture, the doctrine was not resurrected or advanced by Theodore of Mopsuestia (ca. 350-428), Chrysostom (354-407), or Theodoret (386-458), the school’s three most prominent teachers.⁴⁸

In summary, millenarianism remained a normative doctrine during the first four centuries of the Christian era. It was not overthrown until Augustine brought together the concepts of the Church and the kingdom of Christ in such a way as to almost equivocate the two. However, two important factors had already set the stage for the transformation of the eschatological hope of a *messianic kingdom*^[5.2.39] into an ecclesiastical *theocracy*^[5.2.76]. Since the time of Justin, the prospect of an earthly messianic kingdom had become an altogether **Christian hope**, to the exclusion of **ethnic Israel’s** eschatological hope. The other factor was the widespread use made of **allegorical interpretation** of Scripture. [emphasis added]⁴⁹

It was only in the era of the Reformation (A.D. 1500s), when the darkness of allegorical interpretation began to be shaken off, that the dawn began in a return to a literal understanding of the Scriptures. Even then, sound interpretation was mainly applied to areas of doctrine other than eschatology. The study of “last things” had to wait several hundred more years before the same consistency of interpretation was extended to the study of prophecy.

Below, we offer a sampling of the testimony of the early Church concerning a belief in a literal, earthly Millennial Kingdom to come. Their writings clearly establish the expectation of a Kingdom on earth at Christ’s return as the earliest view of the Church and one which we would do well to embrace since it reflects a plain reading of the text.

The Millennial Voice of the Early Church

Father	Date (A.D.)	Millennial View
Barnabas	1st cent.	“Among the Apostolic Fathers Barnabas is the first and the only one who expressly teaches a pre-millennial reign of Christ on earth. He considers the Mosaic history of the creation a type of six ages of labor for the world, each lasting a thousand years, and of a millennium of rest; since with God ‘one day is as a thousand years.’ The millennial Sabbath on earth will be followed by an eighth and eternal day in a new world, of which the Lord’s Day (called by Barnabas ‘the eighth

Father	Date (A.D.)	Millennial View
		day') is the type." ⁵⁰ While the seventh millennial day theory is not taught in Scripture, it is significant that the basic understanding of this early writing is that of a literal thousand-year reign on earth at the end of the age. ⁵¹
Hippolytus	c.170-c.236 ⁵²	"In common with Justin and Irenaeus, Hippolytus entertains millenarian hopes, which he grounds on Rev. 20." ⁵³
Irenaeus	c.130-c.200 ⁵⁴	"Irenaeus wrote the following concerning the blessings of the future Kingdom of God foretold in the Scriptures: 'The predicted blessing, therefore, belongs unquestionably to the times of the kingdom, when the righteous shall bear rule upon their rising from the dead; when also the creation, having been renovated and set free, shall fructify with an abundance of all kinds of food, from the dew of heaven, and from the fertility of the earth: as the elders who saw John, the disciple of the Lord, related that they had heard from him how the Lord used to teach in regard to these times.' ⁵⁵ "Irenaeus stated in even stronger terms than Justin that the premillennial doctrine was 'traditional orthodoxy.' He spoke of 'certain orthodox person' whose opinions were 'derived from heretical sources,' and asserted that 'they are both ignorant of God's <i>dispensations</i> ^[5.2.15] , and of the mystery of the resurrection of the just, and of the [earthly] kingdom.' ⁵⁶ "Irenaeus, on the strength of tradition from St. John and his disciples, taught that after the destruction of the Roman empire, and the brief raging of antichrist (lasting three and a half years or 1260 days), Christ will visibly appear, will bind Satan, will reign at the rebuilt city of Jerusalem with the little band of faithful confessors and the host of risen martyrs over the nations of the earth, and will celebrate the millennial sabbath of preparation for the eternal glory of heaven; then, after a temporary liberation of Satan, follows the final victory, the general resurrection, the judgment of the world, and the consummation in the new heavens and the new earth." ⁵⁷
Jerome	331-420 ⁵⁸	Jerome was opposed to a literal, earthly kingdom: "The saints will in no wise have an earthly kingdom, but only a celestial one; thus must cease the fable of one thousand years." ⁵⁹ Even so, Jerome admitted the premillennial view was held by many: "The evidence in favor of the general perpetuation of the doctrine is strengthened by the concessions of those who were among the first and most bitter opposers. Thus e.g. Jerome (<i>Com. on Jes.</i> , 19:10), says: 'that he durst not condemn the (<i>Millennial</i>) doctrine, because many ecclesiastical persons and martyrs affirm the same.' ⁶⁰
Justin Martyr	c.100-165 ⁶¹	"But I and whoever are at all points right-minded Christians know that there will be a resurrection of the dead a thousand years in Jerusalem which will then be built, adorned, enlarged as the prophets Ezekiel and Isaiah and the others declare. And further, a certain man among us by the name of John predicted by revelation that was made to him that those who believe in our Christ would spend a thousand years in Jerusalem and thereafter the general of us. . . the eternal resurrection and judgement of all men would likewise take place." ⁶²
Lactantius	240-c.320 ⁶³	"Lactantius wrote. . . 'At the end of the six thousandth year, all evil be abolished from the earth, and that justice reign for a thousand years,

Father	Date (A.D.)	Millennial View
		and that there be tranquility and rest from the labors which the world is now enduring for so long. . . When He shall have destroyed injustice and made the great judgment and restored to life those who were just from the beginning, He will stay among men for a thousand years and will rule them with a just dominion. . . Then those who will be living in bodies will not die, but will generate an infinite multitude during those same thousand years, . . . Those who will be raised from the dead will be in charge of the living as judges. . . . At this same time, also, the prince of demons who is the contriver of all evils [<i>sic</i>] will be found in chains, and he will be in custody for the thousand years.’ ” ⁶⁴
Papias	c.60-c.130 ⁶⁵	“[Papias] has recorded other accounts as having come to him from unwritten tradition, certain strange parables of the Lord and teachings of his and some other statements of a more mythical character. . . . Among other things he says that there will be a period of a thousand years after the resurrection of the dead when the kingdom of Christ will be set up in material form on this earth. These ideas, I suppose, he got through a misunderstanding of the apostolic accounts, not realizing that the things recorded in figurative language were spoken by them mystically—Eusebius, <i>Church History</i> 3:39.” ⁶⁶
Tertullian	c.160-c.220 ⁶⁷	“In a work which he wrote before his association with Montanism, Tertullian stated, ‘But we do confess that a kingdom is promised to us upon the earth, although before heaven, only in another state of existence; inasmuch as it will be after the resurrection for a thousand years.’ Then he wrote ‘After its thousand years are over. . . there will ensue the destruction of the world and the conflagration of all things at the judgments.’ ” ⁶⁸ “Tertullian was an enthusiastic Chiliast, and pointed not only to the Apocalypse, but also to the predictions of the <i>Montanist</i> ^[5.2.42] prophets. But the Montanists substituted Pepuza in Phrygia for Jerusalem, as the centre of Christ’s reign, and ran into fanatical excesses, which brought chiliasm into discredit, and resulted in its condemnation by several synods in Asia Minor.” ⁶⁹
Victorinus	died c.304 ⁷⁰	“Victorinus held firmly by the chiliastic interpretation of Rev. 20.” ⁷¹ “After Tertullian, and independently of Montanism, chiliasm was taught by Commodian towards the close of the third century, Lactantius, and Victorinus of Petau, at the beginning of the fourth.” ⁷²

4.11.10 - Additional Resources on the Millennial Kingdom

For those who are interested in studying the *Millennial Kingdom*^[5.2.39] in greater depth, we recommend the following resources:

- Lewis S. Chafer, *Major Bible Themes*, 350-359.⁷³
- Lewis S. Chafer, *Systematic Theology*, 4:167-179.⁷⁴
- Clarence Larkin, *Dispensational*^[5.2.15] *Truth*, 92-96.⁷⁵
- Clarence Larkin, *The Book of Revelation*, 180-191.⁷⁶
- J. Dwight Pentecost, *Things to Come: A Study in Biblical Eschatology*, 427-546.⁷⁷
- George H. N. Peters, *The Theocratic Kingdom*.⁷⁸

- Charles C. Ryrie, *Basic Theology*, 508-511.⁷⁹
- John F. Walvoord, *The Millennial Kingdom*.⁸⁰
- Matthew Waymeyer, *Revelation 20 and the Millennial Debate*.⁸¹
- Nathaniel West, *The Thousand Years in both Testaments*.⁸²

See *The Arrival of God's Kingdom*^[2.4.3]. See *Millennial Temple*^[4.16.5.10]. See commentary on *Revelation 20*^[3.20].

Notes

- ¹ Clarence Larkin, *Dispensational Truth* (Glenside, PA: Rev. Clarence Larkin Estate, 1918, 1920), 92.
- ² Copyright ©003 Ariel Ministries (www.ariel.org), P.O. Box 3723, Tustin, CA 92781. This image appears by *special permission*^[1.3] and may not be duplicated for use in derivative works. [Arnold G. Fruchtenbaum, *The Footsteps of Messiah*, rev ed. (Tustin, CA: Ariel Ministries, 2003), 2].
- ³ For an excellent introductory overview of these views and their variations, see [John F. Walvoord, *The Revelation of Jesus Christ* (Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 1966), 282-290].
- ⁴ “Amillennialism today is divided into two camps. (1) The first . . . holds essentially to the Augustinian amillennialism, . . . This of course is also the view of the Roman Church. It finds the fulfillment of all the Old Testament promises concerning a kingdom and kingdom blessings in Christ’s reign from the Father’s throne over the church, which is on earth. (2) The second . . . attacked the Augustinian position that the kingdom is earthly and viewed the kingdom as God’s reign over the saints which are in heaven, thus making it a heavenly kingdom.”—J. Dwight Pentecost, *Things to Come: A Study in Biblical Eschatology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1958), 387.
- ⁵ W. A. Criswell, and Paige Patterson, eds., *The Holy Bible: Baptist Study Edition* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1991), 1825.
- ⁶ Lewis Sperry Chafer, *Major Bible Themes*, rev. ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1974), 352.
- ⁷ Robert E. Lerner, “The Medieval Return to the Thousand-Year Sabbath,” in Richard K. Emmerson and Bernard McGinn, eds., *The Apocalypse in the Middle Ages*, 38-50, cited by [Thomas Ice, and Timothy J. Demy, *The Return* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 1999), 58].
- ⁸ Mal Couch, *Classical Evangelical Hermeneutics* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications), 12-13.
- ⁹ John F. Walvoord, *The Millennial Kingdom* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1959), 200.
- ¹⁰ “A theology which sees the church fulfilling the OT kingdom promises of Israel continually raises the question of how much the church should invade the realm of Caesar’s government.”—Robert L. Saucy, “*Israel and the Church: A Case for Discontinuity*,” in John S. Feinberg, ed., *Continuity And Discontinuity* (Westchester, IL: Crossway Books, 1988), 259.
- ¹¹ Larkin, *Dispensational Truth*, 92.
- ¹² Nathaniel West, *The Thousand Years in both Testaments* (Fincastle, VA: Scripture Truth Book Co., n.d.), 79.
- ¹³ We use the phrase *Biblical covenant* to denote an agreement which Scripture itself calls a “covenant” rather than various imagined covenants which are imposed upon the text by the minds of creative theologians.
- ¹⁴ LaHaye, “*A Literal Millennium as Taught in Scripture, Part 2*,” in Thomas Ice, ed., *Pre-Trib Perspectives*, vol. 8 no. 8 (Dallas, TX: Pre-Trib Research Center, November/December 2003), 2.
- ¹⁵ Many think of the eternal state as *heaven*, but it is both “heaven and earth” (Rev. 21:1).
- ¹⁶ Carl Friedrich Keil, and Franz Delitzsch, *Commentary on the Old Testament* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2002), 7:624.
- ¹⁷ “In the Premillennial view the coming Kingdom becomes the consummating link between history and the eternal order, thus guarding the Church from either illusion or despair as regards the present life.”—Alva J. McClain, *The Greatness Of The Kingdom* (Winona Lake, IN: BMH Books, 1959), xii.
- ¹⁸ J. Marcellus Kik, *Revelation Twenty: An Exposition* (Philadelphia, PA: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing

Company, 1955), 30.

- 19 John MacArthur, *Revelation 12-22 : The MacArthur New Testament Commentary* (Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 2000), Rev. 20:1.
- 20 “In Holy Scripture there are two Jerusalems: the one is on earth in the land of Palestine; the other is ‘above’ in heaven (Gal. 4:25-26; Heb. 12:22). Now the Old Testament prophets speak of a city which, in the coming Kingdom, shall be reclaimed from Gentile power, rebuilt, restored to the historic nation of Israel, and made the religious center of the world. This Jerusalem cannot be the ‘heavenly Jerusalem,’ for that city is impeccably holy, the eternal dwelling of the true God, and has never been defiled or marred by human sin and rebellion. Any such notion is to the highest degree impossible and absurd. All predictions of a restored and rebuilt Jerusalem must therefore refer to the historical city of David on earth.”—McClain, *The Greatness Of The Kingdom*, 244.
- 21 “In Matthew 19:28 Jesus declared that ‘the regeneration’ would take place ‘when the Son of man shall sit on the throne of his glory.’ His terminology is significant. It indicates that when Christ, as the Son of man (as a human, a kinsman of mankind) rules the earth, there will be a return to the original state that existed when the earth was born, which is recorded in Genesis and involved mankind’s tenant possession or administration of the earth as God’s representative. Christ taught that He will begin to exercise that rule when He returns in glory with His holy angels (Mtt. 25:31). . . . Peter declared that ‘the times of refreshing’ and ‘the times of the restitution of all things’ will come when God sends Christ back to be personally present on the earth. . . . F. F. Bruce wrote that ‘the restitution’ to which Peter referred in Acts 3:21 ‘appears to be identical with’ ‘the regeneration’ to which Jesus referred in Matthew 19:28, and that the restoration involved will include ‘a renovation of all nature.’ ”—Renald E. Showers, *Maranatha, Our Lord Come* (Bellmawr, NJ: The Friends of Israel Gospel Ministry, 1995), 86-87.
- 22 This passage in Isaiah either describes the *regeneration* of the heavens and earth (cf. Mtt. 19:28) since it precedes the description of the millennium which follows, or Isaiah saw the final heavens and earth and the millennium (Rev. 21:1), but the order of their presentation in this passage is reversed.
- 23 Some believe that only unbelievers will die during the Millennial Kingdom: “Death in the millennium will be for unbelievers only. This is why the Bible does not speak of a resurrection of millennial saints, and why the resurrection of the tribulation saints is said to complete the first resurrection (Revelation 20:4-6).”—LaHaye, “*A Literal Millennium as Taught in Scripture, Part 4*,” in Thomas Ice, ed., *Pre-Trib Perspectives*, vol. 8 no. 10 (Dallas, TX: Pre-Trib Research Center, February 2004), 2.
- 24 “Some allege that the Millennial Kingdom cannot be a spiritual one if it is earthly. But ‘earthly’ and ‘spiritual’ are not necessarily mutually exclusive. If the two concepts were incompatible, Christians today could not be expected to live spiritual lives in earthly bodies. During the millennium, God will join the spiritual and the earthly in a full display of His glory on this earth. The earthly kingdom will manifest the highest standards of spirituality.”—Charles C. Ryrie, *Basic Theology* (Wheaton, IL: SP Publications, 1986), 510.
- 25 “The area of the present *Temple*^[5.2.73] Compound is not large enough to hold the Temple described by Ezekiel and will require some major geographical changes. That is why the new Mountain of Jehovah’s House will be necessary.”—Fruchtenbaum, *The Footsteps of Messiah*, 457.
- 26 “The whole Bible, even the New Testament, is written by Jews. If revelation is to recommence in the millennial kingdom, converted Israel must stand at the head of humanity. In a religious point of view, Jews and Gentiles stand on an equal footing as both alike needing mercy; but as regards God’s instrumentalities for bringing about His kingdom on earth, Israel is His chosen people for executing His plans.”—A. R. Fausset, “*The Revelation of St. John the Divine*,” in Robert Jamieson, A. R. Fausset, and David Brown, *A Commentary, Critical and Explanatory, on the Old and New Testaments* (Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc., 1997, 1877), Rev. 20:6.
- 27 But not for salvific purposes. See *Millennial Sacrifices*^[4.16.5.10.2].
- 28 “Here not only giving the millennial nations ‘cleansed’ or ‘purified’ lips, as regenerated peoples, but apparently also in the sense that ‘lip’ signifies ‘language’ (Gen. 11:1, 6-7, 9), and possibly indicating that the Hebrew language will be the one universal language of the Kingdom age (Zec. 14:9). That would be not all that surprising, since Israel will be the chief nation in that economy (Deu. 28:13) and Jerusalem in that day will be the religious and governmental capital of the millennial earth (Isa. 2:2-3; Zec. 8:20-23). Moreover, it is all the more probable since the judgment of the nations at the second advent will eventuate in the destruction of the satanic world system . . . That system had its beginning in ancient Babylon with its pride, idolatry, and rebellion (Gen. 10:8-10; 11:1-6). The gift of a pure speech will remove the curse of Babel, and it will anticipate the great millennial outpouring of the Spirit (Joel 2:28-32), of which Pentecost (Acts 2:1-11) was an illustration.”—Merrill F. Unger, *Unger's Commentary on the Old Testament* (Chattanooga, TN: AMG Publishers, 2002), Zep. 3:9.

- 29 How does the amillennialist get around these logical contradictions to believe He reigns as described here *now*? It's simple really. In Biblical interpretation, you can make two wrongs *appear* to be right. Just redefine *Israel* to mean *Church*—which dwells safely in her Saviour's promises—and you are well on your way to “making it work out.” This is perhaps the most serious danger of amillennialism: in the pursuit of its desired interpretation, it ignores the law of logical non-contradiction and simply contorts contrary evidence into supportive evidence.
- 30 “The princes who shall rule in justice prefigure those who will rule and reign with Christ in the coming Kingdom (Luke 22:30; 2Ti. 2:12; Rev. 2:26-27; 3:21).”—Unger, *Unger's Commentary on the Old Testament*, Isa. 32:1.
- 31 Pentecost, *Things to Come: A Study in Biblical Eschatology*, 491-492.
- 32 McClain, *The Greatness Of The Kingdom*, 513.
- 33 See [George H. N. Peters, *The Theocratic Kingdom* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 1978, 1884), 2:352-361].
- 34 Jerome Smith, *The New Treasury of Scripture Knowledge* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1992), Acts 24:10.
- 35 “The plural ‘thrones’ (seats) has in view the bench of judges whose authority derives from the king (cf. Isa. 32:1). In the millennial Kingdom these seats will be occupied by co-rulers of the Messiah (Mtt. 19:28).”—Unger, *Unger's Commentary on the Old Testament*, Ps. 22:5.
- 36 It may be that there is no *sun*, *moon*, or *birth* in the eternal state, but see commentary on *Revelation 21:23*^[3.21.23] and *Revelation 22:2*^[3.22.2].
- 37 Charles C. Ryrie, *Come Quickly, Lord Jesus* (Eugene, OR: Harvest House Publishers, 1996), 87-88.
- 38 Walvoord, *The Millennial Kingdom*, 243.
- 39 Ryrie, *Come Quickly, Lord Jesus*, 89.
- 40 Philip Schaff, and David Schley Schaff, *History of the Christian Church* (Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, 1997, 1916), 2.XII.158.
- 41 Larry V. Crutchfield, “*Revelation in the New Testament*,” in Mal Couch, ed., *A Bible Handbook to Revelation* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 2001), 24.
- 42 Larry V. Crutchfield, “*Millennial Views of the Church Fathers*,” in Mal Couch, ed., *Dictionary of Premillennial Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 1996), 256.
- 43 Peters, *The Theocratic Kingdom*, 1:482-483.
- 44 James F. Stitzinger, “*The Rapture in Twenty Centuries of Biblical Interpretation*,” in Richard L. Mayhue, ed., *The Master's Seminary Journal*, vol. 13 no. 2 (Sun Valley, CA: The Master's Seminary, Fall 2002), 153n19.
- 45 Mal Couch, ed., *A Bible Handbook to Revelation* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 2001), 27.
- 46 Walvoord, *The Millennial Kingdom*, 123.
- 47 Fausset, “*The Revelation of St. John the Divine*,” Rev. 20:5.
- 48 Crutchfield, “*Millennial Views of the Church Fathers*,” 258.
- 49 Ronald E. Diprose, *Israel and the Church: The Origin and Effects of Replacement Theology* (Rome, Italy: Istituto Biblico Evangelico Italiano, 2000), 159.
- 50 Schaff, *History of the Christian Church*, 2.XII.158.
- 51 “The tradition was based on : (1) the six days of creation followed by a seventh day of rest (Gen. 2); (2) the Sabbath rest concept found in Hebrews (see Heb. 3:11; 4:1, 3, 5, 8-9, 11); and (3) the belief that in biblical chronology a day could represent a thousand years (2Pe. 3:8; Ps. 90:4). Many of the fathers understood these passages to teach by analogy and in prophetic symbolism that the world would endure for a period of six thousand years (represented by six days of Creation) and would then experience a seventh day of rest (represented by seventh day of rest following Creation). . . . While the year-day tradition was held by Jews and others before the church age, the Epistle of Barnabas (composed ca. A.D. 70/117-138) marked the beginning of the year-day tradition in Christian literature.”—Larry V. Crutchfield, “*Millennial Year-Day Tradition*,” in Mal Couch, ed., *Dictionary of Premillennial Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 1996), 265.

- 52 Robert C. Walton, *Chronological and Background Charts of Church History* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1986).
- 53 Henry Barclay Swete, *The Apocalypse of St. John* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 1998, 1906), cciv.
- 54 John D. Woodbridge, ed., *Great Leaders of the Christian Church* (Chicago, IL: Houghton Mifflin, 1993), 43.
- 55 Renald E. Showers, *There Really Is a Difference! A Comparison of Covenant and Dispensational Theology* (Bellmawr, NJ: Friends of Israel Gospel Ministry, 1990), 122.
- 56 Couch, *A Bible Handbook to Revelation*, 24.
- 57 Schaff, *History of the Christian Church*, 2.XII.158.
- 58 [Woodbridge, *Great Leaders of the Christian Church*, 77]. The opposition of Jerome correlates to his relatively later date in history, when allegorical interpretation was gaining dominance.
- 59 Jerome in Robert E. Lerner, "The Medieval Return to the Thousand-Year Sabbath," in Richard K. Emmerson and Bernard McGinn, eds., *The Apocalypse in the Middle Ages*, pp. 38-50, cited in [Ice, *The Return*, 58].
- 60 Peters, *The Theocratic Kingdom*, 1:484.
- 61 Walton, *Chronological and Background Charts of Church History*.
- 62 Alexander Roberts, James Donaldson, and A. Cleveland Coxe, *Ante-Nicene Fathers Vol. I* (Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, 1997), 1.LXXX.239.
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- 66 J. B. Lightfoot, and J. R. Harmer, *The Apostolic Fathers*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1989), 315.
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- 73 Chafer, *Major Bible Themes*, 350-359.
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- 75 Larkin, *Dispensational Truth*, 92-96.
- 76 Clarence Larkin, *The Book of Revelation* (Glenside, PA: Rev. Clarence Larkin Estate, 1919), 180-191.
- 77 Pentecost, *Things to Come: A Study in Biblical Eschatology*, 427-546.
- 78 Peters, *The Theocratic Kingdom*.
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4.12 – Nero

Among those who seek to relegate the events of the book of Revelation to the distant past, no figure is more often held to be the *Beast*^[4.2] of Revelation than the Roman Emperor *Nero*^[5.2.46]. For those who ascribe to the *Golden Rule of Interpretation*^[5.2.24], this may seem surprising. How could it be said with all seriousness that Nero fulfills the many details given concerning the *Beast*^[5.2.9] throughout Scripture? A simple reading of Scripture gives numerous aspects of this man which Nero fails to fulfill.

*Caesar Nero*¹



Ignoring the rest of Scripture for the moment, the book of Revelation alone reveals the following aspects concerning the Beast:

- Literally killed and resurrected (Rev. 13:3, 8; 17:8, 11).
- Prevails for precisely 42 months (Rev. 13:5).
- Globally rules over *every* tribe, nation, and tongue (Rev. 13:7).
- Has a high-profile accomplice who performs literal miracles (Rev. 13:13).
- An *image of the Beast*^[5.2.29] is given the breath of life (Rev. 13:15).
- Buying and selling are precluded except through identification with the Beast (Rev. 13:17).
- Gathers with other kings to wage war against God (Rev. 19:19).
- Captured and cast *alive* into the Lake of Fire by Christ (Rev. 19:20). (Nero committed suicide in A.D. 68.²)
- Receives global worship (Rev. 13:3).

Outside of the book of Revelation, many more things are said of this figure. Here we mention Paul's comments to show the utter unsuitability of Nero as the fulfillment of the Beast:

Let no one deceive you by any means; for *that Day will not come* unless the falling away comes first, and the man of sin is revealed, the son of perdition, who opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God or that is worshiped, **so that he sits as God in the temple of God**, showing himself that he is God. (2Th. 2:3-4) [emphasis added]

It simply will not do to try and make the “son of perdition” be some other figure such as the Jewish high priest because this person, like the Beast, is the one exalted and worshiped above all else. And when did Nero “sit as God in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God”? Not an *image*, not a *proclamation or edict*, but **the live man sitting in the Holy of Holies?**

Since it seems plain from a straightforward reading of Scripture that the Beast is a figure yet future, how is it that *preterists*^[5.2.59] find Nero to fill the bill? The answer, once again, is *hermeneutics*^[5.2.26], *the art and science of interpretation*^[2.7.2]. By ignoring the details in the Word of God, the preterists are

able to “shoe horn” Nero into what they believe is a fulfillment of these prophecies. They simply refuse to read the text in its literal sense because they are motivated to move the future back to the past and Nero provides their best chance of doing so.

In the ensuing discussion, we would ask the reader to notice a key weakness of those who argue for a Neronic fulfillment of the Beast passages of the book of Revelation. They *place great emphasis on similarities which are lacking in objectivity* or are subject to widely different possibility of fulfillment while *minimizing objective details given in the text* which simply do not fit Nero. Anyone who attempts to identify the Beast based primarily on numeric calculations concerning his name (*gematria*^[5.2.21]) while paying relatively little attention to the details of the text is headed for trouble.

4.12.1 - Revival Myth

Nero^[5.2.46] was admittedly a very evil man. His infamy is well known. Apparently, some time after his death, a superstitious belief arose that he came back to life.³ This myth is then thought to be the subject of the passages which record that the *Beast*^[5.2.9] will be killed and revived (Rev. 13:3, 8; 17:8, 11).

While this might sound like an amazing correlation at first, the idea has some major problems:

1. If the Nero revival *myth* is what is recorded in the book of Revelation, then God’s Word is based on pagan untruths.
2. The book of Revelation records a *successful* revival, whereas Nero has not risen.
3. It is unlikely there would have been sufficient time for Nero to die, for the myth to arise, and to have it recorded by John all prior to A.D. 70—the date by which Nero advocates have to have the book written. “Some commentators argue that some passages in Revelation reflect a ‘revival of Nero’ myth, especially 13:3-4 and 17:8, 11, which speak of the demise of the beast and subsequent revival. The Nero myth held that Nero would return from the dead and lead a Parthian army against the Roman Empire. If these texts reflect the myth, then Revelation is better dated later than earlier, since presumably it took time for the myth to arise, develop, and circulate after Nero’s death in 68 AD.”⁴
4. Those in the early church who were most intimately connected with the time of Nero know nothing of the supposed relevance of the myth. “*Irenaeus*^[5.2.34], who was the disciple of *Polycarp*^[5.2.55], who in turn was the disciple of John, had no knowledge of the Nero Redivivus Myth. Because Nero has never returned from the dead and never will, the theory that John refers to the Nero Redivivus Myth in Revelation 13:3, 14 ‘ascribes to John a **false prophecy** based upon a silly superstition.’ ” [emphasis added]⁵
5. The Beast receives worship *because of his revival from the dead* . Those who suggest Nero is the Beast fail to account for the clear indication of Scripture that worship of the Beast is in reaction to his miraculous restoration (Rev. 13:3-4, 12). Nero never received global worship nor was he revived. Any worship he may have received did not follow a restoration to life as so clearly portrayed by the book of Revelation.

4.12.2 - The Number of the Beast

The book of Revelation states the following concerning the *number of the Beast*^[5.2.9]

He causes all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and slave, to receive a mark on their right hand or on their foreheads, and that no one may buy or sell except one who has the mark or the name of the beast, or the number of his name. Here is wisdom. Let him who has understanding calculate the number of the beast, for it is the number of a man: His number *is* six hundred and sixty-six. (Rev. 13:16-18)

John states that the Beast has a number associated with his name and that he “who has understanding” may calculate the “number of the beast” which is “the number of a man,” the infamous “666.”

4.12.2.1 - Gematria

Most who have studied this puzzling passage connect the calculation with the practice known as

gematria^[5.2.21] where different letters of an alphabet are assigned different sequential numeric values so that words then derive a value equal to the sum of the values associated with their individual characters.

With the late Jews and the Greeks the letters of the alphabet were used to denote numbers; a name then could be given enigmatically in the sum of the numbers denoted by its several letters. Thus in Gen. 14:14 the number 318 was taken by the rabbis to denote Eliezer; the numbers denoted by the respective letters of that name added together form this sum. The Christian Sibylline I. 324 ff. uses 888 for the name Ἰησοῦς [*Iēsous*], Jesus.⁶

4.12.2.2 - Nero Caesar = 666?

Advocates of *Nero*^[5.2.46] as the *Beast*^[5.2.9] make much of the fact that two variations of the Hebrew spelling of “Caesar Nero” result in the two different values found in textual variants for the number of the Beast.⁷

This solution reached in the earlier part of the last century independently by a number of scholars (Fritzsche, Benary, Hitzig, Reuss) meets the conditions of the problem so exactly that it is accepted by most scholars of the present day. It’s correctness is supported by the fact that if the proper name be written Νέρω [*Nerō*], נרנ [nrw], that is, without the final consonant as in the Latin form *Nero*, the number 616 is obtained instead of 666, and thus is explained the variant reading found in some Mss.⁸

4.12.2.3 - A Lock almost any Key will Turn

At first glance, this is impressive. But only if one ignores all of the other more objective details given as to the character and ministry of the *Beast*^[5.2.9] which *Nero*^[5.2.46] falls far short of. Unfortunately, as many who have followed the sensational speculation of our own times concerning this matter are well aware, *gematria*^[5.2.21] is simply not reliable as a major indicator as to the identity of the Beast. There are simply too many degrees of freedom for making names or titles fit.

G. Salmon has developed three rules that have been used throughout the centuries for making any desired name equal 666. His rules are appropriate for the attempts by *preterists*^[5.2.59] to make Nero fit the number of the Beast: “First, if the proper name by itself will not yield it, add a title; secondly, if the sum cannot be found in Greek, try Hebrew, or even Latin; thirdly, do not be too particular about the spelling. . . . **We cannot infer much from the fact that a key fits the lock if it is a lock in which almost any key will turn.**” [emphasis added]⁹

in transliterating a foreign word into Hebrew, there is considerable latitude in including, omitting, or varying vowel letters. What’s more, there are three possible Hebrew equivalents [*samek*, *sin*, and *shin*] for the Greek letter for “s.”¹⁰

This flexibility of *gematria* is evident in the many suggestions which have been put forth as possible matches for the “666” calculation of the Beast.

Throughout church history, the gematric method has been used to identify the beast as Teitan, Lateinos, Julius Caesar, Domitian, Vespasian, Caligula, the *Nicolaitans*^[5.2.47], and the German Kaisers. Johnson notes that “the sheer disagreement and confusion created through the years by the *gematria* method should have long ago warned the church that it was on the wrong track.” Such confusion probably exists because the meaning of the number may not be evident until the *Antichrist*^[5.2.3] appears. Thus the best approach is to avoid all guessing and allow God to give the understanding when it is needed.¹¹

Beckwith also lists a number of historical figures who have been seen as fulfilling the *gematria* of Rev. 13:18: Mohammed, Pope Benedict IX, Luther, Titan, Latinus, Gaius Caesar (Caligula), Caesar of Rome (requires the reading 616), Caesar of the Romans, Trajan, Hadrian, Trajan, Vespasian.¹²

The relative ease with which various names of history can be made to add up to 666 renders the match for Nero inconsequential. “*Gematria* is not a *means* by which the name is to be discovered; but it will be a *test* and a *proof* by which the name may be identified after the person is revealed.”¹³ *Gematria* cannot be the main point of evidence in any identity of the Antichrist, because “probably the names of about one in every 10,000 people will total 666. This identification is not in itself a sure test.”¹⁴

See commentary on *Revelation 13:18*^[3.13.18].

4.12.2.4 - Revealed Too Late

What is especially odd about this assertion that Nero^[5.2.46]'s name fulfills the *gematria*^[5.2.21] for 666 is that Neronian advocates are also those who hold the view that the book of Revelation is almost entirely about first-century events of significance to the time of Nero and John's immediate readership.

However, this solution of Nero's name for the number of the *Beast*^[5.2.9] was unknown by John's very audience as evidenced by those who followed closely on their heels. "The name of Nero was apparently never suggested by the ancient commentators, even though his persecuting zeal made him a model of the *Antichrist*^[5.2.3]."¹⁵

Irenaeus^[5.2.34] has only uncertain guesses to offer, and he thinks the Apocalyptist intended the name to remain hidden till Antichrist should come. The language, however, implies that it is discoverable by those who have the requisite wisdom; and the command, 'let him that hath understanding calculate the number,' shows that the author expects some to solve the enigma.¹⁶

Irenaeus understood Antichrist to be a future figure and interprets numerous passages much like *futurist interpreters*^[2.12.5] of our own time:

And again, speaking of Antichrist, [Paul] says, "who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped [2Th. 2:4]." He points out here those who are called gods, by such as know not God, that is, idols. For the Father of all is called God, and is so; and **Antichrist shall be lifted up**, not above Him, but above those which are indeed called gods, but are not.—Irenaeus, *Against Heresies*, iii.vi [emphasis added]¹⁷

Concerning men who suggested the number of the beast was 616, Irenaeus wrote in support of the value 666 and indicated that he expected the Antichrist to be a figure *future* to his day:¹⁸

These men, therefore, ought to learn [what really is the state of the case], and go back to the true number of the name, that they be not reckoned among false prophets. But, knowing the sure number declared by Scripture, that is, six hundred sixty and six, let them await, in the first place, the division of the kingdom into ten; then, in the next place, when these kings are reigning, and beginning to set their affairs in order, and advance their kingdom, [let them learn] to acknowledge that **he who shall come** claiming the kingdom for himself, and shall terrify those men of whom we have been speaking, having a name containing the aforesaid number, is truly the abomination of desolation. . . . It is therefore more certain, and less hazardous, to **await the fulfilment of the prophecy**, than to be making surmises, and casting about for any names that may present themselves, inasmuch as many names can be found possessing the number mentioned. . . . But **when this Antichrist shall have devastated all things in this world, he will reign for three years and six months, and sit in the temple at Jerusalem; and then the Lord will come from heaven in the clouds, in the glory of the Father, sending this man and those who follow him into the lake of fire**; but bringing in for the righteous the times of the kingdom, that is, the rest, the hallowed seventh day; and restoring to Abraham the promised inheritance, in which kingdom the Lord declared, that "many coming from the east and from the west should sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob."—Irenaeus, *Against Heresies*, v.xxx [emphasis added]¹⁹

For **when he (Antichrist) is come**, and of his own accord concentrates in his own person the apostasy, and accomplishes whatever he shall do according to his own will and choice, sitting also in the temple of God, so that his dupes may adore him as the Christ; wherefore also shall he deservedly "be cast into the lake of fire:" [this will happen according to divine appointment], God by His prescience foreseeing all this, and **at the proper time sending such a man**, "that they may believe a lie, that they all may be judged who did not believe the truth, but consented to unrighteousness;" whose coming John has thus described in the Apocalypse: "And the beast which I had seen was like unto a leopard, and his feet as of a bear, and his mouth as the mouth of a lion; and the dragon conferred his own power upon him, and his throne, and great might. And one of his heads was as it were slain unto death; and his deadly wound was healed, and all the world wondered after the beast. And they worshipped the dragon because he gave power to the beast; and they worshipped the beast, saying, Who is like unto this beast, and who is able to make war with him?"—Irenaeus, *Against Heresies*, v.xxviii.2 [emphasis added]²⁰

Justin Martyr^[5.2.36] did not believe Nero to be the Antichrist, but expected a future figure who would be destroyed at the second advent of Christ. In his *Dialogue of Justin*, Justin Martyr cites Daniel 7:9-28 as a Second Coming passage which describes the destruction of the beast at the *future* arrival of

Jesus.²¹

The “Teaching of the Twelve” (*The Didache*) written in approximately 70 A.D.²² knows nothing of Nero as the Beast, instead, in concert with Irenaeus, reflecting the *futurist interpretation*^[2.12.5].

For as lawlessness increases, they will hate and persecute and betray one another. And then the deceiver of the world will appear as a son of God and ‘will perform signs and wonders,’ and the earth will be delivered into his hands, and he will commit abominations the likes of which have never happened before. (5) Then all humankind will come to the fiery test, and “many will fall away” and perish.²³

The unfortunate reality of taking Nero as the Beast is that no believer of his time proved wise enough to benefit from the clues given by God, *even those who lived during the persecution of the Beast*. Thus, God’s Word failed to aid the church until it became obvious to the Church *some 1800 years after the threat the passage was meant to identify had come and gone*.

The Neronic gematric calculation was not even suggested as a solution until Fritzsche first proposed it in 1831. If the *preterist*^[5.2.59] interpretation of Revelation 13:18 is accurate, then the discovery of 666 as a prophecy concerning Nero was made roughly 1,800 years too late to assist John’s original audience. Smith summarizes the issue well by noting, “If John’s purpose was concealment, certainly he succeeded admirably, for his meaning was hidden not only from the enemies of the church, but from the church itself, for 1800 years. It is simply incredible that if this solution is so simple, and if it was ever known to the church, it should have been absolutely forgotten until our time.”²⁴

But, as already stated in the text, there are serious objections to the Nero-hypothesis: (1) The language and readers of the Apocalypse suggest a Greek rather than a Hebrew explanation of the numerical riddle. (2) The seer clearly distinguishes the beast, as a collective name for the Roman empire (so used also by Daniel), from the seven heads, i.e., kings (βασιλεῖς [*basileis*] or emperors. Nero is one of the five heads who ruled before the date of the Apocalypse. (3) It is difficult to conceive of a reasonable motive for concealing the detested name of Nero after his death. (4) A radical error, such as the belief in the absurd heathen fable of the return of Nero, is altogether incompatible with the lofty character and profound wisdom of the Apocalypse, and would destroy all confidence in its prophecy. If John, as these writers maintain, composed it in 68, he lived long enough to be undecieved, and would have corrected the fatal blunder or withheld the book from circulation. (5) It seems incredible that such an easy solution of the problem should have remained unknown for eighteen centuries and been reserved for the wits of half a dozen rival rationalists in Germany. Truth is truth, and must be thankfully accepted from any quarter and at any time; yet as the Apocalypse was written for the benefit of contemporaries of Nero, one should think that such a solution would not altogether have escaped them. Irenaeus makes no mention of it.²⁵

4.12.2.5 - Spelling and Language

It has also been noted that evidence is lacking that Christian commentators would have employed Hebrew in response to John’s text. “The earliest Christian commentators never looked to a solution in any language other than the Greek. . . . the *Sibylline Oracles*, which is a Jewish document composed in Greek, does its *gematria*^[5.2.21] in Greek rather than Hebrew.”²⁶

Then too, in order for the calculation to work, the Hebrew spelling of Caesar must be *abnormal*. “The *preterists*^[5.2.59]’ calculation is built upon a defective spelling of the word *Caesar*. Preterists rely upon the abnormal spelling *rsq* [Hebrew reads right-to-left], while the usual spelling is *rsyq*. The addition of the *yod* would obviously damage the Neronic gematric calculation.”²⁷ Although such abnormal spelling is attested, it is not the common spelling.

Beale points to other variables which provide additional degrees of freedom to make the calculation conveniently come out.

Identifying the name with *Nero*^[5.2.46] mistakenly assumes a knowledge of Hebrew and of the Hebrew system of gematria among native Greek readers. Furthermore, to choose the name “Caesar Nero” is too convenient for the Neronic dating, since there were many possible titles and names for Nero. Also in transliteration of foreign names into Hebrew there was considerable latitude in treatment of vowels and three possible equivalents for *s* [ש , שׁ , ס]. And why would the author not use a Greek form instead of a Hebrew form?²⁸

Mounce pithily observes, “What is not generally stressed is that this solution asks us to calculate a Hebrew transliteration of the Greek form of a Latin name, and that with a defective spelling.”²⁹

4.12.3 - Failure in Fulfillment

Aside from the more obvious ways in which Nero^[5.2.46] fails to fulfill the passages of Scripture as discussed above, there are other problems with the Neronic *Beast*^[5.2.9].

Those who have studied the emperor cult within the first century have noted that the cult was not fully developed or enforced as early as Nero. “Nero was not deified, though there is some evidence that he wished to be. However, **there was no widespread demand that he be recognized as such.**”

[emphasis added]³⁰ This became more characteristic of the time of Domitian which is the traditional date for the writing of the book of Revelation from Patmos. “It was not until the reign of Domitian that failure to honor the emperor as a god became a political offense and punishable.”³¹

Emperor Domitian Gold Coins³²



Although Nero was famous for vicious persecution of Christians, it has not been shown that this persecution extended beyond the city of Rome and as far away as Asia Minor which would be required by our text (Rev. 2:10, 13). “The first outbreak of persecution by the Roman government was under Nero in AD 74 (Tacitus, *Ann.* xv.44). This organized retaliation was apparently confined to the city of Rome and therefore distinct from the universal persecution envisioned in Revelation.”³³

Beckwith notes that Nero’s career ends before the fall of the Roman empire whereas Revelation describes just the opposite. “Activities and attributes are assigned to him [the Beast] which cannot be predicated of any Roman emperor in his ordinary human personality, as is also a career falling after the destruction of the Roman empire.”³⁴

It is unlikely, however, that these shortcomings will deter the *preterists*^[5.2.59] who are intent on having Nero be the Beast. The reason can be seen in how Chilton interprets the clear biblical declaration concerning the *time* and *manner* that the Beast is to be destroyed:

And I saw the beast, the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against Him who sat on the horse and against His army. Then the beast was captured, and with him the false prophet who worked signs in his presence, by which he deceived those who received the mark of the beast and those who worshiped his image. These two were cast alive into the lake of fire burning with brimstone. (Rev. 19:19-20)

From this passage, we see that the Beast is destroyed *at the Second Coming of Christ* and *cast alive* into the Lake of Fire. Chilton’s exposition of this passage is typical of preterist tendencies to brush aside the details:

The imagery is borrowed from the story of the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah . . . St. John’s point, therefore, **is not to provide a detailed personal eschatology** of the Beast and the *False Prophet*^[5.2.20]; . . . Rather, the Lake of Fire is his **symbolic description** of the utter defeat and complete destruction of these enemies . . . The evil personifications of pagan Rome and apostate Israel are ruined and

overthrown. [emphasis added]³⁵

When interpretation majors on “borrowed imagery, symbolic descriptions, and personifications,” it is conveniently elastic. Notice the preterist tendency to resort to symbolic interpretation when the text precludes a first-century fulfillment. Chilton unintentionally places himself among the company of liberal interpreters who oppose a literal hell. For if the “lake of fire” is symbolic here, why not elsewhere? And perhaps there is no literal Lake of Fire after all?

Literal interpreters who cling to the *Golden Rule of Interpretation*^[5.2.24] and point out the obvious mismatch between the simple declaration of the text and the preterist “fulfillment” are seen as making “much about nothing.” Yet as we said before, the *divine is in the details*. Once again, it can be seen just how important *The Art and Science of Interpretation*^[2.7.2] is when we study the Scriptures. The details concur with Tenney: “One cannot assert that the ‘beast’ is finally to be equated with any single person or power that has yet appeared.”³⁶

4.12.4 - Nero as a Type of the Beast

If Nero^[5.2.46] is related to the *Beast*^[5.2.9] in any way, he is related similarly to Antiochus Epiphanes of the time of the Maccabees. His *character* serves as a biblical “type” foreshadowing the real Beast yet to come. Even then, Nero’s influence on history pales in significance to the final Beast to come.

Another striking character who has been singled out by those who believe that the *Antichrist*^[5.2.3] has already appeared and finished his course, is Nero. And here again there are, admittedly, many striking resemblances between the type and the antitype. In his office of emperor of the Romans; in his awful impiety; in his consuming egotism, in his bloodthirsty nature; and in his ferocious and fiendish persecution of the people of God, we discover some of the very lineaments which will be characteristic of the Wicked One. But again it will be found that this man of infamous memory, Nero, did nothing more than foreshadow that one who shall far exceed him in satanic malignity.³⁷

The dominant thought in the Apocalypticist’s prophecy is not that Nero shall come again, but rather than Antichrist will come, the last and most terrible manifestation of the Beast, embodying a Nero reincarnate and demonized—Antichrist, of whom no more fiendish conception can be formed than that furnished by a Nero revived according to popular fancy, and invested with superhuman power.³⁸

See *The Beast*^[4.2].

Notes

- 1 Image courtesy of Mike McCorkle.
- 2 “According to Suetonius, he stabbed himself in the throat with a dagger. According to another version (recounted by Tacitus and almost certainly fiction) he reached the Greek islands, where the following year (69) the governor of Cythnos (modern Kithnos) recognized him in the guise of a red-haired prophet and leader of the poor, had him arrested, and executed the [death] sentence that had been passed by the Senate”—*Britannica CD 99 Multimedia Edition*, s.v. “Nero.”
- 3 “The Nero *redivivus* tradition [was] recorded by his Roman historian Suetonius (*Nero* 6.57).”—J. Randall Price, “*Historical Problems with Preterism’s Interpretations of Events in A.D. 70*,” in Tim LaHaye, and Thomas Ice, eds., *The End Times Controversy* (Eugene, OR: Harvest House Publishers, 2003), 389.
- 4 Gregory K. Beale, *The Book of Revelation: A Commentary on the Greek Text* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1999), 17.
- 5 Andy Woods, “*Revelation 13 and the First Beast*,” in Tim LaHaye, and Thomas Ice, eds., *The End Times Controversy* (Eugene, OR: Harvest House Publishers, 2003), 240.
- 6 Isbon T. Beckwith, *The Apocalypse of John* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2001), 403.
- 7 A third value is also attested: “666 was not the *gematria*^[5.2.21] used for Ner. 1,005 was.”—Hal Harless, “666: *The Beast and His Mark in Revelation 13*,” in *The Conservative Theological Journal*, vol. 7 no. 22 (Fort Worth, TX: Tyndale Theological Seminary, December 2003), 352.
- 8 Beckwith, *The Apocalypse of John*, 404.

- 9 Mark Hitchcock, “*The Stake in the Heart—The A.D. 95 Date of Revelation*,” in Tim LaHaye, and Thomas Ice, eds., *The End Times Controversy* (Eugene, OR: Harvest House Publishers, 2003), 142.
- 10 Woods, “*Revelation 13 and the First Beast*,” 246.
- 11 Woods, “*Revelation 13 and the First Beast*,” 247.
- 12 Beckwith, *The Apocalypse of John*, 404-405.
- 13 E. W. Bullinger, *Number in Scripture: Its Supernatural Design and Spiritual Significance* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 1967), 282.
- 14 Henry Morris, *The Revelation Record* (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 1983), Rev. 13:18.
- 15 Robert H. Mounce, *The Book of Revelation* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1977), 265.
- 16 Beckwith, *The Apocalypse of John*, 403.
- 17 Alexander Roberts, James Donaldson, and A. Cleveland Coxe, *Ante-Nicene Fathers Vol. I* (Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, 1997), s.v. “ECF 1.1.7.1.3.7.”
- 18 Contrast the passages of Irenaeus below with the bold misrepresentation of his position by F.W. Farrar cited in Chilton: “It is significant that ‘all the earliest Christian writers on the Apocalypse, from **Irenaeus** down . . . connect Nero, or some Roman emperor, with the Apocalyptic Beast.’ There should be no reasonable doubt about this identification.” [emphasis added]—David Chilton, *The Days of Vengeance* (Tyler, TX: Dominion Press, 1987), 351. Let the reader beware: go to the source yourself! [emphasis added]
- 19 Roberts, *Ante-Nicene Fathers Vol. I*, s.v. “ECF 1.1.7.1.5.31.”
- 20 Roberts, *Ante-Nicene Fathers Vol. I*, s.v. “ECF 1.1.7.1.5.29.”
- 21 “But if so great a power is shown to have followed and to be still following the *dispensation*^[5.2.15] of His suffering, how great shall that be which shall follow His glorious advent! For He shall come on the clouds as the Son of man, so Daniel foretold, and His angels shall come with Him. These are the words: ‘I beheld till the thrones were set; and the Ancient of days did sit. . .’—Justin Martyr, *Dialogue*, xxx”—Roberts, *Ante-Nicene Fathers Vol. I*, s.v. “ECF 1.1.6.3.0.31.”
- 22 J. B. Lightfoot, and J. R. Harmer, *The Apostolic Fathers*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1989), 146.
- 23 Lightfoot, *The Apostolic Fathers*, 158.
- 24 Woods, “*Revelation 13 and the First Beast*,” 247.
- 25 Philip Schaff, and David Schley Schaff, *History of the Christian Church* (Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, 1997, 1916), 1.xii.101.
- 26 Woods, “*Revelation 13 and the First Beast*,” 246.
- 27 Woods, “*Revelation 13 and the First Beast*,” 246.
- 28 Beale, *The Book of Revelation: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, s.v. “Nero not Number of Beast.”
- 29 Mounce, *The Book of Revelation*, 264.
- 30 Grant R. Osborne, *Revelation* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2002), 6.
- 31 Mounce, *The Book of Revelation*, 33.
- 32 Copyright ©003 www.BiblePlaces.com. This image appears by *special permission*^[1.3] and may not be duplicated for use in derivative works.
- 33 Mounce, *The Book of Revelation*, 34.
- 34 Beckwith, *The Apocalypse of John*, 397.
- 35 Chilton, *The Days of Vengeance*, 491.
- 36 Merrill C. Tenney, *Interpreting Revelation* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1957), 189.
- 37 Arthur Walkington Pink, *The Antichrist* (Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, 1999, 1923), s.v. “intro.”

³⁸ Beckwith, *The Apocalypse of John*, 408.

4.13 – Nicolaitans

Surprisingly little of substance is known concerning the *Nicolaitans*^[5.2.47] only mentioned in Scripture in the book of Revelation. The Lord commends the Ephesian church for hating the deeds of the Nicolaitans, whereas He has against the church in Pergamos, those who hold to the Nicolaitan teachings which He hates.

There are two main views concerning the identity of the Nicolaitans. The first view holds that they are an early cult which followed or perverted the teachings of Nicolas, one of the seven men chosen by the congregation in Acts 6:5. The second view discounts this historical witness¹ in favor of understanding the designation “Nicolaitan” as denoting the error of their practice which asserted authority over the people in an unnatural distinction between clergy and laity (and which continues to be a distortion of biblical teaching to our own time).²

In favor of the first view is the mention of a cult purportedly related to Nicolas by early members of the church.

Irenaeus^[5.2.34] (Haer. 1.26.3) basically repeats the biblical material, adding the assertion that the Nicolaitans were heretical followers of Nicolaus, the proselyte of Antioch who was chosen to be one of The Seven (Acts 6:5). Hippolytus (Haer. 7.24) underscores Irenaeus, adding that Nicolaus departed from true doctrine. Clement of Alexandria (Str. 2.20) claims that Nicolaus was an ascetic, and then current Nicolaitans were not his true followers because they perverted his teaching that it was necessary to abuse the flesh.³

The importance of these early citations has been questioned because they include precious else about the sect. Yet there is no evidence in the early church of alternate explanations or a challenge to the statements of these men, except to say that the Nicolaitans misrepresented the true teachings of Nicolas.⁴ Perhaps the Nicolaitans distorted the teachings of Nicolas in a similar way that antinomian sects throughout history have distorted Paul’s teaching on liberty?⁵

The relationship which may exist between the mention of the Nicolaitans (Rev. 2:15) in close association with Balaam (Rev. 2:14) has also been noted. The two names (Nicolaitans, Balaam) have very similar meanings in their respective languages: “*Balaam* is derived from two Hebrew words, בָּלַע [Bāla] (‘he swallows’) and אָמ [ām] (‘people’). Interestingly, according to the derivative meanings of the names, the two groups troubling this church [Pergamos] were ‘swallowers of the people’ (i.e., the Balaamites) and ‘conquerors of the people’ (i.e., the Nicolaitans).”⁶ If the similar meaning of their names is significant and their mention in adjoining verses in the letter to Pergamos is intended to show a relationship, then it is thought that the licentious tendencies of the Nicolaitans might be understood in light of the doctrine of Balaam.

Was there, in the first place, any sect existing at the time when these words were uttered, which actually bore this name? I believe not. . . . the key to the right understanding of it is given us at Rev. 2:14-15; where those “*that hold the doctrine of Balaam*” (Rev. 2:14) are evidently identical with those “*that hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitans*” (Rev. 2:15). we are here set upon the right track. . . . it may be observed that his name [Balaam], according to the best etymology, signifies “Destroyer of the people” (. . . from בָּלַע [bela] and אָמ [ām]; and Νικόλαος [Nikolaos] (νικᾶν τὸν λαόν [nikan ton laon]) is no more than a Grecizing of this name . . . The Nicolaitans . . . are the Balaamites . . . those who in the *New Dispensation*^[5.2.15] repeated the sin of Balaam in the Old, and sought to overcome or destroy the people of God by the same temptations whereby Balaam had sought to overcome them before.⁷

After Balaam, who was hired by the Moabite King Balaak (Num. 22:5, Deu. 23:4) to curse Israel failed in his task (Num. 24), he evidently counseled that Israel could be drawn into God’s disfavor by luring them into sexual relationship with the women of Moab (Num. 25:1; 31:16) which would also entice them to worship foreign gods (Num. 25:2). If the Nicolaitan doctrine is a reflection of the doctrine of Balaam, the key may be intermarriage with the heathen leading to compromise and idolatrous worship.⁸ Peter mentions false teachers who are “following the way of Balaam” (2Pe. 2:15). It is said that “by covetousness” these teachers will exploit the church (2Pe. 2:3). They are said to be walking

“according to the flesh in the lust of uncleanness” (2Pe. 2:10) and having “eyes full of adultery” (2Pe. 2:14). This would accord with the libertine aspect of the Nicolaitans mentioned by the early witnesses. It is said that Balaam taught Balaak to influence the Israelites “to eat things sacrificed to idols, and to commit sexual immorality” (Rev. 2:14). How similar this is to the warning given the Gentiles by the Jerusalem council:

Therefore I judge that we should not trouble those from among the Gentiles who are turning to God, but that we write to them to abstain from things polluted by idols, *from* sexual immorality, *from* things strangled, and *from* blood. (Acts 15:19-20)

In both passages a connection is made between *eating meat sacrificed to idols* and *sexual immorality*:

The Jerusalem conference had in its decree brought into juxtaposition the eating of εἰδωλόθυτα [*eidōlothytá*] and indulgence in sexual impurity (Acts 15:20, 27) and John had not lived in a Greek city without becoming aware that the two things were in fact closely bound up together. Pagan festivities were too often occasions of immoralities from which Gentile converts had been rescued with the greatest difficulty.⁹

If the Nicolaitans taught a similar doctrine to Balaam, it most likely urged believers to make a *practical compromise* with the society within which they found themselves. “They taught that Christians ought to remain members of the pagan clubs, and that they might do so without disloyalty to their faith.”¹⁰ How doubly-dangerous is such compromise with the surrounding culture: eroding the sanctification of the believer while simultaneously denigrating the witness of the Church.¹¹

However, the view that this was the doctrine of the Nicolaitans supposes that the mention of the Nicolaitans adjacent to Balaam (Rev. 2:14-15) indicates a similarity of teaching. If this is not the case, then we know virtually nothing specific from Scripture about Nicolaitan practice and beliefs.

Those who discount the historic witness to an actual sect known as the Nicolaitans¹² see the meaning of the name as being a key to understanding their errant teaching.

The meaning of the Greek is “rulers of the people.” This meaning may imply that this was an attempt to divide and make an unnatural distinction between the clergy and laity, creating a division in which the clergy exercised rulership over the laity. Certainly, elders have the biblical authority to determine the policy of the local church. But the authority described here probably went much further than the issues in the local church and may have extended to the personal lives of the members.¹³

If this is the Nicolaitan error, then one only need look at the top-heavy ecclesiastical structures which characterize much of Christendom throughout history to see the sour fruit of such teaching. This is one of many reasons why the doctrine of the priesthood of the believer (2Cor. 3:6; 6:4; 1Pe. 2:5, 9; Rev. 1:6; 5:10; 20:6) is so important for the saints of every age.¹⁴

Notes

- ¹ “In church history there is no record or mention of this group, so clues as to its identity need to be sought elsewhere.”—Arnold G. Fruchtenbaum, *The Footsteps of Messiah*, rev ed. (Tustin, CA: Ariel Ministries, 2003), 51.
- ² “Some have interpreted their name as meaning ‘conquering the people’ from *nikao*, meaning ‘to conquer’ and *laos*, meaning ‘the people.’ This view considers the Nicolaitans as the forerunners of the clerical hierarchy superimposed upon the laity and robbing them of spiritual freedom.”—John F. Walvoord, *The Revelation of Jesus Christ* (Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 1966), 58.
- ³ Duane F. Watson, “*Nicolaitans*,” in David Noel Freeman, ed., *The Anchor Bible Dictionary* (New York, NY: Doubleday, 1996, c1992), 4:1106.
- ⁴ “The explanation that takes the Nicolaitans to be composed of followers of Nicolaus of Antioch has strong support in the early church. Added to Irenaeus are the testimonies of *Tertullian*^[5.2.75], Hippolytus, Dorotheus of Tyre, Jerome, Augustine, *Eusebius*^[5.2.19] and others. They all say this was a sect of licentious antinomian Gnostics who lapsed into their antinomian license because of an overstrained asceticism. Hippolytus adds that Nicolaus was the forerunner of Hymenaeus and Philetus who are condemned in 2Ti. 2:17. . . . The few ancient voices that defend Nicolaus against charges of apostasy raise some questions, but are not sufficient to negate the strain of tradition that traces this sect back to Nicolaus.”—Robert L. Thomas, *Revelation 1-7* (Chicago, IL:

Moody Press, 1992), 148-149.

- 5 “We conclude that Nicolaitanism was an antinomian movement whose antecedents can be traced in the misrepresentation of Pauline liberty, and whose incidence may be connected with the special pressures of emperor worship and pagan society.”—Colin J. Hemer, *The Letters to the Seven Churches of Asia in Their Local Setting* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1989), 94.
- 6 Thomas, *Revelation 1-7*, 189.
- 7 Richard Chenevix Trench, *Commentary on the Epistles to the Seven Churches in Asia* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 1861), 82-83.
- 8 “The doctrine relevant to the downfall resulting from Balaam’s counsel advocates that the people of God commit sexual immorality or intermarry with the heathen and compromise in the matter of idolatrous worship.”—Walvoord, *The Revelation of Jesus Christ*, 68.
- 9 Henry Barclay Swete, *The Apocalypse of St. John* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 1998, 1906), lxxii.
- 10 Swete, *The Apocalypse of St. John*, lxxi.
- 11 A similar example of compromise of relevance to our own day is found in Christians who continue to participate in Masonic orders.
- 12 “The value of Irenaeus’s references to the Nicolaitans is doubtful. The primary passage (*adv. Haer.* 1.26.3) tells us that they followed Nicolaus, one of the seven deacons of Acts 6:5, but adds nothing which might not have been inferred from the Revelation. In a passing remark in 3.11.7 he treats them as the earliest representative of the error of Cerinthus and ascribes to them a *Gnostic*^[5.2.23] cosmology. That however might be an inference from a tradition connecting John’s opponents with the “*gnosis* falsely so called” of 1Ti. 6:20, to which Irenaeus here appears to refer.”—Hemer, *The Letters to the Seven Churches of Asia in Their Local Setting*, s.v. “Irenaeus Questionable on Nicolaitans.”
- 13 Fruchtenbaum, *The Footsteps of Messiah*, 51.
- 14 Old Testament priests *were Levites*. New Testament priests *wear levis!*

4.14 – Rapture

One of the significant things any interpreter of the book of Revelation will notice is the abrupt shift in focus which takes place between chapters three and four. Chapters two and three, which describe “the things which are” (Rev. 1:19), are focused entirely on the *Church*. Then, abruptly, chapter four opens, John ascends to heaven “in the Spirit,” and the Church is no longer mentioned until the close of the book. This shift in focus and absence of all mention of the Church would in itself be somewhat remarkable. But when it is combined with what Scripture elsewhere teaches concerning the character and destiny of the Church, it provides additional evidence that the Church will not be present on the earth during the events of Revelation 4 through Revelation 19, including the period of the *tribulation*^[2.13.1].

Twenty-four verses in the book of Revelation refer to the church. . . . Twenty of the 24 verses refer to the church in the present church age (Rev. 1:4, 11, 20; 2:1, 7, 8, 11, 12, 17, 18, 23, 29; 3:1, 6, 7, 13, 14, 22; 22:16, 17). Two verses refer to the church in the marriage of the Lamb, which will take place *in heaven*, not on the earth (Rev. 19:7, 8). Two verses refer to the church in the eternal state (Rev. 21:2, 9). It is important to note that there are no references to the church *on the earth* in chapters 4 through 18, the chapters relating specifically to the 70th week of Daniel 9, including the seals, trumpets, and bowls.¹

The church is mentioned 17 times in the first three chapters of Revelation, but after John (a member of the church) is called up to heaven at the beginning of chapter 4, he looks down on the events of the Tribulation, and the church is not mentioned or seen again until chapter 19, when she returns to the earth with her Bridegroom at His glorious appearing. Why? The answer is obvious: *She isn't in the Tribulation*. She is raptured to be with her Lord before it begins!²

In our day, the *Rapture*^[5.2.62] has come under attack by many. Some think it represents the novel teachings of “defeatist Christians.” Others think it is pure fantasy. Still others seem to savor the idea of the Church going through the events of the Tribulation in order to “prove her metal” or refine her. We find it difficult to understand why there is such opposition *by Christians* to the idea that the bridegroom would come for His bride prior to pouring forth His wrath (John 14:1-3)?

If the Church is to come through the tribulation judgments that are to come upon the earth, then, say it plainly, there is no blessed hope in the Bible.³

So determined, however, are many not to have this blessed hope, or even to allow others to have it, that they would rather hold that this “great and terrible day of the Lord” is our only “hope” and (!) thus be driven to interpret the “thief” [Rev. 3:3] or Christ coming as a friend to fetch us away as he *steals* precious jewels. And this is done in the face of the opposite statement in 1 Thessalonians 5:4, that day shall “not come as a thief” on the church. . . . this thief is to be watched *against*: but Christ is to be watched *for*!⁴

Our treatment of the subject here is not intended to be exhaustive by any means—this is a commentary on the book of Revelation, not a book on the Rapture. However, the Rapture is an important aspect of understanding the Revelation given by John and especially the *nature*^[2.4] and *purpose*^[2.3] of the Tribulation period which it describes. In what follows, we outline aspects of the Rapture which are relevant to understanding the book of Revelation and mention additional resources for further study by the interested reader.

4.14.1 - Is there a Rapture?

A frequently-heard statement by Christians is, “There’s no *rapture*^[5.2.62] mentioned in the Bible!” As we shall see, this is an inaccurate statement on two counts:

1. The term “rapture” *is* a biblical term.
2. The teaching of the Rapture is found in Scripture even if the term is absent.

In the first case, we need to recognize that “the Bible” has changed form over time. Originally, the Bible was written in Hebrew and Greek. But for most of the history of the Church, the Bible used by the majority of people was not in these original languages. Instead, people used a translation in their

native language, just as we use an English translation today. And for the greater part of the history of the Church, the translation used by most in the West was the *Latin Vulgate*^[5.2.81]. This was “the Bible” for over a thousand years—and dominated Bible study and doctrine for a period far longer than any other translation.⁵ It reigned supreme in the West until the time of the Reformation when men began to return to study the original language texts and translate them into the vulgar tongues (e.g., German, English).

The term *rapture* means “to seize” and “to carry off,” and is taken from the phrase “caught up” in 1Th. 4:17 in the Latin Vulgate which reads:

Deinde nos, qui vivimus, qui relinquimur, simul **rapiemur** cum illis in nubibus obviam Christo in aera, et sic semper cum Domino erimus. [Then we, who are alive, who remain, together will be **caught up** with them in the clouds to meet Christ in the air, and so always with the Lord we will be.] [emphasis added]

So we see that the term “rapture” *is* in the Bible—it just depends *which* Bible you are talking about! If you mean one of the recent translations which have only been on the scene for *decades*, or even the KJV which is *hundreds* of years old, then you won’t find the term. But if you are talking about the Grand Daddy of all Bibles which ruled for a millennium (the Vulgate), then the term is indeed there!

Even if we could not find the actual term “rapture” in a Bible, it would not indicate that the *doctrine* of the Rapture is not taught within Scripture. After all, we don’t find the terms *Trinity*, *omnipresence*, or *omniscience* in Scripture, but these doctrines are clearly taught by Scripture. So all that is necessary to establish the truth of a teaching is whether the *concept* is found in Scripture. Here too, the Rapture passes the test.

4.14.2 - What is the Rapture?

If we go back to the original language of the New Testament, we find the *rapiemur* of 1Th. 4:17 in the *Vulgate*^[5.2.81] to be a translation of the Greek term ἀρπαγησόμεθα [*harpagēsometha*] which is the 1st person, plural, future tense, passive voice, indicative mood form of the verb ἀρπάζω [*harpazō*] meaning to “snatch, seize, i.e., take suddenly and vehemently”⁶ and which can denote “rescue from a threatening danger.”⁷

In general usage, it describes: how violent men take the kingdom by force (Mtt. 11:12); carrying off property from the strong man’s house (Mtt. 12:29); how the evil one snatches away what has been sown (Mtt. 13:19); or how the people approached Jesus to take Him by force and make Him king (John 6:15).

The term is also used of supernatural events where God takes people in the Spirit and transports them either physically or in a vision. Philip was *caught away* from the Ethiopian eunuch to Azotus (Acts 8:39), the Apostle Paul was *caught up* to the third heaven (2Cor. 12:2), and those who are alive and remain will be *caught up* to meet Christ in the air (1Cor. 15:51-52; 1Th. 4:17). The same term is used to describe the ascension of Christ who was *caught up* to God and His throne (Rev. 12:5).

When we extend our study of this “catching away” to include the Old Testament, we find numerous *rapture*^[5.2.62] events including: Enoch (Gen. 5); Elijah (2K. 2); Isaiah (Isa. 6); Jesus (Acts 1:11; Rev. 12:5); Philip (Acts 8); Paul (2Cor. 12); The Church (1Th. 4); and the Two Witnesses (Rev. 11).⁸

The Scriptures present six raptures. Four have already taken place. Two are still to come. . . . The four raptures that have taken place include when both Enoch and Elijah who were taken up from earth to heaven without experiencing death (Gen. 5:24; Heb. 11:5; 2K. 2:1, 11), when the Lord Jesus ascended to heaven after His death and resurrection (Mark 16:19; Acts 1:9-11; Rev. 12:5), and when Paul referred to the rapture of a man (probably Paul himself) to the third heaven (2Cor. 12:2-4). . . . The other future rapture [besides that of the church, 1Th. 4:17] will occur when the two witnesses of the future

Tribulation period ascend to heaven after God has resurrected them from the dead (Rev. 11:3, 11-12).⁹

The Rapture, in the sense we are using the term, is the “catching away” of persons to a new location by the power of God without their initiation or control. We are specifically interested in the Rapture of the Church—the event which describes the translation of the living and dead in Christ to be caught up in the clouds forever to be with Him (1Th. 4:17).

4.14.3 - How Many Comings of Christ?

Typically, we speak of only two “comings” of Christ. The First Coming was His virgin birth by Mary and subsequent ministry which ended at the cross and His ascension. The Second Coming will be at the end of the age to judge evil and establish His kingdom. So far, so good.

But how are we to understand the coming of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost? After all, Christ said:

And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever—the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him; but you know Him, for He dwells with you and will be in you. **I will not leave you orphans; I will come to you.** (John 14:16-18) [emphasis added]

Elsewhere, we see that the Holy Spirit is “the Spirit of Christ” (Rom. 8:9; 1Pe. 1:11). So in a sense, “Christ came” on the Day of Pentecost for it was His Spirit which breathed life into a new creation on that day: the *Body of Christ* (1Cor. 12:13). If we include this “coming,” we have at least *three* comings of Christ—two *physical* and one *spiritual*. We know these three comings are all different because of differences in the situations which attend each event.

What we are doing here is analogous to the way we study “coming” passages in the Old Testament. In the Old Testament, we notice some passages which describe the coming Messiah as a victorious king (e.g., Ps. 2; Isa. 9:6) and other passages which describe Him as a suffering servant (e.g., Ps. 22; Isa. 53). How are we to reconcile these differences? One solution, taken by many who reject Christ, is to assume these passages describe two different individuals. The correct solution, which we understand from the New Testament, is to understand that a *single individual* is in view, but He comes *multiple times*. At His First Coming, He is the suffering servant. At His Second Coming¹⁰ He is the victorious King who will reign eternally. As Christians studying the Old Testament, we think nothing strange in noticing the irreconcilable differences between these “coming” passages and understand them as describing *different events*.

This same situation occurs when a careful study is made of the many “coming” passages within the New Testament which describe His *future* coming. The “coming” passages differ in numerous ways which make it impossible to see them all describing the same event.

4.14.3.1 - Rapture versus Second Coming

The following contrasts are found in passages describing the coming of Christ. We suggest that these differences are an indication that different comings are in view: the coming of Christ as *bridegroom*^[4.10.5] for His expectant Church (the *Rapture*^[5.2.62]) versus the Second Coming of Christ upon an unbelieving world in judgment.

Contrasts Between the Rapture and the Second Coming

Rapture	Second Coming
Christ comes for His own (John 14:3; 1Th. 5:28; 2Th. 2:1).	Christ comes with His own (1Th. 3:13; Jude 1:14; Rev. 19:14). ¹¹
Christ comes in the air (1Th. 4:17).	Christ comes to the earth (Zec. 14:4; Acts 1:11). ¹²
Christ claims His bride (1Th. 4:16-17).	Christ comes with His bride (Rev. 19:6-14). ¹³
Removal of believers (1Th. 4:17).	Manifestation of Christ (Mal. 4:2). ¹⁴
Only His own see Him (1Th. 4:13-18).	Every eye shall see Him (Rev. 1:7). ¹⁵
Tribulation begins (2Th. 1:6-9).	<i>Millennial Kingdom</i> ^[5.2.39] begins (Rev. 20:1-7). ¹⁶
Saved are delivered from wrath (1Th. 1:10; 1Th. 5:9).	Unsaved experience the wrath of God (Rev. 6:12-17). ¹⁷

Rapture	Second Coming
No signs precede rapture (1Th. 5:1-3).	Signs precede Second Coming (Luke 21:11, 15). ¹⁸
Focus is Lord and Church (1Th. 4:13-18).	Focus is Israel and kingdom (Mtt. 24:14). ¹⁹
World is deceived (2Th. 2:3-12).	Satan is bound so he cannot deceive (Rev. 20:1-2). ²⁰
Believers depart the earth (1Th. 4:15-17). ²¹	Unbelievers are taken away from the earth (Mtt. 24:37-41). ²²
Unbelievers remain on earth.	Believers remain on earth (Mtt. 25:34). ²³
No mention of establishing Christ's Kingdom on earth.	Christ has come to set up His Kingdom on earth (Mtt. 25:31, 34). ²⁴
Christians taken to the Father's house (John 14:1-3).	Resurrected saints do not see the Father's house (Rev. 20:4). ²⁵
<i>Imminent</i> ^[5.2.30] —could happen at any moment.	Cannot occur for at least 7 years. ²⁶
Precedes the career of the man of sin. (2Th. 2:1-3).	Terminates the career of the man of sin (Rev. 19:20).

4.14.4 - The Holy Spirit and the Rapture

An important aspect concerning the *Rapture*^[5.2.62] is the unique relationship between the Holy Spirit and the *Body of Christ* which was created on the Day of Pentecost when the Holy Spirit came in a new way to earth. While it is beyond the scope of our treatment here to tackle this subject in-depth, several important points should be noted.

4.14.4.1 - The Coming of the Spirit

1. The Holy Spirit has always been present and ministering upon the earth (Gen. 1:2).
2. Prior to the Day of Pentecost, the Holy Spirit *came upon* and *filled* believers (Num. 24:2; Jdg. 3:10; 6:34; 1S. 10:6; 19:20; 2Chr. 15:2; 20:14; Luke 1:67), but His presence was not permanent (1S. 16:13-14; Ps. 51:11).
3. Prior to the Day of Pentecost, John explains that the Holy Spirit “had not yet been given *because* Jesus was not yet glorified” (John 7:39). Notice that the Holy Spirit has always been omnipresent and ministering upon the earth, but John clearly says at that time that He “had not yet been given” (John 14:16).
4. The Holy Spirit came to the earth to begin a new ministry on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 1:4-8; 2:1-4, 17; 11:15).
5. The new ministry of the Holy Spirit during this, the church age, is baptizing believers into the Body of Christ (1Cor. 12:5, 12-13) wherein believers are *permanently* indwelt and sealed with the Spirit (2Cor. 1:22; Eph. 1:13; 4:30).

It is important to grasp two aspects regarding this important transition which took place on the Day of Pentecost:

- The Holy Spirit ministered on earth before the formation of the Church *and He will continue to minister on the earth after the departure of the Church at the Rapture*^[5.2.62].
- The Holy Spirit never *permanently indwelt* believers prior to the Day of Pentecost. The Church is a unique spiritual organism which began on the Day of Pentecost and which has a

unique relationship to the Spirit.

As you can see, there are elements of *continuity* and *discontinuity* which attend the Day of Pentecost. This is important to grasp because these same elements of continuity and discontinuity attend the Rapture of the Church when the Holy Spirit is removed from the earth *in the sense He came at Pentecost* but continues to minister upon the earth in the Tribulation period in the same sense He did prior to the Day of Pentecost. His “coming” on the Day of Pentecost and subsequent “removal” at the Rapture of the Church has no effect upon His role in salvation. Salvation has always been by grace through faith alone and by spiritual regeneration in which the Holy Spirit plays a key role (John 3:5-8; Gal. 4:29).

For a more detailed discussion of the significance of the Day of Pentecost in relation to the ministry of the Holy Spirit, see [Tony Garland, “Does Dispensationalism Teach Two Ways of Salvation?,” in *The Conservative Theological Journal*, vol. 7 no. 20 (Fort Worth, TX: Tyndale Theological Seminary, March 2003), 58-59].

4.14.4.2 - Who is the Restrainer?

In a key passage concerning “the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together to Him,” Paul relates that the Day of Christ (*NU*^{5.2.49}—*Day of the Lord*^{5.2.14}) cannot come unless the man of sin is revealed (2Th. 2:1-4) and that the man of sin was being actively restrained at the time Paul wrote.

And now you know **what** is restraining, that he may be revealed in his own time. For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work; only **He** who now restrains *will do so* until He is taken out of the way. (2Th. 2:6-7) [emphasis added]

The Restrainer is referred to both in the neuter (*what*) and masculine (*he*) gender. This mix of gender appears in relation to the Holy Spirit Who is a *person*, but also described using a Greek term which is neuter in gender (πνεῦμα [*pneuma*]). It is also said that the Restrainer “now restrains” and will continue to do so until “He is taken out of the way.” Since the man of sin has yet to be revealed,²⁸ we can infer that the Restrainer, whoever or whatever he is, has been effectively suppressing the revelation of the man of sin for over 2000 years. When we collect the pieces of evidence concerning the identity of the Restrainer, we find:

- The Restrainer is referred to as both neuter (τὸ κατέχων [*to katechon*], “*what* is restraining”) and masculine (ὁ κατέχων [*ho katechōn*], “*He* who now restrains”).
- The Restrainer existed in Paul’s day.
- The Restrainer has been continually and effectively restraining for nearly 2,000 years so far.
- The Restrainer is powerful enough to suppress the spiritual powers of darkness seeking to promote the man of sin.
- The restraint is *global*.

Numerous suggestions have been made concerning the identity of the Restrainer:

Several of these views do not necessarily involve a supernatural force. These include the Jewish state and James, Paul and the preaching of the gospel, the Roman Empire, and human government. Other views may be grouped as hostile supernatural views, which include Satan, a hostile false prophet, a general hostile force in the form of the mystery of lawlessness and human government, and the preincarnate state of the man of lawlessness. In several views ὁ κατέχων [*ho katechōn*] is seen as a benevolent supernatural figure rather than a hostile one. Usually an angel, such as Michael, or another type of heavenly being, such as Elijah, or a mythological being, is suggested. The most common supernatural figure suggested, though, is God Himself.²⁹

Of the various suggestions, it would seem that the Restrainer must be supernatural in power. For what government could restrain Satan and do so continuously for 2,000 years? Yet, Scripture indicates that the Holy Spirit had just such a ministry (Gen. 6:3; 20:6; John 16:18). It seems the best solution for the identity of the Restrainer is the Holy Spirit Himself. “The first participle (τὸ κατέχο [*to katecho*]) conforms to the gender of πνεῦμα [*pneuma*]. The second participle ὁ κατέχων [*ho katechōn*] confirms the personality of the Holy Spirit.”³⁰

If this is so, this has significant implications concerning the *Rapture*^[5.2.62] of the Church because we previously saw that the Holy Spirit indwells those who are baptized into the Body of Christ *permanently* for the day of redemption. It is impossible that the Holy Spirit could depart from indwelling the sealed believer—He cannot be taken out of the way *unless all born-again believers indwelt by Him are taken with Him!*

The Holy Spirit came down into the world at Pentecost in a special sense in which He had never been in the world, to dwell in the Church, the body of believers which is called the temple of the Holy Spirit (1Cor. 6:19). When all believers are removed to heaven according to the promise made to the church in Philadelphia (Rev. 3:10), . . . the Holy Spirit goes out of the world in the sense that He came into it at Pentecost.³¹

This was precisely Paul's point in his letter to the Thessalonians. Some of them thought that they had already entered the Day of the Lord, but Paul reassures them that this could not be the case for the man of sin must first be revealed and he will not be revealed until the Restrainer has been taken out of the way. The Thessalonian believers would be "gathered together" to Christ before the man of sin would be revealed.

Since the ministry of the Holy Spirit includes indwelling believers and working through the church, then ἔκ μέσου γένηται [*ek mesou genētai*] ("taken out of the way") could possibly refer to the removal of the Holy Spirit through the removal of the church in the *pretribulation*^[5.2.60] rapture. Since the passage concerns the gathering of believers, this cryptic apocalyptic reference to the Spirit, who indwells the church, is probably in view. This would be an encouragement to the Thessalonian believers to stop being alarmed about any false teaching on the Day of the Lord.³²

Who or what is restraining the satanically empowered movement against God's law and is postponing the revelation of the man of sin? Some say it is the Roman Empire. But the empire has long vanished and "the holder back" is not yet revealed. Another suggestion is that this is Satan, but it is difficult to see why he would hold back sin. Others suggest that human governments are holding back sin and the revealing of the *Antichrist*^[5.2.31]. But human governments will not end prior to the Antichrist's unveiling. Nor do all governments restrain sin; many encourage it! The Holy Spirit of God is the only Person with sufficient (supernatural) power to do this restraining. Some object to this being the Holy Spirit on the grounds that to *katechon* in 2 Thessalonians 2:6 is neuter ("what is holding back"). But this is no problem for two reasons: (a) The neuter is sometimes used of the Holy Spirit (John 14:26; 15:26; 16:13-14). (b) In 2 Thessalonians 2:7 the words are masculine: *ho katechon*, the one who . . . holds it back. How does He do it? Through Christians, whom He indwells and through whom He works in society to hold back the swelling tide of lawless living. How will He be taken out of the way? When the church leaves the earth in the Rapture, the Holy Spirit will be taken out of the way in the sense that His unique lawlessness-restraining ministry through God's people will be removed (cf. Gen. 6:3). The removal of the Restrainer at the time of the Rapture must obviously precede the day of the Lord. Paul's reasoning is thus a strong argument for the pretribulation Rapture: the Thessalonians were not in the Great Tribulation because the Rapture had not yet occurred.³³

Many suggestions have been made to identify the restraining force of 1Th. 4:6, 7. These include: (1) human government; (2) preaching of the gospel; (3) the binding of Satan; (4) the providence of God; (5) the Jewish state; (6) the church; (7) the Holy Spirit; and (8) Michael. Whatever now restrains the Antichrist of 1Th. 4:3, 4, 8-10 from being revealed in the fullness of his apostasy and evil, must be more than human or even angelic power.³⁴

The restraint which has withheld the revelation of Antichrist all these years involves both the Holy Spirit and the Word of God. Some understand the neuter τὸ κατέχων [*to katechon*], ("what is restraining") as denoting the Word of God, whereas ὁ κατέχων [*ho katechōn*], ("He who now restrains") denotes the Holy Spirit. If so, the former may be the *means* by which the later *agent* performs His ministry through the Church.

Regarding the association of the Holy Spirit with the gospel, it might be said that neither the Spirit nor the gospel (or the Word of God) operate independently of each other. This is true of Creation when God spoke and the Spirit hovered over the waters (Gen. 1:1-3). The gospel came in power and in the Holy Spirit (1Th. 1:5). Sanctification comes through both the Word and the Spirit (cf. Ps. 119:9, 11; 1Th. 4:8; 2Th. 2:13; 2Ti. 3:16-17). The sword of the Spirit is the Word of God (Eph. 6:17).³⁵

For a more detailed discussion of the identity of the Restrainer, see [Pentecost, *Things to Come: A*

Study in Biblical Eschatology, 259-263] and [Powell, “*The Identity of the "Restrainer" in 2 Thessalonians 2:6-7*”].

4.14.4.3 - How were People Saved before Pentecost?

We pause here to reiterate the point made earlier: people have *always* been saved by spiritual regeneration, being “born of the Spirit” (John 3:5-6). Yet John made it clear that the Holy Spirit “had not yet been given” prior to the Day of Pentecost (John 7:39). The new ministry of the Spirit which began on the Day of Pentecost was not that of *regeneration*, but of *baptism into the Body of Christ* (1Cor. 12:13). *Prior to the Day of Pentecost, believers were never baptized into the Body of Christ. Therefore, the Body of Christ is a new and unique organism ministering in Christ’s absence during the present age.*

4.14.4.4 - How are People Saved in the Tribulation?

When the Holy Spirit, as the Restrainer, is taken out of the way, the Body of Christ will go with Him, *but He will still minister on the earth to save souls during the Tribulation to follow.* In the same way He participated in regenerating people *prior* to Pentecost, so will He *after* the Rapture^[5.2.62].

From this chapter (Rev. 7) it should be evident that the Holy Spirit will be still at work in the Tribulation, for the work of regeneration is His particular ministry. While the work of restraining evil is removed, allowing the *Antichrist*^[5.2.3] to begin his evil rise to power, the Holy Spirit Himself will still be in the world and will have an active ministry. While He will no longer be baptizing (for that is a special ministry for the Church only), He will be performing some of His other ministries, such as regeneration, filling, sealing, etc. In all this, the second purpose of the Tribulation will be accomplished: that of bringing about a worldwide revival.³⁸

For further discussion of the role of the Holy Spirit during the Tribulation, see [Pentecost, *Things to Come: A Study in Biblical Eschatology*, 263-274].

4.14.5 - Is all Tribulation the Same?

Critics of a *pretribulation*^[5.2.60] *rapture*^[5.2.62] point to many verses which indicate that Christians will undergo tribulation—as is also demonstrated by experience (Mtt. 13:21; Mark 4:17; John 16:33; Rom. 5:3; 8:35; 2Cor. 1:4; 7:4; Rev. 1:9). They rightly argue that tribulation refines the saints and develops their character. They conclude that the Church must go through the time of God’s wrath in order to prove and refine the saints of the end time. However, Revelation 3:10 contradicts this view because it indicates that the purpose of the Tribulation is to test the *earth dwellers*^[5.2.18], not the Church.

Also, there is an important difference between general tribulation which is the result of Satan and a sinful world (Mtt. 24:21, 29; Mark 13:19; Rev. 7:14) and tribulation which is the result of the outpouring of God’s wrath on an unbelieving world (Ps. 2:12; Isa. 13:9, 13; 63:3; Jer. 10:10; Rev. 6:16-17; 11:18; 14:8-10; 19; 15:1, 7; 16:17, 19; 19:15). It is the Lamb Himself who opens the seven seals which lead to the events of the seven trumpets and seven bowls (Rev. 6:1). It is the *bridegroom*^[4.10.5] who initiates the events which trigger the Tribulation of the end! Will the bridegroom pour out *His wrath* upon His own bride? Scripture says no!⁴⁰ (See *Church Betrothed to Christ*^[4.10.5].) The Church will be kept from the “hour of trial which shall come upon the whole world, to test those who dwell on the earth” (Rev. 3:10). The Church is kept not from the *trial*, but from the very *hour* of trial (see commentary on *Revelation 3:10*^[3.3.10]).

Many additional verses indicate that the Church is not appointed to endure *God’s wrath*, that it will be exempted from this *time period* (Luke 21:36; Rom. 5:9; 1Th. 1:10; 5:9). Although some saints in history have been kept *through* times of tribulation (e.g., Noah’s family in the Ark, Israel at the Passover), others were kept *from* God’s judgment (e.g., Enoch prior to Noah’s flood, Lot and his daughters in Sodom). In the case of the Church, as Christ’s bride she is not appointed to wrath, but like Enoch will “walk with God” for God will “take her” (cf. Gen. 5:24).

4.14.6 - Delivered from the Wrath to Come

Some have understood Paul's teaching concerning the delivery of believers from the "wrath to come" (1 Th. 1:10) as describing their exemption from the wrath of judgment which unbelievers will undergo for rejecting Christ (John 3:18-19, 36). But everywhere in Scripture, the benefits of redemption are fully and immediately applied at the time of redemption. Believers *have* eternal life (John 3:15; Acts 13:48; 1 Jn. 5:13). The *wrath to come* does not speak of the potential judgment of believers which has already been averted by their saving faith, but the "hour of trial which shall come upon the whole world, to test those who dwell on the earth" (Rev. 3:10).

Much more then, **having now been justified** by His blood, we **shall be saved** from wrath through Him. For if when we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life. (Rom. 5:9-10) [emphasis added]

The justification is *present tense* and entirely complete. The believer stands totally and completely justified the moment he comes to faith. The wrath here is *future*.

The wrath of God here [1 Th. 1:10] is future, and hence, cannot refer to the general wrath of God against sin which is a present reality. This wrath is future. While Hell and the Lake of Fire are also future, they cannot be what this passage is referring to. By virtue of salvation, the believer is already redeemed from Hell. . . . the wrath that the Church is being delivered from is the wrath of the Great Tribulation. He is coming for the specific purpose of delivering the Church from the wrath to come, namely, the Tribulation period.⁴¹

The salvation spoken of here [1 Th. 5:9] is future, and so cannot be soteriological, which is a present reality. The salvation here is eschatological, referring to the redemption of the body which will occur at the *Rapture*^[5.2.62]. It is this salvation that the Church has been appointed to and not to the wrath of the *Day of the Lord*^[5.2.14].⁴²

4.14.7 - The Church and the book of Revelation

Some note that although the term "church" (ἐκκλησία [*ekklēsia*]) is not found in chapters 6-18 of the book of Revelation, "saints" (ἁγίων [*hagiōn*], Rev. 13:7) are frequently the subject of the events of the Tribulation period. Yet this does not prove that the *Church* is present at that time because *saints* is a generic term which describes believers of all ages. And as we have already discussed, saints of the present Church age enjoy a unique relationship by virtue of the coming of the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost which differentiates them from saints of other ages, including the Tribulation period.

The fact that saints are found in the Tribulation does not prove that the Church is there any more than the existence of saints in the Old Testament proves that the Church was there. It has already been shown that the Church began at Pentecost with the baptizing ministry of the Holy Spirit. Thus, the Old Testament saints are not part of the Church. In the same way, the existence of saints in the Tribulation does not prove that the Church is there either, and not even once are they called the Church. The Church, as such, is never mentioned in any passage dealing with the Tribulation. . . . in chapters 6-18 [of the book of Revelation], which deal with the Tribulation period itself, the Church is not even mentioned once. This is most unusual in light of the prominence of the Church in the chapters dealing with events prior to and after the Tribulation. . . . This is only an argument from silence, but within the structure of the book of Revelation it is a powerful case indeed. From the viewpoint of pure exposition, it is impossible for anyone to turn to a Tribulation passage and to show that the Church is there.⁴³

4.14.8 - The Timing of the Rapture

Although there are a variety of views as to *when* the Church is caught away to be with Christ, we believe the Scriptures indicate a catching away of the saints *prior to* the Tribulation or *70th week of Daniel*^[2.13.5] (Dan. 9:24-27).

There are expositors who argue that Revelation supports a *pretribulation*^[5.2.60] *rapture*^[5.2.62] of the church. They cite the following arguments: (1) the promise of exemption from tribulation that was given to the church of Philadelphia (Rev. 3:10); (2) John's spiritual translation to heaven as [a typological] indication of the Rapture (Rev. 4:1-2); (3) the presence of the twenty-four elders in heaven which indicates that the church is removed during the Tribulation (Rev. 4:4ff); (4) the absence of any reference to the church in Revelation 4-18; (5) the marriage supper of the Lamb coming down with Christ at His

Second Coming (Rev. 19:7-9); (6) The complete absence of any statement of rapture in the closing days of the Tribulation.⁴⁴

Additional reasons for a pretribulational rapture include: (7) the Jewish focus of Daniel’s 70th week in light of the distinctions made between the Church and Israel (Rom. 11:25-26);⁴⁵ (8) the *imminent*^[4.8] coming of Christ for His Church precludes prophetic views⁴⁶ which hold that events such as the revealing of *Antichrist*^[5.2.3] or the signing of the seven-year covenant take place *before* the Rapture (Dan. 9:27; 2Th. 2:1-4); (9) the Church is everywhere instructed to watch for *Christ* but never *Antichrist* (Tit. 2:13);⁴⁷ (10) believing sheep (which would have been caught up in a *posttribulation*^[5.2.57] rapture) are found upon the earth at Christ’s coming (Mtt. 25:31).

4.14.9 - Typology and the Rapture

It is a well-established fact that Scripture contains typology—passages which do not explicitly teach doctrine, but which provide “hints” concerning aspects of God’s plans and actions. For example, Christ points to the incident where Moses raises a serpent on a pole (Num. 21:9) as a type (*demonstration or model*) of His crucifixion (John 3:14-16). Although the doctrine of the crucifixion cannot be taught from the passage in Numbers, *by God’s design* the correlation between the incident of the serpent on a pole and the crucifixion is meant to be instructive and worthy of study:

Example of Biblical Typology: Moses and the Serpent on a Pole (Num. 21)

Type (Model)	Antitype (Fulfillment)
The Israelites were bitten by serpents resulting in death (Num. 21:6).	Adam and Eve, and by extension all of mankind, were “bitten by Satan” resulting in the curse of death (Gen. 3:1, 19).
Moses lifted up the serpent on a <i>pole</i> (Num. 21:9).	Jesus was lifted up on a <i>tree</i> (Acts 5:30).
Moses placed a <i>serpent</i> on the pole (Num. 21:9).	Jesus was nailed to the cross. God made Him who knew no sin <i>to be sin</i> for us (Isa. 53:6, 10; 2Cor. 5:21).
Merely <i>looking on</i> the serpent on the pole provided life (Num. 21:9). ⁴⁸	Merely <i>trusting in</i> Jesus on the cross provides life (Isa. 45:22; John 3:16; Rev. 2:7).
The serpent was <i>cursed</i> (Gen. 3:14).	Christ was made a <i>curse</i> for us (Gal. 3:13).
The serpent deceived man using a tree (Gen. 3:6; Num. 21:9).	Christ <i>redeemed</i> man using a tree (Acts 10:39).
The serpent, representing sin, was brazen—a metal not consumed by fire, representing judgment (Num. 21:9).	Those who trust in Christ are sinners, but their sin is judged while they themselves are not consumed.

These are a few examples of the extent to which typology can reveal subtle aspects concerning a related event. Here, the serpent on a pole incident sets forth numerous aspects of the crucifixion of Christ hundreds of years in advance. We could make a similar study of *Abraham’s offering of Isaac*^[4.16.3.1] which models, in advance, the offering of another Son by another Father on the very same mountain (Gen. 22). Or we could point to the book of Ruth and the way in which Boaz, Ruth, and Naomi model Jesus, the Church, and Israel.⁴⁹

Our point here is to establish the fact that God has embedded within the events of Scripture small “gems” of additional insight into future events for those with eyes to see them. These typological hints cannot be used to teach doctrine, but neither should they be ignored. The student of God’s Word who ignores them is overlooking a mine of riches.

In the case of the *Rapture*^[5.2.62] and God's judgment, we have several typological examples we might note:

1. Noah's flood: Enoch was raptured *prior to* the flood. (Noah and his family were *preserved through* the flood.)
2. Sodom and Gomorrah: Lot and his daughters were rescued prior to judgment. The angels could not destroy Sodom until Lot had been removed (Gen. 19:22).
3. After the seven letters to the *seven churches*^[5.2.66] of chapters 2 and 3 of Revelation, John hears a voice like a trumpet calling him up to heaven (Rev. 4:1 cf. 1Th. 4:16). Thereafter, the Church appears in heaven.
4. The overcomer at the church of Thyatira is promised "the morning star" (Rev. 2:28). The morning star is Christ (Rev. 22:16). The morning star rises near the end of the long night, *before the night has run its course* and before the dawn. The night is the current age. The day is the millennial reign of Christ. The morning star will appear to those who watch for Him before the night concludes (Heb. 9:28).

These examples vary from somewhat simple and compelling (the rapture of Enoch prior to the flood) to complex and tenuous (the morning star) and are by no means exhaustive. On their own, they are mere hints or possibilities. But when combined with the other factors listed above, they reinforce the teaching that a category of believers—those who "walk with Him," His own *Body of Christ*—will be taken up before He pours forth His wrath in judgment upon "those who dwell upon the earth."

Posttribulationists reject this conclusion, contending there is no reason why Christians in the last generation deserve to escape the great tribulation. The fact is, however, that Christians in every other generation have escaped the great tribulation, so there is no reason why the last should be singled out for participation in it.⁵⁰

4.14.10 - Additional Resources on the Rapture

For those who wish to study the issues surrounding the *Rapture*^[5.2.62] in greater detail, we suggest the following resources:

- Ice, Thomas and Timothy Demy. *The Return*. Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 1999.⁵¹
- Ice, Thomas and Timothy Demy. *When The Trumpet Sounds*. Eugene, OR: Harvest House Publishers, 1995.⁵²
- LaHaye, Tim. *The Rapture*. Eugene, OR: Harvest House Publishers, 2002.⁵³
- Pentecost, J. Dwight. *Things To Come: A Study In Biblical Eschatology* Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1958.⁵⁴
- Ryrie, Charles C. *Come Quickly, Lord Jesus*. Eugene, OR: Harvest House Publishers, 1996.⁵⁵
- Showers, Renald E. *Maranatha, Our Lord Come*. Bellmawr, NJ: Friends of Israel Gospel Ministry, 1995.⁵⁶
- Stanton, Gerald B. *Kept From The Hour*, 4th ed. Miami Springs, FL: Schoettle Publishing Co., Inc., 1991.⁵⁷
- Walvoord, John F. *The Rapture Question*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1979.⁵⁸

Resources which discuss the pre-wrath rapture position include:

- Fruchtenbaum, Arnold G. *A Review of the Pre-Wrath Rapture of the Church*. Tustin, CA: Ariel Ministries, n.d.
- McClean, John A. "Another Look at Rosenthal's 'Pre-Wrath Rapture.'" *Bibliotheca Sacra*⁵⁹
- Rosenthal, Marvin. *The Pre-Wrath Rapture of the Church*. Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1990.

- Showers, Renald E. *The Pre-Wrath Rapture View*. Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 2001.
- Stanton, Gerald B. “A Review of the Pre-Wrath Rapture of the Church.” *Bibliotheca Sacra*⁶⁰

We do not advocate the pre-wrath rapture position because we believe it suffers from numerous problems—including the denial of an *imminent*^[4.8] return of Christ for His Church.

For those of us who may be bedazzled or dazed by the current blizzard of alternate theories, positions, and prophetic perspectives blowing our way, there is a simple test we can use to check for truth. It involves one word: *Imminence*^[5.2.30]. What does the purveyor of a new, novel, or absurd approach to end-times events have to say about the imminent return of Christ, which the Scriptures declare to be the watchword of the church? Any proposition that ignores, delays, or mutilates the clear meaning of the word and the way in which the early church understood *imminence*—the any-moment return of Christ—should be immediately discredited.⁶¹

Notes

- ¹ Renald E. Showers, *Maranatha, Our Lord Come* (Bellmawr, NJ: The Friends of Israel Gospel Ministry, 1995), 245.
- ² Tim LaHaye, and Thomas Ice, *Charting the End Times* (Eugene, OR: Harvest House Publishers, 2001), 108.
- ³ Donald Grey Barnhouse, *Revelation* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1971), 77.
- ⁴ E. W. Bullinger, *Commentary On Revelation* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 1984, 1935), 194.
- ⁵ Norman L. Geisler, and William E. Nix, *A General Introduction to the Bible* (Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 1986), 26.
- ⁶ Frederick William Danker, and Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 109.
- ⁷ Danker, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 109.
- ⁸ LaHaye, *Charting the End Times*, 110.
- ⁹ Showers, *Maranatha, Our Lord Come*, 11.
- ¹⁰ We use the term in its traditional sense: to denote his *physical* coming yet future.
- ¹¹ Thomas Ice, and Timothy J. Demy, *The Return* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 1999), 101-102.
- ¹² Ice, *The Return*, 101-102.
- ¹³ Ice, *The Return*, 101-102.
- ¹⁴ Ice, *The Return*, 101-102.
- ¹⁵ Ice, *The Return*, 101-102.
- ¹⁶ Ice, *The Return*, 101-102.
- ¹⁷ Ice, *The Return*, 101-102.
- ¹⁸ [Ice, *The Return*, 101-102] [J. Dwight Pentecost, *Things to Come: A Study in Biblical Eschatology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1958), 207]
- ¹⁹ Ice, *The Return*, 101-102.
- ²⁰ Ice, *The Return*, 101-102.
- ²¹ A critical problem for the *posttribunational*^[5.2.57] rapture view is its inability to explain the Sheep and Goat Judgment of Matthew 25:31-46. If all believers are caught up during the Second Coming of Christ at the end of the Tribulation, then only unbelievers are left upon the earth. Yet when Jesus gathers the nations upon His arrival and kingdom (Mtt. 25:31) *sheep* are found in their midst. These sheep demonstrate their faith by their works and enter the Millennial Kingdom. When did they come to faith if all the faithful were caught up to meet Him at His return? The solution is found in recognizing the sheep as saints which came to faith *after the Rapture of the Church* and survive the Tribulation to populate the Millennial Kingdom. See *Who Populates*

the Millennial Kingdom^[4.11.8]

- 22 Richard L. Mayhue, "Why a Pretribulational Rapture," in Richard L. Mayhue, ed., *The Master's Seminary Journal*, vol. 13 no. 1 (Sun Valley, CA: The Master's Seminary, Spring 2002), 247.
- 23 Mayhue, "Why a Pretribulational Rapture," 247.
- 24 Mayhue, "Why a Pretribulational Rapture," 247.
- 25 LaHaye, *Charting the End Times*, 112.
- 26 LaHaye, *Charting the End Times*, 112.
- 27 Tony Garland, "Does Dispensationalism Teach Two Ways of Salvation?," in *The Conservative Theological Journal*, vol. 7 no. 20 (Fort Worth, TX: Tyndale Theological Seminary, March 2003), 58-59.
- 28 See our discussion why Nero^[4.12] cannot be the man of sin.
- 29 Charles E. Powell, "The Identity of the 'Restrainer' in 2 Thessalonians 2:6-7," in *Bibliotheca Sacra*, vol. 154 no. 615 (Dallas, TX: Dallas Theological Seminary, July-Sep 1997), 328-329.
- 30 Powell, "The Identity of the 'Restrainer' in 2 Thessalonians 2:6-7," 330.
- 31 Barnhouse, *Revelation*, 120-121.
- 32 Powell, "The Identity of the 'Restrainer' in 2 Thessalonians 2:6-7," 330.
- 33 Thomas L. Constable, "2 Thessalonians," in John F. Walvoord, and Roy B. Zuck, eds., *The Bible Knowledge Commentary* (Wheaton, IL: SP Publications, 1983), 2Th. 2:7.
- 34 John MacArthur, *The MacArthur Study Bible* (Nashville, TN: Word Publishing, 1997), 2Th. 2:6.
- 35 Powell, "The Identity of the 'Restrainer' in 2 Thessalonians 2:6-7," 331.
- 36 Pentecost, *Things to Come: A Study in Biblical Eschatology*, 259-263.
- 37 Powell, "The Identity of the 'Restrainer' in 2 Thessalonians 2:6-7."
- 38 Arnold G. Fruchtenbaum, *The Footsteps of Messiah*, rev ed. (Tustin, CA: Ariel Ministries, 2003), 224.
- 39 Pentecost, *Things to Come: A Study in Biblical Eschatology*, 263-274.
- 40 It is not a light thing to maintain that the Church goes through the Tribulation for it casts a large shadow over the character of her bridegroom!
- 41 Fruchtenbaum, *The Footsteps of Messiah*, 153.
- 42 Fruchtenbaum, *The Footsteps of Messiah*, 154.
- 43 Fruchtenbaum, *The Footsteps of Messiah*, 151.
- 44 John A. McLean, "Structure of the Book of Revelation," in Mal Couch, ed., *Dictionary of Premillennial Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 1996), 372-373.
- 45 "God does not intend the church to be present on the earth for any part of the 70 weeks or 490 years that He has determined specifically for Israel and Jerusalem [Dan. 9:24-27]. He intends to keep His 70-weeks program for Israel and Jerusalem and His program for the church separate and distinct from each other, just as Israel and the church are distinct entities."—Showers, *Maranatha, Our Lord Come*, 246.
- 46 Such as the pre-wrath rapture view.
- 47 "Such passages as 1 Thessalonians 5:6; Titus 2:13; Revelation 3:3 all warn the believer to be watching for the Lord Himself, not for signs that would precede His coming. . . . the object of the believer's attention is always directed to Christ, never to these portents."—Pentecost, *Things to Come: A Study in Biblical Eschatology*, 203.
- 48 Looking on the serpent was an act demonstrating faith.
- 49 Did the saints of Moses' and Abraham's day understand the details of these types? Perhaps some—like Moses and Abraham—did, but the majority probably did not. Yet it is clear that those who maintained a close relationship with God and carefully studied His Word often understand subtleties which others were unaware of (Luke 2:25-38).
- 50 Henry Morris, *The Revelation Record* (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 1983), Rev. 3:10.

- 51 Ice, *The Return*.
- 52 Thomas Ice, and Timothy J. Demy, *When the Trumpet Sounds* (Eugene, OR: Harvest House Publishers, 1995).
- 53 Tim LaHaye, *The Rapture* (Eugene, OR: Harvest House Publishers, 2002).
- 54 Pentecost, *Things to Come: A Study in Biblical Eschatology*.
- 55 Charles C. Ryrie, *Come Quickly, Lord Jesus* (Eugene, OR: Harvest House Publishers, 1996).
- 56 Showers, *Maranatha, Our Lord Come*.
- 57 Gerald B. Stanton, *Kept from the Hour*, 4th ed. (Miami Springs, FL: Schoettle Publishing, Co., Inc., 1991).
- 58 John F. Walvoord, *The Rapture Question* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1979).
- 59 John A. McClean, "Another Look at Rosenthal's 'Pre-Wrath Rapture'," in *Bibliotheca Sacra*, vol. 148 no. 592 (Dallas, TX: Dallas Theological Seminary, Oct-Dec 1991).
- 60 Gerald B. Stanton, "A Review of the Pre-Wrath Rapture of the Church," in *Bibliotheca Sacra*, vol. 148 no. 589 (Dallas, TX: Dallas Theological Seminary, Jan-Mar 1991).
- 61 Elwood McQuaid, "Expecting a Call Any Moment," in Elwood McQuaid, ed., *Israel My Glory* (Westville, NJ: Friends of Israel Gospel Ministry, January/February 2005), 10.

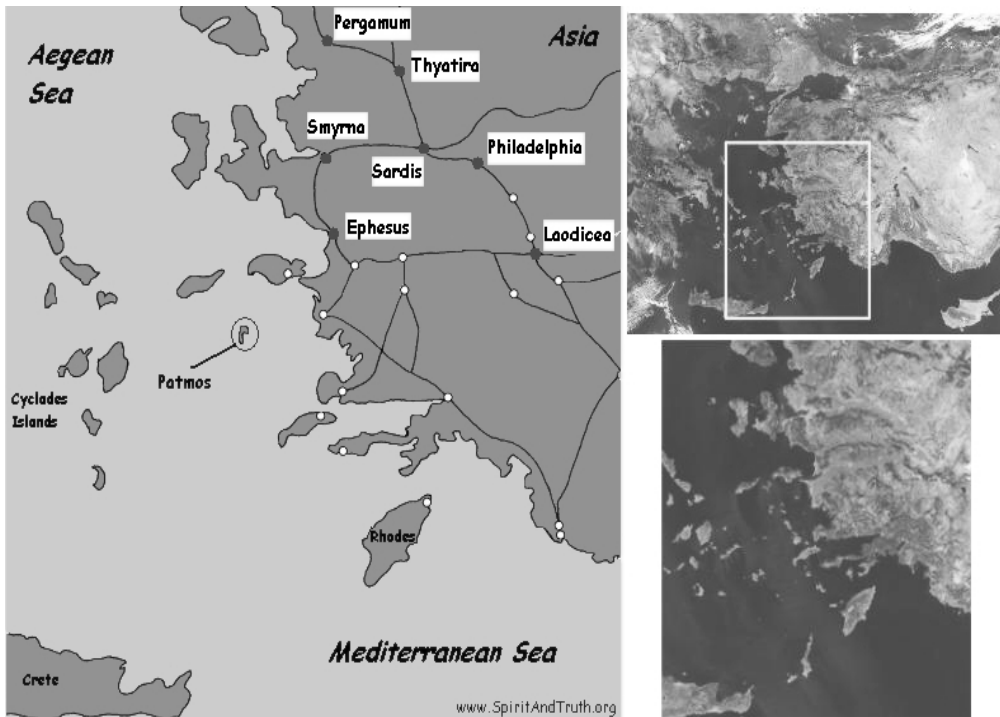
4.15 - Seven Churches of Asia

The immediate audience for the Revelation recorded by John is “the *seven churches*^[5.2.66] which are in Asia” (Rev. 1:4, 11). *Asia* is not the Asia of our day which is the world’s largest continent stretching from the Pacific Ocean on its eastern border to the Ural Mountains in the west. At the time of John, the region refers to the peninsula know as *Asia Minor*:

At the end of the first century the peninsula known as Asia Minor seems to have embraced six provinces, Asia, Bithynia (including Pontus), Galatia, Cappadocia, Cilicia, Lycia (including Pamphylia). The Province of Asia had been created as far back as the year B.C. 120 out of the domains bequeathed to the Senate by Attalus III., the last king of Pergamum. . . . “Asia in the New Testament,” wrote Dr. Lightfoot in 1865, “is always Proconsular Asia.”; and his *dictum* has not been seriously shaken by the researches of the last forty years.¹

We would locate the churches today on a map of *western Turkey*.

*The Seven Churches of Asia*²



These churches were directly or indirectly the result of Paul’s missionary journeys recorded in the book of Acts. Paul taught at Ephesus for over two years at the school of Tyrannus (Acts 19:1, 9-10; 20:31) and his disciple Timothy was an elder there (1Ti. 1:3). It is probably for this reason, together with its prominence and location on the seacoast close to Patmos, that the first church John is told to address is at Ephesus (Rev. 1:11; 2:1).

The prominence of this church is reflected in its being the possible recipient of as many as eight *NT*^[5.2.48] books: the gospel of John, Ephesians, 1 and 2 Timothy, 1, 2, and 3 John, and Revelation.

Besides, Paul was ministering in Ephesus at the time he wrote 1 Corinthians.³

One of the principles of Scripture is that those who have received the *greater revelation* have *greater responsibility* for correctly responding to what they have been shown. Peter mentions this principle: “For the time *has come* for judgment to begin at the house of God; and if *it begins* with us first, what will *be* the end of those who do not obey the gospel of God?” (1Pe. 4:17). This may explain why the letters to the churches which appear in Rev. 2 and 3 precede the portion of the book which describes

God's "correction" of the non-believing (Rev. 6 and beyond).

4.15.1 - Why these Seven Churches?

It is known that there were other churches in Asia Minor at the time John wrote. ⁴Some of them are mentioned elsewhere in Scripture:

There were other churches in Asia at the close of the first century. The *NT*^[5.2.48] itself refers to congregations at Troas (Acts 20:5-12), Colosse (Col. 1:2), and Hierapolis (Col. 4:13). There might also have been churches at Magnesia and Tralles, since Ignatius wrote to them less than twenty years later.⁵

The question naturally arises as to why Jesus chose *these* seven churches from among all the churches in the region? And why *seven*? The answer to the first question would seem to be found in their geographical distribution which facilitated communication by letter along the established trade routes between the cities:

Ephesus was the messenger's natural place of entry to the mainland of the province of Asia, and the other cities lay in sequence on a circular route round its inner territories. It may readily be supposed that a regular itinerary had been perfected since Pauline times and that the seven focal cities on the route had acquired a special importance as organization and distributive centres for the church of the area.⁶

It is not at first sight easy to explain the principle on which the Apocalyptic list of seven has been formed. Why does it include two comparatively small towns, Thyatira and Philadelphia, while Tralles and Magnesia, Hierapolis and Colossae, Alexandria Troas and Adramyttium, Miletus and Halicarnassus, Dorylaeum and Synnada, are passed by? Some at least of these cities had Christian communities before the end of the first century; . . . the first three cities in St John's list were by common consent primary cities in Asia, and they stand in the order which would normally be followed, at least by a resident at Ephesus. Moreover Ephesus, Smyrna, and Pergamum were in direct communication with one another by the great road which the Romans had constructed shortly after their occupation of Asia. So far then both the selection of the names and their order are easy to understand. But why should not the Apocalyptic messenger have been sent on from Pergamum to Cyzicus or to Troas? Why was his course at this point diverted to the inland towns of Thyatira, Sardis and Philadelphia, . . . all the Seven Cities stand on the great circular road that bound together the most populous, wealthy, and influential part of the Province, . . . Planted at these seven centres, the Apocalypse would spread through their neighbourhoods, and from thence to the rest of the province.⁷

As to why *seven* churches were chosen: the *symbolic meaning of seven*^[2.7.5.3.6] indicates completeness or perfection. It appears to be a deliberate choice, like the many other occurrences of seven in the book of Revelation, to signify that these seven churches typify all churches in every age.

4.15.1.1 - Representative of All Churches of All Ages

The *seven churches*^[5.2.66] appear to typify a broad range of strengths and weaknesses which are found in any church in any location in any age. Each letter to an individual church is given for the benefit of all seven churches of the Revelation (and all saints) of every age: Rev. 2:7, 11, 17, 29; 3:6, 13, 22).⁸

This theory says the churches, which were actual existing congregations, are like seven types of churches that one might at any given time in the history of the church. The historicity of these assemblies is not denied, but this view holds that the Lord chose to single them out because they represent seven kinds of problems that typify various congregations of believers.⁹

Of this larger Epistle, namely the Apocalypse itself, these seven Churches are the original receivers; not as having a nearer or greater interest in it than any other portion of the Universal Church; though as members of that Church they have an interest in it as near and great as can be conceived (Rev. 1:3; 22:18-19); but on account of this their representative character.¹⁰

These letters have the same universal application to the saints of all ages as the epistles written to various churches in the *NT*^[5.2.48]:

These seven Epistles, however primarily addressed to these seven Churches of Asia, were also written for the edification of the Universal Church; in the same way, that is, as St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans, or to Timothy, or St. James' to the Dispersion, were written with this intention. The warnings, the incentives, the promises, the consolations, and, generally, the whole instruction in righteousness in these contained, are for every one in all times, so far as they may meet the several cases and conditions of

men. . . Thus far there can be no question. “All Scripture,” and therefore this Scripture, “was written for our learning.”¹¹

It also seems probable that these churches were the ones with which John enjoyed the closest relationship.¹²

4.15.1.1.1 - Historical Significance

A number of these churches remained viable for many years beyond the date of John’s writing.¹³ We have record of early documents which were written to some of them:

The seven accepted letters of *Ignatius*^[5.2.28], datable to about AD 115, are of great value to our study, for three of them were addressed to three of our seven churches, Ephesus, Smyrna and Philadelphia, and a fourth to *Polycarp*^[5.2.55], bishop of Smyrna. It is not clear whether Ignatius knew the Revelation. . . . His impressions of the churches are independent.¹⁴

Several of the early Church Fathers, who attest to the *canonicity*^[2.10] of the book of Revelation and to its *authorship*^[2.9] at the hand of John the Apostle, lived among these churches to which John wrote. Their testimony regarding these facts is especially weighty since they were intimately familiar with the region and times of which John wrote.

4.15.1.2 - Believers and Unbelievers

The letters recognize that each church is composed of both believers and church-going unbelievers. “Church” (Ἐκκλησίας [*Ekklēsiās*]) is a compound word made up of “from” or “out” (ἐκ [*ek*]) and “I call” (καλέω [*kaleō*]) and is used in a variety of contexts:

This word [ecclesia] translated church or assembly is found in at least four important meanings in the New Testament. It is used (1) to mean an assembly of people. In this sense it has no special theological meaning. It can refer to Israel as a gathered people in the wilderness (Acts 7:38) or a regular assembly of citizens (Acts 19:39) or a group of people gathered for religious worship (Heb. 2:12). (2) The same word is used for an assembly of Christians in a local church (Acts 8:1, 8:3; 11:22, 26) and in the plural for a group of such churches (1Cor. 16:19; Gal. 1:2). Each assembly or church has a local gathering composed of professed Christians. That all in the assembly are not necessarily true believers is clear from the messages to the *seven churches*^[5.2.66] of Asia (Rev. 2:1-3:22). (3) Ecclesia is also used of the total of professing Christians without reference to locality and is practically parallel in this sense to Christendom (Acts 12:1; Rom. 16:16; 1Cor. 15:9; Gal. 1:13; Rev. 2:1-29, 3:1-22; etc.). The same word is used (4) of the body of Christ, composed of those baptized by the Holy Spirit into the church (1Cor. 12:13). Ecclesia used in this connection becomes a technical word referring to the saints of this age.¹⁵

It is important to recognize that the letters to these seven churches use the term “church” in the sense of a local gathering of *professing believers*. It is not used in a technical sense to describe all those who are known to have been born again—the true *body of Christ* (Luke 15:24, 32; John 3:3, 7; Gal. 6:15; 1Pe. 1:3, 23; 1Jn. 2:29; 3:9; 5:1, 18). If we fail to understand that the letters address both believers and “church-going” unbelievers, then the promises attending each letter will be misconstrued.¹⁶

[the letters] involve the visible church rather than the invisible Church. The latter is the Body of Messiah, composed of all true believers since Pentecost. It is sometimes referred to as the Universal Church. But the visible church is the local body or local church, which may have both believers and unbelievers. It includes all professing believers whether they really are or not.¹⁷

The omniscience and piercing gaze of Jesus is evident by His detailed knowledge of the condition of each church. Jesus “knows” their works (Rev. 2:2, 9, 13, 19; 3:1, 8, 15). “Know” (Οἶδα [*Oida*], Rev. 2:2) expresses the Lord’s self-claim of knowledge in each of the seven messages in contrast to γινώσκω [*ginōskō*] (“I know”), which speaks of progress of knowledge, *oida* reflects full or complete knowledge. It depicts absolute clearness of mental vision, which photographs all facts of life as they pass. It, not *ginosko*, is always the word used of Christ’s knowledge in Revelation.¹⁸

We call the contents of these chapters *Epistles*; but they are not so much messages from an absent Lord as sentences of a present Judge, engaged in the solemn act of inspection and decision.¹⁹

4.15.1.3 - Who is the Overcomer?

Each letter closes with one or more promises for “he who overcomes.” The question arises, “Who is the overcomer?”

The question that needs resolving involves a proper identification of this overcomer. Does he belong to a special class of Christians composed of those who are spiritual and not carnal? Or is he part of a special group of Christians who are set apart for eventual martyrdom? Or is “overcomer” simply another name for those who are genuinely regenerate believers?²⁰

A survey of the rewards promised for the overcomer in each church shows that they correlate with the general benefits of salvation offered to all believers (Rev. 2:7, 11, 17, 26-27; 3:5, 12, 21). These promises describe the rewards for true believers *within* the larger body of each church, composed of both true and professing Christians.

Almost all the references to overcoming mention a promise for all believers, promises that accompany salvation. . . . It would seem strange to think of only **some** believers eating of the tree of life, or not being hurt by the second death, or not being clothed in white garments. [emphasis added]²¹

As to the definition of *overcomer*, it can best be understood in light of what John says elsewhere:

For whatever is born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world—our faith. **Who is he who overcomes the world, but he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?** (1Jn 5:4-5) [emphasis added]

The overcomers in each church do so, not *by* their actions—rather their actions are an *indication* of their identification with the Overcomer, Jesus Christ (John 16:33; 1Jn. 4:4). John indicates that those who overcome do so by way of their relationship with God:

I write to you, fathers, because **you have known** Him *who is* from the beginning. I write to you, young men, because **you have overcome** the wicked one. I write to you, little children, because **you have known** the Father. (1Jn 2:13) [emphasis added]

Those who overcome do so by trusting in Christ and His sacrifice, remaining unwavering in their faith, even when faced with death (Rev. 12:11). They inherit all things because of their *position in Christ* as sons of God (Rev. 21:7).

Promises to the Overcomer

Church	Promise
Ephesus	To eat from the tree of life (Rev. 2:7).
Smyrna	Not be hurt by the second death (Rev. 2:11).
Pergamos	Hidden manna to eat, a white stone with a new name written (Rev. 2:17).
Thyatira	Power over the nations, the morning star (Rev. 2:26-28).
Sardis	Clothed in white garments, name not blotted out from the <i>Book of Life</i> ^[5.2.10] , name confessed before the Father and angels (Rev. 3:5-6).
Philadelphia	Made a pillar in the temple of God, name of God, New Jerusalem, and Jesus' new name written upon (Rev. 3:12).
Laodicea	Sit with Jesus on His throne (Rev. 3:21).

4.15.1.4 - The Structure of the Letters

The seven letters to the *seven churches*^[5.2.66] follow a well-developed pattern.²²

They are constructed precisely on the same model. They every one of them contain. . . **1.** A command . . . to the seer that he should write to the Angel of the Church. **2.** One or more glorious titles which Christ claims for Himself. . . **3.** The action message from Christ to the Angel of the Church. . . **4.** A promise to the faithful. . . **5.** . . . an exhortation which give a universal character to these particular addresses.²³

The titles used by each letter are taken primarily from John's vision of Jesus in the first chapter (Rev. 1:12-18) and relate to the situation of the particular church.²⁴

4.15.1.4.1 - Ephesus

The Letter to Ephesus

Attribute	Description
Meaning	desirable, darling, beloved, relaxation ²⁵
Titles ²⁶	To the angel of the church of Ephesus write, 'These things says He who holds the seven stars in His right hand, who walks in the midst of the seven golden lampstands:' (Rev. 2:1)
Commendation	I know your works, your labor, your patience, and that you cannot bear those who are evil. And you have tested those who say they are apostles and are not, and have found them liars; and you have persevered and have patience, and have labored for My name's sake and have not become weary. (Rev. 2:2-3) But this you have, that you hate the deeds of the <i>Nicolaitans</i> ^[5.2.47] , which I also hate. (Rev. 2:6)
Criticism	Nevertheless I have <i>this</i> against you, that you have left your first love. (Rev. 2:4)
Exhortation	Remember therefore from where you have fallen; repent and do the first works, or else I will come to you quickly and remove your lampstand from its place— unless you repent. (Rev. 2:5) ²⁷
Promises	To him who overcomes I will give to eat from the tree of life, which is in the midst of the Paradise of God. (Rev. 2:7b)
Commentary	<i>Revelation 2:1</i> ^[3.2.1]

4.15.1.4.2 - Smyrna

The Letter to Smyrna

Attribute	Description
Meaning	myrrh, bitter ²⁸
Titles	And to the angel of the church in Smyrna write, 'These things says the First and the Last, who was dead, and came to life:' (Rev. 2:8)
Commendation	I know your works, tribulation, and poverty (but you are rich); and <i>I know</i> the blasphemy of those who say they are Jews and are not, but <i>are</i> a synagogue of Satan. (Rev. 2:9)
Criticism	None!
Exhortation	Do not fear any of those things which you are about to suffer. Indeed, the devil is about to throw <i>some</i> of you into prison, that you may be tested, and you will have tribulation ten days. (Rev. 2:10a)
Promises	Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life. (Rev. 2:10b)
Commentary	<i>Revelation 2:8</i> ^[3.2.8]

4.15.1.4.3 - Pergamos

The Letter to Pergamos

Attribute	Description
Meaning	much marriage, thoroughly marriage, ²⁹ high tower, ³⁰ parchment ³¹
Titles	And to the angel of the church in Pergamos write, ‘These things says He who has the sharp two-edged sword:’ (Rev. 2:12)
Commendation	I know your works, and where you dwell, where Satan’s throne <i>is</i> . And you hold fast to My name, and did not deny My faith even in the days in which Antipas <i>was</i> My faithful martyr, who was killed among you, where Satan dwells. (Rev. 2:13)
Criticism	But I have a few things against you, because you have there those who hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balak to put a stumbling block before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed to idols, and to commit sexual immorality. Thus you also have those who hold the doctrine of the <i>Nicolaitans</i> ^[5.2.47] , which thing I hate. (Rev. 2:14-15)
Exhortation	Repent, or else I will come to you quickly and will fight against them with the sword of My mouth. (Rev. 2:16)
Promises	He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes I will give some of the hidden manna to eat. And I will give him a white stone, and on the stone a new name written which no one knows except him who receives <i>it</i> . (Rev. 2:17)
Commentary	<i>Revelation 2:12</i> ^[3.2.12]

4.15.1.4.4 - Thyatira

The Letter to Thyatira

Attribute	Description
Meaning	odor of affliction, continual sacrifice ³² , feminine oppression ³³
Titles	And to the angel of the church in Thyatira write, ‘These things says the Son of God, who has eyes like a flame of fire, and His feet like fine brass:’ (Rev. 2:18)
Commendation	I know your works, love, service, faith, and your patience; and <i>as</i> for your works, the last <i>are</i> more than the first (Rev. 2:19).
Criticism	Nevertheless I have a few things against you, because you allow that woman <i>Jezebel</i> ^[5.2.35] , who calls herself a prophetess, to teach and seduce My servants to commit sexual immorality and eat things sacrificed to idols. And I gave her time to repent of her sexual immorality, and she did not repent (Rev. 2:20-21).
Exhortation	Indeed I will cast her into a sickbed, and those who commit adultery with her into great tribulation, unless they repent of their deeds. I will kill her children with death, and all the churches shall know that I am He who searches the minds and hearts. And I will give to each one of you according to your works. Now to you I say, and to the rest in Thyatira, as many as do not have this doctrine, who have not known the depths of Satan, as they say, I will put on you no other burden. But hold fast what you have till I come (Rev. 2:22-25).
Promises	And he who overcomes, and keeps My works until the end, to him I will give power over the nations— ‘He shall rule them with a rod of iron; They shall be dashed to pieces like the potter’s vessels’ —as I also have received from My Father; and I will give him the morning star (Rev. 2:26-28).
Commentary	<i>Revelation 2:18</i> ^[3.2.18]

4.15.1.4.5 - Sardis***The Letter to Sardis***

Attribute	Description
Meaning	remnant, ³⁴ those escaping, ³⁵ renovation, ³⁶ the sun, red ones, prince of joy ³⁷
Titles	And to the angel of the church in Sardis write, 'These things says He who has the seven Spirits of God and the seven stars: (Rev. 3:1a)
Commendation	You have a few names even in Sardis who have not defiled their garments (Rev. 3:4).
Criticism	I know your works, that you have a name that you are alive, but you are dead (Rev. 3:1b).
Exhortation	Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die, for I have not found your works perfect before God. Remember therefore how you have received and heard; hold fast and repent. Therefore if you will not watch, I will come upon you as a thief, and you will not know what hour I will come upon you (Rev. 3:2-3).
Promises	You have a few names even in Sardis who have not defiled their garments; and they shall walk with Me in white, for they are worthy. He who overcomes shall be clothed in white garments, and I will not blot out his name from the <i>Book of Life</i> ^[5.2.10] ; but I will confess his name before My Father and before His angels (Rev. 3:4-6).
Commentary	<i>Revelation 3:1</i> ^[3.3.1]

4.15.1.4.6 - Philadelphia

The Letter to Philadelphia

Attribute	Description
Meaning	brotherly love
Titles	And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write, ‘These things says He who is holy, He who is true, He who has the key of David, He who opens and no one shuts, and shuts and no one opens:’ (Rev. 3:7)
Commendation	I know your works. See, I have set before you an open door, and no one can shut it; for you have a little strength, have kept My word, and have not denied My name (Rev. 3:8) you have kept my command to persevere (Rev. 3:10).
Criticism	None!
Exhortation	Indeed I will make <i>those</i> of the synagogue of Satan, who say they are Jews and are not, but lie—indeed I will make them come and worship before your feet, and to know that I have loved you. Because you have kept My command to persevere, I also will keep you from the hour of trial which shall come upon the whole world, to test those who dwell on the earth. Behold, I am coming quickly! Hold fast what you have, that no one may take your crown (Rev. 3:9-11).
Promises	He who overcomes, I will make him a pillar in the temple of My God, and he shall go out no more. And I will write on him the name of My God and the name of the city of My God, the New Jerusalem, which comes down out of heaven from My God. And <i>I will write on him</i> My new name (Rev. 3:12).
Commentary	<i>Revelation 3:7</i> ^[3.3.7]

4.15.1.4.7 - Laodicea

The Letter to Laodicea

Attribute	Description
Meaning	rule of the people
Titles	And to the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write, ‘These things says the Amen, the Faithful and True Witness, the Beginning of the creation of God.’ (Rev. 3:14)
Commendation	None!
Criticism	I know your works, that you are neither cold nor hot. I could wish you were cold or hot. So then, because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will vomit you out of My mouth. Because you say, ‘I am rich, have become wealthy, and have need of nothing’ —and do not know that you are wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked— (Rev. 3:15-17)
Exhortation	I counsel you to buy from Me gold refined in the fire, that you may be rich; and white garments, that you may be clothed, <i>that</i> the shame of your nakedness may not be revealed; and anoint your eyes with eye salve, that you may see. As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten. Therefore be zealous and repent (Rev. 3:18-19).
Promises	Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with Me. To him who overcomes I will grant to sit with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne (Rev. 3:20-21).
Commentary	<i>Revelation 3:14</i> ^[3.3.14]

4.15.1.5 - Representative of Seven Stages of Church History?

A number of expositors down through history have held that the *seven churches*^[5.2.66] represent seven sequential stages of church history.³⁸ While we do not favor this view, it is instructive to understand the arguments for and against such a view since it will frequently be encountered by students of the book of Revelation. The view is known as the historical-prophetical view:

The historical-prophetical interpretation . . . states that while all seven types of churches always exist, one type dominates a particular era of church history. Throughout church history all seven types of churches will be present, but one type will tend to dominate a particular period of church history. . . .³⁹

Fruchtenbaum responds to the assertion that such a view of the letters to the churches violates the *Golden Rule of Interpretation*^[5.2.24]:

The question this . . . perspective raises is: Does this view not violate *The Golden Rule of Interpretation* and the principles of a literal *hermeneutic*^[5.2.26]? If it could be clearly shown that all that was said in a particular letter can be or was true of that particular church or that type of church, then the answer would be: “Yes.” But if statements are made that cannot in any way be true of that particular church, then the answer would be: “No.” This author would prefer to limit the interpretation to that church only or to that type of church only, but now and then statements are made which render that impossible. . . .⁴⁰

Certain statements made to individual churches cannot be true of the strictly local situation, and they must have a far wider meaning. . . . One example is the promise to keep the Church of Philadelphia from *the hour of trial, that hour which is to come upon the whole earth*. The time is long past that this promise could be kept only to that particular church, for that local church no longer exists; nor can this promise be limited to that type of church because other types of churches of these two chapters will also share in the promise. . . . It is statements like this [the use of the Phoenician name *Jezebel*^[5.2.35] at Thyatira] that lend credence to the historical-prophetical interpretation. . . . In [Rev. 2:22], the woman is to be cast into the Great Tribulation. This means that unlike the true Church, the Roman Catholic

Church [represented by Jezebel] will go into the Great Tribulation . . . This is another example of a passage that simply cannot be limited to the local situation.⁴¹

Fruchtenbaum suggests the following historical correlation.⁴² We've augmented Fruchtenbaum's suggestions with those of Bullinger that each assembly denotes a unique phase in *Israel's history*:⁴³

Seven Stages of Church History

Church	Church History Typified	Dates	Israel's History Typified ⁴⁴	Verses
Ephesus	The Apostolic Church	A.D. 30-100	The Day of Israel's Espousals (Exodus)	Rev. 2:1-7
Smyrna	The Church of the Roman Persecution	A.D. 100 - 313	The Period of Israel's Wanderings (Numbers)	Rev. 2:8-11
Pergamum	The Church of the Age of Constantine	The Wilderness Period (Numbers)	A.D. 313-600 ⁴⁵	Rev. 2:12-17
Thyatira	The Church of the Dark Ages	A.D. 600-1517 ⁴⁶	The Wilderness Period (Numbers)	Rev. 2:18-29
Sardis	The Church of the Reformation	A.D. 1517-1648	The Period of Israel's Kings (1 and 2 Kings)	Rev. 3:1-6
Philadelphia	The Church of the Great Missionary Movement	A.D. 1648-1900	The Period of Israel's Removal (1 and 2 Chronicles)	Rev. 3:7-13
Laodicea	The Church of the Apostasy	A.D. 1900-present day	The Period of Judah's Kings (2 Chronicles)	Rev. 3:14-22

It is our view that the historical-prophetical view suffers from numerous problems.

1. There is significant disagreement between different proponents of the view concerning which periods of history are represented, both their characteristics and dates. In this, the historical-prophetical scheme suffers from the same problems as the *Historicist Interpretation*^[2.12.4] of Revelation.⁴⁷
2. Church history is far more complex than can be reflected by seven periods sharing global characteristics.⁴⁸
3. The correlation made between the letters and church history is entirely westernized and fails to take into account important movements and activities elsewhere in the world.
4. If the churches truly are representative of the course of church history, this fact must have been concealed from the early church or it would have destroyed the concept of *imminency*^[5.2.30].⁴⁹
5. The historical-prophetical interpretation seems to read more into the text than what is intended.⁵⁰

Trench observes;

The multitude of dissertations, essays, books, which have been, and are still being written, in support of this scheme of interpretation, must remain a singular monument of wasted ingenuity and misapplied toil . . . a future looking into Scripture for that which is not to be found there . . . a resolution to draw out from it that which he who draws out must first himself have put in. Men will never thus make Scripture richer. They will have made it much poorer for themselves, if they nourish themselves out of it with the

fancies of men, in place of the truths of God.⁵¹

For further information on this subject, see [Thomas, *Revelation 1-7*, 505-515].

Notes

- ¹ Henry Barclay Swete, *The Apocalypse of St. John* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 1998, 1906), li-iii.
- ² Photograph courtesy of NASA (<http://www.visibleearth.nasa.gov>).
- ³ Robert L. Thomas, *Revelation 1-7* (Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 1992), 130.
- ⁴ “There were other churches in the Asian province: Colosse, near Laodicea, to which Paul wrote in one of his epistles; Troas, where he held a meeting and restored Eutychus to life (Acts 20:5-12); Magnesia and Tralles, to which *Ignatius*^[5.2.28] indited letters at the beginning of the second century. Colosse and Troas were certainly founded before the writing of the Apocalypse, and probably the others were also.”—Merrill C. Tenney, *Interpreting Revelation* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1957), 29. “There were more than *seven churches*^[5.2.66] in the region meant by ‘Asia,’ for instance, Magnesia and Tralles.”—A. R. Fausset, “*The Revelation of St. John the Divine*,” in Robert Jamieson, A. R. Fausset, and David Brown, *A Commentary, Critical and Explanatory, on the Old and New Testaments* (Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc., 1997, 1877), Rev. 1:1.
- ⁵ Alan F. Johnson, *Revelation: The Expositor’s Bible Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1966), 23.
- ⁶ Colin J. Hemer, *The Letters to the Seven Churches of Asia in Their Local Setting* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1989), 15.
- ⁷ Swete, *The Apocalypse of St. John*, liii-liv.
- ⁸ “The [Muratorian Canon^[5.2.12]] states in lines 47-59, “. . . For also John, in his Apocalypse, while writing to the seven churches, yet speaks to all.””—Mark Hitchcock, “*The Stake in the Heart—The A.D. 95 Date of Revelation*,” in Tim LaHaye, and Thomas Ice, eds., *The End Times Controversy* (Eugene, OR: Harvest House Publishers, 2003), 132.
- ⁹ Mal Couch, “*Ecclesiology in the Book of Revelation*,” in Mal Couch, ed., *A Bible Handbook to Revelation* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 2001), 125.
- ¹⁰ Richard Chenevix Trench, *Commentary on the Epistles to the Seven Churches in Asia* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 1861), 5.
- ¹¹ Trench, *Commentary on the Epistles to the Seven Churches in Asia*, 222.
- ¹² “These adequately represented the various spiritual situations of the surrounding churches at the time. Then too they were probably the ones with which John enjoyed the closest relationship.”—Thomas, *Revelation 1-7*, 64.
- ¹³ Bullinger holds the unusual view that the church has been raptured before the book of Revelation opens. He believes the *seven churches*^[5.2.66] of Revelation 2 and 3 are seven, literal, Jewish churches or assemblies yet to come. [E. W. Bullinger, *Commentary On Revelation* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 1984, 1935), xiii] He believes this explains the lack of historical evidence for the existence of some of the churches which some have noted. “*Tertullian*^[5.2.75] (about 145-220) says that leaders of certain sects, such as Cerdon and Marcion, rejected the Apocalypse on the ground that it could not have been written by John, inasmuch as (among other reasons) there was no Christian Church in existence at Thyatira in the time of John. Epiphanius (who wrote about A.D. 367) deals with the Alogi, a sect which disputed the genuineness of the Apocalypse, and on the same grounds. . . . The answer of Epiphanius acknowledged the historical fact: but his answer was that St. John wrote to the church at Thyatira, not because it was then in existence, but because it would be at some future time. . . . In A.D. 363 was held the Council of Laodicea. It was attended by thirty-two bishops of Asia, among whom was the bishop of Ephesus. This Council framed a list or *canon*^[5.2.12] of the sacred books, but the Apocalypse was not included in the catalogue. How can we account for this as a historical fact if these seven churches were all *then existent*; and if these epistles were sent to them at that time, Laodicea being one of them?”—Bullinger, *Commentary On Revelation*, 70-71. Thomas counters: “The basis of the assumption [that no church existed in Thyatira] being statements by Tertullian (A.D. 145-220) and by Epiphanius (about A.D. 367). . . . Tertullian does not agree with the faithfulness of this assertion, but merely cites the claims of

certain sects. Epiphanius too was answering unorthodox objections of the Alogi to the genuineness of the Apocalypse. The absurdity of this position is readily seen when one recollects the evidence of the Apocalypse itself. . . . [The author] would not have assumed as fact a thing known to be erroneous. How much more true this is with the *inspired*^[5.2.33] apostle as author.”—Thomas, *Revelation 1-7*, 506. This view seems implausible when one considers that these churches, once viable, have lain in ruins for most of two millennia. Are we to suppose they will spring back to life at the time of the end?

- 14 Hemer, *The Letters to the Seven Churches of Asia in Their Local Setting*, 19.
- 15 John F. Walvoord, *The Millennial Kingdom* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1959), 224-225.
- 16 The “overcomer” (Rev. 2:7, 11, 17, 26; 3:5, 12, 21; 21:7) is not a special class of Christian, but a simple believer (1Jn. 5:4).
- 17 Arnold G. Fruchtenbaum, *The Footsteps of Messiah*, rev ed. (Tustin, CA: Ariel Ministries, 2003), 47.
- 18 [Thomas, *Revelation 1-7*, 133]. See also [Swete, *The Apocalypse of St. John*, 24].
- 19 J. A. Seiss, *The Apocalypse: Lectures on the Book of Revelation* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1966), 67.
- 20 Thomas, *Revelation 1-7*, 151.
- 21 Mal Couch, “Soteriology in the Book of Revelation,” in Mal Couch, ed., *A Bible Handbook to Revelation* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 2001), 164-165.
- 22 See also [Monty S. Mills, *Revelations: An Exegetical Study of the Revelation to John* (Dallas, TX: 3E Ministries, 1987), Rev. 2:8].
- 23 Trench, *Commentary on the Epistles to the Seven Churches in Asia*, 65-66.
- 24 “The first thing in common is that every letter has a description of the Messiah taken from the description of the Glorified Son of Man found in chapter one.”—Fruchtenbaum, *The Footsteps of Messiah*, 47. “Each feature thus emphasized has an appropriate connection with the nature of the church, as if the manifestation of Christ were specially designed for that church. To the careless assembly at Ephesus He is the inspector who walks among the lampstands; to the oppressed flock of Smyrna threatened by persecution He is the risen Lord whom death could not destroy; to the lax church at Pergamum He appears with the sharp two-edged sword of judgment. Each feature of the portrait is made significant for the addresses.”—Tenney, *Interpreting Revelation*, 123.
- 25 J. Dwight Pentecost, *Things to Come: A Study in Biblical Eschatology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1958), 151.
- 26 Taken primarily from Rev. 1:12-18.
- 27 “Gibbon (*Decline and Fall*, c. lxiv.), . . . writes like one who almost believed that the threatenings and promises of God did fulfill themselves in history: ‘In the loss of Ephesus the Christians deplored the fall of the first Angel, the extinction of the first candlestick, of the Revelations; the desolation is complete; and the temple of Diana or the church of Mary will equally elude the search of the curious traveller. The circus and three stately theatres of Laodicea are now peopled with wolves and foxes; Sardis is reduced to a miserable village; the God of Mahomet, without a rival or a son, is invoked in the mosques of Thyatira and Pergamus, and the populousness of Smyrna is supported by the foreign trade of the Franks and Armenians. Philadelphia alone has been saved by prophecy, or courage. . . . Among the Greek colonies and Churches of Asia, Philadelphia is still erect—a column in a scene of ruins,—a pleasing example that the paths of honour and safety may sometimes be the same.’ ”—Trench, *Commentary on the Epistles to the Seven Churches in Asia*, 187-188.
- 28 Thomas, *Revelation 1-7*, 158.
- 29 Pentecost, *Things to Come: A Study in Biblical Eschatology*, 152.
- 30 [Seiss, *The Apocalypse: Lectures on the Book of Revelation*, 71] and [Pentecost, *Things to Come: A Study in Biblical Eschatology*, 152].
- 31 “This city, whose name means ‘parchment,’ was where parchment was first manufactured.”—Thomas, *Revelation 1-7*, 177.
- 32 Pentecost, *Things to Come: A Study in Biblical Eschatology*, 152.

- 33 “If we take it as a compound of θυγατρὶς [*thygatēs*] and τειρῶ [*teirō*], we get the idea of feminine oppression. The false prophets who first enticed the members of this church into apostasy were women.”—Seiss, *The Apocalypse: Lectures on the Book of Revelation*, 71.
- 34 “[Some] have derived it from the Hebrew, and have assigned it the signification of *remnant*, or an *escaped few*.”—Seiss, *The Apocalypse: Lectures on the Book of Revelation*, 71.
- 35 Pentecost, *Things to Come: A Study in Biblical Eschatology*, 152.
- 36 Pentecost, *Things to Come: A Study in Biblical Eschatology*, 152.
- 37 Jerome Smith, *The New Treasury of Scripture Knowledge* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1992), Rev. 3:1.
- 38 “They affirm that we have in them, besides counsels to the Churches named in each, a prophetic outline of seven successive *periods* of the Church’s history; dividing, as they do, into these seven portions the whole time intervening between Christ’s Ascension and his return in glory.”—Trench, *Commentary on the Epistles to the Seven Churches in Asia*, 224. “The notion itself undoubtedly dates back to a period anterior to the Reformation. The *Fratres Spirituales*, or more rigid Franciscans, who refused the mitigations of the strictness of St. Francis’ rule, in which the majority of his followers allowed themselves, and who on this account separated themselves from them, and from the Church which sanctioned such relaxations, are the first among whom this scheme of interpretation assumed any prominence.”—Trench, *Commentary on the Epistles to the Seven Churches in Asia*, 227.
- 39 Fruchtenbaum, *The Footsteps of Messiah*, 48-49.
- 40 Fruchtenbaum, *The Footsteps of Messiah*, 49.
- 41 Fruchtenbaum, *The Footsteps of Messiah*, 49, 58, 60.
- 42 [Fruchtenbaum, *The Footsteps of Messiah*, 50-90] A fatal weakness of this view, in our opinion, is the variation in the results of different expositors. For example, see LaHaye. “Chart of Church Age View”—Tim LaHaye, *Revelation Unveiled* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1999), 24. Even Fruchtenbaum admits a reduction in his emphasis on the interpretation of the letters to the seven churches as historical periods: [Fruchtenbaum, *The Footsteps of Messiah*, xxxi].
- 43 Bullinger, *Commentary On Revelation*, 73-86.
- 44 Bullinger, *Commentary On Revelation*, 73-86.
- 45 “300 to 800 A.D.”—Pentecost, *Things to Come: A Study in Biblical Eschatology*, 153.
- 46 “800 to 1517.”—Pentecost, *Things to Come: A Study in Biblical Eschatology*, 153.
- 47 “There is no . . . accurate correspondence . . . the interpreters of the historico-prophetical school, besides their controversy with those who deny *in toto* what they affirm, have also an intestine strife among themselves. Each one has his own solution of the enigma, his own distribution of the several epochs; or, if this is too much to affirm, there is, at any rate, nothing approaching to a general *consensus* among them.”—Trench, *Commentary on the Epistles to the Seven Churches in Asia*, 234. “Schaff, in speaking of the periods of church history, notes, ‘In regard to the number and length of periods there is, indeed, no unanimity.’ He then goes on to observe that if any general agreement exists, it is in respect to a threefold division into ancient (A.D. 1-590), medieval (A.D. 590-1517) and modern (A.D. 1517-1880) periods. If a further breakdown is desired, Schaff proposes a division of each of the three into three subdivisions, resulting in nine, not seven periods of church history.”—Thomas, *Revelation 1-7*, 510.
- 48 “One has to force the specific problems of each congregation into a certain period of church history. And those issues do not fit as easily as one may wish. Church history is far more complex.”—Couch, “*Ecclesiology in the Book of Revelation*,” 127.
- 49 “If the churches were genuinely prophetic of the course of church history rather than representative in every age, those who hold to the imminent return of Christ would have been quickly disillusioned once they realized this.”—Johnson, *Revelation: The Expositor's Bible Commentary*, 24.
- 50 “We ask, what slightest hint or intimation does the Spirit of God give that we have here to do with the great successive acts and epochs of the kingdom of God in the course of its gradual evolution here upon earth? Where are the finger-posts pointing the way? What is there, for instance, of chronological succession? Does not every thing, on the contrary, mark *simultaneity*, not *succession*? The seven candlesticks are seen at the same instant; the seven Churches named in the same breath.”—Trench, *Commentary on the Epistles to the Seven Churches in Asia*, 233. “It will be good always to remember, that there is a temptation to make Scripture

mean *more* than in the intention of the holy Ghost it does mean, as well as a temptation to make it mean *less*; and that we are bound by equally solemn obligations not to thrust on it something of ours, as not to subtract from it any thing of its own (Rev. 22:18-19); the interpretation *in excess* proving often nearly, or quite, as mischievous as that *in defect*.”—Trench, *Commentary on the Epistles to the Seven Churches in Asia*, 221.

⁵¹ Trench, *Commentary on the Epistles to the Seven Churches in Asia*, 237.

⁵² Thomas, *Revelation 1-7*, 505-515.

4.16 - Temple of God

There are very few topics one could write on that are as sensitive and significant as the topic of the *Temple*^[5.2.73] of God.

For one thing, there are countless temples dotting our planet which make claim of being “Houses of God.” To single out one particular structure as *The Temple of God* is to invite the ire of a large number of people who consider *their* house to be *God’s* house. Yet the Scriptures indicate that a very specific site, on Mount Moriah in Jerusalem, has historically been the place where God has placed His name and which He calls “His house.”¹ For another thing, it is a large topic of immense spiritual importance: every temple which claims to recognize a deity seeks to provide a place where deity and creature may commune with one another, albeit in a limited way. Thus, a discussion of the Temple of God is all about *relationship* between God and man. This too is a sensitive topic, which at its core, is what uniquely and completely separates Christianity from every other religion of the world: for Christianity holds that only in the blood atonement of God Himself (Rev. 1:5, 18; 5:6, 9) is it possible for sinful man to have communion with a perfect and Holy God. “For *there is* one God and one Mediator between God and men, *the Man Christ Jesus*” (1Ti. 2:5).

Thus we expect, and indeed find, that the history of the Temple of God as set forth in Scripture communicates both a *problem* and a *solution*:

1. **The Problem** - Man has fallen irretrievably into sin and is unable to abide in the presence of a Holy God. His communion with God is severed.
2. **The Solution** - The Perfect Man, the God-man Jesus Christ, did what no other man could. He paid the penalty of imperfect men to restore communion between man and God. When sinful men rely upon His sacrifice of atonement on their behalf, they now appear before God clothed in His righteousness. Communion with God is reestablished and, eventually, consummated.

The Temple of God has always stood at the epicenter of the meeting between God and man. For most of history, the meeting has been formal and distant due to the intervening problem of sin. For God is a consuming fire and man would be consumed in judgment if he were exposed to God’s full presence while in his sinful condition.²

Unlike all other temples, which are *initiated by men* in an attempt to demonstrate their merit and climb up to God, the true Temple of God was constructed at *God’s behest*. It was God’s idea and purpose to meet with man in a Temple during the period of man’s estrangement. As with redemption, the initiative was *completely God’s*.

The following is an introduction and overview of this enormous topic, intended to acquaint the reader with the most significant theological aspects of the Temple of God, the history of the Temple, and Scriptural revelation concerning the role of the Temple in the future. Much of the material which follows is drawn from the work of Dr. Randall Price, an expert on the Temple whose resources we recommend.³

4.16.1 - Hide and Seek

From the day that Adam and Eve rebelled and were driven out of the Garden of Eden (Gen. 3:24) until the eternal state when God and the Lamb will once again dwell in the midst of men (Rev. 21:3, 22), mankind has been unable to approach God “face to face” in complete intimacy and fellowship.⁴ For God is an all-consuming fire in the presence of sin (Deu. 4:24; 5:25; Isa. 6:5; 33:14; Heb. 12:29). Until sin is no more, God has chosen to provide a means by which the original relationship between man and God—unmarred by sin—can be *approximated*. This is the *primary purpose of the Temple*^[5.2.73]. It is the meeting place between God and man, the place where God’s presence dwells in the midst of men.⁵

One way to understand the saga of the Temple within Biblical history is to consider the children’s game of *hide and seek*. One child closes their eyes and counts from one to ten. The other children run away to hide while they can. When the first child reaches ten, he uncovers his eyes and searches for the

hidden children, not knowing where they may be found. In our analogy God is the seeker and mankind runs away to hide. This game was first played in history when Adam and Eve hid from God in the Garden (Gen. 3:8). After the introduction of sin into the human race, history has played itself out as a protracted session of *hide and seek*, but it is anything but a game!

Although there may be numerous motives for why Adam and Eve hid from God, Scripture reveals “the eyes of both of them were opened and they knew that they *were* naked; and they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves coverings” (Gen. 3:7). Although they had previously been naked and unashamed (Gen. 2:25), now they were ashamed. Their shame prompted an attempt to *cover themselves*. Clearly, they realized the need to protect or shield themselves. But from what or from whom? It would appear that they realized that with their fall into sin a huge gap stood between their own condition and that of a Holy Creator with searching eyes of piercing omniscience (see commentary on *Revelation 1:14*^[3.1.14]). An early object lesson concerning sin came when God indicated that their attempt to cover themselves with fig leaves was insufficient. Instead, *animals* were slain to provide a God-given covering for their sin (Gen. 3:21). This established the Biblical requirement that remission of sin requires the shedding of blood (see commentary on *Revelation 1:5*^[3.1.5]). Another, more severe object lesson followed. With the introduction of sin, man could no longer remain in God’s presence—Adam and Eve were expelled from the Garden (Gen. 3:24).⁶ Thereafter, we find that man must approach God through a new means requiring blood sacrifice (Gen. 4:3-7). There would be no more strolling with God, naked and unashamed.

This pattern of man rejecting God only to have God seek after him to reestablish relationship is a theme of Biblical History. It is the prime motivation behind the Great Commission of the Church to reach all nations (Mtt. 28:19-20; Mark 16:15-17; Luke 24:47; Acts 1:8). It recognizes the inability of unregenerate flesh to truly please or seek God (Rom. 3:10-18 cf. Ps. 5:9; 10:7; 14:1-3; 36:1; 53:1-3; 140:3 Pr. 1:16; Isa. 59:7-8) and that only by God’s initiative can any be restored to fellowship with Him (John 1:12-13; 6:44).

When studying the Temple, God’s meeting place with man, we must always remember this human tendency. Even though millions now no longer know Him, let us not forget that twice in the history of mankind every person alive knew God (Adam and Eve and their family; Noah and his family after the flood). That which their forefathers once knew was actively rejected leaving the offspring without knowledge of God.

4.16.2 - The Abiding Presence of God

At the heart of the idea of a *Temple*^[5.2.73] is the abiding presence of God. Although God is omnipresent, He has chosen to manifest His presence in certain locations and at certain times within history. This physical manifestation of God has come to be called the *Shekinah*.

the *Shekinah Glory*^[5.2.67] is the visible manifestation of the presence of God. It is the majestic presence or manifestation of God in which He descends to *dwell* among men. Whenever the invisible God becomes visible, and whenever the omnipresence of God is localized, this is the *Shekinah* Glory. The usual title found in Scriptures for the *Shekinah* Glory is *the glory of Jehovah, or the glory of the Lord*. The Hebrew form is *Kvod Adonai*, which means ‘the glory of Jehovah’ and describes what the *Shekinah* Glory is. The Greek title, *Doxa Kurion*, is translated as ‘the glory of the Lord.’ *Doxa* means ‘brightness,’ ‘brilliance,’ or ‘splendor,’ and it depicts how the *Shekinah* Glory *appears*. Other titles give it the sense of ‘dwelling,’ which portrays what the *Shekinah* Glory does. The Hebrew word *Shekinah*, from the root *shachan*, means ‘to dwell.’ The Greek word *skeinei*, which is similar in sound as the Hebrew *Shekinah* (Greek has no ‘sh’ sound), means ‘to *tabernacle*^[5.2.69].’ . . . In the Old Testament, most of these visible manifestations took the form of light, fire, or cloud, or a combination of these. A new form appears in the New Testament: the Incarnate Word [John 1:14].⁷

The concept of the *Shekinah* is behind the wonder of the incarnation. The very glory of God “tabernacled” within human flesh and was handled and beheld. “And the Word became flesh and **dwelt among us** (ἐσκήνωσεν [*eskēnōsen*]), and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth” [emphasis added] (John 1:14).

Σκηνή [*Skēnē*] was the word used by the translators of the *Septuagint*^[5.2.65] for the Hebrew מִשְׁכָּן [*mishkkān*], “tabernacle” (Ex. 25:9). During Israel’s pilgrimage from Egypt to Canaan the tabernacle

was the place of worship for the people. The tabernacle or tent in the wilderness was the “tent of Jehovah,” Himself a pilgrim among His pilgrim people. In sound and meaning σκηνοῶ [*skēnoō*] recalls the Hebrew verb שָׁכַן [*shākkān*] meaning “to dwell,” which is sometimes used of God’s dwelling with Israel (Ex. 25:8; 29:46). In postbiblical Hebrew the Jews used the term שְׁכִינָה [*sh’kināh*] (“Shekinah,” literally, “presence”) of the bright cloud of the presence of God that settled on the tabernacle. The Shekinah glory was nothing less than the visible manifestation of God.⁸

The manifestation of the *Shekinah* is at the heart of understanding the meeting of God with man. In the earliest communion of man with God, God is said to have been “walking in the Garden in the cool of the day” (Gen. 3:8). This must speak of a localized presence with which Adam and Eve could interact—the *Shekinah*. The word itself embodies the notion of *dwelling* or *abiding*. This emphasizes the single most important aspect concerning God’s localized presence: *where is He abiding?* For wherever the *Shekinah* is, there is relationship with God in a more intimate way and all the benefits which come from His special presence. This is the essence of the promise made to the overcomer in Philadelphia, the fulfillment of that *first love* which was lacking in Ephesus: to walk once again in full fellowship with God (Gen. 3:8; 5:24; Rev. 21:3, 22). This was the ultimate desire of the psalmist (Ps. 23:6; 65:4). Thus, it is an incredible blessing to enjoy the presence of God.

This was the primary purpose of the Temple throughout history: to house the *Shekinah* glory of God among men. It is in the Temple where God’s presence “dwells *between* the cherubim” over the mercy seat of the Ark of the Covenant (Ex. 25:22; Num. 7:89; 1S. 4:4; 2S. 6:2; 1K. 7:29; 2K. 19:15; 1Chr. 13:6; 2Chr. 5:7; 6:41; Ps. 80:1; Ps. 99:1; Isa. 37:16; Eze. 41:18). Unless the glory of God “inhabits” the Temple (1K. 8:10-11; 2Chr. 7:1; Eze. 43:2-4; 44:1-2; Hag. 2:7-9; Mtt. 20:12) it is just a dead architectural edifice.⁹

Conversely, in the history of the Temple, there are grave consequences when the *Shekinah* departs from the Temple, for it indicates God’s displeasure with those among whom He previously dwelt and the removal of His protection and blessing in His departure. The Temple, the *house* of Israel, is left *desolate* when the glory of God departs. In at least two occasions in history, the result has been the destruction of the Temple. When the *Shekinah* left *Solomon’s Temple*^[4.16.5.3] in the days of Ezekiel’s prophecy (Eze. 10:18; 11:22-23), the eventual result was the destruction of the Temple by Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon. When the *Shekinah* left the *Second Temple*^[4.16.5.4] in the days of Jesus (Mtt. 23:38), the eventual result was the destruction of the Temple by Titus Vespasian of Rome (Mtt. 24:1-3). Whether God remains in His house is *serious business!*

Although it is beyond the scope of our treatment here to consider an extensive discussion of God’s abiding presence, it will be helpful to note some of the most significant historical events related to the *Shekinah*.¹⁰ The *Shekinah* glory:¹¹

- Illuminated the earth prior to the creation of the sun and moon (Gen. 1:3, 14).
- Walked with Adam and Eve in the Garden (Gen. 3:8).
- Ratified the Abrahamic covenant while Abraham slept (Gen. 15:17).
- Descended upon Mount Sinai at the giving of the law (Ex. 19:18; 24:15-16; 33:18-23; 34:5-6).
- Filled the Tabernacle in the wilderness (Ex. 40:34).
- Filled Solomon’s Temple upon its dedication (1K. 8:10-11; 2Chr. 7:1).
- Left Solomon’s Temple due to Israel’s sin (Eze. 8:4-6; 9:3; 10:4, 18-19; 11:22-23). The Temple is left unprotected.
- Returned to the Second Temple in the form of the incarnation of Messiah Jesus (Mtt. 12:6; 21:12; John 1:14; 2:15).
- Left the Second Temple desolate upon the departure of Jesus (Mtt. 23:38; 24:2; Luke 13:35; 21:6). The Temple is left unprotected.
- Appeared on the Mount of Transfiguration (Mtt. 17:2; Mark 9:2; Luke 9:29).
- Appeared to Paul on the road to Damascus (Acts 9:3; 22:11; 26:13; 1Ti. 6:16).

- Will return to the *Millennial Temple*^[5.2.40] (Isa. 60:3; Eze. 43:2-4).
- Illuminates the *New Jerusalem*^[4.16.5.11] (Rev. 21:23; 22:5).

The significance of the Mount of Olives derives from its association with the departure and arrival of the glory of the Lord:

The mountain which is so clearly defined and located in this prophecy [Zec. 14:4] is already associated with many events and crises in Israel's history. . . it was from this mountain, which is before Jerusalem on the east, that the prophet Ezekiel saw the glory of Jehovah finally taking its departure. It was from this mountain also that He, who was not only the symbol, but the living personal revelation of the glory of Jehovah, finally took His departure from the land, after He had been rejected by the nation. He led His handful of disciples out as far as Bethany (on the Mount of Olives), and He lifted up His hands and blessed them. 'And it came to pass while He blessed them, He was parted from them, and carried up to heaven' [Luke 24:50-51; Acts 1:9]; since then a still darker era in the long Ichabod period of Israel's history commenced. . . . And what is this but a prophecy in symbolic language of the same event which the heavenly messengers announced to the men of Galilee [Acts 1:9-11]. We love to think that this same mountain on which He once shed tears of sorrow over Jerusalem, the slope of which witnessed His agony and bloody sweat, shall be the first also to witness His manifestation in glory; and that His blessed feet, which in the days of His flesh walked wearily over this mountain on the way to Bethany shall, 'in that day,' be planted here *in triumph and majesty*.¹²

In summary, the *Shekinah* is the visible representation of the localized presence of God. By God's design, the Temple is the location where His abiding presence is intended to dwell and where He has put His name (Deu. 12:5, 11, 21; 2Chr. 6:20; 7:16; 20:19; Ezra 6:12; Ne. 1:9; Mtt. 21:13; Mark 11:17; Luke 19:46).

4.16.3 - The Temple Mount

*Temple Mount with Dome of the Rock*¹³



Isn't it interesting that in our own day, one of the most significant controversies occupying the nations is that of jurisdiction over the Temple Mount in Jerusalem? What an incredible coincidence that what should be an inconsequential and forgotten piece of real-estate associated with a religion of antiquity today causes great perplexity among both religious peoples and secular skeptics the world over! Yet those who study the Bible know from the Master of history that what we witness today concerning the controversy over the Temple Mount is but a precursor to a subsequent day when the city of Jerusalem will become the major concern of all nations as they oppose what God has declared in the pages of Scripture (Zec. 12:2-3). Truly "the nations rage and the people plot a vain thing!" (Ps. 2:1)

As of A.D. 2003, the two most dominant features visible upon the Temple Mount are the *Dome of the Rock*^[4.16.5.8] and the *Al-Aqsa* Mosque. But this is from man's point of view. God recognizes neither of these structures as His Temple. Yet the piece of *real-estate* occupied by these buildings has great Biblical significance, for it is Mount Moriah. The importance of Mount Moriah is established by a number of key historical events which have taken place there:¹⁴

1. **Abraham Offers Isaac** - It was here where Abraham's faith was tested when God instructed him to offer up his son Isaac in sacrifice (Gen. 22). See *Abraham Offers Isaac*^[4.16.3.1].
2. **Site of Solomon's Temple** - In 990 B.C., King David was instructed by God to erect an altar on the threshing floor of Araunah the Jebusite which occupied this site. David purchased the land which later became the site of *Solomon's Temple*^[4.16.5.3] (2S. 24:18-25; 1Chr. 21:18-26; 2Chr. 3:1).
3. **The Crucifixion of Jesus** - On the very mountain where Abraham was asked to sacrifice his "only son" (Gen. 22:2, 12), God sacrificed His only Son.¹⁵

For Islam, only the *first* of these events is significant.¹⁶ Even then, Islam claims that it was *Ishmael*, not Isaac, who was offered up by Abraham (see *Dome of the Rock*^[4.16.5.8]). Although ample evidence exists that Islam recognized the Temple Mount to have been the historic site of *Solomon's Temple*^[4.16.5.3] in the past, more recently it has served Islamic political interests for some to deny any previous historical Jewish presence on the Temple Mount. For Judaism, only the first *two* events are of significance, since Judaism rejects the idea that Israel crucified her Messiah, God in the flesh. All *three* events are of great significance to Christians, for they evidence the consistent purpose of God in their shared location:

Therefore [the sacrifice of Isaac took] place nowhere else than on "Moriah," the mount where "God is seen" (Gen. 22:14), where later the Temple stood (2Chr. 3:1), where upon the altar of burnt offering all the sacrifices which pointed to Christ would be brought, and where in the death hour on Golgotha the veil between the holy and all-holy places would be rent (Mark 15:38).¹⁷

4.16.3.1 - Abraham Offers Isaac

It was upon Mount Moriah where Abraham was told to offer Isaac: "Take now your son, your only *son* Isaac, whom you love, and go to the land of Moriah and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains of which I shall tell you" (Gen. 22:2). What transpired upon this mountain, as recorded in Genesis 22, is a foundational event, both for Judaism and Christianity. To those who are familiar with the Torah, the opening instruction given to Abraham is shocking! For the Torah—the very Word of God—specifically indicates God's opposition to child sacrifice (Deu. 12:31; 18:10). Yet here, the Almighty Himself *instructs Abraham to offer child sacrifice!* Why would God give such instructions if it were not meant as an exclamation mark commenting upon the very event itself?

Although Judaism sees the purpose merely as a point of testing of Abraham's faith, Christianity understands the full typological significance of what took place—as a sign post pointing to the most significant event in all history: when another Father would offer His "only Son" upon the same mountain. The offering of Isaac is a carefully constructed divine pattern which pointed to the redeeming sacrifice of Jesus upon the cross many years later. That this is true can be seen from the numerous typological correlations between this event and the crucifixion.

The Offering of Isaac points to the Crucifixion of Jesus

Type (Model)	Antitype (Fulfillment)
Abraham offered his only son (Gen. 22:2, 12).	God offered his only Son (John 3:16).
Isaac carried the wood for the sacrifice (Gen. 22:5).	Jesus carried the cross for the sacrifice (John 19:17).
Isaac cried out to his father (Gen. 22:7).	Jesus cried out to His Father (Mtt. 27:46; Mark 15:34).
Isaac escaped death after three days (Gen. 22:4).	Jesus rose from the dead on the third day (Mtt. 16:21; Mark 16:2-4; Luke 9:22).
Abraham indicated God will provide a lamb for the sacrifice (Gen. 22:8).	God provided Jesus as The Lamb for the sacrifice (Isa. 53:7; John 1:29, 36; Rev. 5:6; 7:17).
God provided a ram, a <i>male</i> sheep, as a substitutionary sacrifice (Gen. 22:13).	God provided a male, Jesus, as a substitutionary sacrifice.
The ram was caught by its horns (head) in a thicket (thorns) (Gen. 22:13).	Jesus wore a crown of thorns on his head (Mtt. 27:29), a symbol of the sin He bore (Gen. 3:18).
Sacrifice offered at specific location on Mount Moriah (Gen. 22:2, 9).	For hundreds of years, sacrifices would be offered from the same spot inside <i>Solomon's Temple</i> ^[4.16.5.3] and the <i>Second Temple</i> ^[4.16.5.4] (2Chr. 3:1). When Jesus is crucified outside the city walls on the same mountain, the veil within the <i>Temple</i> ^[5.2.73] is rent in two (Mark 15:38).
The ram was God's provision (Gen. 22:13-14).	Abraham prophetically named the place pointing to the crucifixion where God made the ultimate provision: the sacrifice of His Son for sin (Heb. 9:26-28).

Now the God-given instruction to sacrifice Isaac, in violation of what would later be codified in the Law of Moses, can be understood—God had no intention of actually allowing Isaac to die. Instead, He intended to test Abraham's faith *and* demonstrate prophetically His intention to offer His own Son, Jesus Christ, on the same mountain hundreds of years later (Ps. 22; Isa. 53). Sadly, the same words that Jesus spoke to the religious leaders of His day can still be said to Judaism which rejects Messiah Jesus: "You search the Scriptures, for in them you think you have eternal life; and these are they which testify of Me" (John 5:39).¹⁸ In the hundreds of years which would separate Abraham's offering of Isaac on Mount Moriah from God's offering of Jesus, the ritual slaughter of countless animals within the *Tabernacle in the Wilderness*^[4.16.5.2], *Solomon's Temple*^[4.16.5.3], and the *Second Temple*^[4.16.5.4] all pointed forward to this ultimate offering of Jesus on the cross. Both *Solomon's Temple*^[4.16.5.3] and the *Second Temple*^[4.16.5.4] were specifically placed on Mount Moriah to show their connection with the ultimate sacrifice of God's Lamb.

Thus, the Temple Mount is not just a random piece of real-estate contested by some confused religious fanatics. It is a specific location where God Himself ordained that Abraham should act out the event pointing to the crucifixion and the place where the intervening Temples stood. It is at this precise location where both the *Tribulation Temple*^[4.16.5.9] and the *Millennial Temple*^[4.16.5.10] will be built.

4.16.4 - A Heavenly Pattern

The earthly *Temple*^[5.2.73] is patterned after a greater reality: the heavenly Temple (Heb. 8:4-5; Heb. 9:1-11). Almost everything which was shown Moses (Ex. 25:40) and David (1Chr. 28:12-19) concerning the *Tabernacle*^[5.2.69] and Temple, respectively, has a purpose in revealing a greater reality

which ultimately serves the purpose of God in heaven. The heavenly pattern which is reflected in the earthly Temple communicates truths about the nature of sin, redemption, God's holiness, communion with God, and ultimately points to the promised sacrifice of Messiah Jesus to reconcile man to God (Luke 24:27, 44; John 5:39; Acts 10:43).

Price has identified many of the parallels between the earthly and heavenly Temples, which we've incorporated in the table below.¹⁹

Shared Elements of Earthly and Heavenly Temples

Description	Earthly	Heavenly
called "worldly sanctuary" versus "Temple in heaven" or "true Tabernacle"	Heb. 9:1-2	Rev. 7:15; 14:17; 15:5; 16:17; Heb. 8:2
seven-branched lampstand	Ex. 26:35	Rev. 1:12
trumpet	Ex. 19:13, 16, 19	Rev. 8:2, 6
altar of sacrifice	Ex. 27:1-2; 39:39	Rev. 6:9
sacral vestments	Ex. 29, 39	Rev. 4:4; 6:11; 15:6
altar of incense	Ex. 30:1-6; 39:38	Rev. 8:3-5
four horns of the altar	Ex. 30:10	Rev. 9:13
Ark of the Covenant	Ex. 25	Rev. 11:19
golden censer	1K. 7:50	Rev. 8:3-5
incense	Ex. 30:34-36	Rev. 5:8; 8:3-4
incense bowls	1K. 7:50; Num. 7:13, 19, 25, 31, 37	Rev. 5:8
throne (mercy seat)	Ex. 25:22; Lev. 16:2	Ps. 11:4; Rev. 7:9; 16:17
Holy Place	1K. 7:50	Heb. 9:11-12, 24
Holy of Holies	Ex. 26:25-33	Rev. 4:1-10
high priest	Heb. 4:14	Heb. 9:6-7
priestly officiants versus priestly officials	Ps. 110:4; Heb. 7:17	Rev. 8:2-5
rites	Lev. 1-10; 16:23-34	Rev. 4:8-11; 8:2-5; 15:1-8
24 priestly courses versus 24 elders	1Chr. 23:3-6	Rev. 4:4, 10; 5:8
cherubim versus living creatures	Ex. 25:18, 22; 1K. 6:23-28	Rev. 4:6-8
worshippers	2Chr. 7:3	Rev. 5:11; 7:9; 19:6
sacrifice of lambs versus slain Lamb of God	Ex. 29:39	Rev. 5:6

4.16.5 - The Temples of History

The following table provides a summary of the Temples of History which are subsequently described in more detail.²⁰

The Temples of God

Date ²¹	<i>Temple</i> ^[5.2.73]	Description	References
4004 ²²	<i>Garden of Eden</i> ^[4.16.5.1]	Prior to The Fall and the entry of sin, Adam and Eve enjoyed full communion with God. No Temple was needed.	Gen. 2:25 cf. Gen. 3:8
1446 - 960/950 B.C.	<i>Tabernacle in the Wilderness</i> ^[4.16.5.2]	A portable and temporary structure housing the Ark of the Covenant and the location of God's presence among the Jews in their wilderness wanderings.	Ex. 24:15-18; 25:8-22
960/950 - 586 B.C.	<i>Solomon's Temple</i> ^[4.16.5.3]	Erected in Jerusalem according to God's instructions. Planned by King David who gathered the materials, but built by his son Solomon. Destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon.	1K. 5-8; 2K. 24:13; 2Chr. 36:7
515 B.C. ²³ - A.D. 70	<i>Second Temple</i> ^[4.16.5.4]	Rebuilt under the direction of Zerubbabel upon the return of the Jews from Babylon. Desecrated by Antiochus IV (Epiphanes), later cleansed and rededicated by Judas Maccabaeus in 165 B.C (first <i>Hanukkah</i>). Rebuilt by Herod the Great (from 20 B.C. - A.D. 64). Destroyed by Roman General Titus in A.D. 70.	2Chr. 36:22-23; Ezra 1:1-4; 3:1-13; 5:1-17; 6:1-18; Dan. 9:26; Mtt. 23:37-38; 24:2; Mark 13:2; Luke 21:6, 20-24
?	<i>Tribulation Temple</i> ^[4.16.5.9]	A future Jewish Temple which will be built where sacrifices will be offered until the midpoint of the Tribulation. <i>The Beast</i> ^[4.2] will sit in this Temple and proclaim himself to be God.	Isa. 66:1-6?; Dan. 9:27; 12:11; Mtt. 24:15; 2Th. 2:4; Rev. 11:1-2; Rev. 13:6?
Second Coming	<i>Millennial Temple</i> ^[4.16.5.10]	The Temple will be built by Messiah Jesus and serve as the center for His worship and rule during the thousand year reign on earth. All nations will keep the Feast of Tabernacles in Jerusalem.	Eze. 40:5-43:27; Zec. 6:12-15; 14:16-21; Isa. 24:23; 56:6-7; Rev. 20:2-4
Second Coming + 1,000 years	<i>New Jerusalem</i> ^[4.16.5.11]	Sin no longer exists. Man is restored to full fellowship with God. <i>God is the Temple</i> (Rev. 21:22).	Rev. 21, 22

4.16.5.1 - Garden of Eden

The Garden of Eden is a "*Temple*^[5.2.73]" in the same sense as the *New Jerusalem*^[4.16.5.11]. There is no separate building or Holy Place because the entire environ is Holy and without sin. In this sense, the entire Garden may be said to be a "Temple" in that there is full and unrestrained access to God by man (Rev. 21:22). The Garden, like the New Jerusalem, typifies the "Holy of Holies" of every other Temple—the place of unrestricted communion with God without the intimacy-destroying presence of sin.

Until the quality of the fellowship man once had with God in the Garden is appreciated more fully, one will be unable to understand the horrible effects of sin and the great effort involved in carrying out the prescribed liturgical details attending the subsequent Temples where man approached God on a limited basis.

The effect of The Fall upon man's communion with God has already been described. No matter how one looks at it, the result was *catastrophic*. It is as if man reclined and ate at God's table (John 13:23; Rev. 3:20) only to find himself removed from the table, locked outside the room, *and only able to commune with God through a keyhole*. Even on the Day of Atonement on his closest approach to God, the high priest was still required to burn incense when inside the Holy of Holies to cover the mercy seat and separate himself from God's presence "lest he die" (Lev. 16:13). This would all change for believers in Jesus who are the *Temple of the Believer*^[4.16.5.5], but that would not come until much later.

In a study of the Temple, it is most useful to examine the Garden of Eden in relation to the condition of man immediately after The Fall, after having been driven from the Garden. In addition to the correspondence seen earlier between the earthly and heavenly Temples, there is a correspondence between both Temples and the Garden of Eden after The Fall into sin. In some sense, *all of Scripture describes events associated with God establishing a way for man to return to the conditions of Eden prior to The Fall*. In this sense, Jesus is *Eden's Bridge*.

Immediately after The Fall, Adam and Eve were expelled out of the Garden. Evidently, they were driven away *toward the East* for God placed cherubim "**at the east** of the Garden of Eden, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to guard the way to the tree of life" [emphasis added] (Gen. 3:24). God barred man's way to the tree of life by placing Cherubim between the tree and Adam and Eve.

When various aspects of the scene at the expulsion of the Garden of Eden are compared with the layout of the *Tabernacle*^[5.2.69] and Temple, numerous similarities can be seen:²⁴

- **Eastern Entry** - To return back into God's Holy presence in the Garden, Adam and Eve would have had to return *from the east toward the west*. And this is exactly what we see in the pattern of the Tabernacle and Temple, both of which are entered on the east and which have the holiest place at the western extremity where the very *presence of God abides*^[4.16.2].
- **Guarding Cherubim** - In the same way that cherubim separated man from the tree of life in the Garden, so too the veils on the east end of the Holy Place and the Holy of Holies contain depictions of cherubim (Ex. 26:31; 36:8, 35; 2Chr. 3:14). The Ark of God within the Holy of Holies, above which God's *Shekinah* glory dwelt, was overspread by cherubim (Ex. 25:22; Num. 7:89; 2Chr. 5:7).
- **Flames** - The cherubim guarded the way back to the tree of life, but also to the divine presence, with a "flaming sword" (Gen. 3:24). Just outside each veil of separation in the Temple is found an altar upon which fire is found. The priest must pass by the bronze altar of sacrifice before entering the Holy Place, whereas the altar of incense stood before the veil into the Holy of Holies. The fire speaks of purification and judgment of sin.
- **River** - A river flowed from the Garden of Eden (Gen. 2:10). The Temple contained a bronze laver with water for cleansing. The *Millennial Temple*^[5.2.40] is the source of a river of life (Eze. 47:1). So too the New Jerusalem has a river of life (Rev. 22:1).
- **Mountain** - Since a river originated in Eden and flowed outward from there, we may safely assume that the Garden was elevated above the surrounding countryside. As we have seen, the Temple stood on a mountain (Mount Moriah). The Millennial Temple will stand upon the "mountain of the LORD'S house" (Isa. 2:2; 27:13; 30:29; 56:7; Eze. 17:24; 20:40; 40:2; Mic. 4:1) as will the New Jerusalem (Rev. 21:10).
- **Tree of Life** - When man fell in the Garden, he lost access to the tree of life by which he would obtain eternal life (Gen. 2:9; 3:22). The testimony of the law of Moses was stored with the Ark of the Covenant in the Holy of Holies within the Temple. When Moses reviewed the law to the new generation about to cross the Jordan, he said "Set your hearts on all the words which I testify among you today . . . observe-all the words of this law. . . because it is your life, and by this word you shall prolong *your* days in the land" (Deu. 32:46). Thus, the words of the law within the Holy of Holies represent the way of life. This is what Stephen referred to as "the living oracles" (Acts 7:38). John recognized the life-giving power of God's word when he said, "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the **words of eternal life**" [emphasis added] (John 6:68). Thus, the Tree of Life in the Garden is represented by God's word

recorded in the Holy of Holies of the Temple.²⁵ The Tree of Life in our own age, when no recognized Temple stands on the Temple Mount, is the cross of Christ. Those who embrace it regain access to eternal life.

Many more similarities could be identified between the Garden of Eden, the various Temples, and the New Jerusalem (which some see as being in entirety a “Temple,” Rev. 21:22). But in each case, the primary message we must not miss is that the Temple represents *the way back to God*. The entire concept of the earthly Temple is concerned with making allowance for sinful man meeting with Holy God in partial communion which is a shadow of what man once had and the redeemed will one day enjoy.

The arrangement of the Garden of Eden’s landscape corresponds to that of the Tabernacle and the Temple with its furniture. Eastward movement (out of the Garden) is away from God’s presence; westward movement (through the Sanctuary) is a return [to] God. **On the Day of Atonement the high priest reverses the peoples spiritual exile from God** and restores them to a relationship with God (through blood sacrifice for sin). [emphasis added]²⁶

4.16.5.2 - Tabernacle in the Wilderness

The first real structure of any sort which was designed to house the *Shekinah* was the *Tabernacle*^[5.2.69] in the wilderness. After Israel’s rescue from Egypt and before crossing the Jordan into the Promised Land, the Jews wandered in the Sinai. God gave Moses instructions to build the Tabernacle (Ex. 25:40) around which the tribes would camp. (See *Camp of Israel*^[4.7.2].) Israel could only approach God when protected from His presence by the Tabernacle. Even then, elaborate procedures were necessary to account for the sinful condition of man (Ex. 25:9; 40:34). Even the name “Tabernacle” denoted the purpose common to every *Temple*^[5.2.73]: that God would dwell with man. “The Hebrew word for ‘tabernacle’ is *Hamishkhan*, having the same root as *Shechinah*. Thus, the word “tabernacle” can also be translated as ‘the dwelling place of the *Shechinah*.’²⁷

The portability of the Tabernacle had some advantages over the more permanent Temples to follow. For one thing, it taught Israel to depend upon God’s leading because they were to stay camped until God’s presence indicated it was time to move (Ex. 40:36-37). How often this is the case in our own lives—that we learn to wait on God and follow Him more closely in the wilderness! Later, when Israel had the more permanent Temple of Solomon, they made the mistake of assuming the permanence of the building’s location inferred the same for God’s presence.

Later, when *Solomon’s Temple*^[4.16.5.3] was complete, the Tabernacle was brought to the Temple and its furnishings, together with the Ark of the Covenant, were transferred into the Temple (1K. 8:4; 2Chr. 5:5).²⁸

4.16.5.3 - Solomon’s Temple

In the days of David’s kingdom, Israel dwelt permanently in the land and the kingdom was administered from Jerusalem. After a time, David realized the inequity of dwelling in a kingly palace while God’s presence resided in the more humble temporary structure of the *Tabernacle*^[5.2.69].

Although he desired to build a permanent *Temple*^[5.2.73], he was disallowed from doing so because he was a man of war (1Chr. 17:4; 22:8; 28:3). However, David was able to further the work toward building the Temple. He was given plans by the Holy Spirit (1Chr. 28:12, 19; Heb. 8:5), purchased the location where it was to be built (2S. 24:24; 1Chr. 21:24-26; 2Chr. 3:1), and procured materials for its construction (1Chr. 29:1-9). As with the Tabernacle, the Temple service included elaborate procedures by which man could approach God’s presence in a limited way. When the Temple was dedicated, God’s presence came to the Temple (1K. 8:10-11; 2Chr. 5:13-14).

In the days of Ezekiel, after the civil war and after the Northern Kingdom had fallen into apostasy and been judged by Assyria, the sin of the Southern Kingdom, where Jerusalem and the Temple were located, was so severe as to drive God from His sanctuary. God no longer met with Israel in the Temple because it was no longer *His House* (Eze. 8:6; 9:3; 10:4, 18-19; 11:22-23 cf. Mtt. 23:38-39; Mtt. 24:3; Luke 13:35). Soon thereafter, the Temple was destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar and the Jews that remained were exiled to Babylon. Thus, an important historic principle was established concerning

the Temple: when God leaves His House, it becomes subject to destruction. When God is “at Home” in the Temple, no force in the universe can destroy it. In the sequence of events which led up to the final destruction of Jerusalem and Solomon’s Temple by Nebuchadnezzar, some of the Temple articles were taken to Babylon (2Chr. 36:7, 10, 18; Dan. 5:2-3, 23) as Jeremiah had prophesied (Jer. 20:5).

The destruction of Solomon’s Temple fell on the 9th day of the Jewish month of *Av*, a date which became famous in Jewish history and is known as *Tish Bav* (9th of *Av*).²⁹

Five events of national tragedy have been associated with this date. The first of these national tragedies, and the supposed cause of all that followed, was the failure of the Israelites to enter the Promised Land under Moses [Num. 14:23]. . . oral tradition recounts that this lamentation took place on the Ninth of *Av*. . . The next four events occurring on the Ninth of *Av* all relate to the Temple. The second and third disasters involve Solomon’s first Temple and Herod’s second Temple, which were both destroyed on the same day 656 years apart. The last two disasters occurred 65 years later on the same day (A.D. 135). The first of these was the defeat of the army of Bar Kokhba at Betar. The second followed as a consequence of the first. It was the plowing of the site of the Temple Mount by the Roman governor of Judea, Tineius Rufus.³⁰

4.16.5.4 - Second Temple

After seventy years of captivity in Babylon which God had prophesied (2Chr. 36:21; Jer. 25:11; 29:10; Dan. 9:2), and as God had prophesied through Isaiah (Isa. 44:24-5:7), Cyrus was used of God to release the Jews to return back to Jerusalem and rebuild the *Temple*^[5.2.73] (Ezra 1:2; 3:7; 4:3; 5:13; 6:3, 14). When the Jews returned from Babylon, the Temple articles which had been taken by Nebuchadnezzar were returned (Ezra 1:7; 6:5). All of this was recorded by the historian Josephus:

(1) In the first year of the reign of Cyrus, which was the seventieth from the day that our people were removed out of their own land into Babylon, God commiserated the captivity and calamity of these poor people, according as he had foretold to them by Jeremiah the prophet, before the destruction of the city, (2) that after they has served Nebuchadnezzar and his posterity, and after they had undergone that servitude seventy years, he would restore them again to the land of their fathers, and they should build their temple, and enjoy their ancient prosperity; and these things God did afford them; (3) for he stirred up the mind of Cyrus, and made him write this throughout all Asia: “Thus saith Cyrus the King:—Since God Almighty hath appointed me to be king of the habitable earth, I believe that he is that God which the nation of the Israelites worship; (4) for indeed he foretold my name by the prophets; and that I should build him a house at Jerusalem, in the country of Judea.” 2. (5) This was known to Cyrus by his reading the book which Isaiah left behind him of his prophecies; for this prophet said that God had spoken thus to him in a secret vision: “My will is, that Cyrus, whom I have appointed to be king over many and great nations, send back my people to their own land, and build my temple.” (6) This was foretold by Isaiah one hundred and forty years before the temple was demolished. Accordingly, when Cyrus read this, and admired the divine power, an earnest desire and ambition seized upon him to fulfill what was so written; so he called for the most eminent Jews that were in Babylon, and said to them, that he gave them leave to go back to their own country, and to rebuild their city Jerusalem, and the temple of God, (7) for that he would be their assistant, and that he would write to the rulers and governors that were in the neighborhood of their country of Judea, that they should contribute to them gold and silver for the building of the temple, and, beside that, beasts for their sacrifices. 3. (8) When Cyrus had said this to the Israelites, the rulers of the two tribes of Judah and Benjamin, with the Levites and priests, went in haste to Jerusalem, yet did many of them stay at Babylon, as not willing to leave their possessions; (9) and when they were come thither, all the king’s friends assisted them, and brought in, for the building of the temple, some gold, and some silver, and some a great many cattle and horses. So they performed their vows to God, and offered the sacrifices that had been accustomed of old time; I mean this upon the rebuilding of their city, and the revival of the ancient practices relating to their worship. (10) Cyrus also sent back to them the vessels of God which king Nebuchadnezzar had pillaged out of the temple, and carried to Babylon.³¹

The destruction of Solomon’s Temple and the subsequent building of the Second Temple did not require a purification ceremony, as was done later following the subsequent defilement of Antiochus IV (Epiphanes). “Foreigners who enter the Temple generally bring about only desecration, not defilement, and for this reason the Second Temple could be rebuilt after its desecration and destruction by the Babylonians without requiring a purification ceremony (Ezra 3:2-13). However, the Second Temple later required purification (*channukah*, ‘dedication’) because an apostate Israelite priest sacrificed an unclean animal (a sow) on the altar (under orders of the Seleucid king Antiochus IV

Epiphanes) and thereby brought defilement. In addition, the presence of idols or idolatrous practices is an “abomination” (*shiqqutz*) that brings both desecration and defilement to the Temple and the Land, which has harbored such abominations.”³² Sacrifice was resumed at the site of the Second Temple while construction was in progress:

Temple sacrifices were renewed on the first day of the month of Tishri 538 B.C.E. at a festival known as the Feast of Trumpets. . . . Seven months later, work began on building the Second Temple itself, using cedarwood ordered from Lebanon. . . . The king’s treasury even helped to finance the cost of the rebuilding of the ruined Temple, which was finally completed on the 3rd of Adar (February-March) 515 B.C.E.³³

After the Jews rebuilt the Temple, there is no indication that God’s presence ever dwelt there as it had in the *Tabernacle*^[5.2.69] or Solomon’s Temple. God’s presence would eventually come to the Second Temple (see below), but in a form which the Jews would fail to recognize (John 1:14).

Since these verses [Eze. 43:1-7] on the return and restoration of God’s glory to the new Temple are one of the strongest evidences for the eschatological interpretation of chapters 40-48, it is important to give closer attention to this event. Nowhere in Scripture nor in extrabiblical Jewish literature is it stated that the divine presence filled the Second Temple as it did the Tabernacle (Ex. 40:34-35) and the First Temple (1K. 8:10-11; 2Chr. 5:13-14; 2Chr. 7:13). Rather, Jewish sources made a point of its absence (see *Tosefta Yom Tov*) and relegated such a hope to the eschatological period known as ‘the period of the restoration of all things’ (Acts 3:21).³⁴

During the Second Temple period, there was a great deal of political upheaval, both before and after the birth of Christ. Perhaps the two most significant events involving the Second Temple prior to the birth of Jesus were the defilement of the Temple at the time of Antiochus IV (Epiphanes) and the entry into the Holy of Holies years later by Pompey of Rome. The first event was predicted by Daniel and serves as a model—which Jesus pointed to (Mtt. 24:15)—of the future desolation by *Antichrist*^[5.2.3]:

Antiochus further desecrated the Temple by sacrificing an unclean animal (a pig) on the Temple altar and by erecting a statue of Zeus Olympians in the Holy of Holies in 168 B.C. This action had been predicted by the prophet Daniel (Dan. 8:23-25; Dan. 11:21-35) and served as a partial fulfillment of the type of desecration the Temple would one day suffer under the Antichrist (Dan. 7:24-26; Dan. 9:24-27; Dan. 11:36-45).³⁵

This grievous event precipitated the Hasmonean Revolt and the rededication of the Temple, which came to be celebrated as *Hanukkah*, also mentioned in John’s gospel (John 10:22).³⁶ “On the twenty-fifth day of the month of Kislev—then October 16, for the Hebrew lunar calendar had not been intercalated since 167 B.C.E.—in the year 164 B.C.E., the Jews celebrated the rededication of the temple sacrificial service.”³⁷ Thereafter, Judea enjoyed a period of independence, albeit a politically turbulent one. This came to an end in 63 B.C. with the triumphal entrance of Roman general Pompey into Jerusalem. It appears that the priests were prepared for his arrival for the Temple articles had been removed:

Not only did [Pompey] enter the Holy Place, but he also tore away its veil of separation and marched into the Holy of Holies itself. A record of the event was preserved by the Roman historian Tacitus: ‘By right of conquest he entered their Temple. It is a fact well known, that he found no image, no statue, no symbolical representation of the Deity: the whole presented a naked dome; the sanctuary was unadorned and simple.’³⁸

After Herod was proclaimed King of Judea by the Roman Senate (40 B.C.), he returned to the “Roman Palestine” and began to reconquer the country while liquidating the Hasmonean dynasty. During this period, he began a project to rebuild the Second Temple. “Herod began rebuilding the Temple in 19 B.C., and the work was dedicated ten years later, although detail work continued on it for the next 75 years.”³⁹ It was the rebuilt Second Temple, “Herod’s Temple,” to which the glory of the Lord would return.

During the ministry of Jesus, He recognized the Second Temple as being the “Father’s house” (Luke 2:49; John 2:16). It was in the days of Jesus that the glory of the Lord (John 1:14) returned to His Temple (Mtt. 12:6; 21:23), yet once again sin resulted in the departure of the glory—as Jesus left the Temple for the Mount of Olives, retracing the steps of the departure of the glory in Ezekiel’s day (Mtt. 23:38-39; Mtt. 24:3; Luke 13:35). Although Jesus had previously indicated the Temple was the house

of the Father (Luke 2:49; John 2:16), in His final departure from the Temple He referred to it as “your house,” indicating it was being left *desolate* (Mtt. 23:38)—an indication that it would be destroyed (Mtt. 24:2).⁴⁰

At the crucifixion, when the Lamb of God (Isa. 53:7; John 1:29; 1Pe. 1:19; Rev. 5:6) was offered on the cross, God created a new and living way for man to approach Him. See *Temple of the Believer*^[4.16.5.5]. Yet the Temple remained standing with sacrifices continuing to be offered for almost another four decades: “On August 6 [70 A.D.] the daily sacrifice ceased in the temple. It had been offered every morning for more than five hundred years save for the period of the Syrian persecution when an abomination had occupied the Holy of Holies.”⁴¹ Price relates several historical indicators of divine disfavor during the period following the crucifixion of Messiah Jesus and the subsequent destruction of the Temple at the hands of Rome:

Josephus (*Jewish Wars* 6:293-96) noted that at the time of the Passover c. A.D. 66, as the Roman siege was about to begin, the huge Nicanor gate that secured the inner court of the Eastern (Shushan) Gate was observed at the sixth hour to open of its own accord. This event was ultimately interpreted negatively as evidence of divine displeasure. . . This interpretation is also given in a story told in the Babylonian Talmud (*Yoma* 39b), along with another concerning the Temple service, which reflected the problem of divine favor: “Our Rabbis taught: During the last forty years before the destruction of the Temple the lot ‘for the Lord’ did not come up in the right hand; nor did the crimson-colored string [suspended in the Temple to show the acceptance of the pascal sacrifice] become white; nor did the western-most light shine; and the doors of the Temple would open by themselves, until R. Yohanon b. [ben] Zakkai rebuked them, saying: ‘Temple, Temple why will you yourself be the alarmer? I know about you that you will be destroyed, for Zechariah b. [ben] Ido has already prophesied concerning you: “Open your door, O” Lebanon, that the fire may devour your cedars’ ”⁴²

4.16.5.5 - Temple of the Believer

When the Lamb of God (Isa. 53:7; John 1:29; 1Pe. 1:19; Rev. 5:6) was offered on the cross, the veil of the Second *Temple*^[5.2.73] was torn from top to bottom (Mtt. 27:51; Mark 15:38; Luke 23:45). This was a divine indication that the previous separation between God and man which required elaborate liturgical procedures by a special priesthood was done away with by Christ. Instead of recognizing a special day once a year when the high priest could enter through the veil into the Holy of Holies to represent the people before the presence of God, a new and living way was consecrated for believers through Christ’s body and blood offered on our behalf. The writer of Hebrews expressed it this way:

Therefore, brethren, **having boldness to enter the Holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way which He consecrated for us**, through the veil, that is, His flesh, and *having* a High Priest over the house of God, **let us draw near** with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water. (Heb. 10:19-22) [emphasis added]

Let us therefore **come boldly to the throne of grace**, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need. (Heb. 4:16) [emphasis added]

There are numerous benefits which were won for believers by Christ’s sacrifice, but perhaps the most important aspect of the work of Christ is the restoration of fellowship where man can approach God with a conscience having been cleansed by Jesus’ one-time sacrifice. Here again we touch on the theme of the Temple which we’ve been pointing to all along—the meeting place between God and man. Christ’s flesh and blood give the believer, by faith, full access to God:

To the intent that now the manifold wisdom of God might be made known by the church to the principalities and powers in the heavenly *places*, according to the eternal purpose which He accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord, **in whom we have boldness and access with confidence** through faith in Him. (Eph. 3:10-12) [emphasis added]

Many things changed in the moment of the crucifixion when the veil of the Temple was torn, but perhaps none more significant to our subject at hand than the glorification of Jesus which led the way to the giving of the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost (John 7:38-39) to form a new type of spiritual Temple within the body of those who believe on Jesus. A short summary of this important transition, so essential to understanding the book of Acts, will be helpful.⁴³ The significance of the coming of the Holy Spirit can be seen in several passages from John’s Gospel:

On the last day, that great *day* of the feast, Jesus stood and cried out, saying, “If anyone thirsts, let him

come to Me and drink. He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.” But **this He spoke concerning the Spirit, whom those believing in Him would receive; for the Holy Spirit was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified.** (John 7:37-39) [emphasis added]

Jesus states that rivers of living water (see *Garden of Eden*^[4.16.5.1]) will flow out of the heart of those who believe in Him. John explains to the reader that Jesus spoke of the Holy Spirit, but that the Spirit *was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified*. The Holy Spirit could not come to take up His new ministry until Jesus had been glorified. Something about the crucifixion was necessary before the Spirit could take up *permanent* residence within sinful flesh.

Later, in Jesus’ intimate time with His disciples on the night of His betrayal, He provides further insight into the new ministry of the Spirit:

And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that **He may abide with you forever**—the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him; but you know Him, for He dwells **with you** and will be **in you**. I will not leave you orphans; **I will come to you.** (John 14:16-18) [emphasis added]

Jesus is about to die on the cross and encourages His disciples by telling them that He will send another (*ἄλλος* [*allos*], another of the same kind) of Helper. When this helper comes, He will abide with them *forever*. Jesus also relates that the Helper *already* dwells *with* them, but *will* be *in* them. He goes on to identify Himself with the Helper: *I will come to you*. These are remarkable statements pregnant in their theology and hope! Although the Holy Spirit has ministered on earth since the beginning (e.g., Gen. 1:2), He would come in a *new* way, in a *permanent* way, in a way which emphasized *indwelling*, and in the identity of Christ (Rom. 8:9; Php. 1:19). Although the Holy Spirit, the *Spirit of Christ*, had ministered in the times preceding the crucifixion (1Pe. 1:11), there was not a *permanence* to this indwelling (1S. 16:14; Ps. 51:11; Eze. 2:2; 3:24). But this could not happen prior to the cross:

Nevertheless I tell you the truth. **It is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you;** but if I depart, I will send Him to you. (John 16:7) [emphasis added]

Can you imagine sitting at the feet of the Master and hearing words more puzzling than these? How could He claim it was to their *advantage* that He would leave? But note that the Helper “will not come” unless Jesus departs. This is connected with the explanation which John gave earlier: “But this He spoke concerning the Spirit, whom those believing in Him would receive; for the Holy Spirit was not yet *given*, because Jesus was not yet glorified” (John 7:37-39).

To summarize:

1. The Holy Spirit would not just be *with* the disciples, but *permanently in* them.
2. The Holy Spirit could not come in the way Jesus promised *until* Jesus was glorified.
3. The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of Christ. With the indwelling Spirit would be the indwelling Christ.
4. The Holy Spirit would reside *within* each believer in much the same way as the *Shekinah* glory dwelt within the *Tabernacle*^[5.2.69] and Temple. (See *The Abiding Presence of God*^[4.16.2].)

All of this was fulfilled in the events of the Day of Pentecost, often called “the birthday of the Church” (Acts 1:4-8; 2:4; cf. 8:14; 10:45; 11:16; 15:8; 19:6; 1Cor. 12:13). With the coming of the Spirit, the body of the believer became the Temple of God and God’s Spirit resided *permanently* within.⁴⁴

Or do you not know that **your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you**, whom you have from God, and you are not your own? (1Cor. 6:19) [emphasis added]

And what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For **you are the temple of the living God**. As God has said: “**I will dwell in them and walk among them**. I will be their God, and they shall be My people.” (2Cor. 6:16) [emphasis added]

Now, therefore, you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief *cornerstone*, in whom the whole building, being joined together,

grows into a holy temple in the Lord, in whom you also are being built together **for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit**. (Eph 2:19-22) [emphasis added]

These passages emphasize that the body of the believer is a Temple of God *in the Spirit*. The Holy Spirit Who resides permanently within every believer is functioning in an analogous way as the *Shekinah* dwelt between the cherubim over the Ark in the Holy of Holies, but with one extremely important difference: the Holy Spirit will *never* depart from the Temple of the believer as the *Shekinah* departed from the Temple (see *The Abiding Presence of God*^[4.16.2]). This is why believers are said to be *sealed* with the Holy Spirit (2Cor. 1:22; Eph. 1:13; 4:30). Believers may grieve or quench Him (Eph. 4:30; 1Th. 5:19), but He will never leave them!

How can God Himself dwell within the sinful flesh of the believer *permanently* when the sin of the people during Ezekiel's day caused the glory of the Lord to depart the Temple? The answer lies in the *completed* sacrifice of Jesus on the cross. In the same way that the righteous dead were held in Abraham's bosom⁴⁵ but could not enter heaven until the crucifixion was accomplished (Luke 16:22 cf. Luke 23:43; 2Cor. 5:6; Php. 1:21-23), prior to the cross the Holy Spirit could enter individuals for specific purposes and times but could not permanently reside (1S. 16:14; Ps. 51:11; Eze. 2:2; Eze. 3:24)⁴⁶ within sinful flesh as He now does (Eph. 1:13; 4:30). See *The Coming of the Spirit*^[4.14.4.1].

4.16.5.5.1 - What about the Physical Temple?

It might seem that in the tearing of the veil of the *Temple*^[5.2.73] and the coming of the Spirit to establish the Temple of the believer that all purposes for a Temple building standing on the Temple Mount have forever been done away with. If we did not have the Scriptures, we might easily come to this conclusion.⁴⁷ But a careful study of Scripture precludes such a conclusion:

1. **The Early Church and the Temple** - The early church did not abandon the Temple, but continued to treat it as an important institution associated with God. This is seen immediately after Jesus' ascension: "Now it came to pass, while He blessed them, that He was parted from them and carried up into heaven. And they worshiped Him, and **returned to Jerusalem with great joy, and were continually in the temple praising and blessing God.** Amen" [emphasis added] (Luke 24:51-53). This pattern continued far beyond the coming of the Spirit on Pentecost and is especially evident in the life of Paul who: (1) observed feasts regulated by the Temple (Acts 20:6); 2) fulfilled a religious Nazirite vow (Acts 18:18); 3) participated in purification rites, even sponsoring four proselytes (Acts 21:22-26; Acts 24:16); 4) offered sacrifices at the Temple (Acts 21:26; Acts 24:17); 5) prayed and worshiped at the Temple (Acts 22:17; Acts 24:11); 6) respected the Temple priesthood (Acts 23:5); 7) paid the Temple tax (Acts 24:17); (8) professed ceremonial purity (Acts 24:18); (9) and was careful not to violate customs of "our fathers" (Acts 28:17). These would be strange activities indeed if the Temple had lost all significance after the Day of Pentecost. When Paul discusses the desecration of the Temple by the *Antichrist*^[5.2.3], how could he consider this act by the man of sin to be blasphemous and describe its location as "the temple of God" (2Th. 2:3-4) if all interest by God in the Temple disappeared with the Day of Pentecost?⁴⁸ It would seem that this early Christian rabbi understood something beyond the simplistic view that, with the cross of Jesus, God had forever made an end to the concept of "God's House" on Mount Moriah.
2. **The Millennial Temple**^[5.2.40] - Ezekiel was given a highly detailed vision of a Temple unlike any which have ever existed in history. The details of this Temple go far beyond anything which can be explained as mere symbolism. It can only be a literal Temple of the future. Ezekiel and several other prophets indicate there will be *sacrifices for atonement* offered at this Temple. See *Millennial Temple*^[4.16.5.10] and *Millennial Sacrifices*^[4.16.5.10.2].

Following the rejection of Messiah Jesus by Israel, the Temple stood for several decades, but was overthrown as Jesus had predicted. During this age, a spiritual Temple of God is within believers who are sanctified by the blood of Jesus. Each believer is permanently indwelt by the Holy Spirit, much as the *Shekinah* dwelt within the Holy of Holies of the *Tabernacle in the Wilderness*^[4.16.5.2] and *Solomon's Temple*^[4.16.5.3]. Yet, in the future, at least two more physical Temples will be built upon

Mount Moriah. The existence of the spiritual Temple of the believer during the present age does not preclude a future physical Temple:

The “Branch,” as set forth by the prophet in [Zec. 6], Messiah, the true Son of David, shall not only be the real builder of the future literal Temple, which through the millennial period shall be the centre of the true worship of Jehovah on this earth, and the House of Prayer for all nations; but also of the much more glorious mystical Building, which through eternity shall be for the habitation of God through the Spirit. Of this spiritual Temple He is Himself the “sure Foundation,” the previous Corner-stone and Head-stone of the Corner, as well as the Master Builder. Nineteen centuries ago, in His life and suffering, death of atonement, and glorious resurrection, the foundation of that Temple was laid.⁴⁹

4.16.5.6 - Bar Kochba’s Temple

It has been suggested from various evidences that the *Temple*^[5.2.73] was rebuilt during the Bar Kokhba⁵⁰ revolt (A.D. 132) and later destroyed by Hadrian (A.D. 135). Price mentions the following evidence in support of this possibility:⁵¹

1. A passage in the *Sibylline Oracles* (5:414-417, 420-422) may suggest this possibility.
2. A Midrash (*Exodus Rabbah* 51:5) indicates that Hadrian entered the Holy of Holies which would not have been possible without a rebuilt temple.
3. The seventh-century Byzantine historian known as Chronicum Paschale records that “Hadrian tore down the Temple of the Jews in Jerusalem” in his *History of the Jews*.
4. A fourth-century Roman emperor Julian in his *Fragment of a Letter to a Priest*, in A.D. 362 records: “What have they [the Jews] to say about their own temple, which was overthrown **three** times and even now is not being raised up again?” [emphasis added]
5. Coins minted by Bar Kokhba bear an image of the Holy Temple—an unusual practice for Jews if the Temple had not existed.
6. Evidence of the resumption of the sacrificial system (*Sanhedrin* 11b) following the Second Temple’s destruction.
7. Archaeological measurements of the elevated platform upon which the *Dome of the Rock*^[4.16.5.8] are said to indicate dimensions commensurate with the Messianic Temple of Ezekiel rather than the dimensions of the second Temple. Since Bar Kokhba was proclaimed as Messiah and Messiah was expected to build Ezekiel’s Temple, then perhaps the platform is the remains of the Temple of Bar Kokhba.

Although Rabbi Akiva had proclaimed Bar Kokhba as king messiah, this messianic hopeful was eventually killed and the revolt bearing his name was put down and the Temple Mount left without a Jewish Temple.

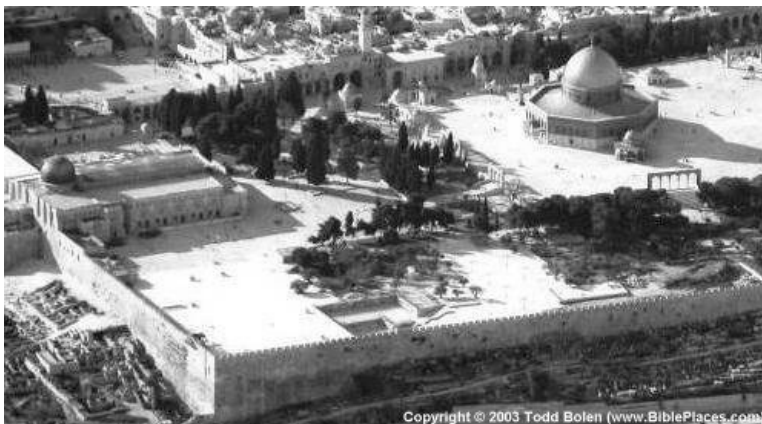
4.16.5.7 - Julian’s Temple

Flavius Claudius Julianus became ruler of Rome in A.D. 361 upon the death of his uncle Constantine. He favored Judaism over Christianity and sought to rebuild the Jewish *Temple*^[5.2.73] as polemic against Christianity (and Jesus’ predictions that the Temple would be destroyed). Jewish religious authorities acquired the necessary building materials, but an earthquake intervened and destroyed the building materials. Julian died a short time thereafter and was succeeded by the Christian emperor Jovian, putting an end to Julian’s favoritism towards Judaism and the Jews.⁵² Thus, Julian’s Temple failed to materialize in history.

4.16.5.8 - Dome of the Rock

In our day, the most striking presence upon the *Temple*^[5.2.73] Mount is the Islamic *Dome of the Rock*.

Al-Aqsa Mosque and Dome of the Rock ⁵³



The Dome of the Rock is not God's Temple—at least not the God of the Bible. This can be readily seen even by a cursory comparison of the God defined by the Qur'an with the God of the Bible. According to the Qur'an:

1. **No Crucifixion** - Jesus was not crucified, but only *appeared* to be (Surah 3:54-55; 4:157-158; 5:117, 120).
2. **God Has No Son** - Jesus is not the Son of God (Surah 2:116; 5:72; 4:171; 6:101; 10:68; 19:35 cf. Ps. 2:7, 12; 110:1; Pr. 30:4; Jer. 3:19; Dan. 3:25; 7:13).
3. **No Trinity** - The Trinity is denied (Surah 3:64; 4:116, 171; 5:27; 9:30-31).⁵⁴
4. **Redemption Unnecessary** - The Fall in the Garden of Eden resulted in no need of a Savior (Surah 7:20-25).⁵⁵
5. **Salvation by Works** - Salvation is by works, not faith (Surah 23:102-103; 39:61 cf. Gen. 15:6).
6. **Jerusalem Not Mentioned** - Jerusalem is never mentioned by name in the Qur'an, but over 800 times in the Bible, the city where God put His name (1K. 11:36; 2Chr. 33:4, 7; Dan. 9:19).
7. **Mohammed Greater Than Jesus** - Although Jesus was born of a virgin (Surah 3:45-47; 19:19-21; 21:91), sinless (Surah 19:18), and performed miracles (Surah 3:49; 5:110; 19:29), Mohammed, who was born by a normal pregnancy, who sinned (Surah 40:55; 41:19; 48:1-2), and who performed no miracles is said to be superior to Jesus.

If the Qur'an is God's Word, then the Bible cannot be. If the Bible is God's Word, then the Qur'an cannot be. They disagree on numerous *fundamental* issues, not to mention many additional details where the Qur'an not only contradicts the *NT*^[5.2.48] (which Islam maintains is corrupted), but also the *OT*^[5.2.51].⁵⁶ Since the Qur'an describes a god which differs in fundamentals from the God of the Bible, but claims to be *inerrant*^[5.2.32] (Surah 4:82), then the inescapable conclusion is that the god of Islam cannot be the God of the Bible:

While Islam today has much in common with Christianity on the essential attributes of God, there is wide divergence on His moral and relational attributes. Muslims and Christians may speak of the same subject, the true God, but they have different concepts of Him. . . . Jews have an *incomplete* picture of God's nature (their view being confined to the Old Testament only), Muslims have an *inaccurate* picture of His nature (based on the Qur'an and the Hadith), and only Christians have the complete and accurate view of His nature (based on the Bible). For here lies the big impasse: Allah/God could not have been

the source of both the Bible and the Qur'an since they have contradictory messages on the most fundamental issues, especially on the nature of God. From a Christian perspective God is the author of the Bible only. But from a Muslim perspective God is the author of both the Bible and the Qur'an, except that the present Bible is a corrupted version of the original one. . . . It is here that the issue of the nature of God comes into focus. Though Muslims and Christians may believe in the same God as *subject*, the *nature* of God as conceived by Islam is not at all identical to the nature of God within the Judeo-Christian faith.⁵⁷

Therefore, the Dome of the Rock is not the temple of the God of the Bible.

According to tradition, the altar which Abraham constructed upon which to *offer Isaac*^[4.16.3.1] (Gen. 22:9) stood upon a particular rock on the mount, the *Stone of Binding*:

In the Midrashim it is written that the Rock is the Even Akkidah, the 'Stone of Binding' and marks the place where Abraham bound his son Isaac and laid him on an altar, but that the Holy of Holies was built over the place where the ram was caught in the thicket, a short distance away. Tradition further contends that the Rock is not only the place where the offering of Isaac was attempted, but that it was also the threshing floor of Arunah the Jebusite which King David purchased and upon which he pitched the *Tabernacle*^[5.2.69].⁵⁸

It is this "Rock" which is referred to in the name *Dome of the Rock*, although Islam distorts the OT teaching by claiming that Abraham offered *Ishmael* rather than *Isaac*. Interestingly, the passage within the Qur'an which describes the offering never mentions Ishmael by name, associating Isaac's name more closely with the account.⁵⁹

In A.D. 638, the Muslims invaded Israel and Jerusalem which had previously been under the control of Byzantine Christians. Caliph Omar caused a mosque to be built on what was considered to be the ancient site of the Temple of David. He is said to have set an example of reverence by personally clearing away some of the garbage which had been discarded upon the Rock marking the location of the Temple on the Mount.

In 691 the Umayyad Caliph 'Abd al-Malik built a wooden cupola over the Rock that Caliph Omar had cleared, giving it the misnomer, "the mosque of Omar," or as it is properly known, the Dome of the Rock (Arabic, *Qubbet es-Sakhra*). In a further show of conquest over the Christians, Caliph Omar later built a wooden mosque on the compound over the foundations of an early Christian church. This mosque, known as the Al-Aqsa Mosque, was completed in A.D. 715 and has been rebuilt many times since. Today this mosque is regarded as the third holiest place in Islam (after Mecca and Medina), but it is the Dome of the Rock which is considered the crown of the *Haram al-Sharif* (Temple Mount).⁶⁰

Originally, Islam had little use for Jerusalem:

Today the Muslims call Jerusalem *Al-Quds* ('the Holy'); however, the earliest Arab name for the city was *Ilyiya*, derived from the Roman renaming of the city as *Aelia* (*Capitolina*). In the Islamic period, the name was *Bayt al Maqdis* from the Hebrew *Beit Hamiqdash* ('the Holy House,' i.e., the Temple), revealing the city's Israelite origin. Only later was the name changed to *Al-Quds*.⁶¹

But over time, it was asserted that the destination of Mohammed's journey described in the Qur'an (Surah 17:1) was Jerusalem, the "Farthest Mosque":⁶²

Glory to (Allah) who did take His Servant for a journey by night from the Sacred Mosque to the **Farthest Mosque**, whose precincts We did Bless—in order that We Might show him some of Our Signs: for He is the One Who heareth and seeth (all things). (Surah 17:1) [emphasis added]⁶³

It was only after centuries—and most likely to justify the continued Muslim presence in Jerusalem—that the stories of Jerusalem being the place of Mohammed's night journey and his final ascension (supposedly at the time of Byzantine Christian rule when the Rock was under a dung heap!) were invented. . . this is obvious from the fact that the name of Jerusalem is not mentioned in the Qur'an. . . . While some Muslim authorities have argued that there is a reference to Jerusalem in the night journey of Mohammed when the account says that he went to *Al-Aqsa*, the name of the mosque which today is built south of the Dome of the Rock, the word *Al-Aqsa* simply means "far corner"—a term originally applied to the east corner of Mecca, not Jerusalem.⁶⁴

The current status of the Temple Mount is that it is effectively owned by Israel, but jurisdiction is completely in the hands of the Muslims. Even though Israel took back the Temple Mount in the Six-Day War of 1967, by a strange turn of events (God is sovereign, remember?), within ten days the Jews

gave up control of the very site of their historic Temples:⁶⁵

Rabbi Shlomo Goren, the chief rabbi of the Israeli Defense Forces . . . recounts the events of that day: “In the midst of deliberations, in both governmental and religious frameworks, about renewing Jewish prayer on the Temple Mount and building a permanent synagogue on the open southern plain, the Minister of Defense told me, to my great surprise, that he decided to pass the auspices and responsibilities for all arrangements on the Temple Mount to the Islamic Wakf. He ordered me to take the Torah study center of the Military Rabbinate down from the Temple Mount and to remove all officers of the Temple Mount. From then on, according to him, the Military Rabbinate has no responsibility for the arrangements there, and I should stop organizing Jewish prayer on the Temple Mount. I accepted the order with anger and pain, and I told the Minister of Defense that this is likely to bring about a third destruction, since the key to our sovereignty over Judea, Samaria, and Gaza is the Temple Mount.”⁶⁶

Previously, Islam recognized the Temple Mount as the location of the Jewish Temple,⁶⁷ it has more recently become politically expedient to deny the Jewish history which transpired at the location.⁶⁸

Controversy continues to rage as to whose site it should be and whether Jews should have access to the site for religious purposes. Even the Jewish rabbis disagree about allowing Jews upon the Temple Mount due to fear that they would accidentally defile the Holy places out of ignorance and lack of preparation:

Does Halakhah [Jewish law] permit Jews to enter the Temple Mount? The Bible specifically forbids those who are ritually impure - as we are today - from entering the inner areas of the Holy Temple. However, many hareidi and religious-Zionist rabbis say that after immersion in a mikveh [ritual bath] and taking other precautions, one may enter the other areas of the Temple Mount. Rabbi Yehuda Edri, of the Movement to Establish the Temple, a principal and educational supervisor for ten years in the hareidi Shas Party's El HaMa'yan educational system, spoke about this with Yosef Zalmanson today. “Several of our great sages of the Rishonim period,” he said, “such as Maimonides and Ishtori HaParchi, actually set foot on the Temple Mount. In addition, Rabbi Akiva Eiger [d. 1837] tried to find out if the Turks would allow Jews to bring the Passover offering... Over the centuries, the Jews simply got used to not frequenting the Temple Mount because the Moslems allowed neither Christians nor Jews to do so.” Rabbi Edri said that even now, “not one religious authority forbids entry into the Temple Mount per se. It is only that because the sin of entering the Holy of Holies is so grave, they are afraid that Jews who either don't know or don't care will also ascend to the Temple Mount and will enter the wrong places. But this does not affect Jews who do know and who are careful.” He agreed that these rulings, ironically, prevent only knowledgeable Jews from entering, while having no influence on those whose entry they wish to stop.⁶⁹

The Yesha Rabbis Council issued a Halakhic ruling today not only permitting Jews to ascend to the Temple Mount, but even mandating it, contingent upon proper precautions. Excerpts from the announcement of the ruling: “...One of the rabbis commented that by refraining from ascending, we are thereby declaring to the world as if we, G-d forbid, have no part in the Mountain of G-d - and we thus strengthen the Arabs' feeling that the Temple Mount is theirs. The public is not aware that many rabbis are of the opinion that we currently have the information necessary to enable one to ascend without transgressing, and that therefore those who permit it are not being 'lenient' and are not disputing those who came before them - but are rather clearly relying on that which is now known. We therefore call on every rabbi who [agrees with this] to actually visit the Temple Mount, and to guide his congregants in doing so according to Halakhah [Jewish law]. It is a disgrace for us that the Arabs - 'who say let us seize for ourselves the pastures of G-d' [Psalms 88] - ascend to the site by the tens of thousands, while barely any Jews do so... All those who continue to feel that it is forbidden did not check the matter sufficiently, and forbade it only because of uncertainty [as to the permitted locations] - but this doubt has been cleared up, and it can be clearly delineated where on the Mount we are permitted to walk. It is our tradition that 'we do not add decrees.' In order to forbid something, the Sanhedrin, or all the generation's Torah leaders, would have to convene and make this decision - but that has not occurred, and therefore the Law remains as it was, namely, permitting ascent to the Temple Mount, as Maimonides himself did and as the Meiri testified that it is a 'common-place custom' to do so. Even a prophet cannot uproot a commandment except as a temporary measure. Those who wish to be extra careful [should know that] their stringency is leading to a leniency, in that many people who would be happy to follow the Halakhah actually transgress it out of ignorance - simply because the proper laws are not publicized. The Yesha Rabbis' announcement, which quotes Maimonides' ruling [Bait HaMikdash 3,4], states that one who ascends to the Mount while adhering to three conditions - immersion in a mikveh; keeping the laws of Awe of the Temple (no leather shoes, etc.); and knowledge

of the precise permitted areas - is fulfilling a 'great mitzvah [Torah commandment].' » 70

For additional information on Islam from a Christian perspective, see:

- Caner, Ergun Mehmet and Caner, *Unveiling Islam*.⁷¹
- Geisler, Norman L., and Abdul Saleeb, *Answering Islam*.⁷²
- Price, Randall, *Unholy War*.⁷³

4.16.5.9 - Tribulation Temple

Several passages of Scripture indicate that the activities of the *Antichrist*^[5.2.3] involve a future Jewish Temple^[5.2.73].⁷⁴

- **Daniel 9:27** - The prince who is to come confirms a covenant for the duration of *The 70th Week of Daniel*^[2.13.5]. In the middle of the week, "he shall bring an end to sacrifice and offering." This implies an preexisting Temple *within which* sacrifice and offering had been taking place.
- **Daniel 12:11** - The daily sacrifice will be taken away and the *Abomination of Desolation* is set up. The context indicates that this occurs during "a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a [Jewish] nation" (Dan. 12:1). A Temple must have been standing in which the daily sacrifices were being offered.
- **Matthew 24:15** - Jesus predicted that the *Abomination of Desolation* would stand "in the holy place." This refers to a location within the Temple.
- **2 Thessalonians 2:4** - Paul indicated that one of the acts of the man of sin would be to exalt himself "above all that is called God or is worshiped, so that he sits as God **in the temple of God**, showing himself that he is God." [emphasis added]
- **Revelation 11:1** - John is told to measure "the temple of God, the altar, and those who worship there." The context is during the Tribulation, prior to the return of Christ.

It is beyond all doubt that *a Temple exists at the time of Antichrist*. The only question which remains is *which Temple?* As we have already mentioned, most *preterist interpreters*^[2.12.2] take Nero^[4.12] to be *The Beast*^[4.2] and understand the fulfillment of his overthrow by Christ (Rev. 19:20) to be his suicide in A.D. 68. They see John's mention of a Temple in Revelation 11 as *internal evidence for an early date*^[2.11.3.1] for the writing of Revelation.

If this were an acceptable explanation and interpretation, then the Tribulation Temple would be none other than the Second Temple prior to its destruction by Rome in A.D. 70. However, attempts to find fulfillment of the book of Revelation, not to mention all the other related *prophetic themes*^[2.13], in the events of the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70 require an enormous amount of creative and imprecise interpretation, not to mention outright reversal of textual meaning.⁷⁵ Although *preterists*^[5.2.59] maintain that since John is told to *measure* the Temple (Rev. 11:1) it must therefore have been standing in John's day, this is not necessarily so:

Regarding Preterist assertion that this is Herod's temple, to be destroyed in 70 A.D., there are at least two problems with this view. Firstly, most scholars date the book of Revelation after that destruction and secondly, It does not matter at all whether the temple is thought to still be standing in Jerusalem at the time that John sees the vision, since that would not necessarily have any bearing upon a vision. John is told by the angel accompanying him during the vision to 'measure the temple' (Rev. 11:1). Measure what temple? The temple in the vision. In fact, Ezekiel, during a similar vision of a temple (Eze. 40-48) was told to measure that temple. [Preterists] would agree, that when Ezekiel saw and was told to measure a temple, that there was not one standing in Jerusalem.⁷⁶

There is an additional problem with the preterist view that the Tribulation Temple is the Second Temple: no one in the early church—the saints who lived closest to the times of both Nero^[5.2.46] and John—understood the preterist scheme. They did not see Nero as the Antichrist and the destruction of Jerusalem as the fulfillment of the book of Revelation. Some of the earliest interpreters, like *futurist*

interpreters^[2.12.5] of today, expected the Temple to be *a rebuilt Temple future to John's day*:

Therefore, when he [the antichrist] receives the kingdom, he orders the temple of God to be rebuilt for himself, which is in Jerusalem; who after coming into it, he shall sit as God.—Ephraim the Syrian, A.D. 373.⁷⁷

But when this Antichrist shall have devastated all things in this world, he will reign for three years and six months, and sit in the temple at Jerusalem; and then the Lord will come from heaven in the clouds, in the glory of the Father, sending this man and those who follow him into the lake of fire; but bringing in for the righteous the times of the kingdom, that is, the rest, the hallowed seventh day; and restoring to Abraham the promised inheritance, in which kingdom the Lord declared, that “many coming from the east and from the west should sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.”⁷⁸

As we discuss elsewhere, the *Date*^[2.11] of the writing of the book of Revelation is most likely in A.D. 95 or 96 at the end of Domitian's reign. At that time, *no Temple stood in Jerusalem*. Therefore, the passages mentioned above which have not yet been fulfilled *require the rebuilding of a Jewish Temple*. It would appear that this Tribulation Temple must be in place no later than the midpoint of *The 70th Week of Daniel*^[2.13.5] in order for the man of sin to sit in the Holy Place and for the Abomination of Desolation to be set up. The Temple may actually be built well in advance of that event, especially since it appears that the breaking of the covenant between the Antichrist and “many” in Israel contravenes the resumption of sacrifice and offering which would previously have been taking place at the site of the Temple (Dan. 9:27). Either the Tribulation Temple will be complete by the time the sacrifice is resumed or, as in the days of the rebuilding of the *Second Temple*^[4.16.5.4], the sacrifices will be resumed while the construction of the Temple is in progress.

As we discussed in relation to the *Temple of the Believer*^[4.16.5.5], there is nothing which precludes the existence of a Jewish Temple side-by-side with believers who are indwelt with the Holy Spirit. This was the situation for almost four decades after the Day of Pentecost until the destruction of the *Second Temple*^[4.16.5.4]:

The early Jewish church—before the destruction of the Temple—was indwelt, sealed, and filled with the Spirit and yet *continued* to worship in the Temple! This would imply that the Third Temple could be built during the church age and even sacrifices commenced without there being a necessary conflict with “spiritual worship.”⁷⁹

Moreover, a rebuilt Jewish Temple would most likely be the product of orthodox Judaism which rejects the Christian reality of the *Temple of the Believer*^[4.16.5.5]. So views concerning the compatibility of a physical Temple while a spiritual Temple already exists within each believer may be irrelevant. There is also the possibility that the Church will be taken in the *Rapture*^[4.14] prior to the construction of the Tribulation Temple. Finally, we note that during the *Millennial Kingdom*^[4.11], a physical *Temple*^[4.16.5.10] will exist alongside believers in Jesus.

As to the practicality of rebuilding the Temple, there is much controversy. Considerable debate attends the identification of the precise location of Solomon's Temple upon the Temple Mount and whether the Dome of the Rock and *Al-Aqsa* Mosque preclude any possibility of a future Jewish Temple on the Mount.

There is also disagreement concerning whether a Jewish Temple could be built upon the Temple Mount while the Dome of the Rock and *Al-Aqsa* Mosque continue to stand. Some investigators claim that the Second Temple stood at a slightly different location than that occupied by the Dome of the Rock. Others say this is a moot point because Muslims would never allow the Jews to build *anything anywhere* upon the Temple Mount so long as Islam controls the location. Similarly, orthodox Judaism considers all Islamic presence on the Mount to be a defilement of their historical holy location. It is beyond the scope of our treatment here to consider the issues related to the precise location and ability to rebuild. See *Temple-Related Websites*^[4.16.6].

See commentary on *Revelation 11:1*^[3.11.1].

4.16.5.10 - Millennial Temple

4.16.5.10.1 - The Predicted Millennial Temple

There is overwhelming scriptural evidence predicting a *Temple*^[5.2.73] during the *Millennial Kingdom*^[4.11] on earth (Isa. 2:3; 56:6-7; 60:13; Eze. 40-47; Dan. 9:24; Joel 3:18; Hag. 2:7-9; Zec. 6:12-15; 8:20-23). Most interpreters do not deny these passages. However, most spiritualize them because they are unable to reconcile a future earthly kingdom, complete with Temple, with a theology which believes that the Church has replaced Israel as the “New Israel” and that the spiritual *Temple of the Believer*^[4.16.5.5] has forever replaced any need for a physical Temple. Even though the level of detail given concerning the Temple (Eze. 40-47) is impossible to explain allegorically or to reliably attach spiritual significance to, most commentators attempt to do just this. They reject the *Golden Rule of Interpretation*^[5.2.24] in favor of a completely spiritual/figurative interpretation. This inability to accept the statements of Scripture concerning the details of the *Millennial Temple*^[5.2.40] has led to a variety of interpretations:

Several non-literal interpretations have been advanced by interpreters regarding the millennial temple of Ezekiel. These are: First view— The vision was given by God for the benefit of post-exilic Jews to help them remember Solomon’s temple design when they restore the old temple. Second view— Here is an ideal blueprint of what should have been built by the Jewish remnant after their return from the Babylonian captivity. Third view— The prophecy is a grand, complicated symbol of the Christian church. This is the standard *amillennial*^[5.2.1] position. As Milton Terry says, “this vision of restored and perfected temple, service, and land symbolizes the perfected kingdom of God and his Messiah.” Fourth view— The glorious descriptions found in this prophecy will surely be fulfilled at the millennium, but do not fuss over the how of fulfillment. This is the covenant *premillennial*^[5.2.58] position which refuses to go into details.⁸⁰

Those who seek to dismiss Ezekiel’s description of the Millennial Temple as being non-literal, are inconsistent because similar descriptions elsewhere in Ezekiel are manifestly literal:

The Millennial Temple is not the only temple that Ezekiel describes. In [Eze. 8-11], he describes the departure of the *Shechinah Glory*^[5.2.67] from Israel from the First Temple. All agree that his description of the Temple and the events that happen there are very literal. In [Eze. 40-48], Ezekiel describes the future return of the Shechinah Glory into the Fourth Temple. If what he said about the First Temple was literal, then what he says about the Fourth Temple should also be taken literally.⁸¹

Scripture reveals that Messiah will build this future Temple and reign there as *both king and priest*:

Take the silver and gold, make **an elaborate crown**, and set *it* on the head of Joshua the son of Jehozadak, the high priest. Then speak to him, saying, ‘Thus says the LORD of hosts, saying: “Behold, the Man whose name *is* the BRANCH! From His place He shall branch out, and He shall build the temple of the LORD; yes, He shall build the temple of the LORD. He shall bear the glory, and shall sit and rule on His throne; so He shall be a **priest on His throne**, and the counsel of peace shall be **between them both**.” ’ (Zec. 6:11-13) [emphasis added]

The Scripture says, “the counsel of peace shall be between them both.” Between both *what*? Unfortunately, the translation suffers from lack of precision. Where the instructions say “make an elaborate crown,” the Hebrew actually says, “make elaborate *crowns*” (plural).

The term for crown is plural signifying that the “branch” will wear both kingly and priestly crowns (Zec. 6:13). The Hebrew word for “crown” here is **אֵתֶרֶת** [*äteret*], a term never used in the *OT*^[5.2.51] for the priestly crown or mitre. Thus, the scene here is the investing of the priest with royal authority.⁸²

There are *two crowns*: a *gold* crown denoting *royalty* and a *silver* crown denoting *priesthood*. “Both” refers to the two offices denoted by the two crowns. The Messiah will be *both king and priest!* This passage refers to the future *earthly rule* of Messiah Jesus upon the throne of David (Isa. 9:7, see *The Arrival of God’s Kingdom*^[2.4.3]).

The rabbis understood this passage to teach that Messiah would build the Temple at His coming (in this case, the Second Coming):

The medieval rabbi Rashi declared that the Temple would descend directly from heaven after the

coming of the Messiah. Maimonides also argued that only the Messiah could build the Temple. The prayer at the afternoon service on Tisha B'Av reflects this thinking: "For You, O Lord, did consume it [the Temple] with fire, and with fire You will in the future restore it."⁸³

To this we could add the implications of Jesus' statement: "See! Your house [the Temple] is left to you desolate; for I say to you, you shall see Me no more till you say . . ." (Mtt. 23:38-39a). The desolation of the Temple is connected with the departure of Jesus, the glory of the Lord (see *The Abiding Presence of God*^[4.16.2]). Could it be that the restoration of the Temple is connected with His return? This is what Zechariah's passage explains. This agrees with Daniel's prophecy concerning the Most Holy being anointed *following The 70th Week of Daniel*^[2.13.5]:

Seventy weeks are determined for your people and for your holy city, to finish the transgression, to make an end of sins, to make reconciliation for iniquity, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal up vision and prophecy, and **to anoint the Most Holy**. (Dan. 9:24) [emphasis added]

That which is to be anointed is not a *person*, but a future Temple, the Millennial Temple:

Nowhere in Holy Writ is **קֹדֶשׁ קְדוֹשִׁים** [*qhōdesh qhādāshīm*] ("a most holy") applied to the Church or to a person. . . Each of the 39 occurrences of **קֹדֶשׁ קְדוֹשִׁים** [*qhōdesh qhādāshīm*] pertains to the *Tabernacle*^[5.2.69], Temple (specifically the Holy of Holies), or the things of the Temple. . . A reasonable deduction from that fact is "a most holy" is the Temple. The allusion is not likely to be the Holy of Holies proper because that term almost always has the article with it.⁸⁴

The Malbim says that this [to anoint the Most Holy] refers to "the Third Temple," since "it will be anointed." This statement reflects the contrast with the Second Temple, which the Mishnah records had *not* been anointed (*Yoma* 21b; compare *Tosefta Sotah* 13:2). The "anointing" refers to the consecration of the chamber that housed the Ark of the Covenant, whose presence sanctified the Temple by virtue of the *Shekinah* (the divine presence). Since neither the Ark nor the *Shekinah* were present in the Second Temple (*Yoma* 21b) rabbinic tradition held that the Ark will be revealed in the future by the Messianic king, who will also build the Third Temple (*Zec.* 6:12-13).⁸⁵

Since the destruction of the *Second Temple*^[4.16.5.4] many centuries ago and the dispersion of the Jews, the idea of a future Jewish state and a literal rebuilt Temple have seemed fantastic to many. Yet based on his simple reading of Scripture, writing over a century ago in advance of the recreation of the Jewish state, Walter Scott (1796 - 1861) said:

The Jews as a nation shall be restored in unbelief both on their part and on that of the friendly nation who shall espouse their cause (Isa. 18). They then proceed to build a temple, and restore so far as they can, the Mosaic ritual. God is not in this movement, which is undertaken for political ends and purposes. But amidst the rank unbelief of these times, there shall be as ever, a true godly remnant, and it is this remnant which is here [Rev. 11:1] divinely recognized.⁸⁶

4.16.5.10.2 - Millennial Sacrifices

One of the more difficult aspects of the *Millennial Kingdom*^[5.2.39] concerns passages which make plain that a sacrificial system will be active during the thousand year reign of Christ on earth. These sacrifices are both by Ezekiel in his famous passage concerning the *Millennial Temple*^{[5.2.73]/[5.2.40]} (*Eze.* 43:20, 26; 45:15, 17, 20), but also by four other prophets (*Isa.* 56:7; 66:20-23; *Jer.* 33:18; *Zec.* 14:16-21; *Mal.* 3:3-4).⁸⁷

If the writer of Hebrews indicates that Christ's one-time sacrifice has made a new and living way to approach God (*Heb.* 10:20), then what possible purpose would future sacrifices serve, especially after the return of Christ and during His righteous rule from Jerusalem?

One of the most difficult passages to harmonize with *dispensational*^[5.2.15] literalism is Ezekiel 40-48 . In these chapters Ezekiel recorded a vision of a new temple in which sacrificial ritual occurred. This immediately places the dispensationalist in a dilemma. If the temple is viewed as in the eschaton and the sacrifices are literal, then this seems to be at odds with the Book of Hebrews, which clearly states that Christ's sacrifice has put an end to all sacrifice. If, on the other hand, the sacrifices are not accepted as literal, this seems to oppose one of the cornerstones of dispensationalism, namely, the normal interpretation of prophetic literature.⁸⁸

Several elements contribute to an understanding of the purpose of sacrifices during the Millennial Kingdom:

1. **Sin Remains** - Although conditions during the millennial reign are far superior to the present age (e.g., a just rule, regenerated environment, peace among animals and man), the problem of sin and death remains (Isa. 65:20). Not everyone in the kingdom will have obtained their glorified state of sinlessness (Rev. 20:4, 6). At its inception, those believers who survive the Tribulation will enter the kingdom in their natural bodies (Mtt. 25:31-34). They will have natural children, all whom will be born in sin, some of whom will reject God (Isa. 65:20; Rev. 20:7-9).
2. **Ministry of Holy Spirit** - The unique ministry of the Holy Spirit during this age, which began on the Day of Pentecost and formed the spiritual *Temple of the Believer*^[4.16.5.5], may also end at the *Rapture*^[4.14] of the Church when the body of Christ returned to be with Her Lord (John 14:1-3). This unique spiritual ministry, which began with the formation of the Church for the purposes of the present age may not attend regeneration during the Millennium. Scripture simply does not say. Since a new and different ministry of the Spirit (Spirit-baptism) attended salvation beginning with the Day of Pentecost, it may be presumptuous to assume the precise continuance of this same ministry in the lives of believers subsequent to the departure of the Church. Note that the spiritual *Temple of the Believer*^[4.16.5.5] is associated with membership in the *body of Christ* during the present age. This spiritual organism was created for purposes associated with Jesus' *physical absence* (John 7:38-39; 16:7), but during the Millennial Kingdom Jesus will be *physically present* on earth. At that time, the literal body of Christ Himself will be seated on the throne of David and ruling from Jerusalem.
3. **Presence of God** - Prior to the incarnation, God's presence was manifested by the *Shekinah*^[4.16.2] and approach to the *Shekinah* was highly restricted through a priesthood and elaborate Temple liturgy. At the First Coming of Messiah, God's presence was manifested in the incarnation of Jesus (John 1:14) and was handled directly by sinful flesh (Luke 7:44). After the ascension of Jesus, with the coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, believers were baptized with the Spirit and God's presence dwelt within them as a spiritual Temple and provided a new quality of access to God (Heb. 4:16). The pattern is this: changes in the manifestation of the divine presence (*Shekinah*, incarnation, Spirit baptism) are attended by changes in the way of approach to that presence (physical Temple and liturgy, direct physical handling, spiritual Temple). During the Millennial Kingdom, God's presence will be manifested in the physical person of Messiah Jesus reigning from Jerusalem as both king and priest (Zec. 6:13). When the divine presence resides in physical form within the Millennial Temple, an entire priestly liturgy will be instituted which includes a system of sacrifice.
4. **Purpose of Sacrifice** - We recognize that animal sacrifice could not purchase salvation (Heb. 10:4) and that it pointed to the sacrifice of the Lamb of God to reconcile sinners to God (1Cor. 5:7; 1Pe. 1:19). "To the objection that a renewal of "expiatory" animal sacrifices is unthinkable and would deny the complete efficacy of our Lord's atoning death, the reply is very simple: no animal sacrifice in the Bible has ever had an expiatory efficacy [Heb. 10:4]. . . These sacrifices were simply a "remembrance" of the sins committed, and pointed forward to the one sacrifice which would take them away."⁸⁹ The countless animals which died in the OT^[5.2.51] did not move man any closer to redemption, but neither were they entirely a forward-pointing memorial. Animal sacrifice had intrinsic value: it provided *atonement*. We discuss this aspect in more detail below.

As has been recognized, animal sacrifice in the OT was a type—a forward-looking memorial—to the eventual sacrifice of the Lamb of God (Ex. 12:5-6; Isa. 53:7; John 1:29, 36; 19:14; Acts 8:32; 1Cor. 5:7; 1Pe. 1:19; Rev. 5:6, 12). Some have explained the sacrifices during the Millennial Kingdom as having a similar *backward-looking* memorial purpose:

These sacrifices will be types and symbols of their faith in Christ's death, but that does not make them any the less real. There will probably be mingled sorrow and joy in the sacrifices, as they recall how

their fathers refused to accept Christ as the Messiah and how now they have the privilege of seeing it all so clearly.⁹⁰

Most dispensationalists have explained the sacrifices in Ezekiel 40-48 through what is known as “the memorial view.” According to this view the sacrifices offered during the earthly reign of Christ will be visible reminders of His work on the cross. Thus these sacrifices will not contradict the clear teaching of Hebrews, for they will not have any efficacy except to memorialize Christ’s death. The primary support for this view is the parallel of the Lord’s Supper. It is argued that just as the communion table looks back on the Cross without besmirching its glory, so millennial sacrifices will do the same.⁹¹

The memorial view helps explain one of the purposes of millennial sacrifices which they share with OT sacrifices. Yet in itself, this explanation is lacking because the Scriptures indicate that millennial sacrifices are more than just memorial, they provide *atonement* (Eze. 16:63; 43:20, 26; 45:15, 17, 20). As we saw above, God’s presence will be on earth in a new way which differs from the *Shekinah* of the OT, the incarnation of the life of Jesus, and the Holy Spirit indwelling the Church as the spiritual Temple during the present age:

Atonement cleansing was necessary in Leviticus because of the descent of the Shekinah in Exodus 40. A holy God had taken up residence in the midst of a sinful and unclean people. Similarly Ezekiel foresaw the return of God’s glory to the millennial temple. This will again create a tension between a holy God and an unclean people.⁹²

Animal sacrifices during the millennium will serve primarily to remove ceremonial uncleanness and prevent defilement from polluting the temple envisioned by Ezekiel. This will be necessary because the glorious presence of Yahweh will once again be dwelling on earth in the midst of a sinful and unclean people.⁹³

When we carefully read the following passage from the book of Hebrews, we notice that the author *differentiates* between purification *of the flesh* and cleansing *of the conscience*:

Then indeed, even the first *covenant* had ordinances of divine service and the earthly sanctuary. For a *tabernacle*^[5.2.69] was prepared: the first *part*, in which *was* the lampstand, the table, and the showbread, which is called the sanctuary; and behind the second veil, the part of the tabernacle which is called the Holiest of All, which had the golden censer and the ark of the covenant overlaid on all sides with gold, in which *were* the golden pot that had the manna, Aaron’s rod that budded, and the tablets of the covenant; and above it were the cherubim of glory overshadowing the mercy seat. Of these things we cannot now speak in detail. Now when these things had been thus prepared, the priests always went into the first part of the tabernacle, performing *the services*. But into the second part the high priest *went* alone once a year, not without blood, which he offered for himself and *for* the people’s sins *committed* in ignorance; the Holy Spirit indicating this, that the way into the Holiest of All was not yet made manifest while the first tabernacle was still standing. It *was* symbolic for the present time in which both gifts and sacrifices are offered which cannot make him who performed the service perfect **in regard to the conscience**— *concerned* only with foods and drinks, various washings, and fleshly ordinances imposed until the time of reformation. But Christ came *as* High Priest of the good things to come, with the greater and more perfect tabernacle not made with hands, that is, not of this creation. Not with the blood of goats and calves, but with His own blood He entered the Most Holy Place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption. For if the blood of bulls and goats and the ashes of a heifer, sprinkling the unclean, sanctifies **for the purifying of the flesh**, how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, **cleanse your conscience** from dead works to serve the living God? (Heb. 9:1-14) [emphasis added]

The writer of Hebrews understands that although animal sacrifices were ineffectual as a means of salvation, *they were effectual for the purifying of the flesh*. Animal sacrifices in the OT were not purely forward-looking memorials, but also had effectual function *in their time*. Their function was not that of providing redemption, but of providing ceremonial cleansing.

Hebrews 9:10 and 13 state that the Levitical offerings were related to “food and drink and various washings, regulations for the body,” and the sprinkling of blood so as to sanctify and purify the flesh. Animal sacrifices were efficacious in removing ceremonial uncleanness. While Christ is superior, the fact should not be lost that animal sacrifices did in the earthly sphere cleanse the flesh and remove outward defilement. . . . Hebrews reveals that Christ’s death met certain objectives and operated in a sphere different from that of the animal sacrifices of the old economy. Hebrews states that animal sacrifices were efficacious in the sphere of ceremonial cleansing. They were not efficacious, however, in the realm of conscience and therefore in the matter of spiritual salvation. Because of this, Christ’s

offering is superior in that it accomplished something the Levitical offerings never could, namely, soteriological benefits.⁹⁴

With an appreciation of the effectual aspect of OT sacrifice—that OT sacrifice was more than merely a memorial to the coming work of Christ—we can begin to see why sacrifices are indicated during the Millennial Kingdom. Another way of looking at the relation of animal sacrifice to Christ’s redemptive work is to ask what the effect is of adding to Christ’s redemptive work? We know that to add *anything* to Christ’s redemptive work is blasphemy for it is akin to representing that His work was *incomplete*. This in itself indicates sacrifice which was *required* by the OT could not be merely a miniature form of what Christ did. For then, their efficacious value could be said to *contribute to* the work of Christ. Alas, this is blasphemy! This dilemma is solved by recognizing that the animal sacrifices in the OT had efficacious value which pointed to, but *differed in function* from the ultimate redemptive work of Christ. Once we recognize this distinction, we understand that *in the same way OT sacrifices do not add to the work of Christ, neither will millennial sacrifices take away from it*.

Perhaps an analogy would be of further help: that of the contribution of *confession* in the life of the believer. When a believer is *born again*, he is unable to become *unborn* for he is among those chosen by God. As a member among the redeemed, the one-time sacrifice of Jesus paid for *all his sin, both past and future*. When he commits sin, it does not result in the loss of salvation, otherwise every believer would lose his salvation daily and require regeneration a multitude of times. Moreover, there would be no possibility of knowing whether he *has* eternal life.⁹⁵ Yet sin clearly *separates* the believer from God. Although his salvation is secure, his *fellowship* is adversely affected because He becomes more distant from God. The solution is found in repentance and confession (1Jn. 1:9). We find that the confession of the believer is *efficacious* for cleansing, but *unrelated to his essential salvation*. This is analogous to the function of animal sacrifices both in the OT and the coming Millennial Kingdom. They are not salvific, but associated with cleansing and the approach of God by those who still suffer the ravages of sin.⁹⁶

For additional information on the Millennial Temple, see [J. Dwight Pentecost, *Things to Come: A Study in Biblical Eschatology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1958), 512-531] and [John F. Walvoord, *The Millennial Kingdom* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1959), 305-315].

4.16.5.11 - New Jerusalem

At the close of the *Millennial Kingdom*^[5.2.39], after the Great White Throne Judgment (Rev. 20:11-14), all things are made new and the holy city, the New Jerusalem, comes down out of heaven from God (Rev. 21:1-2). Perhaps the greatest blessing attending the New Jerusalem is the nearness of the redeemed to *The Abiding Presence of God*^[4.16.2]:

But I saw no temple in it, for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are its temple. The city had no need of the sun or of the moon to shine in it for the glory of God [the *Shekinah*] illuminated it. The Lamb is its light. (Rev. 21:22-23)

In the eternal state, the *purpose of every Temple*^[5.2.73] *through history* is finally achieved: God and the Lamb *are* the temple. The age-long separation between man and God which has taken numerous forms is now done away with and full communion is restored. Man will once again walk with God in full fellowship as in the *Garden of Eden*^[4.16.5.1], but now in a glorified state and in a city. Access to the tree of life, lost at The Fall, will now be restored (Rev. 22:2, 14) for man may now live eternally without the threat of sin (Gen. 3:22).

In one sense there shall be “no temple” in the heavenly city because there shall be no distinction of things into sacred and secular, for all things and persons shall be holy to the Lord. The city shall be all one great temple, in which the saints shall be not merely stones, as in the spiritual temple now on earth, but all eminent as pillars: immovably firm (unlike Philadelphia, the city which was so often shaken by earthquakes, Strabo [12 and 13]), like the colossal pillars before Solomon’s temple, Boaz (that is, “In it is strength”) and Jachin (“It shall be established”): only that those pillars were outside, these shall be within the temple.⁹⁹

Here is a city said to be 1,500 miles in measurement, yet with all the measurements equal (Rev. 21:16, 22). Since the Holy of Holies in the earthly Temples were built according to this design (cf. 1K. 6:19-

20), it has been well recognized that what this depicts is that the *entire city* is a Sanctuary, or rather, an immense *Holy of Holies*.

See *Millennial Kingdom*^[4.11]. See *Genesis and Revelation as Bookends*^[2.13.8]. See commentary on *Revelation 21:2*^[3.21.2] and *Revelation 21:9*^[3.21.9].

4.16.6 - Temple-Related Websites

The following *Temple*^[5.2.73]-related websites contain additional material concerning the history of the Temple and especially modern issues related to the possible establishment of a future Jewish Temple upon Mount Moriah.

- Associates for Scripture Knowledge, [<http://askelm.com/temple/t001211.htm>]
- Chronology of the Temple Mount, [<http://www.ldolphin.org/chron.html>]
- Jerusalem Model, [<http://www.inisrael.com/holyland/model.html>]
- Jewish Virtual Library, [http://www.us-israel.org/jsource/Society_&_Culture/geo/Mount.html]
- List of Bible Archaeology Websites, [<http://www.spiritandtruth.org/sites/sites.htm#archaeology>]
- List of Bible History Websites, [<http://www.spiritandtruth.org/sites/sites.htm#history>]
- List of Temple Mount Websites, [http://www.spiritandtruth.org/sites/sites.htm#temple_mount]
- Noble Sanctuary, [<http://www.noblesanctuary.com>]
- Ritmeyer Archaeological Design, [<http://www.templemountonline.com>]
- Solomon's Temple, [<http://www.solomonstemple.com>]
- Temple Institute, [<http://www.templeinstitute.org>]
- Temple Mount Archaeological Destruction, [<http://www.har-habayt.org>]
- Temple Mount UST Project, [<http://www.ust.ucla.edu/ustweb/Projects/israel.htm>]
- TempleMount.Org, [<http://www.templemount.org>]
- Walking in Their Sandals, [<http://www.ancientsandals.com/overviews/temple.htm>]
- World of the Bible, [<http://www.worldofthebible.com>]

Notes

- ¹ Concerning the Temple as God's House and the place of His name: Deu. 12:5, 11; 12:21; 1Chr. 28:6; 2Chr. 6:20; 7:16; 20:19; Ezra 6:12; Ne. 1:9; Mtt. 21:13; Mark 11:17; Luke 19:46.
- ² A picnic analogy may be helpful. Consider sin as tomato ketchup. When ketchup spills on a man's clothing, it stains his clothing. But when ketchup is spilled on the coals of a fire, the coals consume the ketchup. The man's clothing remains stained, but the coals are unaffected by the ketchup. The coals of the fire are like God: that which is sinful is consumed by His power and Holiness. Concerning God's consuming fire: Ex. 24:17; Lev. 9:24; Num. 11:1; Deu. 4:24; 5:25; 9:3; 1K. 18:38; 1Chr. 21:26; 2Chr. 7:1; Ps. 50:3; Isa. 33:14; Jer. 21:12; Heb. 12:29.
- ³ [Randall Price, *The Coming Last Days Temple* (Eugene, OR: Harvest House Publishers, 1999)], [www.WorldOfTheBible.com].
- ⁴ Gen. 32:30, 33:10; Ex. 3:6; 19:21; 33:11; Num. 12:8; Deu. 5:4; 34:10; Jdg. 13:22; 1S. 6:19; 1K. 19:13; Ps. 17:15; Isa. 6:5; John 1:18; 1Cor. 13:2; 1Jn. 3:2; 4:12; Rev. 22:4.
- ⁵ See *The Abiding Presence of God*^[4.16.2].
- ⁶ Although the initial motive for the expulsion was to prevent their partaking from the tree of life, it soon becomes apparent that fellowship with God apart from sacrificial offering is no longer possible (Gen. 4:7).
- ⁷ Arnold G. Fruchtenbaum, *The Footsteps of Messiah*, rev ed. (Tustin, CA: Ariel Ministries, 2003), 599.

- 8 David J. Macleod, “*The Incarnation of the Word: John 1:14*,” in *Bibliotheca Sacra*, vol. 161 no. 641 (Dallas, TX: Dallas Theological Seminary, January-March 2004), 77.
- 9 The presence of God is essentially that which defines the Temple.
- 10 Concerning God’s abiding presence in visible form: Gen. 3:8, 24; 15:17; Ex. 3:2; 13:21-22; 14:19-20, 24; 16:10; 19:18; 24:15-16; 33:18-23; 34:5-6; 40:34; Lev. 9:6, 23; Num. 14:10, 22; 16:19, 42; 20:6; Deu. 5:25-26; 33:16; 1K. 8:10-11; 2Chr. 7:1; Isa. 4:5; 35:2; 40:5; 58:8; 60:3; Eze. 1:28; 3:23; 9:3; 10:18; 43:2-4; Hag. 2:7-9; Zec. 2:5; Mtt. 16:27; 17:2; 24:30; Mark 9:3; Luke 2:8-9; 9:29; John 1:14; Acts 2:3; 9:3; 22:6; 26:13; Heb. 1:3; 2Pe. 1:16-17; Rev. 1:14-16; 15:8; 21:3; 21:23.
- 11 We have omitted the indwelling of the believer by God during the Church Age since this differs somewhat from the *Shekinah* in that there is no obvious outward manifestation of God’s presence upon the believer as there is with the *Shekinah*.
- 12 David Baron, *Zechariah: A Commentary On His Visions And Prophecies* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 1918), 496.
- 13 Ariel view of the Temple^[5.2.73] Mount from the north showing the *Dome of the Rock* (golden dome, center) and the *Al-Aqsa Mosque* (gray-blue dome, above center) as of A.D. 2003. The Kidron Valley is to the left. Copyright ©003 www.BiblePlaces.com. This image appears by *special permission*^[1.3] and may not be duplicated for use in derivative works.
- 14 We have purposefully omitted Mohammed’s fabled night journey to Jerusalem, the *Mi’raj* (Surah 17:1) because we do not believe it to be factual.
- 15 Jesus was crucified outside the gates of Jerusalem (Heb. 13:11-13) on Mount Moriah.
- 16 Actually, *all three* are highly significant to all men everywhere, although most do not recognize it.
- 17 Erich Sauer, *The Dawn of World Redemption* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1951, c1964), 102.
- 18 Concerning the revelation of Jesus to be found in the OT^[5.2.51]: Ps. 40:7; Luke 18:31; 24:27, 44; John 5:39, 46; Acts 8:35; Acts 10:43; Heb. 10:7.
- 19 Adapted from [Price, *The Coming Last Days Temple*, 57] which, in turn, is adapted from a chart by J. A. and Donald Parry in *Temples of the Ancient World*, p. 521.
- 20 Price, *The Coming Last Days Temple*, 61.
- 21 Price, *The Coming Last Days Temple*, 593-612.
- 22 [Floyd Nolen Jones, *Chronology of the Old Testament* (Woodlands, TX: KingsWord Press, 1999), 26], [James Ussher, *The Annals of the World* (Green Forest, AR: Master Books, 1658, c2003), 17]. See Jones for a list of 30 bible chronologers who date creation between 5426 and 3836 B.C.
- 23 Martin Gilbert, *The Illustrated Atlas of Jewish Civilization* (New York, NY: Macmillan Publishing Company, 1990), 33.
- 24 See [Price, *The Coming Last Days Temple*, 195] for a more extensive treatment.
- 25 [Torah scrolls are] written on parchment, sewn together, rolled onto wooden rollers called *eytz chayeem* (tree of life), and read regularly in the synagogue.—*Israel My Glory*, May/June 2001, 23.
- 26 Price, *The Coming Last Days Temple*, 195.
- 27 Fruchtenbaum, *The Footsteps of Messiah*, 610.
- 28 “Josephus states that the Tabernacle was brought into the First Temple [*Antiquities*, pp. 8. 101, 106], and that the effect of the spread-winged cherubim was to make it appear as a tent (8. 103).”—Randall Price, *In Search of Temple Treasure* (Eugene, OR: Harvest House Publishers, 1994), 193.
- 29 The Jewish month of *Av* (also *Ab*) is the 5th month of the sacred year and 11th month of the civil year and falls in the months of July-August. [W. A. Criswell, and Paige Patterson, eds., *The Holy Bible: Baptist Study Edition* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1991), 1314]
- 30 Thomas Ice, and Randall Price, *Ready to Rebuild* (Eugene, OR: Harvest House Publishers, 1992), 212-213.
- 31 Flavius Josephus, *The Complete Works of Josephus* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 1981), s.v. “Antiquities X, xi 7 - XI, i 3.”

- 32 Price, *The Coming Last Days Temple*, 495.
- 33 Gilbert, *The Illustrated Atlas of Jewish Civilization*, 32.
- 34 Price, *The Coming Last Days Temple*, 526.
- 35 Price, *The Coming Last Days Temple*, 75.
- 36 “Dedication” translates the Aramaic word *hanukkah*.
- 37 Chaim Potok, *Wanderings* (New York, NY: Ballantine Books, 1978), 248.
- 38 Price, *The Coming Last Days Temple*, 76.
- 39 Ice, *Ready to Rebuild*, 65.
- 40 “But the nation had rejected Him; and as He leaves this temple, it is no longer named ‘my house’ (Mtt. 21:13) but ‘your house’ (Mtt. 23:38). And by reason of His rejection and withdrawal, Israel’s house is left ‘desolate.’” —Alva J. McClain, *The Greatness Of The Kingdom* (Winona Lake, IN: BMH Books, 1959), 361.
- 41 Potok, *Wanderings*, 285.
- 42 Price, *The Coming Last Days Temple*, 82.
- 43 For additional background on the transition associated with the Coming of the Spirit on the Day of Pentecost, see [Tony Garland, “Does Dispensationalism Teach Two Ways of Salvation?,” in *The Conservative Theological Journal*, vol. 7 no. 20 (Fort Worth, TX: Tyndale Theological Seminary, March 2003)].
- 44 There is some disagreement regarding whether each individual believer comprises a Temple of God or whether only the collective body of believers is the Temple. Some note plural pronouns which occur in passages describing the Temple of the believer’s body (1Cor. 6:19; 2Cor. 6:16). Others explain this plural form as teaching concerning the individual, but delivered to the readers as a group.
- 45 “In the rabbinic writings this is a very common term . . . the term . . . is a figure of speech describing a guest at a feast, reclining on the breast of his neighbor. Just as in the Gospel of John.” —Fruchtenbaum, *The Footsteps of Messiah*, 754.
- 46 “It is said on separate occasions that the Spirit entered into Ezekiel (Eze. 2:2; Eze. 3:24). How could this be if Ezekiel was permanently indwelt [*sic*]?” —Mal Couch, ed., *A Bible Handbook to the Acts of the Apostles* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 1999), 27.
- 47 And in fact many Christians do conclude this even *with* Scriptural evidence to the contrary.
- 48 “John Townsend stated in his Harvard dissertation on this point: ‘Since Paul sets the desecration of the Temple beside the ultimate blasphemy of proclaiming oneself to be God and since he regards these acts as the climax of the evil which is to precede the parousia [Christ’s second coming], there can be no doubt of Paul’s veneration for this Temple.’” —Price, *The Coming Last Days Temple*, 491. Even if we take this reference to the Temple as being the Second Temple like *preterist interpreters*^[2.12.2] do—although we disagree—it still demonstrates that Paul found significance in the Temple then standing *after* Pentecost.
- 49 Baron, *Zechariah: A Commentary On His Visions And Prophecies*, 140.
- 50 “His original name was probably Bar Koseva, and it is doubtful whether it was derived from a settlement in the Judean mountains or whether it indicates his father’s name or a general family name. The appellation Bar Kokhba was apparently given to him during the revolt on the basis of the homiletical interpretation, in a reference to messianic expectations, of the verse (Num. 24:17): ‘There shall step forth a star כֹּכַב [Kōkāb], *kokhav*] out of Jacob.’ Bar Kokhba was general midrashic designation for the ‘king messiah’ (see Messiah), and customarily used before the destruction of Jerusalem.” —*Encyclopedia Judaica - CD-ROM Edition Version 1.0* (Jerusalem: Judaica Multimedia, 1997), s.v. “BAR KOKHBA.”
- 51 Price, *The Coming Last Days Temple*, 90-96.
- 52 Price, *The Coming Last Days Temple*, 99-100.
- 53 Ariel view of the southern portion of the Temple Mount from the southeast showing the *Dome of the Rock* (golden dome, upper right) and the *Al-Aqsa Mosque* (gray-blue dome, center left) as of A.D. 2003. The edge of the Kidron Valley is in the immediate foreground. Copyright ©003 www.BiblePlaces.com. This image appears by *special permission*^[1.3] and may not be duplicated for use in derivative works.
- 54 “It is due to this uncompromising emphasis on God’s absolute unity that in Islam the greatest of all sins is the

- sin of shirk, or assigning partners to God.”—Norman L. Geisler, and Abdul Saleeb, *Answering Islam* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1993), 18.
- 55 “Kateregga writes. . . ‘Islam teaches that the first phase of life on earth did not begin in sin and rebellion against Allah. Although Adam disobeyed Allah, he repented and was forgiven and even given guidance for mankind. Man is not born a sinner and the doctrine of the sinfulness of man has no basis in Islam.’ . . . Faruqi, notes that ‘in the Islamic view, human beings are no more “fallen” than they are “saved.” Because they are not “fallen,” they have no need of a savior. But because they are not “saved” either, they need to do good works—and do them ethically—which alone will earn them the desired “salvation.” ’ ”—Geisler, *Answering Islam*, 42-43.
- 56 Both OT and NT were written hundreds of years prior to the Qur’an: an incontrovertible fact. For example, the Dead Sea Scrolls, dated prior to the birth of Christ, contain the detailed prediction of His death (Isaiah 53). Neither Judaism nor Islam can adequately deal with this reality for both deny the substitutionary atonement of the death of Messiah.
- 57 Imad N. Shehadeh, “Do Muslims and Christians Believe in the Same God?,” in *Bibliotheca Sacra*, vol. 161 no. 641 (Dallas, TX: Dallas Theological Seminary, January-March 2004), 22-23, 26.
- 58 Ice, *Ready to Rebuild*, 163-164.
- 59 “He said: ‘I will go to my Lord! He will surely guide me! O my Lord! grant me a righteous (son)!’ So We gave him the good news of a boy ready to suffer and forbear. Then, when (**the son**) reached (the age of serious) work with him, He said: ‘O my son! I see in vision that I offer thee in sacrifice: now see what is thy view!’ (**The son**) said: ‘O my father! Do as thou art commanded: thou wilt find me, if Allah so wills one practising patience and constancy!’ So when they had both submitted their wills (to Allah), and he had laid **him** prostrate on his forehead (for sacrifice), We called out to him, ‘O Abraham! Thou hast already fulfilled the vision!’—thus indeed do we reward those who do right. For this was obviously a trial—and we ransomed **him** with a momentous sacrifice: and we left (this blessing) for him among generations (to come) in later times: ‘Peace and salutation to Abraham!’ Thus indeed do We reward those who do right for he was one of Our believing servants. And we gave him the good news of **Isaac**—a prophet—one of the righteous. We blessed him and **Isaac**: but of their progeny are (some) that do right and (some) that obviously do wrong, to their own souls. (Surah 37:99-113)” [emphasis added]—Abdullah Yusuf Ali, *The Meaning of the Holy Qur’an* (Beltsville, MD: Amana Publications, 2001), Surah 37:99-113.
- 60 Price, *The Coming Last Days Temple*, 170.
- 61 Price, *The Coming Last Days Temple*, 180.
- 62 “*The Farthest Mosque* must refer to the site of the Temple of Solomon in Jerusalem on the hill of Moriah, at or near which stands the Dome of the Rock. This and the Mosque known as the Farthest Mosque (*al Masjid al Aqsa*) were completed by the Amir ‘Abd al Malik in A.H. 68. *Farthest*, because it was the place of worship farthest west which was known to the Arabs in the time of the Holy Prophets: it was a sacred place to both Jews and Christians, but the Christians then had the upper hand, as it was included in the Byzantine (Roman) Empire, which maintained a Patriarch at Jerusalem.”—Ali, *The Meaning of the Holy Qur’an*, 673n2168.
- 63 Ali, *The Meaning of the Holy Qur’an*, Surah 17:1.
- 64 Price, *The Coming Last Days Temple*, 173-174.
- 65 “June 7, 1967 - Israel, during the Six-Day War, liberates Temple Mount; hopes of rebuilding Temple revive, and Rabbi Goren suggests blowing up mosques on the Temple Mount, but later Defense Minister Moshe Dayan orders Israeli flag removed from atop the Dome of the Rock. . . . June 17, 1967 - Moshe Dayan meets with leaders of Supreme Muslim Council in Al-Aqsa Mosque and returns Temple Mount, especially site of the Temple, to sovereign control of the Muslim Wakf as a gesture of peace; agrees that Jews can have access to Mount, but cannot conduct prayers or religious activities.”—Price, *The Coming Last Days Temple*, 602, 603.
- 66 Price, *The Coming Last Days Temple*, 104-105.
- 67 “ ‘This site is one of the oldest in the world. Its sanctity dates from the earliest times. Its identity with the site of Solomon’s Temple is beyond dispute.’—Guidebook issued by the Supreme Muslim Council of Jerusalem in 1930”—Randall Price, *Unholy War* (Eugene, OR: Harvest House Publishers, 2001), 259.
- 68 Yet even the Qur’an indicates that the Promised Land was given to Moses and the Jews: “Remember Moses said to his people: ‘O my People! Call in remembrance the favour Of Allah unto you, when He produced prophets among you, made you kings, and gave You what He had not given to any other among the peoples. O my people! enter the holy land which Allah hath assigned unto you, and turn not back ignominiously, for then will ye be overthrown, to your own ruin.’ (Surah 5:20-21)”—Ali, *The Meaning of the Holy Qur’an*, Surah

5:20-21.

- 69 *TEMPLE MOUNT CLOSED EARLY; WHAT DOES JEWISH LAW SAY?*, Arutz Sheva News Service, Monday, August 25, 2003 / Av 27, 5763. [www.IsraelNationalNews.com].
- 70 *YESHA RABBIS: A 'MITZVAH' TO VISIT TEMPLE MOUNT*, Arutz Sheva News Service, Friday, September 5, 2003. [www.IsraelNationalNews.com].
- 71 Ergun Mehmet Caner, and Emir Fethi Caner, *Unveiling Islam* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 2002).
- 72 Geisler, *Answering Islam*.
- 73 Price, *Unholy War*.
- 74 We have only included passages which are definite references to the *Tribulation Temple*^[5.2.78]. Other passages *may* be related to the Tribulation Temple, but such reference is less certain (e.g., Rev. 13:6, 14). Some see a passage in Isaiah as denoting an unaccepted Temple at the time of the end: "Isaiah [Isa. 66:1-6] speaks of a house or temple being built for God which He does not sanction. It cannot refer to Solomon's Temple or the Temple built by Zerubbabel, because God did sanction both of them. Nor can it refer to the *Millennial Temple*^[5.2.40]. That one will be built by Messiah, and God will certainly sanction it. Therefore, the only temple that this could refer to is the Tribulation Temple. . . . What God wants Israel to do at this time is to return to Him in faith, not merely to build Him a house."—Fruchtenbaum, *The Footsteps of Messiah*, 138. Although this may be possible, the passage may simply denote God's dislike of insincere worship offered within the existing temple.
- 75 The city of *Babylon* in Revelation 18 is taken to be *Jerusalem*. God's *defense* of the city of Jerusalem recorded in Zechariah 12, 14 is taken to describe its *destruction* by Rome. For an excellent summary comparison of the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70 with Zechariah, see [Thomas Ice, "*The Olivet Discourse*," in Tim LaHaye, and Thomas Ice, eds., *The End Times Controversy* (Eugene, OR: Harvest House Publishers, 2003), 182].
- 76 Thomas Ice, "*Has Bible Prophecy Already Been Fulfilled?*," in *The Conservative Theological Journal*, vol. 4 no. 13 (Fort Worth, TX: Tyndale Theological Seminary, December 2000), 309.
- 77 Thomas Ice, and Timothy J. Demy, *When the Trumpet Sounds* (Eugene, OR: Harvest House Publishers, 1995), 113.
- 78 Alexander Roberts, James Donaldson, and A. Cleveland Coxe, *Ante-Nicene Fathers Vol. I* (Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, 1997), s.v. "ECF 1.1.7.1.5.31."
- 79 Price, *The Coming Last Days Temple*, 501.
- 80 Paul Lee Tan, *The Interpretation of Prophecy* (Dallas, TX: Bible Communications, Inc., 1993), 318-319.
- 81 Fruchtenbaum, *The Footsteps of Messiah*, 461.
- 82 *New Electronic Translation : NET Bible*, electronic edition (Dallas, TX: Biblical Studies Press, 1998), Zec. 6:12 n10.
- 83 Ice, *Ready to Rebuild*, 173.
- 84 Charles H. Ray, "*A Study of Daniel 9:24-17, Part II*," in *The Conservative Theological Journal*, vol. 5 no. 16 (Fort Worth, TX: Tyndale Theological Seminary, December 2001), 309.
- 85 Price, *The Coming Last Days Temple*, 249.
- 86 Walter Scott, *Exposition of The Revelation* (London, England: Pickering & Inglis, n.d.), 219.
- 87 "It must not be forgotten that Ezekiel is not alone in this affirmation of a revival of a temple ritual in the coming Kingdom. As Reeve says, "The great prophets all speak of a sacrificial system in full vogue in the Messianic Age." [J. J. Reeve, "Sacrifice," I.S.B.E., op cit., Vol. IV, p. 2651.]."—McClain, *The Greatness Of The Kingdom*, 251.
- 88 Jerry M. Hullinger, "*The Problem of Animal sacrifices in Ezekiel 40-48*," in *Bibliotheca Sacra*, vol. 152 no. 607 (Dallas, TX: Dallas Theological Seminary, July-Sep 1995), 279.
- 89 McClain, *The Greatness Of The Kingdom*, 250.
- 90 John L. Mitchell, "*The Problem of Millennial Sacrifices, Part 2*," in *Bibliotheca Sacra*, vol. 110 no. 440 (Dallas, TX: Dallas Theological Seminary, Oct-Dec 1953), 360.

- 91 Hullinger, *“The Problem of Animal sacrifices in Ezekiel 40-48,”* 280.
- 92 Hullinger, *“The Problem of Animal sacrifices in Ezekiel 40-48,”* 285.
- 93 Hullinger, *“The Problem of Animal sacrifices in Ezekiel 40-48,”* 281.
- 94 Hullinger, *“The Problem of Animal sacrifices in Ezekiel 40-48,”* 288.
- 95 Indeed, this is precisely the situation of the Roman Catholic who may have a mortal sin laid to his account which has the potential to send him to hell in the next moment if he should die before confession and absolution.
- 96 The population who entered the kingdom in their natural unresurrected bodies and who will eventually die.
- 97 J. Dwight Pentecost, *Things to Come: A Study in Biblical Eschatology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1958), 512-531.
- 98 John F. Walvoord, *The Millennial Kingdom* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1959), 305-315.
- 99 A. R. Fausset, *“The Revelation of St. John the Divine,”* in Robert Jamieson, A. R. Fausset, and David Brown, *A Commentary, Critical and Explanatory, on the Old and New Testaments* (Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc., 1997, 1877), Rev. 3:12.

4.17 - Ten Tribes Lost?

Sooner or later, one is bound to encounter the claim that certain of the tribes of Israel have been lost to history forever. The meaning of *lost* varies with the different claims. Some claim that the “lost tribes” completely died away without descendants. More often, the tribes are said to have been lost through assimilation with other non-Jewish people groups, having remained separated from the other tribes indefinitely. In other cases, the “lost tribes” are held to be temporarily lost. That is, they migrated to other locations, but *retained their identity* or even *transmogrified* into other people groups which one would not normally associate with the Jews (e.g., Anglo-Saxons, Native American Indians).

The legend of the “lost tribes” maintains that after the civil war of Jeroboam and Rehoboam which separated Israel into a divided kingdom, the *ten tribes*^[5.2.74] of the Northern Kingdom were captured by Assyria and deported from their land and either dwindled away or migrated elsewhere and remained separate from the other two tribes (Judah and Benjamin) in the Southern Kingdom. The continued promotion of this legend in our own day rests upon the following flawed elements:

1. The idea of a precise “surgical” separation between the tribes of the Northern and Southern Kingdoms.¹
2. The tribes of the Northern Kingdom, having been taken by Assyria, never intermixed or returned and are no longer a part of the Jewish nation today.
3. A desire to substitute some other group in the line of *OT*^[5.2.51] promises made to Israel.²
4. Legends and speculation.
5. The use of scriptural passages out-of-context.³
6. An unwillingness to examine clear biblical evidence to the contrary.

As we shall see, the biblical record makes plain that none of the tribes were “lost” in the sense maintained by this legend. Instead, those tribes which are held to have been “lost” or located exclusively outside of Israel are seen to be in Israel in *NT*^[5.2.48] times.

4.17.1 - Claimed As Lost

Claims that the *ten tribes*^[5.2.74] have been “lost” are widespread and less surprising when they come from those who do not know the Bible:

As any careful student of Middle Eastern history knows, **the “ten” tribes (scholars now doubt that there ever were exactly ten Northern tribes) are now extinct, and will never return.**⁴ [emphasis added]

Following the conquest of the northern kingdom by the Assyrians in 721 BC, **the 10 tribes were gradually assimilated by other peoples and thus disappeared from history.** Nevertheless, a belief persisted that one day the Ten Lost Tribes would be found. . . . The descendants of the tribes of Judah and Benjamin have survived as Jews because they were allowed to return to their homeland after the Babylonian Exile of 586 BC. [emphasis added]⁵

What is more surprising, in light of both *OT*^[5.2.51] and *NT*^[5.2.48] passages concerning the tribes, is to see this same myth promulgated by those who should know better:

[Regarding Revelation 7:4], Walvoord accepts this passage as proving that the twelve tribes are still in existence. This interpretation seriously complicates the book of Revelation by bringing in racial distinctions which no longer exist in the NT purview. It disregards the **historical fact that ten of the twelve tribes disappeared in Assyria** and the remaining two list their separate identity when Jerusalem fell in A.D. 70. . . . The number is obviously symbolic. [emphasis added]⁶

The northern tribes had been taken into captivity by the Assyrians and have become known as “the lost tribes of Israel.” **The sole surviving identifiable tribe was Judah**, and when this was conquered by Nebuchadnezzar, the captives became known as “Jews”—a word that developed from “Judeans.” The returning exiles were henceforth known as Jews, and the name Judah was loosely used to refer to the

region they occupied. [emphasis added]⁷

4.17.2 - Alternative Theories

There are many different theories and people groups which have been identified with the “lost tribes.”

Various theories, one more farfetched than the other, have been adduced, on the flimsiest of evidence, to identify different peoples with the ten lost tribes. There is hardly a people, from the Japanese to the British, and from the Red Indians to the Afghans, who have not been suggested, and hardly a place, among them Africa, India, China, Persia, Kurdistan, Caucasia, the U.S., and Great Britain.⁸

Peoples who at various times were said to be descendants of the lost tribes include the Nestorians, the Mormons, the Afghans, the Falashas of Ethiopia, the American Indians, and the Japanese. Among the numerous immigrants to the State of Israel since its establishment in 1948 were a few who likewise claimed to be remnants of the Ten Lost Tribes.⁹

Before looking at why the myth fails to measure up to Scripture, it is instructive to look at some of the theories connected with the so-called “lost tribes.” Providing the reader with an awareness of these theories and groups which promote them fits with our stated *policy of inoculation*^[2.2.10].

4.17.2.1 - Beyond the River

One of the legends associated with the tribes is that they were deported to a mysterious land where they continue to live as a separated group maintaining their ethnic identity. This idea is often connected with a passage from the *Apocrypha*^[5.2.5] book of 2 Esdras.¹⁰ In 2 Esdras, the “lost tribes” are mentioned in the interpretation of the seer’s vision given by God:

“And whereas thou sawest that he [the Son of God] gathered another peaceable multitude unto him; Those are the ten tribes, which were carried away prisoners out of their own land in the time of Osea the king, whom Salmanasar the king of Assyria led away captive, and he carried them over the waters, and so came they into another land. But they took this counsel among themselves, that they would leave the multitude of the heathen, and go forth into a further country, where never mankind dwelt, That they might there keep their statutes, which they never kept in their own land. And they entered into Euphrates by the narrow places of the river. For the most High then shewed signs for them, and held still the flood, till they were passed over. For through that country there was a great way to go, namely, of a year and a half: and the same region is called Arsareth.” (2 Esdras 13:39-45).¹¹

The mysterious land where they are thought to dwell is said to be beyond the “River Sambatyon:”

Their inability to rejoin their brethren was attributed to the fact that whereas the tribes of Judah and Benjamin (the Kingdom of Judah) were “scattered throughout the world,” the ten tribes were exiled beyond the mysterious river Sambatyon (Gen. R. 73:6), with its rolling waters or sand and rocks, which during the six days of the week prevented them from crossing it, and though it rested on the Sabbath, the laws of the Sabbath rendered the crossing equally impossible. According to the Jerusalem Talmud, however (Sanh. 10:6, 29c), the exiles were divided into three. Only one-third went beyond the Sambatyon, a second to “Daphne of Antioch,” and over the third “there descended a cloud which covered them”; but all three would eventually return.¹²

Also spelled Sanbation, or Sambatyon, legendary “Sabbath River” beyond which the Ten Lost Tribes of Israel were exiled in 721 BC by Shalmaneser V, king of Assyria. Legends describe it as a roaring torrent (often not of water but of stones), the turbulence of which ceases only on the Sabbath, when Jews are not allowed to travel. So firm was belief in the existence of the river that the ancient Jewish historian Flavius Josephus located it in Syria and Pliny asserted it was in Judaea, while the Spanish-Jewish scholar Nahmanides identified it with the River Habor (Al-Khabur River) of the Bible (2 Kings 17:6). Rabbi Akiba ben Joseph also saw fit to mention it, as did the 17th-century Jewish scholar Manasseh ben Israel, who carefully studied Eldad ha-Dani’s 9th-century account of his reputed discovery of the “sons of Moses” beyond the river.¹³

The fanciful legends which surround the lost tribes are typical of apocryphal writings:

The lost tribes live in a place (to the East; 4 Ezra 13, 2 Bar 77, Ant 11.5) which is not cold but pleasant (*Ethiopic Acts of St. Matthew*), and where a son does not die before his father (*Ethiopic Acts of St. Matthew*, Commodian), where the body suffers neither pain nor sores and dies after a long life and in a state of rest (Commodian). The people of the lost tribes fulfill the Law (4 Ezra 13: 42, Commodian), are hidden beyond a river (Commodian; it is called Sambatyon in some Jewish works, e.g. Tg. Ps.-J. on Ex.

34:10), and shall return to the Land of Israel in order “to rescue their captured mother [=Jerusalem]” (Hic tamen festinat matrem defendere captam. Commodian). They desire neither gold nor silver, neither eat flesh (Commodian, *Ethiopic Acts of St. Matthew*) nor drink wine; they are nourished by honey and dew, and drink water flowing from paradise (*Ethiopic Acts of St. Matthew*). A man has one wife, and each is free from sexual lust; they offer their first born to God (*Ethiopic Acts of St. Matthew*). They do not lie (Commodian, *Ethiopic Acts of St. Matthew*; cf. *Hist. Rech.*); and youths do not speak in the presence of adults (*Ethiopic Acts of St. Matthew*).¹⁴

4.17.2.2 - Samaritans

Another view is that the tribes, after being carried into Assyria, intermarried with other peoples and became the Samaritans, considered as “half-Jews” by many.

Some say the Samaritans were the result of intermarriage of the Jews that were left in the land of Israel with the people that were deported by the King of Assyria from Babylon, Cuthah, Avva, Hamath and Sepharvaim. Nehemiah separates the pure Jews from those that intermarried (Nehemiah 13:28-29). Josephus says that the “Samaritans” is their Greek name while “Cutheans” is their Hebrew name. They were brought out of the country of Cuthah which is in Persia. They continued to worship false gods until God sent a plague resulting in their worship of the God of Israel and His laws (Antiquities of the Jews Book IX, 14:3). According to Josephus during the Greek period Manasseh, the brother of Jaddua the high priest had married Nicaso, a foreign woman. The priests demanded that Manasseh divorce his wife or not approach the altar. Sanballat II (different from the one mentioned in Nehemiah) his father-in-law told Manasseh that he would build him a temple on Mount Gerizim just like the one at Jerusalem if he would not divorce his wife. Alexander the Great gave Sanballat, a general in his army, permission to build the temple (Antiquities of the Jews Book XI, 8:2-4). Some Two hundred years later Hircanus destroyed the temple on Mount Gerizim (Antiquities of the Jews Book XIII, 9:1).¹⁵

It is not entirely clear whether intermarriage with Jews was involved, or whether the Samaritans were actually Assyrians who adopted elements of the Jewish religion after being relocated to Syria:

At the final captivity of Israel by Shalmaneser, we may conclude that the cities of Samaria were not merely partially but wholly depopulated of their inhabitants in B.C. 721, and that they remained in this desolated state until, in the words of 2 Kings 17:24, “the king of Assyria brought men from Babylon, and from Cuthah, and from Ava (Ivah, 2 Kings 18:34), and from Hamath, and from Sepharvaim, and placed them in the cities of Samaria instead of the children of Israel: and they possessed Samaria, and dwelt in the cities thereof.” Thus the new Samaritans were Assyrians by birth or subjugation. These strangers, whom we will now assume to have been placed in “the cities of Samaria” by Esar-haddon, were of course idolaters, and worshipped a strange medley of divinities. God’s displeasure was kindled, and they were annoyed by beasts of prey, which had probably increased to a great extent before their entrance upon the land. On their explaining their miserable condition to the king of Assyria, he dispatched one of the captive priests to teach them “how they should fear the Lord.” The priest came accordingly, and henceforth, in the language of the sacred historian they “feared the Lord, and served their graven images, both their children and their children’s children: as did their fathers, so do they unto this day.” 2 Kings 17:41. A gap occurs in their history until Judah has returned from captivity. They then desire to be allowed to participate in the rebuilding of the temple at Jerusalem; but on being refused, the Samaritans throw off the mask, and become open enemies, frustrate the operations of the Jews through the reigns of two Persian kings, and are only effectually silenced in the reign of Darius Hystaspes, B.C. 519.¹⁶

The Samaritans had their own version of the Books of Moses, the *Samaritan Pentateuch*, which included modifications from the Jewish *Torah* placing the center of worship on Mount Gerizim rather than Jerusalem (cf. Deu. 11:29; 27:12; Jos. 8:33; John 4:20).¹⁷ There, in their own temple, their priesthood practiced a modified form of OT^[5.2.51] law.

Their relationship to the Jews through belief and practice of common elements of the OT law, as well as their hatred by the Jewish, is recognized by the NT^[5.2.48] (Luke 10:33; John 4:9; 8:48). They were the second people group to receive the Holy Spirit, after the Jews, but prior to the Gentiles (Acts 1:8; 8:14-17 cf. Acts 10:15, 44-45).

Although Samaritans have claimed descent from Israel,¹⁸ it seems unlikely that the Samaritans can be considered descendants of the “lost tribes”:

- Although there was undoubtedly some intermarriage with Jews, the Samaritan’s themselves

indicated they were not of Israel, but from elsewhere: “Now when the adversaries of Judah and Benjamin heard that the descendants of the captivity were building the temple of the LORD God of Israel, they came to Zerubbabel and the heads of the fathers’ houses, and said to them, ‘Let us build with you, for we seek your God as you do; and we have sacrificed to Him since the days of Esarhaddon king of Assyria, **who brought us here**’ ” [emphasis added] (Ezra 4:1-2). “The Samaritans of subsequent history and of the NT are the descendants of the colonists brought in by the king of Assyria. . . . The Samaritans were a mixed race with a pagan core (Ezra 4:2). Their blood would become more and more Hebraized by the addition of renegade Jews and by the intermarriage with surrounding Israelites, who would find among them the familiar worship of former times.”¹⁹

- The Samaritan woman who Jesus spoke with at the well differentiated between “our fathers” and “you Jews” (John 4:20).
- Jesus, in his divine knowledge, specifically excluded them from “the lost sheep of the house of Israel” (Mtt. 10:5-6).

4.17.2.3 - Anglo-Israelism

Perhaps the most bizarre manifestation of *Replacement Theology*^[5.2.63] is found in what has come to be known as *Anglo-* or *British-Israelism*. This strange view holds that the peoples of Great Britain and the United States (those who are white and speak English) are the descendants of the “lost tribes:”

Very briefly the Anglo-Israel position is that the Anglo-Saxon peoples, especially Great Britain and the United States, are descended from the tribes of Israel of the Northern Kingdom, and therefore inherit the promises and responsibilities addressed in the Scriptures to Israel. “The National Message,” the official journal of the British-Israel World Federation, introduces its articles with these words: “*The following should be read in the light of Israel Truth-namely, that the Anglo-Saxon nations are the continuation of the Israel nation; the inheritors of her Charters; the possessors of her guarantees and immunities from destruction; the executors of her commissions.*” . . . *Anglo-Israelism*^[5.2.2] teaches that the *ten tribes*^[5.2.74] in Assyria migrated to South Russia about the year 650 B.C. . . . There in South Russia they became a gentile people by “associating with them (the gentiles) and absorbing them into their ranks” . . . As a matter of fact, we are told, they became the Scythians of history. These Scythians migrated by slow stages and during a period of about 1000 years to the British Isles.²⁰

The principal belief of *Anglo/British Israelism*^[5.2.11] is that the British (and by extension Americans, Canadians, Australians, and others) are the spiritual and literal descendants of the ancient Israelites. Anglo-Israelism has a long history. The Puritan colonists in America also viewed themselves as spiritual descendants of the ancient Israelites. However, it was not until 1840 that John Wilson published “Lectures on our Israelitish Origin” and first proclaimed that the British people were the actual genetic descendants of God’s chosen people. . . . British Israel writers developed the belief that these “10 tribes” retained their identity, became lost to history, and wandered far from the Middle East. They stated that the stone used in the coronation of King David was transported to the British Isles where it exists today as the Stone of Scone. The latter stone is still used for the coronation of British queens and kings. The writers promoted the belief that divine authority was transferred from ancient Israel to England along with the stone. In reality, the origin of the Stone of Scone has been traced to rock outcroppings in Scotland using standard geological methods of analysis.²¹

The idea that Anglos are the “lost tribes” includes the transference of God’s election of Israel²² to these non-Jewish nations such that the royalty of Britain currently occupy the very “throne of David” (but see Mtt. 25:31; Rev. 3:21)!

Great Britain and the USA are believed to be the Anglo-Saxon ancestors of the tribes Ephraim and Manasseh (predominantly), so it may be inferred by British-Israelism that white, English speaking people are really the chosen people of God. . . . Because of this dispersal, it is believed that the Queen of England now sits on the throne of David. . . . “The kingly line of Judah (Genesis 49:10) reached Britain when a daughter of Zedekiah, the last king of Judah before the fall of Jerusalem, arrived with Jeremiah in 569 B.C. This princess, Tea-Tephi, married the king of Ireland, who also happened to be a descendant of Judah through Zarah, Judah’s younger son (Genesis 38:30), and so both branches of the kingly line were established as the Royal House of Ireland. This kingdom was transferred to Scotland and then to England with James I (James VI of Scotland) in 1603. Queen Elizabeth II of Great Britain, therefore is a direct descendant of King David and recipient of his throne.” (D. Olinger, *British Israelism*, Bob Jones

University Press) “Jeremiah also brought with him in 569 B.C. the liafail, or Jacob’s pillow-stone (Genesis 28:18) which had been used as the coronation stone of the kings of Judah (II Kings 11:14 - ‘pillar’). This stone now rests in the royal coronation chair of Great Britain in Westminster Abbey. All kings and queens of Great Britain are crowned while sitting on this chair.” (D. Olinger)²³

This idea, as fanciful as it sounds, garnered considerable support among influential quarters in England in the early 1900s:

The idea that Britain was Israel grew with the Empire. The Metropolitan Anglo-Israel Association was founded in 1878 with the Bishop of Rangoon on the council. By the 1930s it could attract thousands to its annual meetings, many of them aristocrats. Its roll contained two duchesses, a marchioness, two earls, three countesses, barons, thirteen baronesses, nine baronets and a wide selection of knights, admirals and generals. All were convinced that the Briton was a lost tribe, ordained to rule the world. Dr Price, William Blake and the British Israelites were in a tradition of claims that biblical figures had visited the British Isles. Jose Arimathea planted the sacred thorn at Glastonbury; the Stone of which sits under the throne upon which English monarchs are crowned is the pillow upon which Joseph slept at Beth-El. It was taken to be carried by the exiled Children of Israel to Antrim, passed to Scotland, and thence to London in 1291 by Edward the First. In the 1950s it had a brief and ignoble trip back to Scotland when it was stolen by a group of Scottish Nationalists as a political stunt. The return of the Jews to England was itself tied to the story Lost Tribes.²⁴

The idea of British-Israelism is perhaps best known in the United States from its promotion by the Worldwide Church of God, a sect of the Seventh Day Adventists founded by Herbert W. Armstrong:

The founder of the Worldwide Church of God, Herbert W. Armstrong, was ordained in 1931 by the Oregon Conference of the Church of God (Seventh-Day). In 1934 Armstrong, while still associated with the Church of God, began a radio ministry called the Radio Church of God and began publishing a magazine entitled *The Plain Truth*. A devoted student of the Bible, Armstrong had by this time come to believe in British Israelism. This doctrine, which identifies the ten lost tribes of Israel with Anglo-Saxons, became part of his church’s larger complex of beliefs that includes an emphasis on Old Testament law and the observance of Jewish festivals. By 1937 Armstrong had withdrawn from the Church of God (Seventh-Day), which had distanced itself from British Israelism and the observance of Jewish feasts. His own following grew, and in 1947 he moved his headquarters to Pasadena, California, where he founded Ambassador College. There the movement continued to prosper, with the radio broadcast (renamed “*The World Tomorrow*” during the 1960s and hosted by Armstrong’s son, Garner Ted Armstrong), followed by a television ministry, reaching an ever-widening audience. By 1974 distribution of *The Plain Truth* had reached 2 million.²⁵

This unusual idea that English-speaking whites are genetic descendants of the “lost tribes” is completely lacking in objective historical support:

A letter was sent by the writer to several of our leading institutions of higher education, addressed to the department of History. The letter contained this question: “Do you know of any historical evidence to support the theory that the Anglo-Saxon people are descended from the ten tribes of Israel?” Here are the answers received:

“So far as I am aware no reputable historian accepts the theories of the people known as the Anglo-Israelites. There is a considerable body of literature on this subject, largely originating in England, but none of it, I believe, contains much more than speculation on probabilities plus Biblical interpretations of questionable soundness. Professional historians are agreed that the people who are now called Anglo-Saxon are a mixture of Teutonic, Norman French, and some Celtic blood. Any good, modern text-book, such as W. E. Lunt’s *History of England* (Harpers), will give you this information. If the Anglo-Saxons are descended from the ten tribes, the Germans, Scandinavians, French, Scotch, and Irish must be also” (*from the University of Chicago*).

“As you doubtless know, there is a small group of English people who believe that they and all their fellow countrymen are descended from the ‘Ten Lost Tribes,’ but their assertion is based almost entirely upon their own peculiar interpretation of certain passages in the Bible, and has no smallest scrap of historical evidence to support it” (*from Princeton University*).

“I beg to state briefly that the last substantial publication on the Lost Ten Tribes is that of Professor Allen H. Godbey, entitled, *The Lost Tribes, a Myth*, 1930. There you will find an extensive bibliography on the subject. Incidentally the prevalent scholarly opinion shares Professor Godbey’s view that the ten tribes have not left behind them sufficient historical records which allow us to trace them down to the more recent periods” (*from Columbia University*).

“I am aware that this theory has been mooted by a certain class of people for sometime, and that an

organization evidently well supplied with funds occasionally inserts full page propaganda articles in London newspapers in support of it. So far as I know, no reputable historian has ever taken it seriously” (from *Michigan State College*).

“To the best of my knowledge no reputable historian has ever even entertained the suggestion that there is any connection between the ten tribes of Israel and the Anglo-Saxons. The ten tribes, to the historian, were never ‘lost,’ except in the sense that they were absorbed into neighboring peoples of the Near East. There is a wide gap in space and time between the Israelites and the earliest known Anglo-Saxons, and there are no existing records that even suggest that this gap, can be filled” (from *Wayne University, Detroit, Michigan*).

It may be objected that these professors have given prejudiced answers, but this is hardly possible when the question is strictly an historical one. However, we do not rest our case upon authorities, and so will proceed to show from an actual examination of both sacred and secular history, that the opinion of the Anglo-Israel theory expressed by these students of history is correct.²⁶

4.17.2.4 - To The Americas

Another, perhaps equally-strange idea, promoted by Mormons and some Native American Indians, holds that the lost tribes crossed the Atlantic to the Americas.

Special interest is attached to the fantastic traveler’s tale told by Aaron (Antonio) Levi de Montezinos who, on his return to Amsterdam from South America in 1644, told a remarkable story of having found Indians beyond the mountain passes of the Cordilleras who greeted him by reciting the Shema [Deu. 6:4]. Among those to whom Montezinos gave his affidavit was Manasseh Ben Israel, then rabbi of Amsterdam, who fully accepted the story, and to it devoted his *Hope of Israel* (1650, 1652) which he dedicated to the English Parliament. In section 37 he sums up his findings in the following words: “1. That the West Indies were anciently inhabited by a part of the *ten Tribes*^[5.2.74], which passed thither out of Tartary, by the Straight of Anian. 2. That the Tribes are not in any one place, but in many; because the Prophets have fore-told their return shall be into their Country, out of divers places; Isaiah especially saith it shall be out of eight. 3. That they did not return to the Second *Temple*^[5.2.73]. 4. That at this day they keep the Jewish Religion. 5. That the prophecies concerning their return to their Country, are of necessity to be fulfilled. 6. That from all coasts of the World they shall meet in those two places, sc. Assyria and Egypt; God preparing an easier, pleasant way, and abounding with all things, as Isaiah saith, ch. 49, and from thence they shall flee to Jerusalem, as birds to their nests. 7. That their Kingdom shall be no more divided; but the twelve Tribes shall be joined together under one Prince, that is under Messiah, the Son of David; and that they shall never be driven out of their Land.” The Latin work was translated into English the same year it was published, and ran through three editions in as many years, and Manasseh Ben Israel used this “evidence” of the dispersal of the Jews throughout the world as an argument to Oliver Cromwell in his appeal to permit the return of the Jews to England, then the only country which had no Jews. As long as this situation existed, the fulfillment of the prophecy that the coming (or the second coming) of the Messiah would take place only when the Jews were scattered in the four quarters of the world (section 35). Both through the translation and the correspondence which the story initiated between Manasseh Ben Israel and theologians in England, it played a significant role in creating the atmosphere which eventually brought about the return of the Jews to England.²⁷

4.17.2.4.1 - Native American Indians?

Although Montezinos claimed to have encountered South American Indians reciting the *Shema* (Deu. 6:4), others speculated whether the North American Indians might be the offspring of the lost tribes:

The tribe of Gad are the Native American Indians found on reservations throughout America. Genesis 49:19 - ‘Gad, a troop shall overcome him, but he shall overcome at the last.’ The troop that overcame Gad was General Armstrong Custer and the 10th U.S. Cavalry. They defeated the Sioux Indians at the Battle of Little Big Horn in 1876. Chief Sitting Bull surrendered during the Battle of Wounded Knee in 1891. [Notice that Reubenites NEVER surrendered]. This is when they began to be pushed onto reservations.²⁸

Missionaries, such as John Eliot, who worked among the Indians of North America sought for evidence of their connection with the Hebrews.²⁹ Numerous ‘artifacts’ have been claimed to support a connection, but none have withstood careful scrutiny. One such example is the *Bat Creek Stone* which, so it is claimed, contains a “Paleo-Hebrew” inscription referring to Judea. Although there are numerous problems with this claim, such artifacts are of particular interest to Mormons who

desperately seek early American artifacts which would corroborate the record of the *Book of Mormon*.³⁰

4.17.2.4.2 - Mormonism

Enter Mormonism, and its belief that the “lost tribes” crossed the Atlantic prior to Columbus, an idea which attempts to shore up the creative historical account of the early Americas as found in *The Book of Mormon*.

Perhaps the most fantastical of all claimants to be Lost Tribes are in the Americas. The Indians’ supposed history as a lost tribe had saved them: in the early days of South American exploration there was debate as to whether they were human at all, or whether they could be killed like beasts. Only the belief in Indians as a remnant of the tribe of Reuben prevented an even more complete destruction. But how could a band of migrants from the Middle East have got there, two thousand years before Columbus? How could anyone believe anything quite so implausible? In fact, the story of the Lost Tribes is very much alive in the United States. Many Americans have pursued the belief to - or even beyond - its logical limits. The idea goes back to the early days of their nation. In 1837 Mordechai Manuel Noah published *The Evidences of the American Indians being Descendants of the Lost Tribes of Israel*. He planned to establish a Jewish State, Ararat, near Buffalo, New York. His state came to nothing, but the vision of America as the destiny of the exiles from Armageddon has gained a power that affects the lives of millions. The story is tied to the visions of Joseph Smith and the history revealed to him by the Angel Moroni. According to the Book of Nephi, after a century of captivity the *ten tribes*^[5.2.74] escaped to the North. They passed through the unknown region of Arsareth and were then lost to mankind. Some of the theories as to where they now live are frankly speculative. They may be on another planet (as is the City of Enoch, which ‘was translated or taken away from the earth ... is now held in reserve, in some part or portion of space ... not yet revealed’). In 1842 Philo Dibble preserved a drawing made by the Prophet Joseph Smith himself showing the earth joined by a narrow neck to another sphere, home of the Tribes. A more plausible idea had it that the earth was hollow, with the tribes within. This theory was popular in the early nineteenth century, when a Captain Symmes had applied, without success, to Congress and to the Government of Russia for funds to find the entrance. Other Mormons believe the Tribes to be scattered among the peoples of the earth, lost only in identity, not in location. Brigham Young himself felt that ‘The sons of Ephraim are wild and uncultivated, unruly, ungovernable. The spirit in them is turbulent and resolute; they are the Anglo-Saxon race.’ Saxon does sound suspiciously like Isaacson and many Mormons believe themselves, because of Brigham Young’s words, to belong to the Tribe of Ephraim. Wherever they are, at the Second Coming, the tribes will return to the New Jerusalem to be built in Jackson County, Missouri. The Mormon Church studies the monuments of the Aztecs and the Maya in the hope of establishing a link with the Hebrew peoples they suppose to have built them. They have a centre for Near Eastern Studies in Jerusalem, where attempts are made to search for a connection of the peoples of the ancient world with today’s Mormons.³¹

In the Mormon doctrine of the return of the Jews to the Promised Land, the “lost tribes” will remain west of the Atlantic:

Gospel Principles, a manual published by the LDS Church for new members, says on page 263, “The Israelites are to be gathered first spiritually and then physically. They are gathered spiritually when they join the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. . . . Thousands of people all over the world are joining the Church each year. These converts are Israelites either by blood or adoption. . . . The physical gathering of Israel means that the Israelites will be ‘gathered home to the lands of their inheritance, and established in all their lands of promise’ (see 2 Nephi 9:2). The tribes of Ephraim and Manasseh will be gathered to the land of America. The tribe of Judah will be returned to the city of Jerusalem and the area surrounding it. The ten lost tribes will receive from the tribe of Ephraim (in America) their promised blessings (see D. & C. 133).” . . . Mormons expect these “lost tribes” to return from the North because Joseph Smith said they would. On January 4, 1833, Smith said God commanded him to write the following: “And now I am prepared to say by the authority of Jesus Christ, that not many years shall pass away before the United States shall present such a scene of bloodshed as has not a parallel in the history of our nation: pestilence, hail, famine, and earthquake will sweep the wicked of this generation from off the face of the land, to open and prepare the way for the return of the lost tribes of Israel from the north country. . . . there are those now living upon the earth whose eyes shall not be closed in death until they see all these things which I have spoken, fulfilled” (*History of the Church by Joseph Smith*, vol. I, pp. 315-316).³²

Restoration of the Lost Tribes—From the scriptural passages already considered, it is plain that, while

many of those belonging to the Ten Tribes were diffused among the nations, a sufficient number to justify the retention of the original name were led away as a body and are now in existence in some place where the Lord has hidden them. To them the resurrected Christ went to minister after His visit to the Nephites, as before stated. Their return constitutes a very important part of the gathering, characteristic of the *dispensation*^[5.2.15] of the fulness of times. (Talmage, James E. A Study of the Articles of Faith. 12th ed., rev. Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1970. pp. 340-341.)³³

4.17.2.4.2.1 - Book of Mormon

Even the *Book of Mormon* contains passages which are said to apply to the “lost tribes” of Israel:

For behold, I shall speak unto the Jews and they shall write it; and I shall also speak unto the Nephites and they shall write it; and I shall also speak unto the **other tribes of the house of Israel, which I have led away**, and they shall write it; and I shall also speak unto all nations of the earth and they shall write it. And it shall come to pass that the Jews shall have the words of the Nephites, and the Nephites shall have the words of the Jews; and the Nephites and the Jews shall have the words of the lost tribes of Israel;³⁴ [emphasis added]

1 Ne. 22:4 many are already lost from knowledge of those at Jerusalem; **2 Ne. 29:12** the Lord will speak to Jews, Nephites, other tribes, and they shall write; **29:13** Jews, Nephites, and lost tribes shall have each others' writings; **3 Ne. 15:15** Father has not commanded Christ to tell Jews about other tribes whom Father led away; **15:20** Father separated other tribes from Jews because of iniquity; **17:4** Christ will show himself to lost tribes; **21:26** gospel to be preached to lost tribes; **28:29** three Nephites shall minister unto all scattered tribes; **Ether 13:11** they who were scattered and gathered from north countries are partakers of fulfilling of covenant.³⁵

As has been well-documented elsewhere, there are serious discrepancies between the record of history in the Americas and the claims of the *Book of Mormon*. The disagreement between the *Book of Mormon* and what Scripture reveals concerning the “lost tribes” is another illustration of discrepancies between Mormon teaching and the Bible. DNA studies also provide evidence against the idea of Native American Indians descending from a lost tribe of Israel.³⁶

4.17.3 - The Biblical Facts

As fascinating (and time-consuming) as the forgoing ideas may be, they all have a *fundamental problem*: they are opposed by the simple facts of history and *inspired*^[5.2.33] Scripture. History and the Bible indicate that although the tribes were separated during the civil war of Israel, the separation was neither complete nor ongoing. Passages in Scripture indicate that, in reaction to idolatry in the north, many from the Northern Kingdom migrated to the Southern Kingdom to join with Judah and Benjamin. Moreover, after the Northern Kingdom was taken by Assyria, the Assyrians themselves were overthrown by Babylon. This makes it likely that when the Southern Kingdom fell to Babylon, refugees from both Kingdoms intermingled in Babylonia. Thus, in the return of Israel following the Babylonian Captivity, all the tribes of Israel were involved. This fact is attested to by numerous passages in the *NT*^[5.2.48] which identify persons from among the supposed ten “lost tribes” who were not lost, but found in the land of Israel.

If you feel that Anglo-Saxons or any other gentile race makes up “the lost tribes,” may I say to you, you are very much lost in the maze of Scripture. You may be lost, but the *ten tribes*^[5.2.74] are not lost. . . .

When anyone tries to say there are the ten *lost* tribes today, they must be on an Easter-egg hunt.³⁷

4.17.3.1 - Northern Kingdom Falls to Assyria

The main thesis of the “lost tribes” myth is that ten of the tribes—the Northern Kingdom—disappeared when Assyria invaded and deported the Israelites from Syria. The myth requires that *all* the *ten tribes*^[5.2.74] were abducted in the fall of the Northern Kingdom. But the facts indicate otherwise. There was a significant mixing of the tribes prior to the fall of the Northern Kingdom and also probably during the Babylonian Captivity. A basic outline of the sequence of events concerning the captivity of the Northern and Southern Kingdoms and the return of Israel to the land will be helpful in our discussion.

Migrations and Captivities

Date	Passage	Event
931 B.C. ³⁸	1K. 11:26-40; 14:21-31;	Civil war results in the divided Kingdom. The Northern Kingdom under Jeroboam, the Southern Kingdom under Rehoboam.
931-910 B.C. ³⁹	2Chr. 11:13-14	The Levites were rejected as priests in favor of pagan worship in the Northern Kingdom. They left their possessions and lands in the north and relocated to Judah and Jerusalem.
811-870 B.C. ⁴⁰	2Chr. 15:8-9	In response to the reforms of King Asah of the Southern Kingdom, “great numbers” from Ephraim, Manasseh, and Simeon relocated to the Southern Kingdom.
734-732 B.C. ⁴¹	2K. 15:29	First invasion of the Northern Kingdom by Assyria under Tiglath-Pileser.
729-686 B.C. ⁴²	1Chr. 4:24-43	“The Simeonites continued to dwell in the Southern Kingdom and were there in the days of Hezekiah, king of Judah. They were part of the Southern Kingdom when the Northern Kingdom was being carried away captive.” ⁴³
722 B.C. ⁴⁴	2K. 17:3-6	Second invasion of the Northern Kingdom by Assyria under Shalmaneser and Sargon in 721 B.C. Samaria fell at this time.
701 B.C.	Isa. 37	Assyrian incursion into Judah (Southern Kingdom) under Sennacherib in 701 B.C. Jerusalem was delivered, but Assyrian records indicate forty-six cities and 200,150 captives were taken. ⁴⁵
605 B.C. ⁴⁶	Dan. 1:1	Fall of Jerusalem to Babylon about 605 B.C. Some from Judah were carried to Babylon at that time. <i>Note that Babylon had assimilated Assyria so those carried away from the Northern Kingdom were now joined by those from the Southern Kingdom under the same government.</i>
537 B.C. ⁴⁷	Ezra 2:28; Ne. 12:44-47	Return under Zerubbabel mentions Judah, Levi, and “all Israel.” This included: Arah from the tribe of Asher (Ezra 2:5 cf. 1Chr. 7:39), Bani from the tribe of Gad (Ezra. 2:10 cf. Ne. 7:15); Bethlehem from the tribe of Zebulun (Ezra. 2:26 cf. Jos. 19:15-16), Ramah from the tribe of Naphtali (Ezra 2:26 cf. Jos. 19:32-39), men from Bethel and Ai, towns of the Northern Kingdom (Ezra. 2:28), and Nebo from the tribe of Reuben (Ezra 2:29 cf. 1Chr. 5:1-8).
458 B.C. ⁴⁸	1Chr. 9:1-3	Return under Ezra included Judah, Benjamin, Levi, and other tribes which had mixed with Judah prior to the captivity. All Israel was represented in the return, including Ephraim and Manasseh.

After the Northern Kingdom fell to Assyria, eventually the Southern Kingdom also fell to Babylon. By then, Assyria had also fallen to Babylonia and it is likely that among the captives in Babylon were to be found the offspring of some who had originally been taken in the fall of the Northern Kingdom to Assyria.

It is contended by Anglo-Israelites that these migrations were only temporary; that the Israelites came only to worship and later returned to the north. However, the Scriptures present positive evidence that the immigrants did not return. Immediately after the division of the Kingdom there was the threat of war between the two factions, and Rehoboam gathered an army of 180,000 men (1K. 12:21). Rehoboam must have mustered every available fighting man, as he anticipated war with a kingdom far outnumbering his in population. Just seventeen years later in the Southern Kingdom under the reign of Abijah another army was gathered, and this time it numbers 400,000. The increase of 220,000 in 17

years should be noted (2Chr. 13:3). Just three years later another army is mobilized under Asa and the size is given as 580,000 (2Chr. 14:8). Within a period of twenty years there has been an increase in the available army of Judah of 400,000 men. The only reasonable explanation of this phenomenal increase in population in the Southern Kingdom is the explanation given in the Word of God. The immigrants from the northern tribes strengthened the Kingdom of Judah.⁴⁹

4.17.3.2 - Divine Promises of Preservation

We should not be surprised that although *we* may not know who the offspring of the various tribes are today (with the possible exception of Levi), *God knows*. In fact, if one of the tribes were to somehow perish, then the Word of God would have effectively been broken. For God has specifically vowed to preserve His elect nation.

4.17.3.2.1 - Sun, Moon, and Messiah

God has promised that so long as the sun and moon continue, so too will the seed of Israel *as a nation*. This does not speak of the spiritual offspring of Abraham (by faith), but of the physical nation (Rom. 11:25).⁵⁰

Thus says the LORD, Who gives the sun for a light by day, the ordinances of the moon and the stars for a light by night, Who disturbs the sea, and its waves roar (The LORD of hosts *is* His name): **“If those ordinances depart from before Me, says the LORD, then the seed of Israel shall also cease from being a nation before Me forever.”** (Jer. 31:35-36) [emphasis added]

Elsewhere, God promised to restore the “preserved ones” by means of the Messiah, Jesus Christ:

And now the LORD says, Who formed Me from the womb *to be* His Servant, **To bring Jacob back to Him, so that Israel is gathered to Him** (For I shall be glorious in the eyes of the LORD, and My God shall be My strength), indeed He says, ‘It is too small a thing that You should be My Servant **To raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved ones of Israel;** I will also give You as a light to the Gentiles, that You should be My salvation to the ends of the earth.’ (Isa. 49:5-6) [emphasis added]

Pay special attention to what has just been said lest we fall into the confusion of *Replacement Theology*^[5.2.63]: He promised to “raise up the tribes of Jacob” and “restore the preserved ones of Israel” which are a *separate group from the Gentiles* to whom the Messiah will also be given. This speaks of *national Israel*, not the spiritual seed of Abraham which includes Gentiles who also come to faith.

4.17.3.2.2 - Valley of the Dry Bones

The future restoration of the *whole house of Israel* is seen in Ezekiel’s vision of the dry bones. God promises the spiritual regeneration of all of Israel (a condition of the New Covenant, Jer. 31:31) and the joining of both Northern and Southern Kingdoms under the future reign of David:

Then He said to me, “Son of man, these bones are the **whole house of Israel**. They indeed say, ‘Our bones are dry, our hope is lost, and we ourselves are cut off!’ As for you, son of man, **take a stick for yourself and write on it: ‘For Judah and for the children of Israel, his companions.’ Then take another stick and write on it, ‘For Joseph, the stick of Ephraim, and for all the house of Israel, his companions.’ Then join them one to another for yourself into one stick**, and they will become one in your hand. And when the children of your people speak to you, saying, ‘Will you not show us what you *mean* by these?’ - say to them, ‘Thus says the Lord GOD: **“Surely I will take the stick of Joseph, which is in the hand of Ephraim, and the tribes of Israel, his companions; and I will join them with it, with the stick of Judah, and make them one stick, and they will be one in My hand.”**’ And the sticks on which you write will be in your hand before their eyes. Then say to them, ‘Thus says the Lord GOD: **“Surely I will take the children of Israel from among the nations, wherever they have gone, and will gather them from every side and bring them into their own land; and I will make them one nation in the land, on the mountains of Israel; and one king shall be king over them all; they shall no longer be two nations, nor shall they ever be divided into two kingdoms again.** They shall not defile themselves anymore with their idols, nor with their detestable things, nor with any of their transgressions; but I will deliver them from all their dwelling places in which they have sinned, and will cleanse them. Then they shall be My people, and I will be their God. David My servant *shall be* king over them, and they shall have one shepherd; they shall also walk in My judgments and observe My statutes, and do them. Then they shall dwell in the land that I have given to Jacob My servant, where your fathers dwelt; and they shall dwell there, they, their children, and their children’s children, forever; and My servant David *shall be* their prince forever. Moreover I will make a covenant of peace with

them, and it shall be an everlasting covenant with them; I will establish them and multiply them, and I will set My sanctuary in their midst forevermore. My *tabernacle*^[5.2.69] also shall be with them; indeed I will be their God, and they shall be My people. The nations also will know that I, the LORD, sanctify Israel, when My sanctuary is in their midst forevermore.” ’ ’ (Eze. 37:11, 16-28) [emphasis added]

In verses 15-28 Ezekiel mentions two sticks. I will not go into any detail here other than to say that they typify the northern (Israel) and southern (Judah) kingdoms which will again become one nation. This means, my friend, that there must not be any “ten lost tribes of Israel” at least, if there are, God knows where they are, and I am confident that it is not Great Britain which will be joined to them in that land!⁵¹

4.17.3.2.3 - The Tribes in the New Testament

This same theme of tribal preservation continues into the NT^[5.2.48] with Gabriel’s message to Mary concerning her virgin birth:

“And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bring forth a Son, and shall call His name JESUS. He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Highest; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David. And **He will reign over the house of Jacob forever**, and of His kingdom there will be no end.” (Luke 1:31-33) [emphasis added]

Nowhere in all of Scripture will you find the Church or Gentile believers in Messiah Jesus called “the house of *Jacob*.” This refers to the Jewish tribes—all of them descendants from the man Israel. These are the same tribes which Jesus will turn away ungodliness from when “all Israel” is saved (Rom. 11:25-16). Also note the significant distinction which Paul makes between “the fullness of the Gentiles” versus “all Israel.” Israel means Israel!! Yes, Gentiles will be saved (the Church), but Paul is speaking here about the *physical seed* of Abraham (Rom. 9:1-5; 10:1; 11:28).

None of this surprises those who have studied the doctrine of the remnant which runs throughout the pages of Scripture like a golden lifeline. God has always had and will always have those who are physical descendants of Israel that also have faith in Him. It is clear from such passages that God will preserve *all twelve tribes*.⁵²

The preservation of the tribes is also attested by their mention throughout the NT and in conjunction with the Millennial Kingdom and eternal state yet to come.

Tribes in the New Testament and the Future

Time Period	Passage	Tribe
NT	Mtt. 1:1-3; Luke 3:23-26; Heb. 7:14	Judah
NT	Luke 1:5	Levi
NT	Luke 2:36	Asher
NT	Rom. 11:1; Php. 3:5	Benjamin
NT	Mtt. 19:28; Luke 22:30; Acts 26:7; Jas. 1:1; Rev. 7:4-8	All twelve tribes.
<i>Millennial Kingdom</i> ^[5.2.39]	Eze. 48:1-29; Mtt. 19:28; Luke 22:30; Acts 1:6-7	All twelve tribes participate in the Millennial Kingdom.
Eternal State	Rev. 21:12	All twelve tribes are memorialized on the gates of the New Jerusalem.

4.17.4 - Where are the Tribes Today?

“The fallacy inherent in all of the theories about the *lost tribes* is simply this: *they were never lost, but continued as part of the main body of the Jewish people.*”⁵³ All twelve tribes of Israel are in the world. Although it may only be possible for us to identify the tribe of Levi, due to their names and genetic testing from known Levites, God knows their identity. The twelve tribes are to be found wherever one

finds Jews today: they are in the land of Israel and also in the *Diaspora*, dispersed around the world.⁵⁴ They are “lost” in the sense that mankind cannot identify them, but they are not lost from the perspective of our omniscient God nor His promises to preserve the nation and seal members from each tribe in the future time of tribulation (Rev. 7:4-8).

The question may arise in the minds of some as to how the tribes will be discovered and identified since they are scattered today. They reckon, of course, without the power of God. Just as the Lord Jesus will be able to sort out all of the bodies that have gone back to the dust of the earth and raise them from the dead, “according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself” (Php. 3:21), so God will know the tribal identities.⁵⁵

When the time is right, God will send His Son to earth (Rev. 19:11) to overthrow the governments of man and establish His Kingdom on earth. Then, He will rule from the throne of David (Isa. 9:6-7; Luke 1:32-33; Mtt. 25:31; Rev. 3:21) over the *whole house* of Israel (Eze. 37:11) and the apostles will co-rule over all *twelve tribes* of Israel (Mtt. 19:28; Luke 22:30).

Notes

- 1 “The entire tribe of Simeon was located within the boundaries of the Southern Kingdom, and continued to reside there after the division of the Kingdom of Solomon. Joshua 19:1 states clearly that the Simeonites had their inheritance within the boundaries or inheritance of Judah. From 1Chr. 4:24-43 we learn that the Simeonites continued to dwell in the Southern Kingdom and were there in the days of Hezekiah, king of Judah.”—Roy L. Aldrich, “*Anglo-Israelism Refuted*,” in *Bibliotheca Sacra*, vol. 93 no. 369 (Dallas, TX: Dallas Theological Seminary, January-March 1936), 53.
- 2 Many groups which promote the “lost tribes” idea are practitioners of *Replacement Theology*^[5.2.63]. “There are those who say that the ten tribes are lost; that is, the tribes have popped up in Great Britain from where they spread to the United States. This is a nice theory which ministers to the pride of many folk who would like to believe that they are members of the lost tribes, but this idea of ten lost tribes is entirely man-made. You will not find it in the Word of God.”—J. Vernon McGee, *Thru The Bible Commentary* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 1997, c1981), 2K. 17:6. These groups are avid supporters of the idea that they are “Israel” and “Jews” so far as the promises are concerned. One can only expect they will be quick to *distance themselves from their Jewish claims* when the next wave of *Anti-Semitism*^{[5.2.64]/[5.2.4]} washes upon their shore!
- 3 “The Scripture speaks of those who handle the Word of God deceitfully. Mr. David Baron in his book on the Anglo-Israel question, gives this advice: ‘When reading Anglo-Israel literature, always verify your reference and study the context and you will find that the Scriptures quoted in them are either misapplications or perversions of the true meaning of the text.’ ”—Aldrich, “*Anglo-Israelism Refuted*,” 45.
- 4 [www.2think.org/hundredsheap/annotated/iinep29.shtml].
- 5 *Britannica CD 99 Multimedia Edition*, s.v. “Ten Lost Tribes of Israel.”
- 6 Robert H. Mounce, *The Book of Revelation* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1977), 168.
- 7 W. S. Lasor, “*Judah, Territory Of*,” in Geoffrey W. Bromiley, ed., *International Standard Bible Encyclopedia* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1979, 1915), 2:1150.
- 8 Louis Isaac Rabinowitz, “*Ten Lost Tribes*,” in *Encyclopedia Judaica - CD-ROM Edition Version 1.0* (Jerusalem: Judaica Multimedia, 1997), s.v. “Ten Lost Tribes.”
- 9 *Britannica CD 99 Multimedia Edition*, s.v. “Ten Lost Tribes of Israel.”
- 10 The apocryphal book of II Esdras describes a dream in chapter 13 in which there is a miraculous parting of the Euphrates River into Armenia where the 10 tribes seemingly remain. However, this evidence must be disregarded as Josephus records in Antiquities XI v2 that the *ten tribes*^[5.2.74] of the captivity were still in Mesopotamia in the first century AD after Esdras was written, and 750 years after British Israelists claim that they had left for the north and the east. [www.geocities.com/Athens/Forum/5951/BI.html].
- 11 *The Apocrypha: King James Version* (Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, 1995), 2 Esdras 13:39.
- 12 Rabinowitz, “*Ten Lost Tribes*,” s.v. “Ten Lost Tribes.”
- 13 *Britannica CD 99 Multimedia Edition*, s.v. “Sambation.”

- 14 James H. Charlesworth, "Lost Tribes, The," in David Noel Freeman, ed., *The Anchor Bible Dictionary* (New York, NY: Doubleday, 1996, c1992), 4:372.
- 15 [www.bibleandscience.com/archaeology/losttribes.htm].
- 16 William Smith, *Smith's Bible Dictionary* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 1997), s.v. "Samaritans."
- 17 Modifications included: "1. Emendations of passages and words of the Hebrew text which contain something objectionable in the eyes of the Samaritans, on account either of historical improbability or apparent want of dignity in the terms applied to the Creator. Thus in the Samaritan Pentateuch no one in the antediluvian times begets his first son after he has lived 150 years; but one hundred years are, where necessary, subtracted before, and added after, the birth of the first son. An exceedingly important and often-discussed emendation of this class is the passage in Ex. 12:40, which in our text reads, 'Now the sojourning of the children of Israel who dwelt in Egypt was four hundred and thirty years.' The Samaritan has 'The sojourning of the children of Israel [and their fathers who dwelt in the land of Canaan and in the land of Egypt] was four hundred and thirty years'; an interpolation of very late date indeed. Again, in Gen. 2:2, 'And God [?] had finished on the seventh day,' is altered into 'the sixth,' lest God's rest on the Sabbath day might seem incomplete. 2. Alteration made in favor of or on behalf of Samaritan theology, *hermeneutics*^[5.2.26] and domestic worship."—Smith, *Smith's Bible Dictionary*, s.v. "Samaritan Pentateuch."
- 18 "The Samaritans claim descendancy from the northern Israelite tribes of Ephraim and Manasseh following the destruction of the northern kingdom of Israel by the Assyrians in 722 B.C. Since Assyrian documents record deporting a relatively small proportion of the Israelites (27,290), it is quite possible that a sizable population remained that could identify themselves as Israelites, the term that the Samaritans prefer for themselves, indicating their status as remnants of the northern kingdom."—R. T. Anderson, "Samaritans," in Geoffrey W. Bromiley, ed., *International Standard Bible Encyclopedia* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1979, 1915), 4:303.
- 19 Merrill K. Unger, R. Harrison, Frederic F Vos, and Cyril J. Barber, *The New Unger's Bible Dictionary* (Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 1988), s.v. "Samaritans."
- 20 Aldrich, "Anglo-Israelism Refuted," 42, 58.
- 21 [www.religioustolerance.org/anglo_is.htm].
- 22 Concerning the election of Israel: Ex. 3:7, 15, 18; 6:6; 19:5-6; Lev. 20:26; Deu. 4:34, 37; 7:6-8; 10:15; 14:2; 26:18-19; 2S. 7:23; 1K. 8:53; 1Chr. 16:13; 17:21; Ps. 105:6; 106:6-7; 135:4; Isa. 41:8; 43:1, 10; 44:1; 45:4; Jer. 10:16; Mtt. 24:22; Rom. 9:4; Rom. 11:5.
- 23 [www.geocities.com/Athens/Forum/5951/BI.html]. British Israelists make the claim that the stone under the coronation chair is the stone that the builders rejected. God strictly forbade the use of hewn stones in altars (Exodus 20:25). This stone was probably not the coronation altar of the Old Testament kings. Secondly, however, Professor A. C. Ramsey of the Geology Department of London University inspected the stone and identified it as red sandstone, probably of Scottish origin. The nearest red sandstone to Bethel, where Jacob found his stone is in Petra, nearly one hundred miles to the south; the stone around Bethel where Jacob slept is white limestone. [www.geocities.com/Athens/Forum/5951/BI.html].
- 24 [www.dhushara.com/book/torah/tribes/itb/tribes.htm].
- 25 Editors, "Worldwide Church of God," in Daniel G. Reid, Robert Dean Linder, Bruce L. Shelly, and Harry S. Stout, eds., *Dictionary of Christianity in America* (Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity, 1997, c1990), s.v. "Worldwide Church of God."
- 26 Aldrich, "Anglo-Israelism Refuted," 51-52.
- 27 Rabinowitz, "Ten Lost Tribes," s.v. "Ten Lost Tribes."
- 28 It is difficult to imagine a more far-fetched interpretation of prophecy than this! [www.usd.edu/anth/cultarch/ltribes.html].
- 29 "John Eliot, known as the 'Apostle to the Indians,' joined others in speculating about the connection between the American tribes and Israel's ten lost tribes."—H M Conn, "Missions, Evangelical Foreign," in Daniel G. Reid, Robert Dean Linder, Bruce L. Shelly, and Harry S. Stout, eds., *Dictionary of Christianity in America* (Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity, 1997, c1990), s.v. "Missions, Evangelical Foreign."
- 30 See [www.econ.ohio-state.edu/jhm/arch/batcrk.html], [www.lds-mormon.com/batcreek.shtml], [www.geocities.com/SoHo/Lofts/2712/Batcreek.html].
- 31 [www.dhushara.com/book/torah/tribes/itb/tribes.htm].

- 32 [www.ankerberg.com/Articles/_PDFArchives/apologetics/AP1W0803.pdf].
- 33 [http://members.aol.com/acadac/talks/twlv.htm].
- 34 Footnote 13b: *Israel, Ten Lost Tribes of* and the lost tribes of Israel shall have the words of the Nephites and the Jews. *Book of Mormon*, 2 Nephi 29:12-13.
- 35 *Book of Mormon*, ISRAEL, TEN LOST TRIBES OF.
- 36 G. Southerton, *Losing a Lost Tribe: Native Americans, DNA, and the Mormon Church* (Salt Lake City, UT: Signature Books, 2004).
- 37 McGee, *Thru The Bible Commentary*, Zec. 7:3, Mark 2:15.
- 38 W. A. Criswell, and Paige Patterson, eds., *The Holy Bible: Baptist Study Edition* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1991), 502.
- 39 Criswell, *The Holy Bible: Baptist Study Edition*, 502.
- 40 Criswell, *The Holy Bible: Baptist Study Edition*, 502.
- 41 Criswell, *The Holy Bible: Baptist Study Edition*, 528.
- 42 Criswell, *The Holy Bible: Baptist Study Edition*, 504.
- 43 Aldrich, “*Anglo-Israelism Refuted*,” 53.
- 44 Criswell, *The Holy Bible: Baptist Study Edition*, 504.
- 45 Aldrich, “*Anglo-Israelism Refuted*,” 56.
- 46 With the final fall of the Southern Kingdom in 586 B.C., Jerusalem and the *Temple*^[5.2.73] were destroyed and many more captives deported to Babylon.
- 47 Criswell, *The Holy Bible: Baptist Study Edition*, 634, 645.
- 48 Criswell, *The Holy Bible: Baptist Study Edition*, 634, 645.
- 49 Aldrich, “*Anglo-Israelism Refuted*,” 55.
- 50 The ordinances of the sun and moon *insure* the continued existence of Israel, as seen in their mention in association with the woman of Revelation 12.
- 51 McGee, *Thru The Bible Commentary*, Eze. 37:22.
- 52 Regarding the believing remnant of national Israel: 1K. 19:18; 2K. 19:4, 30; 21:14; 25:22; Isa. 1:9; 6:13; 7:3; 10:20-22; 28:5; 37:4, 31-32; 46:3; 59:21; 65:8; Jer. 5:10, 18; 23:3; 50:20; Eze. 5:3; 6:8-10; 9:8, 11; 11:13; Joel 2:32; Zec. 11:10; Mic. 2:12; 7:18; Zec. 13:8-9; Rom. 9:6, 9:27; 11:5, 17, 25; Gal. 6:16; 1Pe. 1:1; Rev. 12:17.
- 53 William Varner, *Jacob's Dozen: A Prophetic Look at the Tribes of Israel* (Bellmawr, NJ: Friends of Israel Gospel Ministry, 1987), 95.
- 54 “ ‘I will sift the house of Israel among all nations.’ If you want to know where the so-called ‘lost tribes of Israel’ are, look in your phone book for the Cohens, the Goldbergs, etc. They are scattered throughout the world, but they are not ‘lost’ as far as God is concerned. ‘Yet shall not the least grain fall upon the earth.’ God will not lose one of them.”—McGee, *Thru The Bible Commentary*, Amos 9:9.
- 55 Donald Grey Barnhouse, *Revelation* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1971), 150.

4.18 - Worldly Churches

The letters to the *Seven Churches of Asia*^[4.15] describe a range of conditions which can be seen within different churches to differing degree throughout history. Much of the criticism which Christ levels at the churches is an indictment of the ever-present tendency to compromise with the culture.

The Bible does not hesitate to condemn worldliness for the serious sin that it is. Worldliness is any preoccupation with or interest in the temporal system of life that places anything perishable before that which is eternal. Since believers are not part of the world system (John 15:19), they must not act as though they were. “Do not be conformed to this world,” wrote the apostle Paul, “but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect” (Rom. 12:2).¹

4.18.1 - The Pressure to Compromise

In the case of the historic churches of Asia, pressure to compromise came on at least two fronts: (1) pressure by the state to worship the emperor and, 2) pressure by the trade guilds to participate in pagan activities.

Because of its belief in one God the church found itself engaged in a struggle with the Roman state which permitted no compromise and from which eventually only one of the two parties would emerge victorious. The *Martyrdom of Polycarp*^[5.2.55] sets out quite clearly both the issue at stake—Lord Christ versus Lord Caesar—and the state’s (as well as the general population’s) view of Christians as disloyal atheists who threatened the well-being of the empire.²

The Christian was faced with a cruel dilemma. His safety was assured only by preparedness, in time of need, to identify Himself either with pagan society, by sacrifice to the emperor and the expected participation in the religious aspects of guilds and social life. . . or with Judaism on whatever terms would gain him acceptance in the synagogue, that is, probably, at least an implicit denial of his Lord. The first inducement was naturally strongest in those places where the pressures of authority and pagan society were most direct (Pergamum and Thyatira, and also Ephesus, where it was steadfastly rejected): the ‘synagogues of Satan’ brought the opposite threat against those who scorned the pagan compromise (Smyrna and Philadelphia, and perhaps the commended minority in Sardis). The situation also introduced a new occasion of disunion between Jewish and Gentile Christians, on whom it impinged differently.³

4.18.2 - Christian Liberty or Licentiousness?

When faced with such pressures, it is often easy to rationalize participation in pagan activities and reinterpret them as being compatible with the grace of God and the maturity and freedom of the believer. Christian liberty can stumble weaker brothers and easily cross the line where we find ourselves participating in events which are neither helpful or edifying and even border on licentiousness (Rom. 6:1-2; Jude 1:4).

But beware lest somehow this liberty of yours become a stumbling block to those who are weak. For if anyone sees you who have knowledge eating in an idol’s temple, will not the conscience of him who is weak be emboldened to eat those things offered to idols? And because of your knowledge shall the weak brother perish, for whom Christ died? But when you thus sin against the brethren, and wound their weak conscience, you sin against Christ. Therefore, if food makes my brother stumble, I will never again eat meat, lest I make my brother stumble. (1Cor. 8:9-13)

What am I saying then? That an idol is anything, or what is offered to idols is anything? Rather, that the things which the Gentiles sacrifice they sacrifice to demons and not to God, and I do not want you to have fellowship with demons. You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons; you cannot partake of the Lord’s table and of the table of demons. Or do we provoke the Lord to jealousy? Are we stronger than He? All things are lawful for me, but not all things are helpful; all things are lawful for me, but not all things edify. (1Cor. 10:19-23)

4.18.3 - The Results of Compromise

The first result of compromising with the culture is the one which offers the greatest temptation: *peace*

is achieved between the believer and the world. The church at Sardis and the church at Laodicea had this in common: no mention is made of any burden being born or conflict with foes. These churches appear to be at peace with the culture. The church at Sardis had the appearance of opposing the culture, but a tacit understanding had evidently been reached between the church and the culture (Rev. 3:1-2).

Concerning the Laodicean church, Trench observes:

Of the absence of heathen adversaries there has been occasion to speak already; but more noticeable still is the fact that there neither appear here nor there *Nicolaitans*^[5.2.47], as at Ephesus, or Balaamites, as at Pergamum, or Jezebelites, as at Thyatira, or those who say they are Jews and are not, as at Smyrna and Philadelphia; seeking to seduce Christ's servants, and constraining them earnestly to contend for the truth.⁴

The world could endure the churches at Sardis and Laodicea because they were not only *in* the world, but *of* the world. Consistent peace with the culture is a clear indication that the believer is not separated to God, but is considered one of the world's own: "If you were of the world, the world would love its own. Yet because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you" (John 15:19).

This road to peaceful coexistence with the culture is typically paved with a series of incremental compromises.

The Jerusalem conference had in its decree brought into juxtaposition the eating of εἰδωλόθυτα [*eidōlothyta*] and indulgence in sexual impurity (Acts 15:20, 27), and John had not lived in a Greek city without becoming aware that these two things were in fact closely bound up together. . . . From participation in a pagan guild-feast to licentiousness was but a step.⁵

"To effect a reasonable compromise with the established usages of Graeco-Roman society"; they taught that Christians ought to remain members of the pagan clubs, and that they might do so without disloyalty to their faith. Such a course involved nothing worse than the abandonment of an obsolete decree. The Jerusalem decree had been issued at the first beginning of Gentile Christianity; it had been circulated by St Paul in Pamphylia and Lycaonia (Acts 16:4), and doubtless had reached Ephesus. But St. Paul himself had permitted at Corinth some modification of the ban against εἰδωλόθυτα [*eidōlothyta*], recognizing the liberty of Christians to partake without question of meat which was sold in the markets or set before them at a friend's table, which he insisted that charity to weaker brethren should preclude them from eating an εἰδωλόθυτον [*eidōlothyton*] which had been declared to be such or from taking part in a banquet held in a pagan temple (1Cor. 8:10; 10:25 ff.).⁶

As the church becomes comfortable with the culture, its witness is compromised and it begins to forfeit the favor of God.

By enticing God's people into an idolatrous practice, Balak got them out of God's favor, compromised their testimony, and caused internal chaos and grief—this is what compromise with the world does to the Church. II Corinthians 6:17 makes this same point of separation from the world by repeating Isa. 52:11. Clearly, God requires Christians to be different from the world.⁷

But if anyone says to you, "This was offered to idols," do not eat it for the sake of the one who told you, and for conscience' sake; for "the earth *is* the LORD'S, and all its fullness." "Conscience," I say, not your own, but that of the other. For why is my liberty judged by another *man's* conscience? (1Cor. 10:28-29)

Compromise has always been a chief tool of Satan.

4.18.4 - Friendship with the World

If the path of accommodation and compromise continues unabated, eventually the church reaches a point of *friendship with the world*. This is an extremely dangerous place for the believer. Like the proverbial frog in the boiling pot, he has lost the ability to sense the heat slowly rising and is likely to slowly cook until almost all distinction from the culture is lost.

This was precisely God's point when He dealt with Israel in the Old Testament. God went to great lengths to separate Israel from the surrounding nations because He knew all too well the eventual destination of the path of incremental compromise and accommodation:

Take heed to yourself, lest you make a covenant with the inhabitants of the land where you are going,

lest it be a snare in your midst. But you shall destroy their altars, break their *sacred* pillars, and cut down their *wooden* images (for you shall worship no other god, for the LORD, whose name *is* Jealous, *is* a jealous God), lest you make a covenant with the inhabitants of the land, and they play the harlot with their gods and make sacrifice to their gods, and *one of them* invites you and you eat of his sacrifice, and you take of his daughters for your sons, and his daughters play the harlot with their gods and make your sons play the harlot with their gods. (Ex. 34:12-16)

How often do we read similar passages and wonder at the seeming harshness of God's instructions to Israel? Yet the seriousness of God's commands to Israel are merely a reflection of the waywardness of man. In many instances, God's laws are not motivated as much by rectifying the immediate situation as they are by His perfect foreknowledge of the consequences which will eventually ensue once men begin down such a path.

Christ's *NT*^{5,2,48]} condemnation of the worldliness of the Thyatiran and Laodicean churches stands in stark contrast to the modern "seeker-friendly" strategy of church growth: "Today's user-friendly, seeker-oriented, market-driven church doesn't preach much against worldliness. To do so might make unbelievers (not to mention many believers) uncomfortable, and is therefore avoided as poor marketing strategy."⁸

In John's day and our own, we need to be constantly reminded of the words of Paul, John, and James:

Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers. For what fellowship has righteousness with lawlessness? And what communion has light with darkness? And what accord has Christ with Belial? Or what part has a believer with an unbeliever? And what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For you are the temple of the living God. As God has said: "I will dwell in them and walk among [them]. I will be their God, and they shall be My people." Therefore "Come out from among them and be separate, says the Lord. Do not touch what is unclean, and I will receive you." (2Cor. 6:14-17)

Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that *is* in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—is not of the Father but is of the world. And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever. (1Jo 2:15-17)

Adulterers and adulteresses! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Whoever therefore wants to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God. (Jas. 4:4)

Notes

- ¹ John MacArthur, *Revelation 1-11 : The MacArthur New Testament Commentary* (Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 1999), 82.
- ² J. B. Lightfoot, and J. R. Harmer, *The Apostolic Fathers*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1989), 131.
- ³ Colin J. Hemer, *The Letters to the Seven Churches of Asia in Their Local Setting* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1989), 10.
- ⁴ Richard Chenevix Trench, *Commentary on the Epistles to the Seven Churches in Asia* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 1861), 206-207.
- ⁵ Henry Barclay Swete, *The Apocalypse of St. John* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 1998, 1906), lxxii.
- ⁶ Swete, *The Apocalypse of St. John*, lxxi.
- ⁷ Monty S. Mills, *Revelations: An Exegetical Study of the Revelation to John* (Dallas, TX: 3E Ministries, 1987), Rev. 2:18.
- ⁸ MacArthur, *Revelation 1-11 : The MacArthur New Testament Commentary*, 81.

4.19 - Zechariah's Horses

4.19.1 - Zechariah and the Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse

There are similarities between the horsemen associated with the first four seals which John sees (Rev. 6:1-8) and two visions given Zechariah which also concern horses. Zechariah's first vision concerns riders astride colored horses (Zec. 1:7-11). His eighth vision concerns chariots drawn by colored horses (Zec. 6:1-8). The visions of both Zechariah and John concern: (1) horses; (2) of varied colors; (3) with riders; (4) which ride forth to various destinations.

4.19.2 - Zechariah's Horsemen

In his first vision Zechariah sees a man riding a red (אָדוֹם [ʾādōm]) horse and behind him were horses: red (אַרְמִיִּם [ʾārūmmîm], *red ones*), sorrel (סְרֻקִּים [sʿrūqqîm], *spotted ones*), and white (לְבָנִים [wulʿbānîm], *white ones*). There are more than four horses in Zechariah's first vision, for a rider is seated upon one horse and there are said to be several horses of each color, presumably also with riders. The color of the *sorrel* horse is uncertain, although a variegated pattern seems to be the best understanding.¹

If we compare this with Zec. 6:2, where the chariots are drawn by red (*'adummim*, πυρροί [*pyrroi*]), black (*shechorim*, μέλανες [*melanes*]), white (*lebhanim*, λευκοί [*leukoi*]), and speckled (*beruddim*, ψαροί [*psaroi*]) horses, and with Rev. 6, where the first rider has a white horse (λευκός [*leukos*]) the second a red one (πυρρός [*pyrros*]) the third a black one (μέλας [*melas*]) the fourth a pale horse (χλωρός [*chlōros*]), there can be no further doubt that three of the colours of the horses mentioned here occur again in the two passages quoted, and that the black horse is simply added as a fourth; so that the *seruqqim* correspond to the *beruddim* of Zec. 6:3, and the ἵππος χλωρός [*hippos chlōros*] of Rev. 6:8, and consequently *sarōq* denotes that startling kind of grey in which the black ground is mixed with white, so that it is not essentially different from *barod*, speckled, or black covered with white spots (Gen. 31:10, 12).²

It seems best to understand the colors of the three horses in Zechariah's first vision as denoting bloodshed (red, "The color of blood"³), peace or victory (white, "the reflection of heavenly and divine glory . . . hence the symbols of a glorious victory (Rev. 6:2)"⁴), and a condition of partial peace and conflict (sorrel).⁵ Perhaps the horsemen, in walking "to and fro throughout the earth" typically encounter all three conditions in their tour. At the time of Zechariah's vision, they report "all the earth is resting quietly" (Zec. 1:11).⁶

Some see Zechariah's horsemen as being *sent out* to cause death (red), sickness (sorrel), and victory (white) much like the horsemen of Revelation 6,⁷ but the context of Zechariah's vision says nothing of them being sent out in judgment, but that they had *already* been riding and were now *returned to report* what they had seen.⁸ The most we can conclude concerning a similarity between Zechariah's first vision of the horsemen and the horsemen shown John is:

1. They are connected with the judgment of God (Zec. 1:15).
2. They ride at a time of apparent peace (Zec. 1:15 cf. Dan. 8:25; Mtt. 24:37-39; Luke 17:26-30; 21:34-35; 1Th. 5:3).

4.19.3 - Zechariah's Chariots

Zechariah's eighth vision has a greater bearing on the horsemen shown John. Zechariah sees four chariots which come forth from between two mountains of bronze (Zec. 6:1). In our commentary on *Revelation 1:15*^[3.1.15], we understood that bronze is a metal which can withstand the heat of fire and often represents judgment. Each chariot is drawn by horses of different colors—much like our four horsemen: red, black, white, and dappled (Zec. 6:2-3). The chariots are said to be captained by "spirits" (or *winds*)—a reference to the Holy Spirit or possibly invisible messengers such as angels.⁹

There are *four* chariots, just as there are *four* horsemen shown John, indicating a global scope of activity (see *Four: the Entire World, the Earth*^[2.7.5.3.3]).

The four chariots drawn by different colored horses ride out as follows:

1. The chariot drawn by black horses rides north.
2. The chariot drawn by white horses also rides north.¹⁰
3. The chariot drawn by the dappled horses rides south.
4. The destination of the chariot drawn by red horses is not explicitly given.

As is common with prophetic passages, Zechariah's last vision has a near-term referent and a far-future referent. The near-term referent is the overthrow of Babylon and judgment of Egypt at the time of Zechariah. The far-future referent is to the times preceding the coming of Messiah to establish His millennial reign.¹¹

In Zechariah's day, the black and white horses riding north were bound for *Babylon*. The dappled ride south to *Egypt*.

The land of the north, i.e., the territory covered by the lands of the Euphrates and Tigris, and the land of the south, i.e., Egypt, are mentioned as the two principal seats of the power of the world in its hostility to Israel: Egypt on the one hand, and Asshur-Babel on the other, which were the principal foes of the people of God, not only before the captivity, but also afterwards, in the conflicts between Syria and Egypt for the possession of Palestine (Dan. 11). . . . Then follow the white horses, indicating that the judgment will lead to complete victory over the power of the world. Into the south country, i.e., to Egypt, the other representative of the heathen world-power, goes the chariot with the speckled horses, to carry the manifold judgment of death by sword, famine, and pestilence, which is indicated by this colour.¹²

"The black horses" go to Babylon, primarily to represent the awful desolation with which Darius visited it in the fifth year of his reign (two years after this prophecy) for revolting [Henderson]. The "white" go after the "black" horses to the same country; two sets being sent to it because of its greater cruelty and guilt in respect to Judea. The white represent Darius triumphant subjugation of it [Moore]. Rather, I think, the white are sent to victoriously subdue Medo-Persia, the second world kingdom, lying in the same quarter as Babylon, namely, north.¹³

The emphasis given is fitting for in the fifth year of Darius (three years after the prophet saw these visions); Babylon, which had been conquered by Cyrus, revolted against Darius and experienced devastation and depopulation in retaliation. When these things happened, Zechariah and the Israel of his day could know that truly the spirit (i.e., the wrath of God, cf. Zec. 1:15; Eze. 5:13; 24:13) was quieted (i.e., was satisfied) in the north country.¹⁴

But where do the red horses ride? One view explains the red horses as the "strong steeds" which, rather than riding in a single direction, are commanded to "walk to and fro *throughout* the earth" (Zec. 6:6-7).

It should be observed that the red horses (cf. Zec. 6:2) seemingly are assigned no mission and that the bay horses are separated from the grizzled, whereas in Zec. 6:3 they appear to be together. While it does not solve the problem completely, it seems best to view the black . . . white . . . and the grizzled as being references to the second, third, and fourth chariots that are sent on specific missions and that the bay in Zec. 6:7 should be taken not to denote a color, but to denote a characteristic, i.e., strong (the Heb. word *'amots* can denote strength as well as a deep red color). If this understanding is correct, then the bay in Zec. 6:7 is a reference to the red horses drawing the first chariot of verse Zec. 6:2. While the second, third, and fourth chariots are off on their specific missions, the first chariot engages in a general mission of going to and fro through the earth (mentioned three times in Zec. 6:7, an indication that their task is every bit as important as that undertaken by the other chariots). Their mission throughout all the earth is indicative that war and bloodshed will hold sway throughout all the world. The reference to the earth must be understood in a much broader sense than just to the land of Israel. It must be understood as being a reference to the earth universally.¹⁵

This view notes that whereas the black, white, and dappled horses are all given specific destinations, Zechariah 6:6 indicates a global scope for the "strong steeds." Others understand the "strong steeds" and their walking "to and fro throughout the earth" as referring to the collective whole. Another explanation is that the red horses seen by Zechariah had *already drawn their chariot* in empowering

Medo-Persia's overthrown of Babylon:

Now, when these visions were shown to Zechariah, Babylon had already been overthrown, and its world-empire taken away, visibly and apparently, by the Medo-Persians, behind whom, however (as the prophet beholds), there was the invisible chariot of God, with its red horses of blood and vengeance. This act of judgment on the first great Gentile world-power which had oppressed Israel and laid waste his land being already an accomplished fact (though in the 3rd verse, for completeness's sake, all the four are shown to the prophet together . . .), this first chariot is passed over by the Angel in the interpretation, and is not seen among those who 'go forth' in Zec. 6:6—its mission, as far as the Babylonian Empire is concerned, having already been fulfilled.¹⁶

4.19.4 - Significance for Understanding Revelation

Whatever the case may be concerning the red horses, the similarities between Zechariah's vision of the chariots and the horsemen shown John are:

1. *Four* different categories of horses ride with a global ministry.
2. The horses ride at the *command* of God—they serve God's purposes.
3. The horses ride in *judgment*.
4. The horses have similar *colors* representing victory (white), bloodshed (red), black (judgment), and pale or dappled (sickness leading to death).

We note the reversal in the order of the white horses and black horses in Zechariah's vision versus what John sees of the four horses. In Zechariah's vision, the white horses *follow* the black horses in their ride north indicating a time of judgment and destruction followed by victory and peace. Here, the white horse rides out *ahead* of the black horse, indicating victory and peace which *degenerates* into a time of judgment and death. The pattern established in John's vision (Rev. 6) matches what we see elsewhere in Scripture of the end-times—at a time when people believe all is well, then destruction will come suddenly (Mtt. 24:37-39; Luke 17:26-30; 21:34-35; 1Th. 5:3).

One of the most difficult aspects of interpreting prophetic passages from the OT^[5.2.51] is determining whether a passage was completely fulfilled in the local near-term setting, or whether aspects of the passage reveal events of the end. Often, a passage begins describing a local situation, but then transcends that situation and reveals information concerning the last days.

There is a well-known type of biblical narrative in the Old Testament in which the Holy Spirit leads a prophet to consider some event that is taking place before the gaze of the world at that moment. The *inspired*^[5.2.33] writer presents some of the details of what is to him contemporaneous history. Then, suddenly, without so much as a break in the paragraph, the Holy Spirit carries the writer forward more than two thousand years to the time of the end and speaks of prophetic events which have some similarity with those taking place before the eye of the prophet.¹⁷

Some feel that Zechariah's vision of the chariots is such a passage:

God's wrath is specially spoken of in this last vision as being caused to rest on "the north country" [Zec. 6:8], because not only was it there that the attempt was first made to array a world-empire against God, and where apostasy sought, so to say, to organise and fortify itself; not only did Babylon also, at a later time, become the final antagonist and subduer of God's people and the destroyer of His *Temple*^[5.2.73] [Solomon's Temple], but probably because there, "in the land of Shinar," the metropolis of world power, Babylon, the great rival of the city of God—wickedness [Zec. 5:8], . . . will once again establish itself, and all the forces of evil again for a time be concentrated. Then God's judgments shall be fully poured out, and anti-Christian world-power be finally overthrown to make room for the Kingdom of Christ.¹⁸

It is interesting to consider that in Zechariah's time the chariots rode north to Babylon in judgment, whereas in the book of Revelation it is once again *Babylon* which occupies center stage in the end times to be overthrown in judgment (Rev. 18:2, 21).

- 1 “Brown; other sources suggest ‘bright red,’ or even ‘pale yellow.’; . . . color pattern, i.e., a spotted or two-tone color pattern, possible in colors of lighter and darker brown.”—James Swanson, *Dictionary of Biblical Languages With Semantic Domains : Hebrew (Old Testament)*, electronic ed. (Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, 1997), s.v. “#H8320.” “The significance of the colors is not stated, and this is complicated by the fact that the Hebrew word translated ‘brown’ (NIV) or ‘speckled’ (KJV) is found only here in the Old Testament, so that its meaning is not sure.”—F. Duane Lindsey, “*Zechariah*,” in John F. Walvoord, and Roy B. Zuck, eds., *The Bible Knowledge Commentary* (Wheaton, IL: SP Publications, 1983), Zec. 1:8. “The Hebrew קַרְקִיִּם [s^{er}ūqqīm] means ‘red.’ Modern translations such as ‘speckled’ or ‘spotted’ are based on ancient versions that attempt to bring the color of this horse into line with those of Zec. 6:2-3. This is a methodological fallacy since these are two different and unrelated visions.”—*New Electronic Translation : NET Bible*, electronic edition (Dallas, TX: Biblical Studies Press, 1998), Zec. 1:8. Yet it seems unlikely that *sorrel* represents red horses for they are distinguished from אֲרֻמִּים [ʾārūmmīm], which are said to be the red horses. Moreover, the translators of the LXX^[5.2.38], probably closer to the meaning of the word than we moderns, render the word as ψαροὶ καὶ ποικίλοι [psaroi kai poikiloi], *speckled and many-colored ones*.
- 2 Carl Friedrich Keil, and Franz Delitzsch, *Commentary on the Old Testament* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2002), Zec. 1:8.
- 3 Keil, *Commentary on the Old Testament*, Zec. 1:8.
- 4 Keil, *Commentary on the Old Testament*, Zec. 1:8.
- 5 “‘Speckled’ (from a root ‘to intertwine’), a combination of the two colors white and red (bay [Moore]), implies a state of things mixed, partly prosperous, partly otherwise [Henderson].”—A. R. Fausset, “*The Revelation of St. John the Divine*,” in Robert Jamieson, A. R. Fausset, and David Brown, *A Commentary, Critical and Explanatory, on the Old and New Testaments* (Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc., 1997, 1877), Zec. 1:8.
- 6 It seems best to understand “all the earth” as a figure of speech for it seems unlikely that the *entire* world was at peace during the time of *Zechariah*. But the language could also have a secondary eschatological application: “Perhaps the vision has a more eschatological reference in anticipation of the worldwide kingdom of Messiah, since the patrol covered not only the vast Persian Empire, but also the whole world—though perhaps ‘the whole world’ is a figure of speech (synecdoche) for the Persian Empire.”—Lindsey, “*Zechariah*,” Zec. 1:9.
- 7 “We must not, indeed, infer from this account that the riders were all sent for the simple and exclusive purpose of obtaining information concerning the state of the earth, and communicating it to the Lord. For it would have been quite superfluous and unmeaning to send out an entire troop, on horses of different colours, for this purpose alone. Their mission was rather to take an active part in the agitation of the nations, if any such existed, and guide it to the divinely appointed end, and that in the manner indicated by the colour of their horses; viz., according to Rev. 6, those upon the red horses by war and bloodshed; those upon the starling-grey, or speckled horses, by famine, pestilence, and other plagues; and lastly, those upon the white horses, by victory and the conquest of the world.”—Keil, *Commentary on the Old Testament*, Zec. 1:8.
- 8 “In our vision, however, the swift messengers were in the first instance only sent out to reconnoitre the earth and the state of the nations in their relation to the land and people of Israel.”—David Baron, *Zechariah: A Commentary On His Visions And Prophecies* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 1918), 32.
- 9 “We must therefore regard them either as ideal appearances, personifying the forces and providential acts which God often uses in carrying out His judgments on the earth, or, what seems to me the simplest and most natural explanation, *angelic beings*, or *heavenly powers*.”—Baron, *Zechariah: A Commentary On His Visions And Prophecies*, 175.
- 10 Some texts interpret the Hebrew here as indicating that the white horses rode *west*: “The one with the white horses toward the west.” (Zec. 6:6, NIV). “The one with the black horses is going out to the region of the north; the white ones have gone out to what is to the west of them; the spotted ones have gone out to the region of the south; and the dappled ones have gone out.”—*Tanakh: The Holy Scriptures: A New Translation of the Holy Scriptures According to the Traditional Hebrew Text* (Philadelphia, PA: Jewish Publication Society, 1997, c1985), Zec. 6:6. But, as McGee wryly observes, “Notice that none of the horses go to the west—that would put them into the Mediterranean Sea, and none of these are sea horses!”—J. Vernon McGee, *Thru The Bible Commentary* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 1997, c1981), Zec. 6:8.
- 11 “The prophet’s eyes are opened to see the invisible chariots of God which are being sent forth for the overthrow of Gentile world-power, and to prepare the way for the Kingdom of Messiah.”—Baron, *Zechariah: A Commentary On His Visions And Prophecies*, 173.

- ¹² Keil, *Commentary on the Old Testament*, Zec. 6:1-8.
- ¹³ Fausset, “*The Revelation of St. John the Divine*,” Zec. 6:5.
- ¹⁴ Jerry Falwell, Edward D. Hindson, and Michael Woodrow Kroll, eds., *KJV Bible Commentary* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 1997, c1994), Zec. 6:4.
- ¹⁵ Falwell, *KJV Bible Commentary*, Zec. 6:4.
- ¹⁶ Baron, *Zechariah: A Commentary On His Visions And Prophecies*, 179.
- ¹⁷ Donald Grey Barnhouse, *Revelation* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1971), 124.
- ¹⁸ Baron, *Zechariah: A Commentary On His Visions And Prophecies*, 182.

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5.2 - Glossary

5.2.1 - Amillennial

The amillennial view denies a literal *Millennial Kingdom*^[5.2.39] on earth (Rev. 20). It holds that the kingdom promises in the *OT*^[5.2.51] are fulfilled spiritually rather than literally in the New Testament church. Amillennialists usually consider the thousand years of Revelation 20 as a symbol indicating an “indefinite” period of time. Christ is seen as ruling over His kingdom through the church in the current age, a kingdom which is strictly spiritual. “The *a-* in *amillennialism* negates the term; hence, *amillennialism* means there will not be a literal, future millennium.”¹ See *Millennial Kingdom*^[4.11]. See commentary on *Revelation 20*^[3.20].

5.2.2 - Anglo-Israelism

Also known as British-Israelism. See *Anglo-Israelism*^[4.17.2.3].

5.2.3 - Antichrist

The ruler of the final global kingdom prior to the Second Coming of Christ. See *The Beast*^[4.2], #16 - *Beast*^[4.3.2.16].

5.2.4 - Anti-Semitism

“Hostility toward or prejudice against Jews or Judaism.”²

5.2.5 - Apocrypha

“1. The 14 books of the *Septuagint*^[5.2.65] included in the *Vulgate*^[5.2.81] but considered uncanonical by Protestants because they are not part of the Hebrew Scriptures. The Roman Catholic *canon*^[5.2.12] accepts 11 of these books and includes them in the Douay Bible. 2. Various early Christian writings proposed as additions to the New Testament but rejected by the major canons. 3. apocrypha. Writings or statements of questionable authorship or authenticity.”³ “The Roman Catholic Church’s claim that these writings of the Apocrypha are *inspired*^[5.2.33] must be rejected for the following reasons . . . [which see]”⁴

5.2.6 - Arianism

The teaching of Arius that God the Son was not of the same substance as God the Father, but was created as an agent for creating the world. Arius believed that the Son was a creature, higher than the angels, but lower than God Himself. This teaching was condemned at the Council of Nicea (A.D. 325).

5.2.7 - Athanasius

Athanasius (c. 296-373) was born in Alexandria, Egypt where he was later to become a bishop in 328. Much of his energy was devoted to defending the decisions of the Council of Nicea against Arius. His strong stance against *Arianism*^[5.2.6] led to his first exile, something he experienced numerous times during his life. His times of exile among hermits (monks) while living an ascetic lifestyle provided opportunity for his various writings, such as *Against Arius*, *Against the Heathen*, and *On the Incarnation*. Athanasius reasoned that only God Himself was righteous enough to satisfy the demands of His own justice—hence the Son must be fully God.⁵

5.2.8 - AV

AV stands for *authorized version*, the King James version.

5.2.9 - Beast

The ruler of the final global kingdom prior to the Second Coming of Christ. See *The Beast*^[4.2], #16 - *Beast*^[4.3.2.16].

5.2.10 - Book of Life

A book which retains the names of all who have eternal life. See *Book of Life*^[4.4].

5.2.11 - British Israelism

See *Anglo-Israelism*^[4.17.2.3].

5.2.12 - Canon

“The original meaning of the term canon can be traced to the ancient Greeks, who used it in a literal sense: a kanon was a rod, ruler, staff, or measuring rod. . . . This literal concept provided the basis for a later extended use of the word kanon, meaning ‘standard,’ ‘norm.’ Galatians 6:16 comes closest to the final theological significance of the word, as Paul says ‘Those who will walk by this rule [kanon], peace and mercy be upon them.’ . . . From the literal ‘ruler,’ the word was extended to mean a rule or standard for anything. In early Christian usage, it came to mean rule of faith, normative writings, or authoritative Scripture.”⁶ “While the “canon” of scripture means the list of books accepted as holy scripture, the other sense of “canon”—rule or standard—has rubbed off on this one, so that the “canon” of scripture is understood to be the list of books which are acknowledged to be, in a unique sense, the rule of belief and practice.”⁷

5.2.13 - Chiliasm

From χίλιοι [*chilioi*] (Rev. 20:3), *one thousand*. The belief in a literal one thousand year reign of Christ upon the earth (Rev. 20:4-6). “The most explicit reference in Scripture to the thousand-year millennial reign of Christ is found in Revelation 20. It is a significant fact that the early adherents of *premillennialism*^[5.2.58] (or chiliasm, as it was first called), either had direct contact with John, the longest living apostle, or with his most famous disciple *Polycarp*^[5.2.55].”⁸ See *Premillennial*^[5.2.58].

5.2.14 - Day of the Lord

A period in history when God comes in judgment, especially the time of trouble preceding the establishment of the *Millennial Kingdom*^[5.2.39] on earth where God arises to judge the inhabitants of the earth who reject Him. See *The Day of the Lord*^[2.13.3].

5.2.15 - Dispensation

“A concise definition of dispensation is this: A dispensation is a distinguishable economy in the outworking of God’s purpose.”⁹ “[By dispensation] [w]e don’t mean a way of salvation. We simply mean a distinguishable rule of life or economy. The Stewardship; the economy, the household management; the way God runs His affairs, has changed. The way He deals with people, the way He carries out His sovereign plan has changed. The plan hasn’t altered, but the way He works it out, the people He uses and the way it’s done, those things have changed, and that’s what we mean by a dispensation, (i.e. a distinguishable economy in the outworking of God’s purpose).”¹⁰

5.2.16 - Docetism

The belief that Jesus Christ only *appeared* human and *seemed* to suffer, but was in fact *immaterial* and not truly human. “This view arose from the assumption of Greek philosophers that the material world, including the body was innately evil.”¹¹ This denial of the incarnation was written against by John (1Jn. 1:1-3; 4:3).

5.2.17 - Dominion Theology

The view that the Church will be triumphant in bringing the world to know and accept Christ as savior. See *Theonomy*^[5.2.77].

5.2.18 - Earth Dweller

The phrase “those who dwell upon the earth” takes on a soteriological and eschatological meaning in the book of Revelation for it denotes the unsaved at the time of the end worship the *Beast*^[5.2.9] and who steadfastly continue in their rejection of God. See *Earth Dwellers*^[3.3.10.1]. See *Beast Worshipers are Unique*^[4.4.3.4].

5.2.19 - Eusebius

Eusebius of Caesarea (as opposed to Eusebius the bishop of Nicomedia) was born *circa* A.D. 260 and is best known as the “Father of Church History.” He wrote a history of Christianity covering the first three centuries among many other important works. His work was enabled by his position as a research librarian in a large private library of some 30,000 volumes. His patron, Pamphilus, was tortured, imprisoned, and martyred in 303 before the rise of Christianity under Constantine whereupon Eusebius was made bishop of Caesarea. Upon the death of Constantine, Eusebius began writing his autobiography which was interrupted by his own death approximately two years later at the age of almost 80. We are indebted to the writings of Eusebius for much of what we know about the early Christian church.¹²

5.2.20 - False Prophet

The accomplice of the *Beast*^[5.2.9] who performs false signs and wonders. See #18 - *False Prophet*^[4.3.2.18]. See commentary on *Revelation 13:11*^[3.13.11].

5.2.21 - Gematria

“With the late Jews and the Greeks the letters of the alphabet were used to denote numbers; a name then could be given enigmatically in the sum of the numbers denoted by its several letters. Thus in Gen. 14:14 the number 318 was taken by the rabbis to denote Eliezer; the numbers denoted by the respective letters of that name added together form this sum. The Christian Sibylline I. 324 ff. uses 888 for the name Ἰησοῦς [*Iēsous*], Jesus.”¹³ See commentary on *Revelation 13:18*^[3.13.18].

5.2.22 - Genre

A category of artistic composition, as in music or literature, marked by a distinctive style, form, or content.¹⁴

5.2.23 - Gnostic

“Early Christian writers already used the term as a general name for various social groups which were not content with orthodox practices and beliefs otherwise widely accepted. The first certain early Christian reference to the term, and this in an orthodox text, is 1Ti. 6:20. In reflecting on the theological problem of the origin, development, and continued existence of evil, these gnostic groups were at odds with developing orthodoxy.”¹⁵ “Gnosticism, a name indicating the assumption of superior capacity for knowledge (Gk. *gnosis*, “knowledge”). Gnosticism in its diverse forms received its impulse, and in the main its guidance, from pagan philosophy. In different ways it denied the humanity of Christ, even to the extent of denying the reality of His human body.”¹⁶ “For the Gnostics, the nature of that which is truly man is spiritual, and the essential principle in the saved person is the spiritual seed or nature planted in him.”¹⁷

5.2.24 - Golden Rule of Interpretation

“When the plain sense of Scripture makes common sense, seek no other sense, therefore, take every word at its primary, ordinary, usual, literal meaning unless the facts of the immediate context, studied in the light of related passages and axiomatic and fundamental truths, indicate clearly otherwise.—*The Golden Rule of Interpretation*, D.L. Cooper”¹⁸

5.2.25 - Harlot

The woman who rides the *Beast*^[5.2.9] and who is the “mother of harlots and of the abominations of the earth” (Rev. 17:5). See *The Great Harlot*^[4.1.4]. See #21 - *Harlot*^[4.3.2.21]. See commentary on *Revelation 17*^[3.17].

5.2.26 - Hermeneutic

The word *interpretation* occurs in many forms in the New Testament. An example as *hermeneia* (“to interpret”). This word forms the basis for the term *hermeneutics*. Embedded in this Greek word is the name of the Greek god *Hermes*. “The word *hermeneutics* is ultimately derived from Hermes the Greek god who brought the messages of the gods to the mortals, and was the god of science, invention, eloquence, speech, writing, and art. As a theological discipline hermeneutics is the science of the correct interpretation of the Bible.”¹⁹

5.2.27 - Hyperbole

“A figure of speech in which exaggeration is used for emphasis or effect, as in ‘I could sleep for a year’ or ‘This book weighs a ton.’”²⁰ “A hyperbole is a deliberate exaggeration in which more is said than is literally meant, in order to add emphasis. When 10 of the Israelite spies reported on their exploration of the land of Canaan, they said, ‘The cities are large and fortified to heaven’ (Deu. 1:28). Obviously they were not saying the walls of the Canaanite cities reached literally to heaven; they were simply stating that the walls were unusually high.”²¹

5.2.28 - Ignatius

Third bishop of Antioch arrested in the reign of Emperor Trajan (A.D. 98-117). Taken by Roman soldiers to Smyrna, he was welcomed by Bishop *Polycarp*^[5.2.55] and received visitors from the churches at Ephesus, Magnesia, and Tralles. Ignatius wrote to two of the cities addressed by Paul (Ephesus, Rome) and to three of the cities among the *seven churches*^[5.2.66] of Revelation 2-3 (Ephesus, Philadelphia, Smyrna). His letters cite both *OT*^[5.2.51] passages and the writings of Paul. Ignatius was a staunch opponent of Judaism’s emphasis upon earning favor with God through works and opposed *Docetism*^[5.2.16]. Ignatius was martyred in Rome (c. A.D. 108).²²

5.2.29 - Image of the Beast

An image of the *Beast*^[5.2.9] constructed by the *earth dwellers*^[5.2.18] under the direction of the *False Prophet*^[5.2.20]. See #19 - *Image of Beast*^[4.3.2.19].

5.2.30 - Imminent

The teaching of Scripture that certain prophesied events could occur at any moment without any precursor or warning. See *Imminency*^[4.8].

5.2.31 - Imperial Cult

The worship of the emperor of Rome. This historical reality from the time of John’s writing provides a backdrop against which the readers of his time could better appreciate the final beast yet future (Rev. 13). Asia was the epicenter of the imperial cult and cities competed for the privilege of erecting a temple in honor of the emperor. In 29 B.C. Pergamum was the first to erect a temple and Smyrna the

second in A.D. 21. Ephesus was the third.²³ To show their allegiance to the Roman emperor, citizens were required to burn incense to the emperor and to declare, “Caesar is Lord”²⁴ whereupon he was issued a certificate. Under Domitian (A.D. 81-96) emperor worship became compulsory for every Roman citizen on threat of death.²⁵

5.2.32 - Inerrant

“Inerrancy is the view that when all the facts become known, they will demonstrate that the Bible in its original autographs and correctly interpreted is entirely true and never false in all that it affirms, whether that relates to doctrine or ethics or to the social, physical, or life sciences.”²⁶ See [Rene Pache, *The Inspiration & Authority of Scripture* (Salem, WI: Sheffield Publishing Company, 1969)], *The Chicago Statement on Inerrancy* in [Geisler, *A General Introduction to the Bible*, 181-185], and [Norman L. Geisler, ed., *Inerrancy* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1980)]. The primary reason the Scriptures are inerrant is because they are *inspired*^[5.2.33].

5.2.33 - Inspired

The source of all Scripture is the Spirit of God, the Holy Spirit. Since the Holy Spirit is God, by His very nature He is completely without error. Therefore, the Scriptures which He breathed out are also without error (*inerrant*^[5.2.32]). “All Scripture *is* given by inspiration (θεοπνευστος [*theopneustos*], divinely breathed) of God, and *is* profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.” (2Ti 3:16-17). “And so we have the prophetic word confirmed, which you do well to heed as a light that shines in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts; knowing this first, that no prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation, for prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke *as they were* moved by the Holy Spirit.” (2Pe 1:19-21) See also: 2S. 23:2; Ps. 95:7 cf. Heb. 3:7; Ps. 110:1 cf. Mark 12:36; Isa. 6:8; Jer. 31:33 cf. Heb. 10:15; Mic. 3:8; Zec. 7:12; John 14:26; Acts 1:16; Acts 28:25; Heb. 9:8; 2Ti. 3:16; 2Pe. 1:21.

5.2.34 - Irenaeus

Irenaeus (c. 130 - c. 200) wrote his most famous work *Against Heresies* in opposition to *Gnosticism*^[5.2.23], a major theological threat to the Church in the second century. His writings against the Gnostics are among the earliest which appeal to the New Testament as having apostolic authority. He was appointed bishop of Lyons, France in A.D. 177-178.³⁰ Crutchfield gives the following dates for Irenaeus: 120-202.³¹

5.2.35 - Jezebel

Queen of King Ahab in the *OT*^[5.2.51]. A woman in the church at Thyatira in the *NT*^[5.2.48] who also represents the apostate church of the Tribulation. See *Jezebel*^[4.9].

5.2.36 - Justin Martyr

Justin Martyr (c. 100 - c. 165) was one of the earliest of the Apologists, spokesmen who offered an *apologia*, a reasoned defense of Christianity (Acts 22:1; 1Pe. 3:15). Justin studied philosophy prior to his conversion to Christ. In his *Dialogue with Trypho* he attempts to explain to a Jew named Trypho how Jesus Christ is the fulfillment of the prophecies of Messiah from the Jewish *OT*^[5.2.51].³²

5.2.37 - Little Horn

One of many titles of the *Antichrist*^[5.2.3]. The little horn comes up among the ten horns of the fourth beast in Daniel’s night vision (Dan. 7:8). See #25 - *Little Horn*^[4.3.2.25].

5.2.38 - LXX

Roman numerals designating “seventy” and representing the *Septuagint*^[5.2.65], which see.

5.2.39 - Millennial Kingdom

The thousand-year reign of Christ on earth, centered at Jerusalem. Also called the *Messianic Kingdom* because the Messiah will rule as King during this time. See commentary on *Revelation 20*^[3.20]. See *Millennial Kingdom*^[4.11]. See *Millennial Temple*^[4.16.5.10].

5.2.40 - Millennial Temple

The temple which will stand in Jerusalem during the *Millennial Kingdom*^[5.2.39] and from which Jesus will rule over the earth. See *Millennial Temple*^[4.16.5.10]. See *Millennial Kingdom*^[4.11].

5.2.41 - Minuscule

Manuscripts written in lowercase, cursive letters. This style was developed after *Uncial*^[5.2.80] manuscript style. “By the time of the tenth century, the demand for manuscript copies caused the more fluid cursive style to outstrip the cumbersome uncial style. Thus, by the golden age of manuscript copying, the eleventh through fifteenth centuries, this new running hand employing small and connected letters was the dominant form of manuscript copying. It was superseded in the fifteenth century by printed manuscripts, after the introduction of movable typeset by Johann Gutenberg.”³³

5.2.42 - Montanus

“The Montanists were a *chiliasitic*^[5.2.13] sect from Asia Minor who, under the leadership of the prophet Montanus, had predicted the descent of the New Jerusalem and the end of the world. That event was supposed to have occurred in the year 177, but its failure to arrive provided reprisals against the sect, and it disappeared soon afterward. . . . *Tertullian*^[5.2.75] was drawn to Montanist teachings . . . concentrating to a considerable extent on their holiness teachings.”³⁴

5.2.43 - MSS

Abbreviation for “manuscripts.”

5.2.44 - MS

Abbreviation for “manuscript.”

5.2.45 - MT

The Majority Text as represented by [Zane C. Hodges, and Arthur L. Farstad, *The Greek New Testament According To The Majority Text* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishing, 1985)].

5.2.46 - Nero

An emperor of Rome which some *preterist interpreters*^[2.12.2] believe fulfilled the prophecies of the *Antichrist*^[5.2.3]. See *Nero*^[4.12].

5.2.47 - Nicolaitans

A sect during John’s day which Jesus opposed in the seven letters to *seven churches*^[5.2.66]. See *Nicolaitans*^[4.13].

5.2.48 - NT

“New Testament.” The 27 books of Matthew through Revelation.

5.2.49 - NU

The *Critical Text* published in the twenty-sixth edition of the Nestle-Aland Greek New Testament (N) and in the United Bible Societies' third edition (U). Hence the acronym, NU.

5.2.50 - Origen

Origen (c. 185-254) was born in Alexandria, Egypt. He was trained in the Bible and other topics from childhood. He supported the Christian stand of his father, Leonides, who was jailed and eventually martyred by decapitation. Upon being ordained to the priesthood, he was exiled from Alexandria. He journeyed to Caesarea where he spent the remainder of his life teaching, writing, and practicing a strict asceticism. He was imprisoned and tortured during the reign of Decian (c. 250) which weakened him physically. Origen died in Tyre about A.D. 254. *Eusebius*^[5.2.19] records he taught during the day and stayed up most of the night studying and praying. He was a prodigious writer, having produced more than 6,000 works and was a pioneer in systematic theology. Origen was a proponent of allegorical interpretation of Scripture and often departed from the literal grammatical sense in search of a "deeper" spiritual, often allegorical, meaning. His most monumental work was the production of the *Hexapla*, an early parallel Bible, which arranged into six parallel columns the Hebrew text, its Greek translation, the *Septuagint*^[5.2.65], and various other Greek versions of the *OT*^[5.2.51] into a single work.³⁶

5.2.51 - OT

"Old Testament." The 39 books of Genesis through Malachi. Also known by the Jewish name *Tanak*^[5.2.70].

5.2.52 - Papias

Papias (ca. 60 - 130) was bishop of Hierapolis in Phrygia, Asia Minor. A contemporary of *Polycarp*^[5.2.55], he is best known for his five-volume work entitled *Expositions of the Sayings of the Lord* which was probably published within a decade of A.D. 130. Papias provides some of the earliest testimony revealing the early church's stance on the millennium (*chiliastic*^[5.2.13]) and the authorship of Matthew, Mark, John, and Revelation. He placed great emphasis on oral tradition and following the 'living and abiding voice' of the elders or followers of the apostles. His writings are preserved indirectly as fragments by others who wrote of him.³⁷

5.2.53 - Papyri

"Papyrus was used in ancient Gebal (Byblos) and Egypt from about 3100 B.C. It was made by pressing and gluing two layers of split papyrus reeds together in order to form a sheet. A series of papyrus sheets were joined together to form a scroll. It is that type of papyrus scroll that is mentioned in Revelation 5:1 (though it is translated book in NASB). The apostle John used papyrus for his epistles (cf. 2 John 12)."³⁸

5.2.54 - Parable

"The word *parable* comes from the Greek *para* ('beside or alongside') and *ballein* ('to throw'). Thus the story is thrown alongside the truth to illustrate the truth. Hearers and readers, by sensing the comparison or analogy between the story and their own situation, are prodded to think. In interpreting parables we need to ask, What is the point of the story? What spiritual truth is being illustrated? What analogy is being made?"³⁹

5.2.55 - Polycarp

Polycarp was one of the most notable figures in the early post-apostolic church. He was bishop of Smyrna as early as A.D. 110 and died a martyr's death several decades later at the age of eighty-six. *Irenaeus*^[5.2.34] met Polycarp as a child and both Irenaeus and *Eusebius*^[5.2.19] assert that he had known the Apostle John. Polycarp was a strong opponent of Marcion and the *Gnostic*^[5.2.23] movement.

Among the writings preserved for our times are *The Letter to the Philippians* by Polycarp himself and *The Martyrdom of Polycarp* written by those who witnessed his death at the stake.⁴⁰

5.2.56 - Postmillennial

“Simply put, postmillennialism is a view of eschatology teaching that Christ’s return to earth will occur at the end of the Millennium. . . . Postmillennialism . . . expects the gradual, developmental expansion of the kingdom of Christ in time and on earth. . . . Christ’s personal presence on earth is not needed for the expansion of His Kingdom. . . . distinction should be made between liberals who promote a postmillennialism through humanism (i.e., the social Gospel of the past) and evangelical postmillennialism that promotes progress through the church’s preaching of the gospel and application of Mosaic Law. . . . Postmillennialism fails to account for the fact that if there is going to be a fulfillment of millennial conditions predicted in the Bible, it is going to be only as a result of a revolutionary intervention of Jesus Christ at His Second Coming in order to introduce new factors that are discontinuous with the present age.”⁴¹ See *Premillennial*^[5.2.58]. See *Millennial Kingdom*^[4.11]. See commentary on *Revelation 20*^[3.20].

5.2.57 - Posttribulation

The view that the *Rapture*^[5.2.62] of the Church will take place *after* the Tribulation. Other views expect the Rapture of the Church to take place *before* the Tribulation (*pretribulation*^[5.2.60] rapture view) or *within* the Tribulation (midtribulation and pre-Wrath rapture views).

5.2.58 - Premillennial

The premillennial view holds that Christ will return to earth literally and bodily prior to the millennial age (Rev. 19, 20). Upon His Second Advent, a kingdom will be instituted on earth wherein He will reign from Jerusalem on the promised throne of David. During this period, various promises associated with the *OT*^[5.2.51] covenants made with Israel will be fulfilled. These literal OT promises are not redirected to the church in the present age to be spiritually fulfilled. Although there is no distinction between Jew and Gentile in the manner of salvation, promises made to national Israel which remain unfulfilled will find their fruition during the reign of Jesus following His return to earth. The kingdom of God on earth is seen to be brought about by the dramatic and sudden intervention of God to actively overthrow the kingdoms of man and is not achieved solely through the spiritual work of the Church. See *Millennial Kingdom*^[4.11]. See *Postmillennial*^[5.2.56]. See commentary on *Revelation 20*^[3.20].

5.2.59 - Preterist

The term “preterism” is based on the Latin *preter*, which means “past.” Preterism refers to that understanding of certain eschatological passages which holds that *they have already come to fulfillment*. *Mild* or *partial* preterism holds that most of the prophecies of Revelation were fulfilled either in the fall of Jerusalem in A.D. 70 or the fall of the Roman Empire, but in both cases the Second Coming of Christ is seen as yet future. This form of preterism is orthodox. *Full* or *consistent* preterism holds that all the prophecies of Revelation are already fulfilled, that we are currently living spiritually in the “new heavens and earth” and denies a future bodily return of Jesus. Full or consistent preterism is heterodox. Preterism teaches that many of the prophecies of Revelation have already been fulfilled. Most of the prophecies before Revelation 20 are said to find fulfillment in the fall of Jerusalem (A.D. 70).

5.2.60 - Pretribulation

The view that the *Rapture*^[5.2.62] of the Church will take place *before* the beginning of the Tribulation. Other views expect the Rapture of the Church to take place *within* the Tribulation (midtribulation and pre-Wrath rapture views) or at the *end* of the Tribulation (*posttribulation*^[5.2.57] rapture view).

5.2.61 - Pseudepigrapha

“The Pseudepigrapha books are those that are distinctly spurious and unauthentic in their overall content . . . Although they claim to have been written by biblical authors, they actually express religious fancy and magic from the period between about 200 B.C. and A.D. 200. In Roman Catholic circles these books are known as the *Apocrypha*^[5.2.5], a term not to be confused with an entirely different set of books known in Protestant circles by the same name . . . although at times Protestants have referred to these same books as the “wider Apocrypha,” or “Apocalyptic Literature.” Most of these books are comprised of dreams, visions, and revelations in the apocalyptic style of Ezekiel, Daniel, and Zechariah. . . . The actual number of these books is not known certainly, and various writers have given different numbers of important ones. There are eighteen worthy of mention. . . .”⁴²

5.2.62 - Rapture

The taking up of the church from the world in order to be spared from the wrath of God during the Tribulation. See *Rapture*^[4.14].

5.2.63 - Replacement Theology

The view that Israel, having rejected her Messiah Jesus, has been *permanently* cast aside by God in favor of the Church. The Church is considered to be the “New Israel” and *OT*^[5.2.51] passages written to the nation Israel are reinterpreted and understood as being fulfilled by the Church “spiritually.” OT passages which set forth curses for disobedience to God retain their literal meaning and are applied to Israel. New Testament passages which describe *the Israel of God* (Gal. 6:16) and *all Israel* (Rom. 9:6) are often misinterpreted as describing the Church rather than a strict subset of Israel (the believing Jewish remnant). “Historically, “the word Israel is applied to the Christian church for the first time by *Justin Martyr*^[5.2.36] c. A.D. 160 in his Dialogue with Trypho, where the church is equated with ‘true Israel’ (not labeled “the Israel of God” as in Gal. 6:16).”⁴³ “The New Testament uses many metaphors for the church that the Old Testament uses of Israel. They are both called a bride, or wife (Hos. 1:2; cf. Jer. 3:20; Rev. 21:2), a family household (Ps. 107:41; Jer. 31:1; Eph. 2); a flock (Isa. 40:11; cf. Ps. 23; Luke 12:32; Acts 20:28–29), and a vineyard or vine branches (Isa. 5:1–7; John 15:5). But the Old Testament never speaks of Israel as God’s body. That is a distinct and formerly unrevealed figure for God’s people in the New Covenant. Christ’s church is His present reincarnated Body on earth.”⁴⁴

5.2.64 - Semitism

A viable definition of “Semitism” is a *non-Greek construction produced by an overly literal rendering of either a Hebrew or Aramaic oral or written source*.⁴⁵

5.2.65 - Septuagint

A Greek translation of the Old Testament commissioned at Alexandria, Egypt. “It was in that period (c. 250-c. 150 B.C.), that the Hebrew Old Testament was being translated into Greek, the first time it had ever been extensively translated. The leaders of Alexandrian Jewry had a standard Greek version produced, known as the *LXX*^[5.2.38], the Greek word for “seventy.” It was undoubtedly translated during the third and/or second centuries B.C. and was purported to have been written as early as the time of Ptolemy II in a Letter of Aristeeas to Philocartes (c. 130-100 B.C.).”⁴⁶

5.2.66 - Seven Churches

Seven historical churches in Asia Minor which Revelation chapters 2 and 3 are written to. See *Seven Churches of Asia*^[4.15].

5.2.67 - Shekinah Glory

The visible manifestation of God’s presence. See *The Abiding Presence of God*^[4.16.2].

5.2.68 - Solecism

“1. A nonstandard usage or grammatical construction. 2. A violation of etiquette. 3. An impropriety, a mistake, or an incongruity.”⁴⁷

5.2.69 - Tabernacle

The portable structure within which God met with Israel during her wilderness wandering until the time of *Solomon's Temple*^[4.16.5.3]. See *Tabernacle in the Wilderness*^[4.16.5.2].

5.2.70 - Tanach

The Jewish Old Testament consisting of the Law (*Torah*), the Prophets (*Nevi'im*), and the Writings (*Ketuv'im*) = “TNK.” The Tanach contains the same writings as the English Old Testament, but arranged in a different order.

5.2.71 - Targums

“The Aramaic word for ‘translation.’”⁴⁸ “Any of several Aramaic translations or paraphrasings of the Old Testament.”⁴⁹

5.2.72 - Technical Term

A technical term or phrase carries a uniform meaning wherever it appears. Thus, its meaning is somewhat independent of context. For example, the phrase *Abomination of Desolation* carries the same meaning even though it occurs in different passages and historical settings (Dan. 11:31; 12:11; Mtt. 24:15; Mark 13:14). A non-technical word or phrase has meaning which is highly dependent upon the context within which it appears. For example, the word *world* can denote either the entire globe (Mtt. 24:14; Luke 4:5; Luke 21:26; Acts 17:31; Rom. 10:18; Heb. 1:6; 2:5; Rev. 12:9; 16:14) or a smaller region, the *known world* of the Mediterranean (Luke 2:1; Acts 11:28; 17:6; 19:27). It's meaning is determined by the context within which it appears.

5.2.73 - Temple

The meeting place between sinful men and a Holy God. See *Temple of God*^[4.16].

5.2.74 - Ten Tribes

The ten northern tribes of Israel during the divided kingdom after the days of Solomon. See *Ten Tribes Lost?*^[4.17]

5.2.75 - Tertullian

Tertullian (c. 150 - c. 212) was a prolific writer producing some 1,500 pages in about thirty books. Tertullian was drawn to some of the teachings of Montanism, especially their teachings on holiness. His most famous work is called the *Apology* in which he dissects pagan religion in order to point out its irrational nature and in which he criticizes the Romans for their negative attitude toward Christians. He also wrote apologetic works against Marcion's *anti-Semitism*^[5.2.64]^[5.2.4] and against the *Gnostic*^[5.2.23] heretics Hermogenes and Valentinus. Tertullian rejected the philosophical schools of his time including Platonism because it was antimaterialist (believing that only the soul, but not the flesh could be saved). Tertullian practiced a form of early “*dispensationalism*^[5.2.15]” in which he divided history into three ages, according to the Persons of the Trinity (the *OT*^[5.2.51] being the age of the Father, the Incarnation the age of the Son, the time since Pentecost the age of the Holy Spirit). Tertullian is thought to have died at Carthage sometime after A.D. 212.⁵⁰ Crutchfield provides the following dates for Tertullian: A.D. 150-225.⁵¹

5.2.76 - Theocracy

“A theocracy is a form of government in which God’s rule is administered by one or more representatives over a possession of God in accordance with His sovereign purpose and in obedience to His commands.”⁵²

5.2.77 - Theonomy

“Theonomy—also known as “*dominion theology*”^[5.2.17] and “Christian reconstructionism”—is a worldview that foresees a progressive domination of world government and society by Christianity until God’s kingdom on earth becomes a reality. Its eschatology is essentially that of the *postmillennialism*”^[5.2.56] so popular around the beginning of the twentieth century.”⁵³

5.2.78 - Tribulation Temple

The temple which will stand in Jerusalem during the Tribulation period. See *Tribulation Temple*^[4.16.5.9]. See commentary on *Revelation 11:1*^[3.11.1].

5.2.79 - TR

The *Textus Receptus* or “Received Text”. This is the Greek text associated with the King James Version of 1611.

5.2.80 - Uncial

Manuscripts of the Scriptures written in uppercase Greek letters. “The style of writing was slow and laborious during the early centuries of the church, as the letters were capital (uncial), written separately, and without breaks between words or sentences. Uncial manuscripts were copied through the tenth century; but before they became less prominent, a new form of writing was introduced into the field, which is called *minuscule*”^[5.2.41] or cursive writing.”⁵⁴

5.2.81 - Vulgate

“The Latin edition or translation of the Bible made by Saint Jerome at the end of the fourth century A.D., now used in a revised form as the Roman Catholic authorized version.”⁵⁵

Notes

- ¹ Paul Enns, *The Moody Handbook of Theology* (Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 1989), 380.
- ² *American Heritage Online Dictionary*, Ver. 3.0A, 3rd ed. (Houghton Mifflin, 1993), s.v. “Anti-Semitism.”
- ³ *American Heritage Online Dictionary*, s.v. “Apocrypha.”
- ⁴ James G. McCarthy, *The Gospel According to Rome* (Eugene, OR: Harvest House Publishers, 1996), 338-339.
- ⁵ Gerald L. Bray, “*Athanasius: A Pillar of Orthodoxy*,” in John D. Woodbridge, ed., *Great Leaders of the Christian Church* (Chicago, IL: Houghton Mifflin, 1993), 63-68.
- ⁶ Norman L. Geisler, and William E. Nix, *A General Introduction to the Bible* (Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 1986), 203-204.
- ⁷ F. F. Bruce, *The Canon of Scripture* (Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity Press, 1988), 18.
- ⁸ Larry V. Crutchfield, “*Revelation in the New Testament*,” in Mal Couch, ed., *A Bible Handbook to Revelation* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 2001), 24.
- ⁹ Charles C. Ryrie, *Dispensationalism* (Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 1995), 28.
- ¹⁰ Robert P. Lightner, “*Progressive Dispensationalism*,” in *The Conservative Theological Journal*, vol. 4 no. 11 (Fort Worth, TX: Tyndale Theological Seminary, March 2000), 49-50.
- ¹¹ Edwin M. Yamauchi, “*Ignatius of Antioch*,” in John D. Woodbridge, ed., *Great Leaders of the Christian*

- Church* (Chicago, IL: Houghton Mifflin, 1993), 37.
- 12 Glen F. Chestnut, "Eusebius of Caesarea," in David Noel Freeman, ed., *The Anchor Bible Dictionary* (New York, NY: Doubleday, 1996, c1992), 2:673-676.
- 13 Isbon T. Beckwith, *The Apocalypse of John* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2001), 403.
- 14 *American Heritage Online Dictionary*.
- 15 Kurt Rudolph, "Gnosticism," in David Noel Freeman, ed., *The Anchor Bible Dictionary* (New York, NY: Doubleday, 1996, c1992), 2:1033.
- 16 Merrill K. Unger, R. Harrison, Frederic F Vos, and Cyril J. Barber, *The New Unger's Bible Dictionary* (Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 1988), s.v. "Gnosticism."
- 17 Everett Ferguson, "Irenaeus: Adversary of the Gnostics," in John D. Woodbridge, ed., *Great Leaders of the Christian Church* (Chicago, IL: Houghton Mifflin, 1993), 45.
- 18 J. Dwight Pentecost, *Things to Come: A Study in Biblical Eschatology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1958), 44.
- 19 Bernard Ramm, *Protestant Biblical Interpretation*, 3rd rev. ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1970), 11.
- 20 *American Heritage Online Dictionary*, s.v. "hyperbole."
- 21 Roy B. Zuck, *Basic Bible Interpretation* (Colorado Springs, CO: Cook Communications, 1991), 154.
- 22 Yamauchi, "Ignatius of Antioch," 35-38.
- 23 Grant R. Osborne, *Revelation* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2002), 7.
- 24 Robert H. Mounce, *The Book of Revelation* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1977), 97.
- 25 Alan F. Johnson, *Revelation: The Expositor's Bible Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1966), 41.
- 26 Paul D. Feinberg, "Bible, Inerrancy and Infallibility of," in Walter A. Elwell, ed., *The Evangelical Dictionary of Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1984), 142.
- 27 Rene Pache, *The Inspiration & Authority of Scripture* (Salem, WI: Sheffield Publishing Company, 1969).
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5.4 - Topic Index

The major topics mentioned within the commentary appear below. Each topic is listed along with every section number within the commentary where that topic is mentioned. The total number of times a topic occurs in the commentary, and within each section, is shown in superscript. Topics which appear in endnotes are listed within the section which contains the endnote. In order to reduce the size of the topic index, only the 10 sections which most frequently mention the topic are listed. Sections which mention the topic most often appear first in the list.

1,260 days⁴¹ : 2.13.5.2⁷, 2.13.4⁵, 3.11.3³, 3.11.7³, 3.12.6³, 2.12.4², 3.11.2², 3.11.6², 3.13.5², 3.6.9², (10 more . . .)

42 months : see *1,260 days*

616, Number of the Beast : see *Number of the Beast*

666, Number of the Beast : see *Number of the Beast*

70 Weeks : see *Seventy Weeks*

Abaddon : see *Apollyon*

Abomination¹⁰⁹ : 3.17.4¹², 4.1.4.1⁹, 3.17.5⁶, 2.13.4⁵, 3.12.6⁵, 4.1.3.3⁵, 3.13.14⁴, 2.13.6³, 3.6.12³, 4.16.5.4³, (54 more . . .)

Abomination of Desolation³⁵ : 2.13.6³, 3.6.12³, 4.16.5.9³, 2.13.4², 2.13.5.4², 3.12.6², 3.13.14², 3.13.15², 2.11.3.1, 3.11.1, (16 more . . .)

Abraham¹¹⁵ : 3.2.9¹³, 4.16.3.1¹¹, 4.16.5.8⁵, 2.7.5.3.1⁴, 4.16.3⁴, 3.10.3³, 3.12.17³, 3.19.9³, 3.5.6³, 3.9.20³, (63 more . . .)

Abram : see *Abraham*

Abyss¹⁹⁶ : 3.9.1³⁸, 3.9.11¹⁶, 4.2.7¹², 3.11.7⁹, 3.17.8⁸, 4.2.7.1⁸, 3.20.1⁶, 3.9.7⁶, 4.3.2.17⁵, 3.13.1⁵, (83 more . . .)

Adam⁹⁹ : 3.1.13¹⁴, 3.22.2⁷, 3.5.3⁵, 4.16.1⁵, 2.2.4⁴, 3.14.7⁴, 3.21.24⁴, 2.13.8³, 3.5.2³, 4.16.5.1³, (47 more . . .)

Adultery¹³ : 3.2.22³, 4.10.3², 3.17.5, 3.2.14, 3.21.8, 3.9.21, 4.1.3.1, 4.1.4.1, 4.13, 4.15.1.4, (8 more . . .)

Allegory²⁹ : 2.7.3¹⁰, 4.11.2², 2.7.2², 3.4.1², 4.2.8², 1.1, 2.12.2.4, 2.12.3, 3.1.1, 3.1.20, (11 more . . .)

Alpha and Omega²¹ : 3.1.8⁴, 3.22.13⁴, 2.13.8², 2.2.13², 3.1.11², 3.21.6², 3.4.3², 1.5, 3.13.17, 3.13.18, (3 more . . .)

Altar¹²⁵ : 3.6.9²³, 3.11.1¹¹, 3.8.3¹¹, 3.9.13¹⁰, 3.14.18⁶, 3.16.7⁶, 3.2.17⁴, 4.11.7⁴, 3.2.13³, 4.16.4³, (44 more . . .)

Amillennialism⁴⁶ : 3.20.1⁹, 3.20.2⁸, 5.2.1⁴, 2.7.3³, 4.11.1³, 4.11.3³, 3.20.5², 4.11.5², 2.10.1, 2.12.5, (12 more . . .)

Ammon⁴ : 3.12.6.1², 3.16.12, 4.1.4.1

Angel⁸⁹⁵ : 3.1.20⁵¹, 3.10.1.1⁴⁶, 3.9.1²⁷, 3.4.4²⁶, 3.8.2¹⁹, 3.20.1¹⁷, 3.8.3¹⁷, 3.10.1¹⁶, 3.10.3¹⁶, 3.19.10¹⁶, (644 more . . .)

Anglo-Israelism : see *British-Israelism*

Anti-supernatural¹⁷ : 2.5⁸, 2.5.1⁴, 2.3.2.1.1³, 2.3.3, 2.6.2

Antichrist : see *Beast, from the sea*

Antichrist, Armilus : see *Armilus, Antichrist*

Antitype : see *Type*

Apocalyptic²⁷² : 2.6.1²¹, 2.10.1¹², 2.11.3.2¹⁰, 2.6.2⁹, 2.6⁹, 2.11.4.2.1⁸, 2.8⁸, 2.7.5.4.2⁷, 2.9.3.4⁷, 4.12.2.4⁷, (174 more . . .)

Apocrypha²¹ : 2.7.5.4.2⁴, 5.2.5³, 4.17.2.1³, 2.7.5.4², 5.2.6¹², 2.10.2, 2.11.4.2.1, 2.12.2.5, 2.2.8, 2.7.1, (7 more . . .)

Apollyon¹² : 3.9.11⁶, 3.9.1⁴, 3.11.18²

Apostle¹⁸¹ : 2.9.4.1⁹, 3.2.2⁷, 3.21.12⁷, 2.9.2⁶, 2.7.5.3.7⁶, 3.21.14⁶, 3.18.20⁵, 3.4.4⁵, 3.7.4⁵, 2.10.1⁴, (121 more . . .)

Arianism² : 5.2.6, 5.2.7

Ark⁷⁹ : 3.11.19⁴⁵, 3.15.5⁴, 4.7.3⁴, 3.2.17³, 4.16.5.10.1³, 3.16.21², 3.3.10², 4.16.5.1², 3.10.1, 3.16.18, (14 more . . .)

Armageddon⁷⁷ : 4.5.6¹⁷, 4.5¹², 4.5.1⁶, 4.5.4⁶, 3.16.16⁴, 3.14.20³, 4.5.2³, 4.5.3.3³, 4.5.5³, 4.5.3.2², (18 more . . .)

Armilus, Antichrist¹² : 4.2.2¹²

Artemis¹⁵ : 3.2.1¹⁰, 3.3.1², 3.2.12, 3.2.5, 4.15.1.4

Asher⁹ : 3.21.13², 3.7.6², 3.21.19.1, 3.7.4, 4.17.3.1, 4.17.3.2.3, 4.7.2

Asia¹¹¹ : 3.1.11¹³, 4.15¹⁰, 2.11.4.2.4⁷, 4.15.1⁷, 2.11.4.1.1⁵, 2.12.5⁴, 3.2.13⁴, 3.3.10⁴, 2.11.4.2.2³, 3.1.4³, (51 more . . .)

Athanasias⁶ : 5.2.7³, 2.10.1, 2.10.2, 4.7.1

Audience²⁸ : 2.3.2⁴, 2.3³, 4.1.3.3³, 2.2.7², 4.12.2.4², 4.7², 2.3.2.2, 2.3.2.1, 3.1.6, 3.10.10, (12 more . . .)

Authority²³⁰ : 3.13.12⁸, 3.2.27⁷, 3.11.2⁶, 3.3.7⁶, 3.5.9⁶, 4.3.2.16⁶, 3.17.11⁵, 3.6.2⁵, 2.10⁴, 3.13.2⁴, (173 more . . .)

Authorship⁴⁶ : 2.9.1¹¹, 2.9⁹, 2.9.3.1³, 2.10², 2.5², 2.9.2², 2.9.4², 2.9.4.2², 2.10.1, 2.11.2, (13 more . . .)

Avenge : see *Vengeance*

Babel⁵⁸ : 4.3.2.5¹⁰, 4.1.1⁸, 4.1.3.5.3⁴, 3.17.10³, 3.18.3³, 3.17.18², 4.1.3.3², 4.1.3.5.2², 4.11.4², 4.3.2.4.1², (20 more . . .)

Babylon⁷¹² : 4.1.3.5.2⁴⁸, 4.1.3.4⁴³, 4.1.3.3⁴², 4.1.3.1²⁵, 3.14.8¹⁸, 4.1.2.1¹⁷, 4.1.4.2.2¹⁷, 3.17.16¹⁵, 4.1.3.5.3¹⁵, 4.1.2.2¹⁴, (458 more . . .)

Balaam³⁶ : 4.13¹⁷, 3.2.14⁶, 3.19.15², 3.2.20², 3.2.28², 3.1.1, 3.2.12, 3.2.15, 3.2.16, 4.15.1.4, (7 more . . .)

Baptism¹⁶ : 3.15.2³, 3.1.9², 3.14.18², 3.8.7², 4.16.5.10.2², 2.7.3, 3.4.1, 3.4.4, 3.9.20, 4.14.4.3, (5 more . . .)

Baptism, Holy Spirit¹ : 3.4.4

Bear⁷⁵ : 3.13.2⁹, 4.3.2.10⁴, 3.20.12⁴, 4.3.2.16³, 3.15.3², 3.2.2², 3.2.5², 3.22.2², 3.3.14², 3.3.7², (43 more . . .)

Beast, Image of : see *Image of the Beast*

Beast, Mark of : see *Mark of the Beast*

Beast, Number of : see *Number of the Beast*

Beast, from the land¹⁴¹ : 3.13.11¹⁸, 3.19.20¹³, 3.13.15¹⁰, 4.3.2.18⁹, 3.13.12⁹, 3.13.13⁷, 3.13.1⁶, 4.2.8⁴, 3.20.10³, 4.1.4.2.3³, (59 more . . .)

Beast, from the sea¹¹⁸⁴ : 3.13.1³⁵, 3.6.2³⁴, 3.11.7³², 3.13.4²⁸, 4.3.2.16²⁵, 3.13.12²², 3.13.16²², 3.17.8²⁰, 4.12.2.4²⁰, 4.2.7.1²⁰, (926

more . . .)

Benjamin²³ : 3.12.1³, 2.7.5.3.4², 3.21.13², 3.4.3², 3.11.15, 3.21.19.1, 3.7.4, 3.7.8, 4.11.7, 4.16.5.4, (14 more . . .)

Bible Study, Target² : 2.2.14²

Biblical, extra : see *Extra-Biblical*

Bird⁴⁰ : 3.18.2⁵, 3.19.17⁴, 3.16.14³, 3.8.13³, 3.12.6², 3.19.18², 3.2.20², 3.11.9, 3.12.14, 3.13.16, (19 more . . .)

Birth⁹⁶ : 3.12.2⁹, 3.6.1⁸, 3.20.6.1⁷, 3.16.17⁶, 2.13.4⁵, 2.13.6⁵, 3.12.1⁵, 3.1.1⁴, 3.1.5³, 3.12.17², (42 more . . .)

Black⁴¹ : 4.19.3⁸, 4.19.2⁵, 4.19.4⁴, 3.2.17³, 3.3.18³, 3.6.5³, 3.13.17², 2.14.3, 3.1.11, 3.11.3, (13 more . . .)

Blasphemy⁶⁰ : 3.13.1⁵, 3.13.5⁴, 3.13.6⁴, 3.17.3⁴, 3.16.21³, 3.14.13², 3.8.7², 4.16.5.10.2², 4.16.5.5.1², 4.3.2.4², (30 more . . .)

Blessing¹²⁷ : 2.13.3⁹, 4.11.3⁶, 3.14.13⁴, 3.20.6⁴, 3.22.7⁴, 3.3.17⁴, 4.11.7⁴, 3.1.3³, 3.19.5³, 3.7.12³, (83 more . . .)

Blind³² : 3.3.17⁵, 2.2.6², 2.7.5.7², 3.13.3², 3.14.7², 2.2.8, 2.2.9, 3.10.7, 3.11.13, 3.11.3, (19 more . . .)

Blood³²⁸ : 4.5.5.1¹⁷, 3.1.5¹⁴, 3.14.20¹⁴, 3.19.13¹⁴, 3.8.8¹³, 3.16.6¹², 3.16.3⁹, 3.17.6⁹, 3.6.9⁹, 3.8.7⁹, (208 more . . .)

Blotted Out⁵⁰ : 4.4.3¹⁰, 4.4.3.3⁷, 4.4.3.5⁷, 4.4.3.1⁶, 4.4.3.2⁵, 3.13.8³, 3.20.15², 4.4.3.4², 3.12.5, 3.13.15, (8 more . . .)

Body of Christ⁴² : 4.10.5⁶, 3.17.14⁵, 3.3.1³, 4.14.4.3³, 4.16.5.10.2³, 3.1.13², 3.7.4², 4.15.1.2², 3.12.6, 3.19.7, (16 more . . .)

Book¹⁵⁷⁰ : 3.5.1⁴⁷, 3.1.1³⁶, 2.10.1²⁸, 3.10.2²⁶, 3.13.8²⁶, 3.22.19²⁶, 2.12.5²⁵, 4.4.3²², 4.4.3.2²⁰, 2.11.1¹⁸, (1296 more . . .)

Book of Kells⁴ : 4.7⁴

Book of Life⁸³ : 3.13.8¹⁰, 4.4.3.2⁹, 4.4.3.1⁶, 3.17.8⁶, 4.4.3.3⁶, 4.4.3⁵, 4.4.1⁴, 4.4³, 3.21.27³, 3.3.5³, (28 more . . .)

Book of the Living : see *Book of Life*

Born Again¹³ : 3.20.6.1², 4.4.3.2², 2.2.3, 3.1.13, 3.12.10, 3.2.11, 3.3.1, 3.7.4, 3.9.4, 4.15.1.2, (9

more . . .)

Bottomless Pit : see *Abbyss*

Bound⁹⁴ : 3.20.2²¹, 3.20.1¹², 3.9.14¹¹, 4.11.3⁷, 4.11.2⁴, 2.7.4², 3.18.2², 2.12.4, 2.14.3, 2.7.5.3.3, (35 more . . .)

Bow³³ : 3.6.2⁵, 3.3.9³, 4.11.7³, 3.6.9², 3.1.18, 3.10.1, 3.11.15, 3.12.1, 3.12.6, 3.13.14, (20 more . . .)

Bowl²⁹⁰ : 2.14.2¹⁷, 3.16.1¹⁷, 3.15.1¹⁴, 2.13.5.4¹³, 2.14.3¹¹, 3.15.7¹⁰, 3.16.17¹⁰, 3.5.8¹⁰, 3.17.1⁹, 3.16.4⁸, (171 more . . .)

Bowl, Fifth⁷ : 3.16.10², 2.14.3, 3.13.2, 3.15.1, 3.16.11, 3.3.10.1

Bowl, First¹⁴ : 2.13.5.4⁵, 3.16.10², 3.18.4², 2.12.4, 2.14.3, 3.15.1, 3.16.11, 3.16.4

Bowl, Fourth⁸ : 2.14.3, 3.15.1, 3.16.4, 3.16.8, 3.3.10.1, 3.6.12, 3.6.2, 3.7.16

Bowl, Second⁷ : 2.14.2, 2.14.3, 3.15.1, 3.16.1, 3.7.1, 3.8.2, 3.8.8

Bowl, Seventh²⁷ : 3.16.17³, 3.11.13², 3.18.4², 3.19.1², 4.5.3.4², 2.14.3, 2.4.1, 3.11.14, 3.16.1, 3.17.1, (16 more . . .)

Bowl, Sixth¹⁵ : 4.5.3.4³, 3.6.12², 2.14.3, 3.15.1, 3.16.12, 3.16.15, 3.3.10, 3.3.10.1, 3.7.1, 3.9.14, (10 more . . .)

Bowl, Third⁸ : 2.14.3, 3.11.6, 3.13.15, 3.15.1, 3.16.4, 3.16.5, 3.19.2, 3.8.8

Bozrah²⁸ : 3.12.6.1⁸, 3.14.20⁷, 4.5.4⁷, 4.5.5², 4.5.5.1², 3.12.14, 4.5.3.5

Branch³² : 4.7⁵, 3.5.5³, 4.16.5.10.1³, 2.7.5.3.5², 3.11.4², 3.19.12², 4.11.7², 4.2.6², 3.10.1, 3.19.11, (11 more . . .)

Bride¹⁶² : 4.10.2²², 4.10.1²⁰, 4.10.5¹⁸, 3.21.2¹⁴, 3.19.7¹¹, 3.19.8¹⁰, 3.19.9⁷, 4.10.4⁷, 2.13.8⁴, 3.21.9³, (46 more . . .)

Brimstone²³ : 3.14.10⁵, 3.9.17⁴, 3.19.20³, 3.13.8, 3.17.8, 3.18.2, 3.18.23, 3.19.3, 3.2.11, 3.20.14, (11 more . . .)

British-Israelism⁸ : 4.17.2.3⁶, 5.2.2²

Burn¹⁶⁹ : 3.17.16¹⁰, 3.8.7⁸, 3.14.18⁶, 4.1.2.2⁶, 3.4.5⁵, 3.18.9⁴, 3.20.14⁴, 3.8⁴, 3.8.10⁴, 3.10.1³, (115 more . . .)

Buy²⁴ : 3.21.6², 3.22.17², 3.5.9², 3.1.13, 3.12.6, 3.13.11, 3.13.16, 3.13.17, 3.14.4, 3.16.15, (18

more . . .)

Caesar Nero : see *Nero, Caesar*

Calf : see *Ox*

Calvin, John¹¹ : 2.2.5², 2.9.1², 2.9.2², 2.10.1, 3.13.1, 3.22.10, 4.11.6, 4.2.8

Camp of Israel⁶ : 4.7.2², 4.7.3², 2.7.5.3.3, 3.20.9

Canon⁶⁵ : 2.10.1¹¹, 2.10.2⁸, 2.10⁶, 5.2.12⁵, 2.12.2.5⁴, 2.9³, 3.22.18³, 2.2.8², 2.6.2², 1.5, (21 more . . .)

Carnelian : see *Sardius*

Cave¹² : 3.6.17⁵, 3.6.15², 3.13.16, 3.19.18, 3.20.12, 3.6.12, 3.6.8

Censer¹² : 3.16.18², 3.8.3², 3.8.5², 3.14.18, 3.5.8, 3.6.17, 3.6.9, 4.16.4, 4.16.5.10.2

Chain³⁶ : 3.20.1¹², 3.9.1⁴, 2.7.4³, 2.12.4², 3.2.27², 3.20.2², 3.5.1², 3.1.1, 3.14.1, 3.16.3, (9 more . . .)

Chariot⁴⁹ : 4.19.3²⁰, 3.18.13³, 3.9.9³, 4.19.4³, 3.4.6², 3.9.17², 3.9.7², 2.7.5.3.3, 3.11.3.1, 3.18.12, (14 more . . .)

Cherub⁶⁰ : 3.4.6¹¹, 4.16.5.1⁷, 4.7.3⁷, 2.7.5.3.3⁵, 4.7⁴, 4.7.2⁴, 3.9.7³, 2.13.8, 2.2.7, 2.7.4, (19 more . . .)

Child²²⁴ : 4.11.7¹³, 3.12.2¹⁰, 3.7.4⁸, 3.12.6⁷, 3.2.23⁶, 3.2.9⁶, 3.21.7⁶, 4.17.2.2⁶, 4.17.3.2.2⁶, 3.12.5⁵, (151 more . . .)

Chiliasm²⁵ : 4.11.9⁷, 3.20.1⁶, 2.12.5⁴, 2.10.1³, 5.2.13², 3.20.2, 5.2.42, 5.2.52

Christ, Body of : see *Body of Christ*

Church Fathers⁶⁴ : 4.11.9⁵, 3.2.17⁴, 4.17.2.2⁴, 2.12.5³, 2.10.1², 3.1.7², 3.11.3.1², 3.12.6², 3.13.4², 3.20.1², (36 more . . .)

Churches, Seven of Asia : see *Seven Churches of Asia*

City⁸⁰⁶ : 3.21.2⁴², 4.1.3.5.2²⁸, 4.1.2.1²³, 3.16.19¹⁹, 3.11.2¹⁷, 3.17.18¹⁷, 3.11.8¹⁶, 3.14.1¹⁶, 3.17.16¹⁵, 3.21.16¹⁵, (598 more . . .)

City, Great⁷⁰ : 3.17.18¹⁰, 3.14.8⁵, 3.11.8⁴, 3.16.19⁴, 4.1.2.2⁴, 4.1.4.2.2⁴, 3.21.10³, 4.1.3.5.2³, 4.1.4.2.3³, 3.17.18.1², (28 more . . .)

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Clothing⁹⁸ : 3.12.1¹², 3.19.8⁸, 3.3.5⁸, 3.7.9⁶,

3.3.18⁵, 3.4.4⁴, 4.16⁴, 3.16.15³, 3.19.14³,
4.5.5.1³, (42 more . . .)

Cloud⁹⁰ : 3.1.7³⁰, 3.10.1⁵, 3.15.8⁵, 2.12.2.4³,
3.14.14³, 3.8.12³, 3.8.3³, 4.12.2.4², 4.16.2²,
4.5.4², (32 more . . .)

Coming, Second : see *Second Coming*

Command¹³⁷ : 3.22.14⁹, 3.2.17⁶, 3.13.16⁴,
3.12.17³, 3.14.12³, 3.14.4³, 3.4.1³, 3.6.1³,
4.1.1³, 4.15.1.4³, (97 more . . .)

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3.7.4⁸, 3.10.1⁷, 3.6.2⁷, 4.10.1⁶, 3.11.13⁴,
3.12.15⁴, 4.10.3⁴, (111 more . . .)

Creation¹⁴⁹ : 3.21.1¹⁵, 3.21.5⁹, 3.4.11⁹, 3.3.14⁷,
3.22.2⁶, 4.11.9⁶, 2.13.8⁴, 3.14.7⁴, 3.20.11⁴,
3.21.23⁴, (81 more . . .)

Creature¹⁷⁰ : 3.4.6²², 2.4.2⁵, 2.7.5.3.3⁵, 3.5.9⁵,
2.2.6⁴, 3.12.8⁴, 3.19.4⁴, 3.6.1⁴, 3.14.7³,
3.19.10³, (111 more . . .)

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Crown¹⁸⁷ : 3.6.2²⁷, 3.19.12²³, 3.4.4¹⁹,
4.16.5.10.1¹¹, 4.6.1¹¹, 4.6.3⁸, 3.9.7⁸, 4.6⁶,
3.12.3⁵, 3.13.1⁵, (64 more . . .)

Crucifixion⁶² : 3.1.7⁹, 3.11.8⁴, 3.12.1⁴, 4.14.9⁴,
4.16.3.1⁴, 4.16.5.5⁴, 4.16.3³, 3.12.4², 3.20.2²,
4.16.5.4², (24 more . . .)

Crystal¹⁷ : 3.4.6⁵, 3.15.2⁴, 3.22.1², 3.15.3,
3.21.11, 3.21.19, 3.21.19.1, 4.10.4, 4.9.3

Cup⁴⁸ : 3.17.4⁶, 3.14.10⁵, 3.15.8⁵, 4.1.4.2.2⁴,
3.16.19³, 3.18.6³, 3.1.9², 3.17.2², 3.18.24²,
3.6.4², (14 more . . .)

Curse⁶⁹ : 3.22.3¹³, 4.11.4⁵, 3.10.7³, 3.12.2³,
3.22.2³, 3.7.4³, 2.11.4.1.3², 2.2.14², 3.1.18²,
3.1.7², (31 more . . .)

Dan³⁷ : 3.7.4²⁸, 4.7.2⁵, 3.13.11², 4.2.3, 4.9.2

Daniel³⁶⁴ : 4.3.2.4.1¹⁶, 3.13.2¹⁴, 4.3.1¹³,
3.22.10¹³, 3.13.1¹¹, 4.3.2.16¹¹, 3.17.10¹⁰,
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Dark¹⁷¹ : 2.13.3¹⁰, 3.16.10⁸, 2.7.3⁶, 3.9.1⁶,
3.9.20⁵, 3.14.10⁴, 3.2.28⁴, 3.3.3⁴, 3.6.12⁴,
3.10.10³, (117 more . . .)

Date Written¹⁶⁰ : 2.11.1³¹, 2.11.3.2¹⁸, 2.11.3.1¹⁰,
2.11.4.2.1⁷, 2.11.2⁶, 2.11.4.1.2⁶, 2.11⁵, 2.11.4³,
2.11.4.1.1³, 2.11.4.1.3³, (68 more . . .)

David²⁰¹ : 3.5.5²¹, 3.3.21¹⁵, 3.22.16¹⁴, 3.3.7¹⁰,
3.12.1⁶, 4.11.5⁶, 3.1.7⁵, 3.14.1⁵, 4.5.5⁵,
2.7.5.3.4⁴, (110 more . . .)

David, Root of⁶ : 3.10.1.1², 2.2.13, 3.3.7, 3.5.5,
3.5.6

Day⁹⁹⁵ : 2.13.3⁶⁵, 3.1.10⁶¹, 2.13.3.1⁴⁹, 3.6.17⁴³,
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3.3.10.1¹², (679 more . . .)

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Day of the Lord¹⁸⁸ : 2.13.3.1³², 2.13.3³¹,
3.1.10¹⁵, 3.6.17¹⁵, 3.6.12¹¹, 3.3.3⁸, 2.13.1⁵,
2.13.4⁴, 3.10.10⁴, 3.6.1⁴, (59 more . . .)

Dead²⁸⁶ : 3.20.5²¹, 3.20.5.1¹⁸, 3.11.18¹³,
3.20.12¹³, 3.1.18¹⁰, 3.1.5¹⁰, 3.20.4⁹, 3.3.1⁹,
3.13.3⁶, 3.17.8⁶, (171 more . . .)

Death⁵³⁶ : 3.1.18²⁵, 3.6.8²⁴, 3.20.14¹⁸,
3.20.6.1¹⁵, 3.21.1¹⁴, 3.21.4¹³, 3.20.6¹¹, 3.2.10¹⁰,
3.17.8⁹, 3.20.4⁹, (388 more . . .)

Death, First⁵ : 3.20.6.1³, 3.19.15, 3.2.11

Death, Second⁴⁶ : 3.20.6⁹, 3.2.11⁷, 3.20.14⁶,
3.20.6.1⁵, 3.11.18⁴, 3.14.10², 3.9.21², 4.15.1.3²,
4.4.1², 3.16.17, (7 more . . .)

Deception¹³⁶ : 3.12.9¹², 3.20.3¹⁰, 3.20.2⁸,
3.13.13⁷, 3.13.14⁷, 3.16.14⁴, 3.18.23⁴, 3.19.20⁴,
3.20.8⁴, 3.13.11³, (73 more . . .)

Deed of Purchase⁶ : 3.5.1⁶

Demon²⁰⁵ : 3.9.1¹⁹, 3.18.2¹⁸, 3.16.14¹², 3.9.11¹⁰,
3.9.4⁹, 3.9.20⁸, 3.9.21⁸, 3.9.7⁸, 3.13.15⁵,
3.13.4⁵, (103 more . . .)

Desolation, Abomination of : see *Abomination of Desolation*

Devil : see *Satan*

Devil⁶⁶⁶ : 3.20.2⁵⁹, 3.20.1²⁴, 4.2.5²³, 3.9.1¹⁹,
3.12.9¹⁵, 4.2.7¹⁵, 3.12.3¹³, 3.2.24¹³, 3.20.3¹³,
3.12.6¹², (460 more . . .)

Diadem : see *Crown*

Diamond⁶ : 3.2.17², 2.2.3, 3.21.11, 3.21.19.1,
3.4.3

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Didache⁶ : 2.12.2.3², 2.3.2.2, 3.1.10, 3.3.10, 4.12.2.4

Dispensation³³ : 5.2.15⁵, 2.2.11⁴, 2.12.5³, 2.2.7², 3.20.9², 3.6.11², 4.16.5.10.2², 2.13.1, 2.3.2.2, 3.1.6, (13 more . . .)

Docetism² : 5.2.16, 5.2.28

Dome of the Rock¹⁵ : 4.16.5.8¹⁰, 4.16.5.9³, 3.11.19, 4.16.3

Dominion⁸⁶ : 3.19.15⁷, 3.11.15⁵, 4.11.3⁵, 3.1.6⁴, 3.5.6⁴, 2.10³, 2.11.1³, 2.12.2.2³, 3.1.13³, 3.4.4³, (46 more . . .)

Dominion Theology¹⁰ : 2.10³, 5.2.17, 2.11.1, 2.12.2.2, 2.2.11, 3.11.15, 3.9.3, 5.2.77

Domitian⁹⁴ : 2.11.4.2.1²², 2.11.4.1.2¹⁰, 2.11.3.2⁹, 3.1.9⁶, 2.11.4.2.2⁵, 2.11.4.1.3⁴, 3.6.6⁴, 2.9.4.1³, 3.10.11³, 2.11.2², (26 more . . .)

Door⁵⁶ : 3.3.8¹¹, 3.3.20¹⁰, 3.4.1⁶, 3.3.7⁵, 3.12.6.1³, 4.15.1.4³, 3.12.6², 3.15.8², 4.16.5.4², 1.1, (12 more . . .)

Dragon : see *Satan*

Drunk⁴⁰ : 3.17.2⁴, 3.17.6⁴, 4.1.4.2.2⁴, 3.14.10³, 3.14.8³, 3.3.3³, 3.16.15², 3.16.6², 2.2.6, 2.7.5.7, (15 more . . .)

Dweller, Earth : see *Earth Dweller*

Eagle⁵⁶ : 4.7.2⁹, 3.8.13⁸, 4.7⁶, 3.4.6⁵, 4.7.1⁵, 3.12.14⁴, 3.19.17³, 2.7.5.3.3², 3.14.17², 3.12.3, (12 more . . .)

Ear¹⁸ : 3.3.14⁴, 2.2.5, 3.1.10, 3.11.1, 3.11.3, 3.12.6, 3.14.17, 3.16.13, 3.2.2, 3.22.17, (14 more . . .)

Earth : see *World*

Earth Dweller⁹⁷ : 3.3.10.17, 3.9.20⁵, 2.13.3.1³, 3.13.13³, 3.14.7³, 3.16.1³, 3.17.8³, 3.8.7³, 3.11.5², 3.15.1², (63 more . . .)

Earth, New⁵⁹ : 3.21.1¹⁴, 3.21.24⁴, 2.12.2.5³, 2.13.3³, 2.12.2.1², 3.10.7², 3.16.20², 3.19.9², 3.2.7², 3.22.1², (23 more . . .)

Earthquake⁸² : 3.16.18¹⁴, 3.6.12¹², 3.11.13⁸, 3.16.19⁵, 2.11.4.1.3³, 2.14.1³, 3.16.21³, 3.3.1³, 2.14.2², 3.11.19², (27 more . . .)

East⁹⁴ : 3.16.12¹¹, 3.9.16⁶, 3.7.1⁵, 4.16.5.1⁵, 4.5.4⁵, 4.11.7⁴, 4.7.2⁴, 3.21.13³, 2.10.1², 3.17.14², (47 more . . .)

Eat⁷⁹ : 3.22.2⁹, 4.11.7⁶, 3.10.9⁵, 3.19.9⁵, 3.2.17⁴, 4.15.1.4⁴, 3.17.16³, 3.10.2², 3.12.2², 3.2.20², (37 more . . .)

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Ecclesiastical²¹ : 4.1.3.1⁴, 3.17.16³, 3.17.3³, 4.1.3.2², 4.1.4.2.3², 4.11.9², 2.11.4.1.1, 2.13.5.5, 3.1.9, 3.6.11, (5 more . . .)

Elder¹⁴⁵ : 3.4.4⁴⁴, 3.5.9¹³, 3.19.4¹⁰, 2.4.2⁶, 3.14.3⁵, 3.1.20⁴, 3.20.4⁴, 3.5.8⁴, 2.9.2³, 3.11.16³, (49 more . . .)

Election¹⁴⁹ : 3.17.14¹¹, 3.12.6⁴, 3.16.15⁴, 3.19.9⁴, 3.7.4⁴, 4.17.2.3⁴, 3.16.14³, 3.21.14³, 3.3.10³, 3.4.4³, (106 more . . .)

Elijah⁹² : 3.11.3.1⁵⁷, 3.11.3⁷, 3.11.6⁵, 2.12.5³, 2.7.5.3.1³, 3.11.5², 3.12.6², 4.14.2², 2.6.1, 2.7.5.4.2, (11 more . . .)

Emerald⁹ : 3.21.19.1⁴, 3.4.3⁴, 4.7.2

Emperor Worship²³ : 2.11.4.1.2⁸, 2.11.4.2.2⁴, 3.2.13³, 2.2.8², 2.3.2², 3.2.9, 4.13, 4.3.2.4, 5.2.31

Enoch⁴⁶ : 3.11.3.1²⁴, 3.8.2³, 2.6.1², 3.3.10², 4.14.2², 4.14.5², 4.14.9², 2.12.5, 2.7.5.4.2, 3.1.4, (9 more . . .)

Ephesus⁹⁴ : 3.2.1³⁰, 2.11.4.1.1⁸, 3.2.5⁵, 2.9.4.1⁴, 4.15.1.4⁴, 2.11.3.2³, 2.11.4.2.1³, 3.1.20³, 4.15³, 4.15.1³, (28 more . . .)

Ephraim⁵³ : 4.7.2¹⁴, 3.7.4¹², 3.21.13⁴, 4.17.2.4.2⁴, 3.16.12³, 3.7.8², 4.17.3.1², 4.17.3.2.2², 4.2.2², 3.12.6, (8 more . . .)

Erasmus⁶ : 3.22.19⁴, 2.9.1²

Eternal³³⁷ : 3.22.2³⁵, 3.21.1¹⁴, 4.11.3⁸, 3.1.18⁷, 4.11.7⁷, 3.21.23⁶, 3.2.7⁵, 3.20.12⁵, 3.22.1⁵, 3.22.3⁵, (240 more . . .)

Euphrates⁸¹ : 3.9.14¹⁶, 3.16.12¹⁵, 3.18.17⁹, 4.1.3.5.2⁶, 4.1.3.5.3³, 3.16.16², 3.17.1², 3.18.21², 3.9.16², 4.1.2.1², (22 more . . .)

Eusebius⁴⁰ : 2.11.4.2.1⁹, 5.2.19⁶, 2.9.2⁶, 2.9.1³, 2.10.1², 2.11.3.2², 3.2.1², 4.11.9², 2.10.2, 2.11.4.1.2, (8 more . . .)

Evangelical³⁷ : 2.5²⁸, 2.5.1², 2.2.10, 2.2.3, 2.7.2, 3.20.12, 4.1.3.3, 4.5.2, 5.2.56

Eve⁶⁰ : 3.22.2⁶, 4.16.1⁵, 3.12.2⁴, 3.12.1³,

3.12.9³, 3.21.24³, 4.16.5.1³, 3.20.3², 4.1.3.5.2², 4.16.2², (27 more . . .)

Evidence, External¹⁷ : 2.11.3.2⁶, 2.11.2³, 2.9.4², 2.11.4.2, 2.11.4.1, 2.9, 2.9.3.1, 2.9.4.1, 3.11.12

Evidence, Internal⁵⁰ : 2.11.2¹⁵, 2.9.3.1⁹, 2.11.3.1⁷, 2.11.3.2⁵, 2.11.4.1², 2.11.4.2.2², 2.9.2², 2.9.3, 2.11.4.1.1, 2.11.4.1.2, (8 more . . .)

External Evidence : see *Evidence, External*

Extra-Biblical³² : 2.2.8¹¹, 2.7.5.4³, 3.7.4², 2.12.1, 2.2.14, 2.2.4, 2.3.2.1, 2.5, 2.7.5.5, 3.13.13, (16 more . . .)

Eye¹⁶⁰ : 3.1.7¹⁰, 3.3.18⁶, 3.1.14⁵, 3.4.8⁵, 4.2.4⁵, 3.11.4⁴, 3.13.3⁴, 3.2.18⁴, 3.20.4⁴, 3.5.6⁴, (109 more . . .)

Face¹⁷⁵ : 3.22.4¹⁷, 4.7.1⁵, 3.9.7⁵, 3.12.6⁴, 3.21.3⁴, 3.4.6⁴, 3.6.16⁴, 4.1.1⁴, 4.7⁴, 4.7.2⁴, (120 more . . .)

Fall, The⁷¹ : 2.12.2.1⁵, 4.16.5.1⁵, 2.11.1⁴, 3.22.2⁴, 3.17.10³, 4.17.3.1³, 5.2.59³, 2.2.7², 3.12.2², 3.2.5², (38 more . . .)

Fallen¹²³ : 3.9.1¹⁵, 3.18.2⁷, 3.17.10⁶, 4.3.2.5⁵, 4.3.2.4⁵, 4.1.2.2⁴, 3.9.3³, 4.2.7³, 4.3.2.12³, 4.3.2.4.1³, (69 more . . .)

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False Prophets¹⁴ : 3.13.11³, 3.2.2², 2.13.6, 3.12.9, 3.13.13, 3.13.14, 3.14.6, 3.16.14, 3.21.8, 4.12.2.4, (9 more . . .)

Famine⁷² : 3.6.6¹⁴, 3.6.8¹⁴, 3.7.16⁶, 3.8.7⁴, 3.13.10³, 3.6.2³, 3.2.4², 2.13.3.1, 2.7.5.3.2, 3.1.1, (26 more . . .)

Father God : see *God, the Father*

Fathers, Church : see *Church Fathers*

Feet¹⁰⁷ : 4.3.1⁶, 4.3.2.12⁵, 3.1.15⁴, 3.13.2⁴, 3.19.10⁴, 3.1.13³, 3.12.1³, 3.19.15³, 3.21.16³, 3.3.9³, (69 more . . .)

Figures⁹² : 3.11.5¹⁸, 2.7.4¹⁵, 2.7.3¹², 2.7.2³, 2.7.5.1³, 2.5.1², 3.14.20², 3.7.4², 5.3, 2.12.2.4, (35 more . . .)

Fire³⁶⁸ : 3.11.5²⁶, 3.19.20²⁰, 3.8.7¹⁷, 3.14.18¹⁴, 3.15.2¹², 3.9.17¹⁰, 3.20.14⁹, 3.14.10⁸, 3.17.16⁷, 3.20.10⁷, (238 more . . .)

Fire, Lake of : see *Lake of Fire*

First Death : see *Death, First*

First Resurrection : see *Resurrection, First*

Firstborn²³ : 3.1.5⁷, 3.5.5⁴, 3.5.13², 2.13.7, 2.2.13, 3.1.7, 3.10.1.1, 3.14.1, 3.21.2, 3.3.12, (10 more . . .)

Five¹⁰⁹ : 2.7.5.3.4¹³, 4.3.2.5⁸, 3.17.10⁸, 3.9.5⁷, 4.3.2.4⁵, 4.3.2.12⁴, 2.5.1³, 3.21.16³, 3.6.12³, 2.13.5.2², (53 more . . .)

Flag : see *Standard*

Food⁷³ : 3.10.1⁶, 3.12.15⁶, 3.16.12⁶, 4.14.9⁴, 3.3.3³, 3.4.3³, 2.13.8², 3.10.4², 3.15.2², 3.3.10², (37 more . . .)

Fonts⁶ : 2.2.2.6³, 2.2.2.2², 3.13.18

Forehead⁶⁷ : 3.7.3⁸, 3.13.16⁷, 3.14.1⁶, 3.17.5⁵, 3.20.4³, 3.22.4³, 2.14.2², 2.4.2², 3.17.4², 3.3.10², (27 more . . .)

Fornication⁸¹ : 3.17.2¹¹, 3.14.8¹⁰, 4.1.4.2.2⁶, 3.18.3⁵, 3.9.21⁵, 3.17.4⁴, 3.19.2⁴, 3.21.8⁴, 3.9.1⁴, 4.13⁴, (24 more . . .)

Foundation¹¹² : 3.13.8.1¹², 4.4.2⁸, 3.21.19.1⁷, 3.13.8⁵, 3.21.14⁵, 3.21.2⁴, 3.5.6⁴, 2.7.5.3.7³, 3.1.1³, 3.4.3³, (58 more . . .)

Fountain²¹ : 3.21.6⁷, 3.17.5², 3.7.17², 3.8.10², 3.1.18, 3.16.12, 3.21.1, 3.22.1, 3.22.17, 3.8.2, (8 more . . .)

Four⁴⁰⁷ : 2.7.5.3.3⁴⁰, 3.4.6²¹, 4.7¹⁹, 4.7.2¹⁷, 3.7.1¹⁴, 3.4.4¹³, 4.3.2.4.1¹³, 3.6.1¹², 4.3.2.8¹⁰, 3.9.14⁹, (239 more . . .)

Fruit⁹² : 3.22.2²³, 4.11.7⁵, 2.7.5.3.7⁴, 3.14.4³, 3.12.2², 3.13.11², 3.14.18², 3.18.14², 3.2.23², 3.2.4², (45 more . . .)

Futurist³⁹ : 2.12.5²⁰, 3.17.10⁴, 2.12², 2.14.2², 2.12.1, 2.12.2.2, 2.12.2.3, 2.12.2.4, 2.12.6, 2.2.7, (11 more . . .)

Futurist Interpretation : see *Interpretation, Futurist*

Gad¹¹ : 4.17.2.4.1³, 3.21.13², 3.7.5², 3.21.19.1, 3.7.4, 4.17.3.1, 4.7.2

Gamatria : see *Gematria*

Garden⁸⁵ : 4.16.5.1²⁰, 3.22.2¹³, 3.2.7⁷, 2.13.8⁵, 3.10.7³, 3.4.3³, 4.16.1³, 3.22.3², 4.16.2², 4.5.1², (25 more . . .)

Garden of Eden⁸⁵ : 4.16.5.1²⁰, 3.22.2¹³, 3.2.7⁷, 2.13.8⁵, 3.10.7³, 3.4.3³, 4.16.1³, 3.22.3², 4.16.2², 4.5.1², (25 more . . .)

Garment¹⁶⁹ : 3.19.8¹⁹, 4.5.5.1¹⁵, 3.3.18¹⁰,

3.3.4¹⁰, 3.19.13⁹, 3.3.5⁸, 3.7.9⁸, 3.1.13⁶,
3.16.15⁶, 3.12.6.1⁵, (73 more . . .)

Garments, White : see *White Robes*

Gate⁹³ : 3.21.12¹², 3.21.13¹¹, 3.22.2⁶, 4.11.7⁶,
3.22.14⁵, 3.21.21⁴, 3.21.25⁴, 2.7.5.3.7³, 3.1.18³,
3.11.15³, (36 more . . .)

Gematria¹⁹ : 4.12.2.3⁶, 3.13.18³, 4.12.2.1²,
4.12.2.5², 5.2.21, 3.13.17, 4.12, 4.12.2.2,
4.12.2.4, 4.2.6, (6 more . . .)

Genesis compared with Revelation¹ : 2.13.8

Genre³⁸ : 2.6⁷, 2.6.2⁷, 2.14.2⁴, 2.5.1³, 2.6.1³,
2.7.2³, 2.7.1², 2.7.4², 2.7.5.2², 5.2.22, (5 more .
. . .)

Gentile²⁶⁰ : 3.11.2³², 4.2.3¹⁸, 3.7.4¹⁸, 3.13.1⁸,
4.11.7⁸, 3.3.9⁷, 3.12.17⁶, 3.21.21⁶, 3.10.3⁴,
3.12.6⁴, (149 more . . .)

Glass²⁰ : 3.15.2⁷, 3.4.6³, 3.21.21², 3.22.1²,
3.15.4, 3.15.5, 3.17.6, 3.21.11, 3.21.18, 3.9.7,
(6 more . . .)

Glory³⁵⁸ : 4.16.2²², 3.1.7¹⁵, 3.21.23¹³, 3.15.8⁹,
4.11.7⁹, 2.4.2⁷, 3.1.13⁷, 3.1.14⁷, 3.21.24⁶,
3.22.4⁶, (257 more . . .)

Glory, Shekinah : see *Shekinah Glory*

Glossary⁵ : 2.2.2.3², 5.2, 1.5, 2.2.2.2

Gnosticism¹⁷ : 5.2.23⁴, 2.9.1², 2.9.4.2², 3.2.24²,
3.12.9, 3.13.17, 4.11.3, 4.13, 5.2.34, 5.2.55, (7
more . . .)

God, Son of : see *Son of God*

God, the Father³¹ : 3.1.1, 3.1.4, 3.11.4, 3.13.11,
3.14.1, 3.15.3, 3.16.17, 3.16.20, 3.17.14,
3.19.1, (31 more . . .)

Goel : see *Redeemer, Kinsman*

Gog³⁸ : 3.20.8¹⁴, 4.5.6¹³, 3.16.18², 3.9.11²,
3.14.10, 3.16.14, 3.16.21, 3.19.15, 3.19.18,
3.20.9, (7 more . . .)

Gold²⁰⁸ : 3.17.4⁶, 3.3.18⁶, 3.11.19⁵, 3.9.7⁵,
4.11.7⁵, 4.3.1⁵, 3.18.12⁴, 3.21.18⁴, 3.5.8⁴,
4.9.2⁴, (160 more . . .)

Golden Rule of Interpretation²⁸ : 5.2.24²,
2.12.5², 2.7.2², 4.15.1.5², 2.12, 2.12.3, 2.13.3.1,
2.14.2, 3.1.1, 3.1.3, (20 more . . .)

Gospel²²⁰ : 4.7¹⁸, 3.14.6¹², 2.8⁹, 4.7.1⁷, 3.7.4⁷,
3.10.7⁶, 4.14.4.2⁵, 2.9.3.4⁴, 3.3.20⁴, 3.5.9⁴, (144
more . . .)

Gospels, Synoptic : see *Synoptic Gospels*

Govern⁶¹ : 3.19.16⁴, 4.14.4.2⁴, 3.20.9³, 3.8.7³,
4.11.4³, 4.2.9³, 4.3.2.4³, 3.3.14², 3.3.7², 3.5.5²,
(32 more . . .)

Grape²³ : 3.14.18⁸, 4.5.5.1⁶, 3.14.15³, 3.15.3²,
4.5.5, 3.10.3, 3.14.19, 3.16.9

Grass⁴⁵ : 3.8.7¹⁵, 3.8¹⁰, 3.9.4⁶, 3.14.8², 3.6.8²,
3.7.1², 4.11.7², 2.7.5.3.2, 3.17.16, 3.3.10, (6
more . . .)

Great City : see *City, Great*

Great Tribulation : see *Tribulation, Great*

Great White Throne³² : 3.19.20⁴, 3.11.18³,
3.20.5.1³, 3.20.6.1², 4.4.3.4², 2.12.5, 2.14.3,
3.1.10, 3.12.6, 3.17.8, (18 more . . .)

Green⁴⁰ : 3.8.7⁷, 3.9.4⁵, 3.21.19.1⁴, 3.8⁴, 3.6.8³,
3.7.1³, 3.11.4², 3.8.11², 4.7.2², 2.7.2, (8 more .
. . .)

Hades⁶⁵ : 3.6.8¹⁵, 3.1.18¹⁴, 3.20.13⁷, 3.20.14⁵,
3.9.1⁴, 3.19.20², 3.19.21², 4.4.1², 2.7.5.3.1,
3.12.6, (14 more . . .)

Hail⁴⁹ : 3.16.21²⁰, 3.8.7¹⁵, 2.7.2³, 2.13.7²,
3.11.19², 3.9.4², 3.15.2, 3.16.18, 3.3.10.1,
4.17.2.4.2, (5 more . . .)

Hand³⁶⁸ : 3.13.16⁹, 3.11.2⁸, 3.1.3⁷, 3.12.6⁷,
3.20.4⁷, 3.9.20⁷, 4.11.7⁷, 3.1.20⁶, 3.10.2⁶,
3.10.5⁶, (298 more . . .)

Hand, Right : see *Right Hand*

Har Megiddo : see *Armageddon*

Harlot²⁴⁷ : 4.1.4.1¹⁷, 4.1.4.2.2¹⁶, 4.1.3.3¹⁵,
3.17.4¹³, 3.19.2¹¹, 3.17.16¹⁰, 4.1.4.2.3⁹, 3.17.5⁷,
4.1.3.4⁷, 4.1.3.5.2⁶, (136 more . . .)

Harp⁵⁵ : 3.14.2¹⁹, 3.14.1.2¹⁸, 3.15.2⁶, 3.5.8⁶,
3.14.3², 3.14.5, 3.16.9, 3.18.22, 3.19.1

Harvest⁷⁰ : 3.14.15³², 3.14.16⁵, 3.14.4⁴,
3.20.5.1³, 4.14.10³, 3.14.17², 3.15.1², 4.5.2²,
2.7.5.3.3, 3.1.13, (17 more . . .)

Head³¹⁹ : 4.3.2.4.1²⁷, 3.13.1²⁴, 4.3.2.4²⁰,
3.12.3¹⁴, 3.13.3¹⁰, 3.19.16⁸, 4.3.2.16⁸, 3.17.10⁷,
3.17.11⁷, 3.9.7⁷, (187 more . . .)

Heads, Seven : see *Seven Heads*

Healed⁷⁰ : 3.22.2²³, 3.13.3⁵, 3.1.18³, 4.11.7³,
3.12.6², 3.13.1², 3.13.11², 3.16.2², 3.17.8²,
3.18.4², (24 more . . .)

Heat⁴⁴ : 3.16.8⁷, 3.7.16⁵, 3.16.9³, 3.20.11³, 3.21.1³, 3.8.7³, 3.3.10.1², 3.6.12², 3.7.15², 2.13.3.1, (14 more . . .)

Heaven⁷⁴⁵ : 3.21.1³⁹, 3.4.1¹⁵, 3.14.1.2¹², 3.20.11¹⁰, 3.6.13¹⁰, 3.19.1⁹, 3.4.4⁹, 3.11.3.1⁸, 3.13.6⁸, 3.2.17⁸, (617 more . . .)

Heaven, New²⁴ : 3.21.1⁶, 3.22.1³, 3.19.9², 3.22.2², 4.11.1², 2.13.8, 3.20.11, 3.21.16, 3.21.24, 3.21.25, (9 more . . .)

Hell⁴² : 3.19.20⁶, 3.20.12³, 3.20.14³, 3.14.10², 3.20.6.1², 3.7.9², 3.9.1², 4.14.6², 2.5, 3.1.6, (20 more . . .)

Hermeneutic⁴⁶ : 2.12.2.4⁸, 2.7.2⁶, 5.2.26⁴, 2.7.3⁴, 2.12.5³, 2.12.6³, 2.2.6³, 2.7.1², 2.7.4², 3.1.1², (9 more . . .)

Hermeneutics : see *Interpretation*

Herod²⁰ : 3.11.2³, 4.16.5.4³, 2.11.3.1², 3.12.4², 2.3.1, 3.11.1, 3.11.4, 3.20.2, 3.7.2, 4.1.2.1, (10 more . . .)

Hills, Seven : see *Seven Mountains*

Historicist¹⁰ : 2.12.4⁹, 2.12

Historist Interpretation : see *Interpretation, Historicist*

Holy⁵⁹² : 4.14.4.2²⁰, 4.16.5.5²⁰, 3.11.2¹⁷, 4.16.5.1¹⁴, 3.15.4¹¹, 4.14.4.1¹¹, 4.11.7¹⁰, 3.3.7⁹, 4.16.5.10.1⁹, 3.19.10⁸, (463 more . . .)

Holy Spirit²²¹ : 4.14.4.2²⁰, 4.16.5.5¹⁷, 4.14.4.1¹¹, 3.11.4⁶, 3.13.11⁶, 3.19.10⁶, 3.1.4⁵, 3.3.1⁵, 4.16.5.10.2⁵, 3.22.17⁴, (136 more . . .)

Holy Spirit Baptism : see *Baptism, Holy Spirit*

Holy of Holies⁴⁰ : 4.16.5.1⁸, 4.16.5.4⁴, 3.11.1², 3.11.19², 3.21.16², 3.21.23², 4.16.5.10.1², 4.16.5.11², 4.16.5.5², 4.16.5.8², (12 more . . .)

Honor⁶³ : 3.5.12⁵, 3.20.11⁴, 3.19.1³, 3.14.5², 3.21.24², 3.22.12², 3.22.7², 3.4.11², 4.11.6.1², 4.6.1², (37 more . . .)

Horn²⁰² : 3.13.1¹⁶, 4.3.2.22¹⁵, 3.5.6¹³, 4.3.2.25¹², 3.12.3¹¹, 3.17.11¹⁰, 4.3.2.16⁹, 4.3⁷, 3.13.11⁶, 3.17.12⁶, (97 more . . .)

Horns, Ten : see *Ten Horns*

Horse¹⁷⁷ : 4.19.3²⁴, 4.19.2²⁰, 3.9.17¹⁵, 3.6.2¹², 4.19.4¹², 3.9.7¹⁰, 3.14.20⁵, 3.6.8⁵, 4.5.5.1⁵, 2.14.3⁴, (65 more . . .)

Horsemen⁴⁸ : 4.19.2⁶, 3.6.2⁵, 3.6.8⁴, 3.16.12³, 4.19.3³, 4.19.1², 2.7.5.3.3², 2.4.1, 2.7.4, 3.14.18, (23 more . . .)

Hour¹⁰⁴ : 3.3.10¹⁴, 3.16.15⁷, 3.3.3⁷, 3.17.12⁵, 3.14.8³, 3.9.15³, 4.1.2.2³, 1.1², 2.13.3², 2.13.3.1², (56 more . . .)

Hunger : see *Famine*

Husband²⁹ : 4.10.3⁸, 4.10.5³, 2.13.8², 3.21.2², 4.10.6², 4.9.2², 1.1, 3.12.2, 3.12.6, 3.14.4, (10 more . . .)

Hyperbole¹⁷ : 4.1.2⁴, 5.2.27², 2.11.4.1.2, 2.12, 2.13.3, 2.7.4, 3.1.11, 3.14.20, 3.16.21, 3.6.13, (11 more . . .)

Idealist¹¹ : 2.12.3⁷, 2.12, 2.12.2.2, 2.12.2.4, 2.12.6

Idealist Interpretation : see *Interpretation, Idealist*

Idol⁷⁹ : 3.9.20¹⁴, 3.13.15⁴, 4.18.2⁴, 3.13.14³, 3.13.4³, 3.2.14³, 3.2.4³, 3.21.8³, 3.6.17³, 3.7.2³, (36 more . . .)

Idolatry⁶⁹ : 3.7.4⁶, 3.17.5³, 3.8.7³, 3.9.20³, 4.1.4.1³, 4.9.2³, 3.1.1², 3.14.4², 3.14.7², 3.17.1², (40 more . . .)

Ignatius²⁰ : 5.2.28⁴, 3.2.2³, 3.2.8², 4.15.1², 4.15.1.1.1², 2.10.2, 2.11.4.1.3, 3.1.10, 3.1.20, 3.3.9, (7 more . . .)

Illumination¹³ : 2.2.3, 2.2.6, 2.7.2, 3.1.13, 3.11.4, 3.18.1, 3.2.17, 3.2.5, 3.2.7, 3.21.23, (13 more . . .)

Image²²⁴ : 3.13.15²⁶, 4.3.2.19²¹, 3.13.14¹³, 2.13.5.4¹¹, 3.9.20⁸, 4.3.1⁷, 2.13.1⁵, 3.15.2⁵, 3.20.4⁵, 3.13.18⁴, (119 more . . .)

Image of the Beast⁷⁵ : 3.13.15⁹, 4.3.2.19⁹, 2.13.5.4⁶, 3.9.20⁵, 3.20.4⁴, 3.15.2³, 5.2.29², 3.13.11², 3.13.14², 3.13.7², (31 more . . .)

Imminency⁶⁵ : 4.8.2²², 4.8⁸, 2.4.3⁵, 3.1.1⁵, 2.12.2.4⁴, 2.12.2.5³, 4.15.1.5², 5.2.30, 2.11.1, 3.1.3, (16 more . . .)

Immorality, Sexual : see *Fornication*

Imperial cult⁷ : 5.2.31², 2.11.4.1.2, 2.3.2, 3.2.1, 3.2.13, 3.2.9

Incense⁴⁹ : 3.8.3¹⁰, 3.5.8⁸, 3.6.9⁶, 4.16.4³, 3.15.4², 3.8.4², 4.1.4.1², 4.11.7², 4.16.5.1², 3.11.1, (12 more . . .)

- Inerrancy**²⁹ : 5.2.32⁴, 2.5⁴, 2.2.14³, 2.5.1³, 3.10.7², 2.12.2.5, 2.2.10, 2.2.8, 2.2.9, 2.7.2, (13 more . . .)
- Inherit**⁷⁷ : 3.5.1¹¹, 3.21.7¹⁰, 3.22.2⁶, 3.21.8⁵, 4.5.1³, 3.10.7², 3.16.12², 3.20.4², 3.5.10², 3.5.5², (32 more . . .)
- Inspiration**⁹¹ : 3.22.18⁶, 2.2.8⁵, 2.5⁵, 2.7.5.4⁵, 2.2.14⁴, 2.7.2⁴, 3.22.19³, 5.2.33², 2.10.1², 2.5.1², (53 more . . .)
- Internal Evidence** : see *Evidence, Internal*
- Interpretation**⁵⁴⁹ : 2.7.2⁴⁴, 2.7.3²⁶, 2.12.5²⁴, 2.12.2.4¹⁸, 4.11.9¹³, 2.12.6¹², 2.7.4¹¹, 4.15.1.5¹¹, 2.11.1¹⁰, 2.12.3⁹, (371 more . . .)
- Interpretation, Ecclectic**¹ : 2.12.6
- Interpretation, Futurist**¹¹ : 2.12.5⁶, 2.12.1, 2.12.2.3, 2.7.2, 3.13.16, 3.6.9
- Interpretation, Historicist**² : 2.12.4²
- Interpretation, Idealist**⁵ : 2.12.3⁴, 2.12.2.4
- Interpretation, Literal** : see *Literalism*
- Interpretation, Preterist**¹³ : 2.11.1³, 2.12.2.4², 3.1.7², 4.1.3.4², 2.12.2, 2.12.2.1, 2.12.2.3, 4.12.2.4
- Interpretation, Systems of**¹⁰ : 2.12², 2.11.1², 2.12.5², 2.12.6, 2.7.2, 4.11, 4.11.2
- Iona**² : 4.7²
- Iraq**⁴ : 4.1.3.5.2⁴
- Irenaeus**⁹³ : 2.11.3.2²¹, 4.11.9¹⁰, 4.12.2.4¹⁰, 2.12.5⁸, 2.11.4.2.1⁷, 3.13.18⁶, 2.9.4.1⁵, 4.13⁵, 5.2.34³, 2.10.2³, (15 more . . .)
- Isaac**⁴⁹ : 4.16.3.1¹⁰, 4.16.5.8⁶, 2.12.4⁴, 4.16.3⁴, 3.12.17³, 3.19.9³, 3.2.9², 2.11.3.2, 2.13.8, 2.14.1, (17 more . . .)
- Islam**²² : 4.16.5.8¹⁵, 4.16.3³, 3.6.2, 4.1.4.2.3, 4.16.5.9, 4.2.8
- Island**³⁶ : 3.1.9⁹, 2.11.4.2.1⁵, 2.7.2⁴, 3.16.20³, 3.6.14³, 1.4, 2.11.3.2, 2.12.5, 2.14, 2.9.4.1, (12 more . . .)
- Israel**¹¹⁷⁴ : 3.7.4⁶¹, 2.13.4³⁷, 3.12.17³¹, 4.1.3.4²⁶, 3.1.7²⁵, 3.12.6²⁴, 3.12.1²³, 4.11.7²⁰, 4.17.2.3²⁰, 3.11.4¹⁶, (891 more . . .)
- Israel, Camp of** : see *Camp of Israel*
- Issachar**⁷ : 3.21.13², 3.7.7², 3.21.19.1, 3.7.4, 4.7.2
- Jacob** : see *Israel*
- Jacob's, Time of Trouble** : see *Time of Jacob's Trouble*
- Jasper**²⁰ : 3.4.3¹⁰, 3.21.11⁵, 3.21.18³, 3.21.19.1²
- Jehoshaphat, Valley of** : see *Valley of Jehoshaphat*
- Jerome**³¹ : 4.11.9⁷, 2.11.4.2.1⁶, 2.12.5³, 4.1.3.3², 4.3.1², 4.7.2², 1.5, 2.11.3.2, 2.2.14, 3.10.7, (9 more . . .)
- Jerusalem**⁷⁶⁹ : 4.1.3.4⁴⁰, 3.21.2³⁴, 4.5.5²⁴, 3.3.12²⁰, 3.1.7¹⁹, 3.11.2¹⁹, 3.11.8¹⁹, 3.16.19¹⁸, 4.11.7¹⁶, 3.17.18¹⁴, (546 more . . .)
- Jerusalem, New**¹⁸⁸ : 3.21.2²⁴, 3.11.2¹³, 3.22.2⁹, 3.19.7⁷, 3.21.10⁷, 3.22.1⁷, 3.3.12⁷, 3.21.9⁶, 4.10.4⁵, 4.10.6⁴, (99 more . . .)
- Jesse**⁷ : 4.11.7³, 3.5.5², 3.1.4, 3.22.16
- Jew**⁸⁰⁰ : 3.7.4⁴⁶, 3.12.17³⁸, 3.12.6³⁶, 3.2.9³⁴, 3.1.7²⁶, 4.16.5.8²⁴, 3.11.2²³, 2.13.4¹⁷, 4.7.2¹⁷, 4.2.3¹⁶, (523 more . . .)
- Jezebel**⁷¹ : 4.9.3²⁰, 3.2.20⁸, 4.9.2⁶, 3.2.22⁴, 3.2.23⁴, 4.9.1⁴, 3.19.2³, 3.2.18³, 3.2.21², 3.9.21², (15 more . . .)
- Jezreel Valley**⁴ : 4.5.3.3³, 3.16.16
- John Calvin** : see *Calvin, John*
- Jordan**¹⁴ : 3.2.17⁴, 3.11.1, 3.12.14, 3.12.6.1, 3.16.12, 4.16.5.1, 4.16.5.2, 4.5.3, 4.5.3.1, 4.5.3.3, (10 more . . .)
- Joseph**⁴⁷ : 3.7.4⁸, 3.12.1⁵, 3.7.8⁵, 4.17.2.4.2⁴, 2.12.4³, 3.1.7³, 3.21.13³, 2.7.5.3.4², 3.7.6², 4.17.3.2.2², (10 more . . .)
- Judah**¹⁴¹ : 4.7.2¹⁴, 3.5.5¹⁰, 4.17.3.1⁹, 4.5.5⁷, 3.16.12⁵, 4.17.2.3⁵, 3.19.15⁴, 3.7.4⁴, 2.13.4³, 3.14.1³, (77 more . . .)
- Judaism**⁴⁰ : 3.2.9¹³, 4.16.3.1³, 4.2.2³, 4.16.3², 4.16.5.7², 4.16.5.9², 2.11.4.1.3, 2.13.2, 2.7.5.4, 3.1.20, (15 more . . .)
- Judgment**¹¹⁵³ : 3.8.7²³, 2.14.2²², 3.20.12²², 3.9.1²¹, 3.1.7¹⁹, 3.6.1¹⁹, 3.16.1¹⁸, 3.4.4¹⁷, 3.11.18¹⁶, 3.19.2¹⁶, (960 more . . .)
- Justin Martyr**¹⁹ : 2.12.5³, 4.11.9³, 4.12.2.4³, 5.2.36², 2.10.2², 2.12.2.3², 2.9.4.1², 2.11.4.2.1, 5.2.63

Kells, Book of : see *Book of Kells*

Key¹⁴⁴ : 3.3.7¹⁵, 3.1.18¹², 3.9.1⁸, 3.20.1⁵, 2.7.4⁴, 3.12.1⁴, 4.12.2.3³, 2.5³, 4.13³, 2.12.4², (85 more . . .)

Kill¹²⁵ : 3.13.10⁶, 3.11.7⁵, 3.19.20⁵, 3.9.15⁵, 3.9.20⁵, 3.11.3³, 3.12.11³, 3.19.21³, 3.6.9³, 4.3.2.19³, (84 more . . .)

King⁸²⁶ : 4.3.2.4²⁷, 3.17.10²⁶, 4.11.7²⁰, 3.17.14¹⁷, 3.18.9¹⁶, 4.3.2.13¹⁴, 3.11.15¹², 3.13.1¹², 3.17.16¹², 3.19.16¹², (658 more . . .)

Kingdom¹¹⁴⁸ : 2.4.3³⁶, 4.17.3.1²⁹, 3.11.15²⁴, 3.17.10²³, 4.11.3²², 2.13.1²¹, 3.13.2²¹, 4.3.2.5²¹, 4.11.9²⁰, 3.20.2²⁰, (911 more . . .)

Kingdom, Millennial : see *Millennial Kingdom*

Kinsman Redeemer : see *Redeemer, Kinsman*

Koran¹⁵ : 4.16.5.8¹⁵

LXX : see *Septuagint*

Labor⁵² : 2.13.4⁹, 3.12.2⁹, 3.16.17⁷, 3.2.2³, 3.6.17³, 4.11.7³, 3.11.2², 3.3.3², 2.11.1, 2.11.4.2.1, (14 more . . .)

Lake of Fire¹⁰⁹ : 3.19.20¹⁸, 3.20.10⁷, 3.20.14⁷, 3.17.8⁶, 4.12.3⁵, 4.4.1⁵, 3.14.10⁴, 3.20.12³, 4.4.3.4³, 3.19.3², (49 more . . .)

Lamb's Book of Life : see *Book of Life*

Lament⁸ : 3.18.9⁴, 3.18.1, 3.18.3, 3.5.1, 4.1.2.2

Lamp²⁸ : 3.11.4⁹, 3.1.13⁶, 3.4.5³, 2.7.5.3.6², 3.1.12, 3.1.4, 3.1.9, 3.15.6, 3.16.15, 3.21.2, (8 more . . .)

Lampstand³² : 3.11.4⁷, 3.1.20⁴, 3.1.12³, 3.1.13³, 3.2.5³, 4.15.1.4³, 3.4.5², 2.2.13, 2.7.5.3.1, 2.7.5.3.6, (7 more . . .)

Land³⁴⁷ : 3.10.2¹⁵, 3.5.1¹¹, 4.1.3.5.3⁹, 3.1.7⁸, 3.12.6⁸, 4.1.3.4⁸, 4.5.2⁸, 4.5.5⁸, 3.15.3⁷, 4.11.7⁷, (258 more . . .)

Leaves⁵⁴ : 3.22.2²³, 4.11.7², 4.16.1², 2.12.6, 2.3.1, 2.3.2.2, 2.7.3, 3.1.1, 3.1.11, 3.1.9, (27 more . . .)

Leopard²³ : 3.13.2⁹, 4.3.2.11⁴, 4.3.2.16³, 4.3.2.12², 3.17.10, 4.11.4, 4.11.7, 4.12.2.4, 4.3.1

Levi³¹ : 3.7.4⁶, 3.21.13⁴, 3.5.5⁴, 4.5.5.1³, 3.7.7², 4.17.3.1², 3.1.7, 3.21.19.1, 3.4.3, 3.4.4, (10 more . . .)

Levites²³ : 3.12.1³, 4.7.2³, 4.7.3³, 3.1.13, 3.11.1, 3.14.3, 3.15.5, 3.20.6, 3.21.13, 3.5.8, (14 more . . .)

Liar¹⁵ : 3.21.8⁶, 2.13.8², 3.22.14², 3.16.13, 3.2.11, 3.20.14, 3.20.6, 4.15.1.4

Life, Book of : see *Book of Life*

Life, River of : see *River of Life*

Life, Tree of : see *Tree of Life*

Life, Water of : see *Water of Life*

Light²³¹ : 3.21.23¹⁸, 3.11.4⁹, 4.11.7⁹, 3.6.12⁸, 2.13.3⁷, 3.8.12⁶, 3.22.16⁵, 3.22.5⁵, 2.13.8⁴, 3.2.17⁴, (156 more . . .)

Lightning¹⁴ : 3.11.19², 3.4.5², 3.8.5², 2.14.1, 3.16.18, 3.16.21, 3.19.17, 3.4.3, 3.5.8, 3.8.7, (8 more . . .)

Linen, White : see *White Robes*

Lion¹¹³ : 3.10.3¹⁴, 3.13.2¹⁰, 4.7.2¹⁰, 4.7⁸, 3.5.5⁶, 3.9.8⁶, 3.4.6⁵, 4.7.1⁵, 4.3.2.9⁴, 3.10.1.1³, (42 more . . .)

Literalism⁴³⁴ : 4.1.3.5.2²⁸, 2.7.2²⁷, 2.7.4²², 2.7.5.2¹⁹, 2.7.3¹⁹, 2.12.5¹⁸, 3.20.1¹³, 3.11.5¹², 3.8.7¹¹, 4.11.9¹¹, (254 more . . .)

Literary Structure⁶ : 2.14⁵, 2.14.2

Living Creature⁸³ : 3.4.6⁸, 2.7.5.3.3⁵, 3.5.9⁵, 2.4.2⁴, 3.19.4⁴, 3.6.1⁴, 3.5.8³, 3.7.11³, 2.7.5.3.2², 3.10.3², (43 more . . .)

Living, Book of : see *Book of Life*

Loadicea⁷⁴ : 3.3.14¹⁸, 3.3.18⁶, 3.3.15⁴, 3.3.16⁴, 3.3.20⁴, 3.3.17³, 4.15.1.4³, 2.10.1², 2.11.4.1.1², 2.11.4.1.3², (26 more . . .)

Locust¹²⁰ : 3.9.7³³, 3.9.3²¹, 3.9.4¹⁶, 3.9.11⁸, 3.9.8⁸, 3.9.5⁵, 3.7.1⁴, 3.9.1³, 2.12.4², 2.7.5.3.4², (18 more . . .)

Lord, Day of the : see *Day of the Lord*

Lost Tribes⁷⁵ : 4.17.2.3¹⁴, 4.17.2.4.2¹¹, 4.17⁹, 4.17.2.4.2.1⁹, 4.17.2.1⁸, 4.17.2⁵, 4.17.1³, 4.17.3³, 4.17.2.4², 4.17.2.4.1², (9 more . . .)

Love¹³⁶ : 3.1.5¹², 3.3.20⁸, 3.2.4⁷, 3.12.11⁵, 4.15.1.4⁴, 3.14.11³, 3.2.19³, 3.2.5³, 3.21.4³, 3.22.20³, (85 more . . .)

Luther, Martin³⁰ : 2.10.1⁶, 2.12.4⁶, 2.9.1⁴, 3.10.3², 4.2.8², 2.2.6, 3.1.3, 3.1.6, 3.12.6, 3.13.1, (10 more . . .)

- Luxury**¹⁷ : 3.18.3⁴, 3.6.6³, 4.1.3.5.3², 2.13.8, 3.1.11, 3.14.8, 3.18.1, 3.18.11, 3.18.15, 3.6.15, (8 more . . .)
- Magic**¹⁶ : 3.2.1⁴, 3.9.21⁴, 3.18.23², 3.2.20², 3.13.11, 3.13.13, 3.21.8, 5.2.61
- Magog**¹³ : 3.20.8¹², 3.20.9
- Man**⁸⁰² : 3.1.1¹⁸, 2.13.8¹⁴, 4.16¹⁴, 2.7.5.3.5¹³, 3.13.18¹³, 4.16.5.1¹², 3.1.13¹¹, 3.20.12¹¹, 3.6.17¹⁰, 3.9.20¹⁰, (676 more . . .)
- Man of Sin** : see *Beast, from the sea*
- Man, Son of** : see *Son of Man*
- Manasseh**²⁶ : 3.21.13⁴, 4.17.2.2⁴, 3.7.4³, 3.7.6³, 4.17.2.4³, 3.7.8², 4.17.3.1², 3.5.5, 4.17.2.1, 4.17.2.3, (5 more . . .)
- Manna**⁴⁰ : 3.2.17³⁰, 3.10.9³, 3.11.19², 3.12.6², 4.15.1.3, 4.15.1.4, 4.16.5.10.2
- Mark of the Beast**⁶³ : 3.13.16⁸, 3.15.2⁴, 3.12.17³, 3.14.1³, 3.20.4³, 2.13.5.4², 3.13.15², 3.14.7², 3.15.5², 3.16.10², (32 more . . .)
- Marriage**¹⁶² : 4.10.1³⁰, 4.10.2²⁵, 3.19.8¹⁷, 3.19.9¹³, 4.10.5¹¹, 4.10⁸, 3.3.4⁶, 3.21.2⁵, 3.19.7⁴, 4.10.4⁴, (39 more . . .)
- Martin Luther** : see *Luther, Martin*
- Martyr, Justin** : see *Justin Martyr*
- Martyrdom**¹⁴¹ : 3.6.9¹³, 4.11.9⁶, 2.12.5⁵, 3.11.3⁴, 3.14.13⁴, 3.15.2⁴, 3.17.6⁴, 3.19.2⁴, 3.20.4⁴, 3.7.14⁴, (89 more . . .)
- Marvel**¹² : 3.17.8⁵, 3.13.8, 3.15.3, 3.20.5, 3.3.1, 3.9.1, 4.2.7.1, 4.4.2
- Meaning**³²⁷ : 2.7.3¹⁵, 2.7.2¹⁴, 2.7.1¹¹, 2.7.5.2¹¹, 4.1.3.5.1¹⁰, 3.1.1⁹, 3.1.3⁹, 3.3.10⁸, 2.7.5.1⁷, 3.21.2⁷, (226 more . . .)
- Measure**⁷⁴ : 3.11.1¹⁶, 4.16.5.9⁶, 3.6.6⁵, 3.2.9³, 3.20.1³, 3.21.15³, 2.11.3.1², 3.17.4², 3.21.17², 3.21.2², (30 more . . .)
- Megiddo**⁴¹ : 4.5.3.1¹⁹, 3.16.16¹⁶, 4.5.3.3², 3.16.21, 4.5, 4.5.4, 4.5.5
- Merchant**²⁸ : 3.18.3⁶, 3.18.15⁴, 3.18.1³, 3.18.11², 3.18.17², 3.18.19², 3.18.23², 3.3.18², 3.14.8, 3.18.10, (5 more . . .)
- Messiah**³³⁹ : 3.1.7¹⁷, 3.5.5¹⁵, 3.19.15¹³, 2.13.4¹¹, 4.2.2¹⁰, 3.6.2⁹, 2.13.2⁸, 4.16.5.10.1⁸, 4.16.5.6⁸, 4.2.3⁶, (234 more . . .)
- Metaphor**³ : 3.1.7, 3.11.8, 3.22.15
- Michael**²² : 3.12.7⁵, 3.10.1.1⁴, 3.12.8³, 3.8.2³, 4.14.4.2², 3.1.4, 3.12.17, 3.13.1, 3.20.5.1, 3.5.2, (5 more . . .)
- Millennial Kingdom**⁴⁶⁶ : 4.11.9²³, 3.20.5.1²², 3.21.1²¹, 4.11.3¹³, 3.20.2¹², 4.11.4¹¹, 2.13.3⁹, 3.11.18⁹, 3.20.5⁹, 4.16.5.10.2⁹, (328 more . . .)
- Millennial Sacrifice**⁵ : 4.16.5.10.2⁵
- Millennial Temple** : see *Temple, Millennial*
- Millennium** : see *Millennial Kingdom*
- Million**²⁶ : 3.9.16¹¹, 3.12.17³, 3.16.12³, 3.6.8², 2.7.4, 3.1.7, 3.12.6, 3.2.1, 3.20.12, 3.21.16, (7 more . . .)
- Minuscule**⁵ : 3.13.18², 5.2.41, 2.2.2.4, 5.2.80
- Moab**¹⁴ : 3.12.6.1⁹, 3.19.15², 3.16.12, 3.2.14, 4.13
- Mohammed**⁹ : 4.16.5.8⁵, 3.22.18, 3.8.7, 4.12.2.3, 4.16.3
- Montanus**²⁵ : 2.10.1¹¹, 5.2.42⁴, 4.11.9⁴, 2.12.5², 2.9.1², 3.8.7, 5.2.75
- Month**⁹⁶ : 2.13.5.2²², 3.9.5⁹, 3.11.2⁷, 3.22.2⁵, 4.16.5.3⁵, 2.7.5.3.4³, 3.11.6³, 3.2.1³, 3.21.23³, 3.9.15³, (33 more . . .)
- Moon**¹³⁵ : 3.12.1²⁸, 3.21.23²⁸, 3.6.12¹², 4.11.7⁷, 2.13.5.2⁶, 3.8.12⁶, 4.17.3.2.1⁴, 2.13.8⁴, 3.22.2⁴, 3.16.8³, (33 more . . .)
- Moriah, Mount** : see *Mount Moriah*
- Mormon**²⁵ : 4.17.2.4.2⁹, 4.17.2.4.2.1⁷, 3.21.2², 3.22.18², 4.17.2.4.1², 3.8.7, 4.17.2, 4.17.2.4
- Morning Star**³⁸ : 3.2.28¹², 3.22.16¹⁰, 4.14.9⁵, 2.2.13, 2.3.2.1.1, 3.15.6, 3.19.10, 3.2.17, 3.3.22, 3.6.13, (11 more . . .)
- Moses**¹⁸⁵ : 3.11.3.1²⁷, 3.15.3²², 2.7.5.4.2⁸, 2.7.5.3.1⁷, 3.2.17⁶, 4.14.9⁵, 4.5.5.1⁵, 3.11.3⁴, 3.22.4⁴, 2.13.7³, (94 more . . .)
- Mother**⁷⁷ : 3.17.5¹², 4.1.4.1⁸, 3.12.1⁷, 4.1.3.4⁷, 4.1.3.3⁶, 3.12.2³, 4.3.2.4.1³, 4.3.2.5³, 3.17.4², 4.3.2.4², (24 more . . .)
- Motive**³¹ : 2.3.2.1⁵, 2.3.2.1.1³, 2.5.1³, 2.7.3³, 2.12.2.2², 2.3², 4.16.1², 2.12.4, 2.2.3, 2.3.1, (11 more . . .)
- Mount Moriah**¹⁷ : 4.16.3.1⁵, 4.16.3⁴, 4.16.5.5.1², 4.1.3.5.2, 4.16, 4.16.5.1, 4.16.5.8,

4.16.6, 4.5.3.6

Mount Sinai¹³ : 2.13.7, 3.1.10, 3.12.6.1, 3.15.5, 3.17.14, 3.2.17, 3.22.4, 3.4.5, 3.4.6, 3.5.1, (13 more . . .)

Mount Zion¹¹³ : 3.14.1³³, 4.11.7⁹, 3.14.1.2⁷, 4.5.5⁶, 3.14.1.1⁵, 3.14.3⁴, 4.11.5³, 4.5.1³, 3.10.3², 3.12.6.1², (39 more . . .)

Mount, Temple : see *Temple Mount*

Mountain²¹⁰ : 4.11.7¹⁵, 3.17.10¹³, 3.17.9¹², 3.16.16⁹, 3.16.20⁸, 3.8.8⁷, 4.1.3.3⁷, 3.12.6⁵, 3.21.10⁵, 3.6.12⁵, (124 more . . .)

Mountains, Seven : see *Seven Mountains*

Mourn²¹ : 3.1.7⁸, 4.5.5³, 3.16.17, 3.16.20, 3.16.9, 3.17.14, 3.18.11, 3.18.9, 3.21.4, 3.6.13, (10 more . . .)

Mouth¹⁰⁰ : 3.14.5¹², 3.11.5¹⁰, 3.19.15⁶, 3.1.16⁴, 3.16.13⁴, 4.3.2.16³, 3.10.9², 3.13.2², 3.13.6², 3.13.8², (53 more . . .)

Muhammed : see *Mohammed*

Mystery¹³⁸ : 3.10.7¹⁹, 4.1.4.2.1¹⁷, 3.17.5¹⁵, 3.5.1⁷, 3.1.20⁵, 3.10.3⁴, 4.10.5⁴, 3.2.24³, 4.1.3.5.2³, 4.1.4.2², (59 more . . .)

Mythology, Pagan : see *Pagan Mythology*

Naked⁴¹ : 3.3.18⁵, 3.16.15⁴, 3.3.17³, 4.16.1³, 3.12.1², 3.17.16², 3.3.5², 4.15.1.4², 2.2.6, 3.1.14, (18 more . . .)

Names, Numerical Value : see *Gematria*

Naptali⁸ : 3.21.13², 3.7.6², 3.21.19.1, 3.7.4, 4.17.3.1, 4.7.2

Nation⁷⁰⁶ : 4.11.7³¹, 4.5.2²², 4.5.5²², 3.11.2¹⁹, 3.10.3¹⁸, 3.1.7¹⁷, 3.22.2¹⁷, 4.5.1¹⁴, 3.15.4¹³, 3.12.6¹¹, (522 more . . .)

Nebuchadnezzar⁶⁶ : 4.3.1⁶, 3.14.8⁴, 3.17.10⁴, 3.13.18³, 4.16.5.4³, 4.3.2.12³, 4.3.2.19³, 3.11.19², 3.13.2², 3.17.12², (34 more . . .)

Nero, Caesar¹⁶³ : 4.12.1¹⁷, 4.12.2.4¹⁴, 4.12¹¹, 2.3.2¹⁰, 2.11.3.1⁹, 2.11.4.2.2⁹, 4.12.4⁸, 3.13.18⁸, 4.2.7⁸, 4.12.3⁷, (62 more . . .)

Nero, Revival Myth² : 4.12.1, 3.13.3

New Earth : see *Earth, New*

New Heaven : see *Heaven, New*

New Jerusalem : see *Jerusalem, New*

Nicolaitans⁵⁰ : 4.13²⁷, 2.11.4.1.1¹⁴, 3.2.14³,

3.2.15³, 3.2.16³, 3.2.6³, 4.15.1.4², 5.2.47, 3.2.12, 3.2.20, (5 more . . .)

Night¹³⁶ : 3.21.25¹¹, 3.3.3⁹, 3.16.15⁵, 3.17.10⁵, 3.2.28⁴, 4.14.9⁴, 4.3.1⁴, 2.13.3.1³, 3.12.1³, 3.14.10³, (85 more . . .)

Nimrod³¹ : 4.1.1¹⁶, 4.3.2.5⁵, 2.13.8, 3.14.8, 3.17.5, 3.18.3, 3.2.13, 3.9.14, 4.1.3.5.2, 4.1.4.1, (10 more . . .)

North⁷² : 4.19.3⁷, 4.5.4⁵, 4.7.2⁵, 3.12.15³, 3.21.13³, 4.17.2.4.2³, 4.19.4³, 4.5.2³, 4.5.6³, 3.18.4², (35 more . . .)

Number³²⁶ : 3.13.18⁴⁶, 3.7.4²², 2.7.5.3.5¹⁴, 2.7.5.2¹⁰, 4.12.2⁹, 3.13.17⁹, 3.9.16⁷, 4.12.2.4⁷, 2.7.5.3.2⁶, 2.7.5.3.6⁶, (190 more . . .)

Number of the Beast⁶⁸ : 3.13.18³², 4.12.2.3⁶, 4.12.2.4⁶, 4.12.2⁵, 4.12.2.2⁵, 2.7.5.3.5⁵, 4.5², 2.11.3.2, 2.12.2.4, 2.7.5.3.2, (7 more . . .)

Numbers, Understanding⁸ : 2.7.5.1², 2.7.5.2², 2.7.5.3², 2.7.5, 2.7.5.3.4

Numerical Value, Names : see *Gematria*

Numerology : see *Numbers, Understanding*

Objectivity, Lack of : see *Subjectivity*

Oil³¹ : 3.6.6¹², 3.11.4⁹, 3.8.11³, 4.1.4.1², 3.1.13, 3.12.1, 3.12.14, 3.18.12, 3.18.13

Omega, and Alpha : see *Alpha and Omega*

Origen¹⁶ : 2.7.3⁴, 2.9.4.1³, 5.2.50², 2.11.4.2.1², 4.11.9², 2.10.1, 2.12.5, 3.8.7

Outline¹ : 2.14.3

Overcome²⁰⁵ : 4.15.1.3¹⁴, 3.2.17¹², 3.21.7¹⁰, 3.3.12¹⁰, 3.17.14⁷, 3.3.5⁶, 3.6.2⁶, 4.15.1.4⁶, 3.11.7⁵, 3.13.7⁴, (125 more . . .)

Ox⁴⁷ : 4.7.2¹⁰, 4.7⁶, 3.4.6⁵, 4.7.1⁵, 4.11.7³, 4.9.2³, 2.7.5.3.3², 3.10.4², 3.14.8², 2.7.2, (9 more . . .)

Pagan⁷⁵ : 2.7.5.4.1⁶, 3.12.1⁶, 3.9.20⁶, 3.2.14⁵, 4.18.1⁴, 2.2.8³, 3.2.17³, 3.2.9³, 4.13³, 4.18.3³, (33 more . . .)

Pagan Mythology⁶ : 2.7.5.4.1³, 2.7.5.4², 3.12.1

Pale¹⁷ : 3.6.8⁷, 4.19.2², 2.13.4, 2.2.4, 3.11.2, 3.16.6, 3.6.17, 3.8.7, 3.9.7, 4.19.4, (8 more . . .)

Papias³³ : 4.11.9⁸, 2.9.2⁶, 2.11.3.2⁵, 2.9.4.1⁵, 5.2.52³, 2.10.2³, 2.9.1², 3.2.1

Papyrus¹⁵ : 5.2.53⁶, 3.2.12³, 3.1.10², 2.2.2.4,

3.1.4, 3.13.16, 3.13.18

Parable⁴⁰ : 2.2.6¹⁴, 4.10.2⁶, 5.2.54³, 3.20.2³, 2.4.3², 3.19.8², 3.2.27², 3.11.10, 3.12.17, 3.13.1, (8 more . . .)

Paradise²⁹ : 3.2.7¹⁰, 3.22.2⁷, 3.11.4², 3.17.14², 3.21.24², 3.1.18, 3.1.6, 3.21.1, 3.4.4, 4.15.1.4, (6 more . . .)

Patmos⁴¹ : 2.11.4.2.1⁷, 3.1.9⁷, 2.7.2³, 3.10.11³, 2.8², 2.9.4.1², 3.1.20², 2.11.3.2, 2.11.4.2.2, 2.11.4.2.4, (15 more . . .)

Peace¹¹⁸ : 3.6.2¹⁶, 2.13.3.1⁸, 4.5.1⁵, 3.11.4⁴, 4.11.7⁴, 4.19.2⁴, 3.19.11³, 4.11.3³, 4.11.4³, 4.18.3³, (65 more . . .)

Pearl²⁸ : 3.21.21⁷, 3.13.1⁵, 3.18.12⁴, 3.17.4³, 2.7.5.3.7², 3.17.18.1², 4.1.4.2.2², 3.17.16, 3.21.12, 3.21.2, (3 more . . .)

Pentecost⁴³ : 4.14.4.1¹⁰, 4.14.4.3³, 4.16.5.5³, 3.17.14², 3.20.4², 3.3.1², 4.14.3², 4.16.5.10.2², 4.16.5.5.1², 2.2.7, (15 more . . .)

Peoples¹⁰⁸ : 4.11.7⁶, 3.5.9⁵, 4.5.5⁵, 3.22.2⁴, 4.5.2⁴, 3.1.7³, 3.10.11³, 3.11.9³, 3.12.6³, 4.17.2.3³, (69 more . . .)

Perdition³⁵ : 3.17.8⁶, 4.3.2.16³, 3.22.20², 4.12², 4.2.7.1², 3.11.1, 3.13.1, 3.13.10, 3.13.12, 3.13.3, (20 more . . .)

Perdition, Son of : see *Beast, from the sea*

Pergamos⁶¹ : 3.2.12¹³, 3.2.13¹², 3.2.14⁴, 4.15.1.4⁴, 3.2.17³, 4.13³, 3.2.1², 3.2.16², 3.2.20², 4.15.1², (14 more . . .)

Persecution¹³¹ : 2.11.4.2.2¹³, 3.12.17¹⁰, 3.2.9¹⁰, 3.12.6⁶, 4.12.3⁴, 2.13.4³, 3.3.10³, 2.11.4.1.2², 2.11.4.2.1², 2.12.3², (76 more . . .)

Petra¹³ : 3.12.6.1¹⁰, 3.12.14, 4.17.2.3, 4.5.6

Phenomena, Cosmic : see *Cosmic Phenomena*

Philadelphia⁵¹ : 3.3.7⁵, 3.3.8⁴, 4.15.1.4⁴, 3.3.12³, 2.11.4.1.3², 3.2.5², 3.3.1², 3.3.10², 3.6.6², 4.15.1², (23 more . . .)

Pierce³⁰ : 3.1.7¹⁶, 3.1.18², 3.20.4², 3.5.6², 4.5.5², 3.1.14, 3.1.16, 3.17.10, 3.3.17, 3.9.10, (6 more . . .)

Pit, Bottomless : see *Abyss*

Plague¹⁵² : 2.13.7¹⁷, 3.15.1⁸, 3.9.3⁷, 3.16.1⁶, 2.14.2⁵, 3.11.6⁵, 3.9.20⁵, 3.9.7⁵, 3.16.21⁴,

3.8.7⁴, (86 more . . .)

Polycarp³³ : 3.2.8⁷, 5.2.55⁶, 3.2.9³, 4.11.9³, 2.11.4.2.3², 3.2.10², 2.10.1, 3.1.8, 3.13.18, 3.13.5, (10 more . . .)

Pope²⁸ : 4.2.8¹², 2.12.4⁶, 4.1.3.3², 2.7.3, 3.10.3, 3.14.13, 3.15.1, 3.15.2, 3.18.13, 4.1.4.2.3, (8 more . . .)

Populate⁶⁷ : 3.9.15⁹, 3.14.4⁴, 3.6.8⁴, 4.11.8³, 3.9.20³, 3.11.13², 3.12.17², 3.2.1², 3.22.2², 3.3.16², (34 more . . .)

Possess⁹¹ : 3.5.1⁹, 3.5.2⁹, 3.10.2⁵, 4.5.1⁴, 3.13.4³, 3.5.5³, 2.13.1², 3.12.6², 3.13.10², 3.13.15², (50 more . . .)

Postmillennial¹⁹ : 5.2.56⁶, 3.20.1³, 3.21.1², 2.12.4, 3.10.7, 3.16.12, 3.20.2, 4.11, 4.11.1, 4.11.3, (8 more . . .)

Posttribulational⁴ : 4.11.8², 4.14.3.1, 5.2.60

Potter²³ : 3.2.27⁶, 3.9.21³, 3.13.3², 4.5.1², 2.13.1, 3.11.15, 3.12.5, 3.13.2, 3.17.10, 3.19.15, (10 more . . .)

Power³⁶⁰ : 4.2.7⁸, 3.13.2⁷, 3.13.15⁶, 3.18.3⁶, 3.6.2⁶, 3.13.1⁵, 3.13.13⁵, 3.13.4⁵, 3.2.26⁵, 3.9.3⁵, (302 more . . .)

Praise : see *Worship*

Pray¹¹² : 3.8.3¹², 3.5.8⁹, 3.8.4⁶, 3.8.5⁶, 3.15.4⁴, 2.13.1³, 3.14.18³, 3.16.15³, 4.16.5.8³, 2.13.4², (61 more . . .)

Predestination : see *Election*

Premillennial⁵⁰ : 4.11.9¹⁰, 3.20.1⁷, 4.11.3⁵, 2.2.11³, 3.10.7³, 3.11.17³, 4.11.6³, 5.2.58², 2.12², 2.12.5², (10 more . . .)

Preterism²⁵³ : 2.12.2.4⁴⁷, 2.12.2.1³¹, 3.1.7²³, 2.12.2.2²¹, 2.12.2.3¹⁵, 2.11.1¹³, 2.12.2.5¹², 3.22.7¹², 5.2.59⁸, 4.1.3.4⁶, (65 more . . .)

Preterist Interpretation : see *Interpretation, Preterist*

Pretribulational²⁴ : 3.4.1³, 2.2.11², 2.13.3.1², 3.3.22², 4.14.4.2², 4.14.8², 4.8.2², 5.2.60, 2.4.3, 3.11.4, (9 more . . .)

Priest¹⁵⁶ : 3.2.17¹², 3.1.6¹¹, 3.11.4⁶, 3.19.12⁶, 4.16.5.10.1⁶, 3.1.13⁵, 3.20.6⁵, 3.5.10⁵, 4.16.5.10.2⁵, 4.17.2.2⁵, (90 more . . .)

Prophecy³⁹² : 2.3.1¹⁶, 2.7.2¹⁵, 2.13.5⁹, 3.10.11⁹, 2.3.2.2⁸, 2.6.1⁸, 2.7.3⁸, 3.22.10⁸, 3.19.10⁷,

3.21.1⁷, (297 more . . .)

Prophet³⁹³ : 3.10.7¹⁵, 3.19.20¹³, 3.13.12¹², 3.13.15¹², 3.11.5¹¹, 3.13.11¹¹, 3.13.13¹⁰, 3.19.10¹⁰, 3.11.18⁹, 3.11.3⁹, (281 more . . .)

Prophet, the False : see *Beast, from the land*

Prophets, False : see *False Prophets*

Pseudepigrapha⁴ : 5.2.6¹², 2.2.8, 2.6.1

Purchase, Deed of : see *Deed of Purchase*

Purple²¹ : 3.17.4⁶, 3.18.12⁴, 3.2.18³, 4.1.4.2.2², 3.12.1.1, 3.17.16, 3.17.18.1, 3.19.8, 3.21.19.1, 3.9.17, (6 more . . .)

Purpose²⁴⁹ : 2.3.3¹², 3.6.2¹², 4.16.5.10.2⁷, 2.13.4⁵, 3.1.1⁵, 3.22.2⁵, 2.2.11⁴, 2.2.6⁴, 2.3.2.1.1⁴, 3.12.6⁴, (187 more . . .)

Queen¹⁷ : 3.18.7³, 3.11.19², 3.21.18², 4.10.2², 4.17.2.3², 3.17.4, 3.9.14, 4.1.3.5.2, 4.2.4, 4.9.3, (6 more . . .)

Quran : see *Koran*

Rabbinical Thought¹ : 2.13.2

Raiment : see *Garment*

Rainbow²¹ : 3.10.18, 3.4.3⁷, 3.21.19.1², 3.10.1.1, 3.12.1, 3.4.2, 4.7.2

Rapture¹⁸³ : 3.4.1²², 4.14.10¹¹, 4.11.8¹⁰, 4.14.1⁹, 4.14.2⁸, 4.14.8⁸, 4.14⁶, 4.14.3.1⁶, 4.14.4.2⁶, 4.8.2⁶, (91 more . . .)

Reap¹¹ : 2.7.5.1², 3.14.15², 3.14.16², 3.6.17², 3.1.13, 3.14.17, 3.9.20

Recapitulation²⁷ : 2.14.1⁶, 2.14.2⁶, 2.14⁵, 3.21.9³, 3.20.1², 1.5, 2.12.4, 3.16.17, 3.16.4, 4.3.2.9, (5 more . . .)

Red⁸¹ : 4.19.2¹³, 4.19.3⁹, 3.15.2⁷, 3.12.3³, 3.15.3³, 3.17.3³, 3.6.4³, 3.16.12², 3.21.19.1², 3.4.1², (34 more . . .)

Redeemer, Kinsman¹⁶ : 3.1.13⁵, 3.5.9³, 3.5.6², 3.10.7, 3.14.15, 3.21.3, 3.5.1, 3.6.10, 4.10.5

Redemption²⁹³ : 3.5.9²⁶, 3.5.1¹¹, 3.14.3¹⁰, 3.4.4¹⁰, 3.14.1.2⁷, 3.21.6⁷, 3.22.2⁷, 3.12.2⁶, 2.4.3⁵, 2.13.8⁴, (200 more . . .)

Reformation³⁴ : 2.12.4⁶, 2.12.5³, 2.7.3³, 4.1.3.3³, 2.12.2.3², 2.2.5², 3.10.3², 4.11.9², 4.15.1.5², 2.10.1, (9 more . . .)

Regenerate⁵² : 3.16.20⁴, 3.12.17³, 3.21.1³, 4.11.4³, 4.11.5³, 2.2.6², 3.11.13², 3.20.4²,

3.4.4², 4.14.4.3², (26 more . . .)

Reign³⁰⁷ : 4.11.5¹⁷, 4.11.6¹³, 4.11.9¹², 2.11.3.2¹⁰, 2.11.4.2.1⁸, 3.20.4⁷, 3.17.10⁶, 3.19.6⁶, 4.11.1⁶, 3.20.1⁵, (217 more . . .)

Repent¹⁰⁹ : 3.2.21¹⁰, 3.9.20⁹, 3.2.5⁸, 4.15.1.4⁸, 3.11.3⁴, 3.11.13³, 3.12.6³, 3.16.9³, 3.2.16³, 3.2.22³, (55 more . . .)

Replacement Theology¹² : 3.2.9², 5.2.6.3, 2.11.1, 2.2.11, 3.11.15, 3.21.12, 3.7.4, 4.1.3.4, 4.17, 4.17.2.3, (10 more . . .)

Restrainer²⁵ : 4.14.4.2¹⁵, 3.6.2⁴, 3.13.18², 3.11.18, 3.13.7, 3.19.9, 4.14.4.4

Resurrection⁴¹⁷ : 3.20.5.1⁶⁹, 3.20.5⁵⁹, 3.20.4³⁶, 3.20.6.1²⁰, 3.11.12¹², 4.11.9¹⁰, 3.4.4⁹, 3.1.18⁸, 3.1.5⁸, 3.20.1⁸, (178 more . . .)

Resurrection, First⁵² : 3.20.5¹⁶, 3.20.5.1⁸, 3.20.4⁵, 3.20.6.1³, 3.11.12², 3.14.10², 3.20.6², 4.11.7², 2.7.3, 3.1.3, (12 more . . .)

Resurrection, Second¹⁶ : 3.20.5.1⁶, 3.20.6.1³, 3.20.5², 3.12.6, 3.2.11, 3.20.14, 3.20.4, 4.4.1

Reuben³¹ : 4.7.2¹², 3.5.5⁵, 3.4.3³, 3.21.13², 3.7.5², 3.20.6, 3.20.8, 3.21.19.1, 3.7.4, 4.17.2.4.2, (7 more . . .)

Revelation compared with Genesis : see *Genesis compared with Revelation*

Revival⁶⁵ : 3.13.3⁹, 4.12.1⁶, 3.13.4⁵, 3.17.8⁴, 3.17.11³, 2.4.4², 2.13.4², 2.3.2², 3.11.4², 3.18.17², (28 more . . .)

Revival, Nero Myth : see *Nero, Revival Myth*

Right Hand⁵⁵ : 3.3.21⁶, 3.1.20⁴, 3.17.14⁴, 3.1.16², 3.1.7², 3.13.16², 3.2.1², 3.2.27², 2.2.13, 2.4.2, (31 more . . .)

Righteous²⁷⁷ : 3.19.8¹⁶, 3.20.12¹⁶, 3.19.11⁸, 3.19.2⁸, 4.11.7⁸, 3.16.7⁷, 3.20.5.1⁷, 3.22.11⁷, 3.11.19⁶, 3.16.5⁶, (188 more . . .)

River of Life¹⁰ : 3.4.6², 4.16.5.1², 3.15.2, 3.16.20, 3.22.1, 3.22.2, 3.22.22, 3.7.17

Robe : see *Garment*

Robes, White : see *White Robes*

Rock, Dome of : see *Dome of the Rock*

Rod⁶² : 3.19.15¹³, 3.11.1⁹, 3.2.27⁵, 3.12.5³, 3.11.19², 3.2.28², 4.11.7², 4.5.1², 4.5.5.1², 5.2.12², (20 more . . .)

- Rome**⁴³⁹ : 4.1.3.3⁷⁵, 3.17.10²⁰, 3.13.2¹⁸, 3.18.17¹³, 3.13.7¹⁰, 2.11.4.1.2⁸, 2.12.4⁸, 3.8.7⁸, 4.3.2.4⁸, 4.3.2.5⁸, (263 more . . .)
- Root**⁶⁸ : 3.5.5¹², 3.22.16³, 3.8.11³, 2.2.13², 3.1.7², 3.10.1.1², 3.3.22², 3.9.1², 2.13.8, 3.1.1, (40 more . . .)
- Root of David** : see *David, Root of*
- Rule**³⁵⁰ : 3.19.15¹⁴, 4.11.6¹¹, 2.7.2¹⁰, 2.13.3⁹, 3.12.5⁹, 4.11.4⁹, 3.5.5⁷, 4.11.5⁷, 5.2.12⁷, 3.17.14⁶, (261 more . . .)
- Sacrifice**²¹³ : 4.16.5.10.2⁴⁹, 4.16.3.1¹⁴, 3.6.9⁹, 3.11.2⁸, 4.16.5.4⁸, 4.16.5.9⁸, 3.5.6⁶, 4.16.3⁵, 2.13.3.1⁴, 3.11.1⁴, (98 more . . .)
- Sacrifice, Millennial** : see *Millennial Sacrifice*
- Salvation**¹⁶⁶ : 3.7.10¹³, 3.3.20⁹, 4.16.5.10.2⁸, 3.19.1⁵, 3.1.7⁴, 4.14.6⁴, 3.12.6³, 3.15.2³, 3.20.12³, 3.22.20³, (111 more . . .)
- Samaritan**²⁴ : 4.17.2.2²¹, 2.7.3, 3.3.7, 3.7.17
- Sardis**⁵⁹ : 3.3.1¹⁹, 4.15.1.4⁵, 3.16.15⁴, 3.3.3⁴, 4.18.3³, 3.3.2², 3.3.4², 2.11.4.1.1, 2.12.4, 3.11.13, (20 more . . .)
- Sardius**⁹ : 3.4.3⁶, 3.21.19.1³
- Satan** : see *Devil*
- Satan**⁸²⁵ : 3.20.2⁶³, 3.12.3²⁵, 3.20.1²⁴, 4.2.5²⁴, 3.13.2²¹, 3.13.1¹⁹, 3.9.1¹⁹, 3.12.6¹⁸, 3.12.9¹⁵, 3.20.3¹⁵, (582 more . . .)
- Scale**²⁴ : 3.20.12³, 3.14.5², 3.19.6², 3.6.5², 3.9.7², 2.8, 3.10.7, 3.15.1, 3.16.13, 3.17.3, (13 more . . .)
- Scarlet**²⁵ : 3.17.4⁸, 3.17.3⁵, 3.18.12⁴, 4.1.4.2.2², 3.12.1.1, 3.17.16, 3.17.18.1, 3.19.8, 3.20.12, 3.21.3, (6 more . . .)
- Scepter** : see *Rod*
- Scorch** : see *Heat*
- Scroll** : see *Book*
- Sea**²⁸⁶ : 3.13.1²⁴, 3.15.2¹⁶, 3.21.1¹⁵, 3.7.1¹², 4.11.7¹¹, 3.8.8¹⁰, 3.13.11⁷, 3.15.3⁶, 3.4.6⁶, 3.8.7⁶, (173 more . . .)
- Seal**⁵⁵⁵ : 3.5.1⁴³, 2.13.3.1³¹, 3.6.1²⁹, 2.14.2²⁵, 3.6.12²³, 3.7.1²², 3.7.4¹⁹, 3.6.2¹⁶, 3.20.3¹⁵, 3.6.17¹⁵, (317 more . . .)
- Seal, Fifth**³¹ : 3.6.9¹¹, 3.7.9³, 3.7.1², 2.14.3, 3.1.2, 3.12.11, 3.13.6, 3.13.8, 3.14.1.2, 3.14.13, (15 more . . .)
- Seal, First**¹⁸ : 3.6.2⁴, 2.13.3.1³, 3.9.15², 2.14.3, 2.4.1, 3.10.3, 3.11.18, 3.13.11, 3.19.11, 3.5.1, (9 more . . .)
- Seal, Fourth**⁸ : 3.8.7², 2.14.3, 3.20.13, 3.6.2, 3.6.7, 3.6.8, 3.9.15
- Seal, Second**⁶ : 2.13.3.1, 2.14.3, 3.12.3, 3.6.2, 3.7.4, 3.9.15
- Seal, Seventh**³⁹ : 2.13.3.1¹⁰, 3.8.1⁶, 2.14.2³, 3.5.5³, 3.6.17³, 2.14.3², 3.10.1², 3.7.1², 3.11.14, 3.15.1, (8 more . . .)
- Seal, Sixth**⁶⁰ : 3.6.12¹⁶, 3.6.17⁹, 2.13.3.1⁸, 2.14.1⁴, 3.7.1³, 2.13.3², 2.14.2², 3.6.13², 3.6.16², 2.14.3, (12 more . . .)
- Seal, Third**⁸ : 3.9.15², 2.14.3, 3.18.13, 3.6.2, 3.7.16, 3.8.7, 3.9.4
- Second Coming**²⁰⁸ : 2.12.2.4¹⁰, 3.17.14⁹, 3.16.15⁷, 2.12.2.1⁶, 3.19.11⁶, 3.22.7⁶, 4.11.8⁶, 4.14.3.1⁵, 3.19.15⁵, 4.10.1⁵, (143 more . . .)
- Second Death** : see *Death, Second*
- Second Resurrection** : see *Resurrection, Second*
- Second Temple** : see *Temple, Second*
- Security**²⁵ : 3.6.2³, 2.4.1², 3.5.1², 4.4.3.5², 2.12.5, 2.13.7, 2.7.2, 3.1.5, 3.16.15, 3.18.7, (16 more . . .)
- Sell**¹⁰ : 3.10.2³, 3.12.6, 3.13.11, 3.13.16, 3.13.17, 3.20.4, 4.12.2, 4.3.2.18
- Semitism**¹⁷ : 3.12.17⁵, 3.12.6⁴, 5.2.64², 5.2.4, 3.12.7, 3.6.9, 4.17, 4.5.2, 5.2.75
- Septuagint**⁵⁴ : 3.1.7⁸, 3.1.5³, 5.2.38², 5.2.65², 2.8², 3.1.1², 3.1.20², 3.11.2², 3.20.9², 3.9.11², (27 more . . .)
- Sequential**³⁵ : 2.14.2¹⁰, 2.14⁵, 3.20.1², 4.3.2.4.1², 1.5, 2.13.3, 2.14.3, 3.12.3, 3.15.1, 3.16.20, (16 more . . .)
- Seraph**¹⁰ : 3.4.8², 2.7.5.3.5, 3.1.18, 3.15.4, 3.15.8, 3.22.4, 3.4.6, 3.8.5, 3.9.7
- Serpent** : see *Devil*
- Serpent** : see *Satan*
- Servant**¹⁷⁸ : 3.10.7⁹, 3.19.2⁹, 3.1.1⁷, 3.3.3⁷, 3.11.18⁵, 3.19.5⁵, 3.6.11⁵, 4.11.7⁵, 4.7⁵, 3.22.3⁴, (117 more . . .)
- Seven**⁸³¹ : 2.7.5.3.6⁴⁰, 3.17.10³¹, 4.3.2.4.1²², 3.10.3²², 4.1.3.3¹⁸, 3.13.1¹⁷, 3.17.9¹⁷, 3.5.1¹⁷, (15 more . . .)

4.3.2.4¹⁶, 2.14.2¹⁶, (615 more . . .)

Seven Churches of Asia⁸⁰ : 3.1.4⁵, 4.15.1.1⁵, 4.15.1.4, 2.11.4.1.1⁴, 2.9.4.1⁴, 3.1.11³, 3.1.20³, 3.13.9³, 4.15.1.1.1³, 4.15.1.5³, (43 more . . .)

Seven Heads⁷⁵ : 4.3.2.4.1¹⁴, 3.13.1¹³, 4.3.2.4⁷, 3.12.3⁶, 3.17.3³, 3.17.9³, 4.3.2.22³, 4.3.2.5³, 2.11.2², 3.17.10², (19 more . . .)

Seven Mountains⁷³⁸ : 2.7.5.3.6³⁴, 3.17.10²⁶, 4.3.2.4.1²⁰, 3.10.3²⁰, 4.1.3.3¹⁸, 3.17.9¹⁷, 2.14.2¹⁶, 3.1.4¹⁶, 3.13.1¹⁶, 3.5.1¹⁵, (540 more . . .)

Sevens, Seventy : see *Seventy Weeks*

Seventy Weeks¹⁵ : 2.12.5³, 2.11.3.1², 2.13.5.1², 2.13.5, 2.13.5.2, 2.13.5.3, 2.7.5.2, 3.17.8, 4.14.8, 4.16.5.10.1, (8 more . . .)

Sexual Immorality : see *Fornication*

Shekinah Glory²⁹ : 3.1.7¹⁰, 3.21.23⁴, 4.16.2³, 4.16.5.10.1², 5.2.67, 2.13.8, 3.15.8, 3.16.17, 3.16.18, 3.20.11, (10 more . . .)

Shepherd³³ : 3.12.6⁵, 3.12.6.1⁴, 3.13.3⁴, 3.7.17⁴, 3.12.5², 3.3.10², 4.2.6², 2.10.2, 3.15.1, 3.19.15, (10 more . . .)

Shiloh¹² : 3.5.5⁵, 3.2.26⁴, 3.19.15³

Shinar²⁶ : 4.1.3.5.3¹¹, 4.1.1⁴, 4.3.2.5³, 3.11.4, 3.16.10, 3.17.1, 3.17.18, 3.18.8, 4.1.3.4, 4.1.3.5.2, (8 more . . .)

Ship³² : 3.18.17⁸, 3.8.7⁴, 3.8.9⁴, 3.7.1², 3.9.15², 4.1.2.2², 4.11.7², 2.13.1, 3.18.19, 3.19.10, (8 more . . .)

Shortly³³ : 3.1.1⁹, 3.20.5.1², 2.11.1, 2.12.2.2, 2.12.2.4, 2.2.11, 2.2.13, 2.2.4, 2.2.6, 2.7.5.3.6, (22 more . . .)

Sign¹⁷³ : 3.12.1¹⁸, 3.13.13¹⁷, 3.6.12¹¹, 2.13.3.1⁹, 2.12.5⁴, 3.12.9⁴, 3.16.14⁴, 4.7.2⁴, 4.8.2⁴, 2.13.6³, (95 more . . .)

Signified¹⁴ : 2.7.4², 3.1.1², 3.11.19, 3.12.1, 3.14.20, 3.15.6, 3.17.5, 3.2.17, 3.21.2, 3.22.16, (10 more . . .)

Simeon¹¹ : 3.21.13², 3.7.7², 3.10.6, 3.21.19.1, 3.5.5, 3.7.4, 4.17, 4.17.3.1, 4.7.2

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Sinai, Mount : see *Mount Sinai*

Sing⁷⁵ : 3.14.3¹⁷, 3.14.1.2¹⁴, 3.5.9¹⁰, 3.15.3⁵, 3.14.2³, 3.15.2², 3.4.4², 3.8.1², 4.10.4², 3.11.8,

(18 more . . .)

Sit¹⁶³ : 3.4.4⁹, 4.11.5⁸, 3.18.7⁷, 3.3.21⁶, 4.11.7⁵, 4.16.5.9⁵, 3.17.9⁴, 3.19.9⁴, 4.3.2.4⁴, 3.13.4³, (108 more . . .)

Six¹⁵⁴ : 2.7.5.3.5²⁵, 3.13.18²², 4.11.9⁵, 2.13.3.1⁴, 3.4.8⁴, 3.9.7⁴, 2.7.5.3.2³, 3.11.6³, 3.2.8³, 3.22.19³, (78 more . . .)

Slain¹⁰⁹ : 3.19.15⁸, 3.6.9⁷, 3.5.6⁶, 3.13.3⁴, 4.1.3.4⁴, 4.5.3.1⁴, 3.1.16², 3.13.8², 3.14.13², 3.17.6², (68 more . . .)

Slave¹⁹ : 3.18.13⁴, 3.13.16², 3.1.1, 3.10.7, 3.13.18, 3.16.12, 3.19.18, 3.2.20, 3.21.7, 3.5.9, (13 more . . .)

Smoke⁴⁶ : 3.9.2⁶, 3.19.3⁴, 3.15.8³, 3.18.9³, 3.9.17³, 4.1.2.2³, 3.6.12², 3.8.7², 3.9.3², 4.5.5², (16 more . . .)

Smyrna⁶⁵ : 3.2.8¹⁴, 3.2.9⁷, 3.2.10⁶, 2.11.4.2.3⁵, 4.15.1.4⁴, 2.11.4.1.3², 3.1.20², 4.15.1.1.1², 5.2.28², 2.11.4.2.2, (21 more . . .)

Solecism⁵ : 2.8³, 5.2.68, 3.1.4

Solomon⁴⁹ : 4.16.5.3⁴, 3.3.12³, 2.6.1², 2.7.5.3.5², 3.11.19², 3.11.4², 4.16.2², 4.16.5.4², 4.16.5.8², 4.16.5.9², (26 more . . .)

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Son of God⁴⁸ : 3.21.7⁶, 3.1.13³, 3.12.6², 3.2.17², 3.20.15², 3.21.6², 3.21.8², 3.3.12², 3.9.4², 2.2.1, (25 more . . .)

Son of Man⁷⁸ : 3.1.13⁶, 3.16.15⁴, 3.3.3⁴, 3.1.20³, 3.1.7³, 3.14.14³, 3.14.17³, 4.11.5³, 3.17.14², 3.19.15², (45 more . . .)

Son of Perdition : see *Beast, from the sea*

Song¹¹⁹ : 3.15.3⁴³, 3.14.1.2²¹, 3.14.3¹⁴, 3.5.9¹¹, 2.13.7³, 3.15.2³, 3.6.1³, 3.14.7², 3.20.4², 4.10.2², (15 more . . .)

Soon⁶³ : 3.22.7⁷, 3.1.1⁴, 4.8.2⁴, 2.12.2.4³, 3.12.6², 3.16.17², 3.2.28², 3.20.8², 3.22.20², 3.3.11², (33 more . . .)

Sorcery³⁰ : 3.9.21¹⁰, 3.18.23⁷, 3.21.8⁴, 3.13.13², 4.1.4.1², 3.12.9, 3.17.2, 3.17.4, 3.20.3, 4.1.4.2.2, (5 more . . .)

Soul¹³¹ : 3.6.9¹³, 3.20.4⁸, 3.7.9⁷, 3.18.13⁶, 3.2.20⁵, 3.12.11⁴, 3.19.20⁴, 3.6.8⁴, 3.17.14³, 3.20.13³, (74 more . . .)

South⁴² : 4.19.3⁵, 4.7.2⁴, 3.21.13³, 4.17.2.3³, 3.14.20², 4.11.7², 4.5.4², 2.12.5, 2.13.5.2, 2.7.5.3.3, (21 more . . .)

Sovereignty⁷³ : 2.4.1⁷, 3.6.2⁶, 2.13.3⁴, 3.13.10⁴, 3.17.17³, 4.16.5.8³, 3.12.14², 3.20.3², 3.6.17², 2.3.2.1, (40 more . . .)

Spirit⁶⁵⁴ : 4.16.5.5³², 3.19.10²⁶, 4.14.4.2²⁵, 3.1.4²², 3.16.14²¹, 3.3.1²⁰, 3.13.11¹⁷, 3.9.21¹⁶, 4.14.4.1¹⁴, 3.18.2¹¹, (450 more . . .)

Spirit, Holy : see *Holy Spirit*

Standard⁷⁰ : 4.7.2⁴⁰, 3.21.19.1⁴, 3.11.19³, 5.2.12³, 1.3², 3.7.4², 4.7.3², 2.11.3.1, 2.13.3, 2.5, (14 more . . .)

Star¹⁸³ : 3.9.1¹⁸, 3.1.20¹⁷, 3.12.1¹⁵, 3.2.28¹⁵, 3.22.16¹⁴, 3.6.13¹³, 3.8.10¹¹, 3.8.12⁶, 3.1.16⁵, 4.14.9⁵, (64 more . . .)

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Street²⁰ : 3.22.2³, 4.11.7³, 3.21.2², 3.21.21², 3.11.11, 3.11.8, 3.13.4, 3.14.9, 3.15.2, 3.16.9, (10 more . . .)

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Sun¹⁹² : 3.12.1³⁹, 3.21.23²², 3.6.12¹³, 3.16.8¹⁰, 3.8.12⁸, 3.2.28⁷, 4.11.7⁷, 2.13.8⁵, 3.22.16⁵, 4.17.3.2.1⁴, (72 more . . .)

Supper⁸⁴ : 3.19.9¹⁷, 3.19.8⁸, 3.19.17⁵, 4.10.1⁵, 4.10.2⁵, 3.7.9⁴, 3.11.15³, 3.3.20³, 4.11.7³, 3.1.10², (29 more . . .)

Sword¹¹³ : 3.6.8¹⁰, 3.1.16⁹, 3.13.10⁹, 3.11.5⁵, 3.19.15⁵, 3.19.21⁵, 3.14.1⁴, 4.11.7⁴, 4.5.1⁴, 4.5.5.1⁴, (54 more . . .)

Symbols²⁸⁷ : 2.7.4⁵⁵, 2.7¹⁰, 2.7.2⁹, 3.21.2⁹, 3.12.1⁸, 2.7.5.4.1⁷, 3.11.3⁷, 3.8.7⁷, 4.3.2⁶, 2.12.2.4⁶, (163 more . . .)

Synagogue³⁶ : 3.2.9¹⁰, 2.11.4.1.3³, 3.3.9³, 3.1.20², 3.3.8², 4.15.1.4², 4.18.1², 2.11.4.2.2, 3.12.11, 3.16.14, (12 more . . .)

Synoptic Gospels⁶ : 2.13.6², 2.5, 2.7.5.3.2, 3.2.7, 4.7

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Tabernacle¹³¹ : 4.7.2¹¹, 4.16.5.2¹⁰, 3.15.5⁹, 3.21.3⁸, 4.16.2⁶, 3.13.6⁵, 3.15.8⁵, 4.16.5.10.2⁵, 4.7.3⁵, 3.12.12⁴, (63 more . . .)

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Ten Tribes : see *Lost Tribes*

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Test⁴⁷ : 3.16.9³, 3.2.10³, 3.3.10³, 3.13.13², 3.2.2², 3.20.9², 3.3.10.1², 3.3.18², 3.7.14², 4.12.2.3², (24 more . . .)

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Thyatira⁷⁵ : 3.2.18¹⁵, 4.9.3⁸, 3.2.20⁶, 4.15.1.4⁴, 4.15.1.1.1³, 3.1.15², 3.2.22², 3.2.23², 3.2.27², 3.9.21², (29 more . . .)

Time of Jacob's Trouble²⁷ : 2.13.4¹², 2.13.1², 3.12.17², 2.12.5, 2.13.3, 3.11.13, 3.11.18, 3.11.2, 3.12.6, 3.12.6.1, (11 more . . .)

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Tribulation, Great¹¹¹ : 2.13.4¹⁸, 2.13.1⁵, 3.7.14⁵, 3.2.22³, 3.7.9³, 2.12.5², 2.13.3², 2.13.5.5², 2.13.6², 2.14.3², (67 more . . .)

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Trumpet³⁴⁹ : 3.11.15²⁸, 2.14.2²⁶, 3.10.1¹⁶, 2.13.5.4¹², 3.8.2¹², 3.11.14¹¹, 2.14.3¹⁰, 3.1.10¹⁰,

3.8.1¹⁰, 3.9.1¹⁰, (204 more . . .)

Trumpet, Fifth¹⁶ : 3.9.1⁵, 2.14.2², 3.6.12², 2.12.4, 2.14.3, 3.20.1, 3.8.13, 3.9.12, 3.9.2, 3.9.3, (7 more . . .)

Trumpet, First¹³ : 3.8.7⁴, 2.12.4², 3.7.1², 3.9.4², 2.14.3, 3.16.18, 3.9.15

Trumpet, Fourth⁵ : 3.16.8², 2.14.3, 3.6.12, 3.9.15

Trumpet, Second⁷ : 2.14.2, 2.14.3, 3.11.6, 3.16.3, 3.7.1, 3.8.2, 3.9.15

Trumpet, Seventh⁶⁹ : 3.11.15¹², 2.13.5.4⁷, 2.14.2⁶, 3.10.1³, 3.11.14³, 3.15.1³, 2.14.3², 3.10.7², 3.11.18², 3.11.19², (27 more . . .)

Trumpet, Sixth³² : 3.10.1⁸, 3.16.12⁷, 2.13.5.4², 2.14.1², 3.9.15², 2.14.3, 3.11.14, 3.11.5, 3.3.10.1, 3.8.13, (11 more . . .)

Trumpet, Third⁸ : 3.16.4², 2.14.3, 3.11.6, 3.7.16, 3.8.8, 3.9.1, 3.9.15

Twelve²¹⁰ : 2.7.5.3.7³⁹, 3.7.4²⁶, 3.4.4¹⁶, 3.21.12¹⁴, 2.7.5.2⁷, 3.4.3⁷, 3.21.14⁶, 3.12.1⁵, 3.21.19.1⁵, 3.1.20⁴, (81 more . . .)

Twelve Tribes⁷⁷ : 3.7.4¹³, 2.7.5.3.7⁸, 3.21.12⁸, 3.4.4⁶, 4.11.6.1³, 4.17.3.2.3³, 4.17.4³, 2.7.5.2², 3.14.1², 3.16.12², (27 more . . .)

Type⁹⁰ : 4.15.1.5⁸, 4.14.9⁷, 2.2.2.2⁷, 3.4.1⁷, 4.12.4⁴, 2.7.5.1⁴, 2.7.2², 3.15.2², 3.2.22², 3.5.1², (45 more . . .)

Unbiblical : see *Extra-Biblical*

Uncial⁷ : 5.2.80³, 5.2.41², 2.2.2.4, 3.2.20

Urim⁹ : 3.2.17⁹

Valley of Jehoshaphat²¹ : 4.5.3.2⁵, 3.14.20⁴, 4.5.4⁴, 4.5.2³, 3.10.3², 3.14.18, 3.17.14, 3.9.1

Valley of Jezreel : see *Jezreel Valley*

Vatican² : 3.5.9, 4.1.3.3

Vengeance⁶⁴ : 3.18.20⁶, 3.19.2⁴, 3.13.10³, 3.15.3³, 3.6.10³, 3.6.11³, 4.5.5.1³, 3.1.1², 3.14.18², 3.14.20², (33 more . . .)

Victorinus²³ : 4.11.9⁶, 2.11.4.2.1³, 2.12.5³, 2.14.1², 2.9.4.1², 3.10.11², 2.5.1, 3.1.9, 3.15.3, 4.2.7, (5 more . . .)

Vine³⁷ : 3.14.18⁵, 3.6.6⁴, 4.5.5.1⁴, 2.11.2², 3.11.4², 3.11.8², 3.15.3², 3.16.9², 3.22.2², 2.7.5.3.5, (12 more . . .)

Virgin⁵³ : 4.10.2¹⁴, 3.14.4⁷, 3.12.2⁴, 3.12.1.1², 3.12.1², 4.10.3², 4.10.5², 4.2.7², 2.5, 2.6.1, (18 more . . .)

Voice²³⁷ : 3.10.3²², 3.14.2²², 3.10.4¹¹, 3.19.1⁹, 3.21.3⁹, 3.4.1⁸, 3.1.15⁶, 3.19.6⁶, 3.9.13⁶, 3.16.17⁵, (133 more . . .)

Vulgate¹¹ : 3.22.19³, 4.14.1³, 5.2.81, 3.12.2, 3.13.18, 4.14.2, 5.2.5

Wall⁴⁹ : 3.21.12⁵, 3.21.2³, 3.14.1², 3.21.17², 3.21.18², 3.21.19², 3.22.2², 4.1.2.2², 4.11.7², 5.2.27², (25 more . . .)

War¹⁵⁹ : 3.17.14⁸, 4.5.2⁶, 3.6.2⁵, 3.6.8⁵, 3.13.4⁴, 3.19.11⁴, 3.6.12⁴, 3.8.7⁴, 2.13.3³, 2.14.3³, (113 more . . .)

Watch⁹⁰ : 3.16.15²⁰, 3.3.3¹⁷, 3.3.2⁹, 3.2.28⁵, 3.1.3², 3.2.2², 3.22.16², 4.14.8², 4.8.2², 2.13.1, (29 more . . .)

Water²⁵³ : 3.21.6¹⁸, 4.11.7¹⁷, 3.15.2¹⁰, 3.8.11⁹, 3.16.5⁷, 3.3.15⁷, 3.7.17⁷, 3.8.10⁷, 3.8.8⁷, 3.17.1⁶, (158 more . . .)

Water of Life²⁴ : 3.21.6⁸, 3.22.17⁴, 3.7.17³, 3.22.1², 4.16.5.5², 2.2.1, 3.12.15, 3.22.2, 3.3.1, 3.8.11, (5 more . . .)

Wedding : see *Marriage*

Weep¹⁵ : 3.5.4⁴, 3.15.8², 3.18.11, 3.18.15, 3.19.9, 3.21.1, 3.6.12, 3.9.20, 4.1.2.2, 4.11.3, (9 more . . .)

West⁴⁶ : 4.7.2⁵, 4.19.3⁴, 3.16.12³, 3.21.13³, 4.14.1², 2.10.2, 2.11.3.2, 2.12.4, 2.7.5.3.3, 3.11.3, (29 more . . .)

Wheat²⁷ : 3.14.15⁹, 3.6.6⁶, 2.4.4², 3.14.18², 3.8.7², 3.13.12, 3.14.14, 3.18.12, 3.2.10, 3.6.8, (6 more . . .)

White²⁰⁶ : 3.2.17³², 4.19.3¹², 3.6.2¹¹, 3.3.5¹⁰, 4.19.2¹⁰, 3.3.4⁷, 3.7.9⁷, 3.1.14⁵, 3.19.14⁵, 3.19.20⁴, (103 more . . .)

White Robes³⁵ : 3.3.5⁶, 3.7.9⁵, 3.3.18⁴, 3.19.8³, 3.16.15², 3.19.13², 3.4.4², 3.6.11², 4.15.1.3², 4.15.1.4², (5 more . . .)

Widow⁹ : 3.12.6², 3.18.7², 3.1.13, 3.1.5, 3.17.4, 3.5.9, 4.1.3.5.2

Wilderness¹²⁸ : 3.12.6²⁰, 3.2.17⁸, 3.12.17⁶, 3.12.6.1⁶, 3.2.4⁵, 3.7.9⁵, 3.12.14⁴, 4.16.5.2³, 2.13.4³, 3.14.1.1³, (65 more . . .)

Wind⁵² : 3.7.1¹⁶, 2.2.11², 2.7.5.3.3², 3.9.20², 2.13.1, 2.13.7, 2.14.1, 2.2.12, 2.7.2, 3.12.16, (30 more . . .)

Wine⁷³ : 3.6.6¹², 3.14.8⁸, 3.14.10⁷, 4.1.4.2.2⁵, 3.16.9⁴, 3.17.2⁴, 3.16.19³, 3.18.3³, 3.15.7², 2.14.3, (25 more . . .)

Winepress⁴⁰ : 4.5.5.1¹², 3.19.15⁶, 3.14.19³, 3.10.3², 3.12.6.1², 3.14.18², 3.15.1², 3.19.13², 4.5.2², 3.14.10, (7 more . . .)

Wing⁵⁰ : 3.4.8⁷, 3.12.14⁵, 3.12.6⁵, 3.4.6⁴, 4.3.2.9³, 2.7.5.3.5², 3.9.7², 4.1.3.5.3², 4.3.1², 2.13.5.3, (18 more . . .)

Wisdom⁸⁸ : 3.13.18⁴, 3.17.9⁴, 2.7.5.7³, 3.1.1³, 3.16.14³, 3.22.2³, 4.12.2.4³, 2.2.6², 3.2.7², 3.20.10², (59 more . . .)

Witchcraft¹⁰ : 3.9.21³, 3.21.8², 3.13.11, 3.17.4, 3.17.5, 3.18.23, 4.9.2

Witness³³⁰ : 3.1.2²⁶, 3.19.10²¹, 3.15.5¹⁷, 2.9.4.1¹⁴, 3.11.3¹¹, 3.15.3⁸, 2.7.5.3.1⁷, 2.11.4.2.1⁷, 3.20.4⁷, 3.6.9⁷, (205 more . . .)

Witnesses²¹⁰ : 3.11.3³⁹, 3.11.3.1¹⁶, 2.7.5.3.1¹¹, 3.11.7⁹, 3.11.13⁷, 3.12.1⁶, 3.11.5⁵, 3.14.1.1⁵, 3.5.1⁵, 3.7.4⁵, (102 more . . .)

Woe⁷¹ : 3.11.14⁸, 3.9.12⁸, 3.8.13⁷, 2.14.3⁴, 3.10.1⁴, 3.12.12⁴, 3.9.1⁴, 3.5.1³, 2.13.4², 2.14.2², (25 more . . .)

Woman³⁵² : 3.12.1³², 3.12.2²⁵, 4.1.3.5.3¹⁶,

3.12.17¹⁴, 3.12.6¹², 3.2.20¹², 4.1.3.3⁹, 4.9.3⁹, 4.1.4.2.1⁸, 3.17.3⁷, (208 more . . .)

World²³⁵² : 3.21.1⁵⁸, 3.9.1³², 3.3.10.1²⁸, 3.3.10²⁵, 2.13.3²³, 4.11.4²³, 4.11.7²³, 4.11.9²², 3.6.2²⁰, 3.8.7²⁰, (2078 more . . .)

Wormwood¹⁸ : 3.8.11¹⁰, 3.10.9², 3.16.4², 3.9.1², 3.7.4, 3.8.10

Worship⁵⁷³ : 3.9.20²⁸, 3.13.4²², 2.4.2¹⁶, 3.13.12¹⁵, 3.19.10¹⁵, 3.13.15¹², 3.19.5¹², 4.3.2.19¹², 4.11.7¹¹, 4.9.2¹⁰, (420 more . . .)

Worship, Emperor : see *Emperor Worship*

Wound⁶⁵ : 3.13.3¹¹, 4.2.7.1⁸, 4.3.2.16⁵, 3.13.12⁴, 3.17.8⁴, 3.13.1³, 3.9.11³, 3.1.7², 3.13.11², 3.16.2², (21 more . . .)

Wrath³⁷⁴ : 3.6.17²⁷, 3.16.1¹⁷, 3.14.10¹⁶, 3.15.1¹⁶, 4.14.6¹³, 2.13.3.1¹³, 3.11.18⁸, 2.13.3⁷, 3.14.15⁷, 3.16.19⁷, (243 more . . .)

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Years, Thousand : see *Millennial Kingdom*

Years, three and one-half : see *1,260 days*

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Zion, Mount : see *Mount Zion*

5.5 - Scripture Index

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Jdg. 6:14 - 3.10.1.1**Jdg. 6:15** - 3.10.1.1**Jdg. 6:16** - 3.10.1.1**Jdg. 6:17** - 3.10.1.1**Jdg. 6:18** - 3.10.1.1**Jdg. 6:19** - 3.10.1.1**Jdg. 6:20** - 3.10.1.1**Jdg. 6:21** - 3.10.1.1**Jdg. 6:22**² - 3.1.17,
3.10.1.1**Jdg. 6:33** - 4.5.3.1**Jdg. 6:34** - 4.14.4.1**Jdg. 7****Jdg. 7:1** - 4.5.3.1**Jdg. 8****Jdg. 8:26** - 3.17.4**Jdg. 9****Jdg. 9:1** - 3.11.5**Jdg. 9:14**² - 3.11.5²**Jdg. 9:15** - 3.11.5**Jdg. 9:20** - 3.11.5**Jdg. 9:23**² - 3.9.5,
3.16.14**Jdg. 13****Jdg. 13:3** - 3.10.1.1**Jdg. 13:4** - 3.10.1.1**Jdg. 13:5**² - 3.10.1.1,
3.13.15**Jdg. 13:6**⁵ - 3.2.17,
3.3.12, 3.10.1.1, 3.19.12,
4.5.5.1**Jdg. 13:7** - 3.10.1.1**Jdg. 13:8** - 3.10.1.1**Jdg. 13:9** - 3.10.1.1**Jdg. 13:10** - 3.10.1.1**Jdg. 13:11** - 3.10.1.1**Jdg. 13:12** - 3.10.1.1**Jdg. 13:13** - 3.10.1.1**Jdg. 13:14** - 3.10.1.1**Jdg. 13:15** - 3.10.1.1**Jdg. 13:16** - 3.10.1.1**Jdg. 13:17** - 3.10.1.1**Jdg. 13:18**⁵ - 3.2.17,
3.3.12, 3.10.1.1, 3.19.12,
4.5.5.1**Jdg. 13:19** - 3.10.1.1**Jdg. 13:20** - 3.10.1.1**Jdg. 13:21** - 3.10.1.1**Jdg. 13:22**² - 3.1.17,
4.16.1**Jdg. 14****Jdg. 14:1** - 4.2.4**Jdg. 17****Jdg. 17:5** - 3.4.6**Jdg. 18****Jdg. 18:2** - 3.7.4**Jdg. 18:3** - 3.7.4**Jdg. 18:4** - 3.7.4**Jdg. 18:5** - 3.7.4**Jdg. 18:6** - 3.7.4**Jdg. 18:7** - 3.7.4**Jdg. 18:8** - 3.7.4**Jdg. 18:9** - 3.7.4**Jdg. 18:10** - 3.7.4**Jdg. 18:11** - 3.7.4**Jdg. 18:12** - 3.7.4**Jdg. 18:13** - 3.7.4**Jdg. 18:14**² - 3.4.6,
3.7.4**Jdg. 18:15** - 3.7.4**Jdg. 18:16** - 3.7.4**Jdg. 18:17**² - 3.4.6,
3.7.4**Jdg. 18:18**² - 3.4.6,
3.7.4**Jdg. 18:19**² - 3.7.4²**Jdg. 18:20**³ - 3.7.4²,
3.4.6**Jdg. 18:21**² - 3.7.4²**Jdg. 18:22**² - 3.7.4²**Jdg. 18:23**² - 3.7.4²**Jdg. 18:24**² - 3.7.4²**Jdg. 18:25**² - 3.7.4²**Jdg. 18:26**² - 3.7.4²**Jdg. 18:27**² - 3.7.4²**Jdg. 18:28**² - 3.7.4²**Jdg. 18:29**² - 3.7.4²**Jdg. 18:30**³ - 3.7.4³**Jdg. 18:31**² - 3.7.4²**Jdg. 20****Jdg. 20:18**² - 3.5.9,
3.7.5**5.5.8 - Ruth****Ru. 2****Ru. 2:20**² - 3.1.13,
3.5.9**Ru. 3****Ru. 3:2** - 3.14.15**Ru. 3:3** - 3.14.15**Ru. 3:4** - 3.14.15**Ru. 3:5** - 3.14.15**Ru. 3:6** - 3.14.15**Ru. 3:7** - 3.14.15**Ru. 4****Ru. 4:1**² - 3.1.13, 3.5.9**Ru. 4:2** - 3.5.9**Ru. 4:3** - 3.5.9**Ru. 4:4** - 3.5.9**Ru. 4:5** - 3.5.9**Ru. 4:6** - 3.5.9**Ru. 4:7** - 3.5.9**Ru. 4:8** - 3.5.9**Ru. 4:9** - 3.5.9**Ru. 4:10** - 3.5.9**Ru. 4:11** - 3.5.9**Ru. 4:14**² - 3.1.13,
3.5.9**Ru. 4:22** - 3.5.5

5.5.9 - 1 Samuel

1S. 2		1S. 17:5 ² - 2.7.5.3.5, 3.13.18	
1S. 2:9 - 3.3.4	1S. 10	1S. 17:6 ² - 2.7.5.3.5, 3.13.18	1S. 21
1S. 2:10 ² - 3.4.5, 3.5.6	1S. 10:6 - 4.14.4.1	1S. 17:7 ² - 2.7.5.3.5, 3.13.18	1S. 21:3 - 2.7.5.3.4
1S. 2:28 - 3.5.8		1S. 17:26 ⁴ - 3.7.2 ² , 3.1.18, 3.9.20	1S. 28
	1S. 12	1S. 17:36 ³ - 3.1.18, 3.7.2, 3.9.20	1S. 28:1 - 3.11.3.1
1S. 3	1S. 12:1 - 3.6.6	1S. 17:40 ² - 2.7.5.3.4 ²	1S. 28:3 - 3.9.21
1S. 3:15 - 3.1.10	1S. 12:17 - 3.4.5	1S. 17:44 - 3.19.18	1S. 28:4 - 3.9.21
	1S. 12:18 - 3.4.5	1S. 17:46 - 3.19.18	1S. 28:5 - 3.9.21
1S. 4	1S. 12:19 - 3.6.6	1S. 17:49 - 2.7.5.3.4	1S. 28:6 ² - 3.2.17, 3.9.21
1S. 4:4 ³ - 3.4.6 ² , 4.16.2	1S. 12:24 - 3.11.18	1S. 17:50 - 2.7.5.3.4	1S. 28:7 - 3.9.21
1S. 4:12 - 3.18.19			1S. 28:8 - 3.9.21
	1S. 15		1S. 28:9 - 3.9.21
1S. 5	1S. 15:23 - 3.4.6	1S. 18	1S. 28:13 - 3.13.11
1S. 5:12 - 4.1.2		1S. 18:10 ² - 3.9.5, 3.16.14	1S. 29
	1S. 16		1S. 29:1 - 4.5.3.1
1S. 6	1S. 16:13 - 4.14.4.1	1S. 19	
1S. 6:19 - 4.16.1	1S. 16:14 ⁵ - 4.16.5.5 ² , 3.1.13, 3.16.14, 4.14.4.1	1S. 19:9 - 3.16.14	1S. 31
		1S. 19:13 - 3.4.6	1S. 31:2 - 4.5.3.1
1S. 7	1S. 17	1S. 19:16 - 3.4.6	1S. 31:8 - 4.5.3.1
1S. 7:8 - 3.1.6	1S. 17:4 ³ - 2.7.5.3.4, 2.7.5.3.5, 3.13.18	1S. 19:20 - 4.14.4.1	
1S. 7:10 - 3.4.5			

5.5.10 - 2 Samuel

2S. 1	2S. 6:5 - 3.14.2	3.3.7, 3.21.1	2S. 7:23 ³ - 2.7.5.3.7, 3.19.21, 4.17.2.3
2S. 1:19 - 3.17.10		2S. 7:14 ⁵ - 3.5.5 ² , 3.1.7, 3.3.7, 3.3.19	
2S. 1:25 - 3.17.10	2S. 7	2S. 7:15 ⁴ - 3.5.5 ² , 3.1.7, 3.3.7	2S. 12
	2S. 7:8 ² - 3.1.7, 3.5.5	2S. 7:16 ¹⁰ - 3.3.21 ³ , 3.5.5 ² , 3.1.7, 3.3.7, 3.14.6, 3.21.1, 4.11.4	2S. 12:30 - 3.19.12
2S. 5	2S. 7:9 ² - 3.1.7, 3.5.5	2S. 7:17 ³ - 3.3.7, 3.3.21, 3.5.5	2S. 21
2S. 5:7 - 3.14.1	2S. 7:10 ² - 3.1.7, 3.5.5	2S. 7:19 ² - 3.5.5, 3.6.16	2S. 21:16 - 2.7.5.3.4
	2S. 7:11 ² - 3.1.7, 3.5.5		2S. 21:18 - 2.7.5.3.4
2S. 6	2S. 7:12 ³ - 3.5.5 ² , 3.1.7		
2S. 6:2 ³ - 3.4.6 ² , 4.16.2	2S. 7:13 ⁵ - 3.5.5 ² , 3.1.7,		

2S. 21:19 - 2.7.5.3.4**2S. 21:20**³ - 2.7.5.3.4,
2.7.5.3.5, 3.13.18**2S. 21:21** - 2.7.5.3.4**2S. 21:22**² - 2.7.5.3.4²**2S. 22****2S. 22:3** - 3.5.6**2S. 22:11** - 3.4.6**2S. 22:14** - 3.4.5**2S. 23****2S. 23:2**² - 3.19.10,
5.2.33**2S. 23:5** - 3.5.5**2S. 24****2S. 24:13** - 3.9.5**2S. 24:16**² - 3.10.1.1,
3.14.15**2S. 24:18** - 4.16.3**2S. 24:19** - 4.16.3**2S. 24:20** - 4.16.3**2S. 24:21** - 4.16.3**2S. 24:22** - 4.16.3**2S. 24:23** - 4.16.3**2S. 24:24**² - 4.16.3,
4.16.5.3**2S. 24:25** - 4.16.3

5.5.11 - 1 Kings

1K. 1**1K. 1:39** - 3.11.15**1K. 1:50** - 3.9.13**1K. 1:51** - 3.9.13**1K. 2****1K. 2:5** - 3.1.13**1K. 2:19** - 3.5.1**1K. 2:20** - 3.9.13**1K. 5****1K. 5:1** - 4.16.5**1K. 6****1K. 6:19**² - 3.21.16,
4.16.5.11**1K. 6:20** - 4.16.5.11**1K. 6:22** - 3.21.18**1K. 6:23**² - 3.4.6,
4.16.4**1K. 6:24**² - 3.4.6,
4.16.4**1K. 6:25**² - 3.4.6,
4.16.4**1K. 6:26**² - 3.4.6,
4.16.4**1K. 6:27**² - 3.4.6,
4.16.4**1K. 6:28**² - 3.4.6,
4.16.4**1K. 6:29** - 3.4.6**1K. 6:32**² - 3.4.6, 4.7.2**1K. 6:35** - 3.4.6**1K. 7****1K. 7:13** - 3.3.12**1K. 7:14** - 3.3.12**1K. 7:15** - 3.3.12**1K. 7:16** - 3.3.12**1K. 7:17** - 3.3.12**1K. 7:18** - 3.3.12**1K. 7:19** - 3.3.12**1K. 7:20** - 3.3.12**1K. 7:21**² - 3.3.12²**1K. 7:22** - 3.3.12**1K. 7:23** - 3.4.6**1K. 7:29**⁴ - 3.4.6²,
4.7.2, 4.16.2**1K. 7:36** - 3.4.6**1K. 7:50**³ - 4.16.4³**1K. 8****1K. 8:1** - 4.16.5**1K. 8:4** - 4.16.5.2**1K. 8:6** - 3.4.6**1K. 8:7** - 3.4.6**1K. 8:9** - 3.11.19**1K. 8:10**⁷ - 4.16.2³,
2.13.8, 3.15.8, 4.16.5.3,
4.16.5.4**1K. 8:11**⁸ - 4.16.2³,
3.15.8², 2.13.8, 4.16.5.3,
4.16.5.4**1K. 8:21** - 3.11.19**1K. 8:46** - 3.5.3**1K. 8:48** - 3.3.12**1K. 8:53**³ - 2.7.5.3.7,
3.19.21, 4.17.2.3**1K. 10****1K. 10:1** - 4.2.4**1K. 10:10** - 3.11.5**1K. 10:11** - 3.11.5**1K. 10:12** - 3.11.5**1K. 10:14**² - 2.7.5.3.5,
3.13.18**1K. 10:19** - 2.7.5.3.5**1K. 11****1K. 11:4** - 3.2.4**1K. 11:13** - 3.3.12**1K. 11:26** - 4.17.3.1**1K. 11:27** - 4.17.3.1**1K. 11:28** - 4.17.3.1**1K. 11:29** - 4.17.3.1**1K. 11:30** - 4.17.3.1**1K. 11:31** - 4.17.3.1**1K. 11:32** - 4.17.3.1**1K. 11:33** - 4.17.3.1**1K. 11:34** - 4.17.3.1**1K. 11:35** - 4.17.3.1**1K. 11:36**⁵ - 3.3.12,
3.5.5, 3.11.8, 4.16.5.8,
4.17.3.1**1K. 11:37** - 4.17.3.1**1K. 11:38** - 4.17.3.1**1K. 11:39** - 4.17.3.1**1K. 11:40** - 4.17.3.1**1K. 12****1K. 12:21** - 4.17.3.1**1K. 12:25** - 4.9.2**1K. 12:26**² - 3.7.4,
4.9.2**1K. 12:27**² - 3.7.4,
4.9.2**1K. 12:28**⁵ - 3.7.4³,
4.9.2²**1K. 12:29**⁵ - 3.7.4⁴,
4.9.2**1K. 12:30**³ - 3.7.4²,
4.9.2**1K. 12:31**² - 3.7.4,
4.9.2

1K. 12:32² - 3.7.4,
4.9.2

1K. 12:33² - 3.7.4,
4.9.2

1K. 14

1K. 14:11 - 3.11.8

1K. 14:21² - 3.3.12,
4.17.3.1

1K. 14:22 - 4.17.3.1

1K. 14:23 - 4.17.3.1

1K. 14:24³ - 3.17.4²,
4.17.3.1

1K. 14:25² - 3.11.19,
4.17.3.1

1K. 14:26² - 3.11.19,
4.17.3.1

1K. 14:27 - 4.17.3.1

1K. 14:28 - 4.17.3.1

1K. 14:29 - 4.17.3.1

1K. 14:30 - 4.17.3.1

1K. 14:31 - 4.17.3.1

1K. 15

1K. 15:4 - 3.5.5

1K. 16

1K. 16:4 - 3.11.8

1K. 16:13 - 4.9.1

1K. 16:29 - 4.9.2

1K. 16:30 - 4.9.2

1K. 16:31³ - 4.9.1,
4.9.2, 4.9.3

1K. 16:32² - 4.9.1,

4.9.2

1K. 16:33² - 4.9.1,
4.9.2

1K. 17

1K. 17:1³ - 3.11.3.1,
3.11.4, 3.11.6

1K. 17:2 - 3.12.6

1K. 17:3 - 3.12.6

1K. 17:8 - 3.12.6

1K. 17:9 - 3.12.6

1K. 17:10 - 3.12.6

1K. 17:11 - 3.12.6

1K. 17:12 - 3.12.6

1K. 17:13 - 3.12.6

1K. 17:14 - 3.12.6

1K. 17:15 - 3.12.6

1K. 17:17² - 3.1.5,
3.11.3.1

1K. 17:18² - 3.1.5,
3.11.3.1

1K. 17:19² - 3.1.5,
3.11.3.1

1K. 17:20² - 3.1.5,
3.11.3.1

1K. 17:21³ - 3.1.5,
3.11.3.1, 3.13.3

1K. 17:22³ - 3.1.5,
3.11.3.1, 3.20.4

1K. 17:23² - 3.1.5,
3.11.3.1

1K. 17:24 - 3.11.3.1

1K. 18

1K. 18:3 - 3.1.17

1K. 18:4³ - 3.16.6,
4.9.1, 4.9.2

1K. 18:13² - 4.9.2,
4.9.3

1K. 18:17 - 3.11.10

1K. 18:19³ - 4.9.2²,
4.9.3

1K. 18:21² - 3.3.15,
4.9.3

1K. 18:28 - 3.1.10

1K. 18:38² - 3.13.13,
4.16

1K. 18:46 - 3.1.13

1K. 19

1K. 19:2 - 4.9.1

1K. 19:4 - 3.16.6

1K. 19:7 - 3.10.1.1

1K. 19:13³ - 3.20.11,
3.22.4, 4.16.1

1K. 19:18⁴ - 2.7.5.2,
3.2.9, 3.7.4, 4.17.3.2.3

1K. 20

1K. 20:34 - 3.1.7

1K. 21

1K. 21:1 - 4.9.2

1K. 21:2 - 4.9.2

1K. 21:3 - 4.9.2

1K. 21:4 - 4.9.2

1K. 21:5 - 4.9.2

1K. 21:6 - 4.9.2

1K. 21:7 - 4.9.2

1K. 21:8 - 4.9.2

1K. 21:9 - 4.9.2

1K. 21:10³ - 2.7.5.3.1,
4.9.1, 4.9.2

1K. 21:11 - 4.9.2

1K. 21:12 - 4.9.2

1K. 21:13 - 4.9.2

1K. 21:14 - 4.9.2

1K. 21:15 - 4.9.2

1K. 21:16 - 4.9.2

1K. 21:20 - 3.11.10

1K. 21:23 - 4.9.2

1K. 21:25 - 4.9.3

1K. 22

1K. 22:8 - 3.11.10

1K. 22:10 - 3.16.14

1K. 22:11 - 3.16.14

1K. 22:12 - 3.16.14

1K. 22:13 - 3.16.14

1K. 22:14 - 3.16.14

1K. 22:15 - 3.16.14

1K. 22:16 - 3.16.14

1K. 22:17 - 3.16.14

1K. 22:18 - 3.16.14

1K. 22:19³ - 3.1.10,
3.4.4, 3.16.14

1K. 22:20 - 3.16.14

1K. 22:21 - 3.16.14

1K. 22:22⁴ - 3.2.10,
3.9.5, 3.12.4, 3.16.14

1K. 22:23² - 3.12.4,
3.16.14

1K. 22:28 - 3.9.7

5.5.12 - 2 Kings

2K. 1

2K. 1:3 - 3.10.1.1

2K. 1:9 - 3.13.13

2K. 1:10⁶ - 3.11.5²,
3.1.14, 3.11.3.1, 3.13.13,
3.20.9

2K. 1:11⁵ - 3.11.5²,

3.11.3.1, 3.13.13, 3.20.9

2K. 1:12⁵ - 3.11.5²,
3.11.3.1, 3.13.13, 3.20.9

2K. 1:13² - 3.11.3.1,

3.20.9

2K. 1:14² - 3.11.3.1,
3.20.9

2K. 1:15² - 3.10.1.1,

- 3.20.9
- 2K. 2**
- 2K. 2:1**² - 4.14.2²
- 2K. 2:11**⁵ - 3.11.3.1², 2.7.5.4.2, 3.1.5, 4.14.2
- 2K. 2:12** - 3.11.3.1
- 2K. 2:19** - 3.8.11
- 2K. 2:20** - 3.8.11
- 2K. 2:21** - 3.8.11
- 2K. 2:22** - 3.8.11
- 2K. 3**
- 2K. 3:4** - 3.12.6.1
- 2K. 3:5** - 3.12.6.1
- 2K. 4**
- 2K. 4:32** - 3.1.5
- 2K. 4:33** - 3.1.5
- 2K. 4:34**² - 3.1.5, 3.13.3
- 2K. 4:35** - 3.1.5
- 2K. 4:36** - 3.1.5
- 2K. 6**
- 2K. 6:14** - 3.19.14
- 2K. 6:17** - 3.1.1
- 2K. 8**
- 2K. 8:13** - 3.22.15
- 2K. 8:19** - 3.5.5
- 2K. 8:27** - 4.5.3.3
- 2K. 9**
- 2K. 9:6** - 3.19.2
- 2K. 9:7** - 3.19.2
- 2K. 9:10** - 3.11.9
- 2K. 9:22**⁵ - 4.9.3², 3.9.21, 3.18.23, 4.9.2
- 2K. 9:23** - 3.9.21
- 2K. 9:27** - 4.5.3.1
- 2K. 9:30** - 4.9.2
- 2K. 9:31** - 4.9.2
- 2K. 9:32** - 4.9.2
- 2K. 9:33** - 4.9.2
- 2K. 9:34** - 4.9.2
- 2K. 9:35** - 4.9.2
- 2K. 9:36** - 4.9.2
- 2K. 9:37**² - 3.11.8, 4.9.2
- 2K. 10**
- 2K. 10:6** - 3.2.23
- 2K. 10:7** - 3.2.23
- 2K. 10:29** - 3.7.4
- 2K. 11**
- 2K. 11:14** - 4.17.2.3
- 2K. 13**
- 2K. 13:11** - 4.1.4.1
- 2K. 13:20** - 3.1.5
- 2K. 13:21**² - 3.1.5²
- 2K. 14**
- 2K. 14:7** - 3.12.6.1
- 2K. 15**
- 2K. 15:29** - 4.17.3.1
- 2K. 16**
- 2K. 16:3** - 3.17.4
- 2K. 16:17** - 4.7.2
- 2K. 17**
- 2K. 17:3** - 4.17.3.1
- 2K. 17:4** - 4.17.3.1
- 2K. 17:5** - 4.17.3.1
- 2K. 17:6**² - 4.17.2.1, 4.17.3.1
- 2K. 17:7** - 3.12.6
- 2K. 17:8** - 3.12.6
- 2K. 17:9** - 3.12.6
- 2K. 17:10** - 3.12.6
- 2K. 17:11** - 3.12.6
- 2K. 17:12** - 3.12.6
- 2K. 17:13** - 3.12.6
- 2K. 17:14** - 3.12.6
- 2K. 17:15** - 3.12.6
- 2K. 17:16**⁴ - 3.6.12, 3.6.13, 3.12.6, 3.16.8
- 2K. 17:17** - 3.12.6
- 2K. 17:18** - 3.12.6
- 2K. 17:19** - 3.12.6
- 2K. 17:20** - 3.12.6
- 2K. 17:21** - 3.12.6
- 2K. 17:22** - 3.12.6
- 2K. 17:23** - 3.12.6
- 2K. 17:24** - 4.17.2.2
- 2K. 17:41** - 4.17.2.2
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- Zec. 8:6**² - 2.4.3, 3.14.1 3.16.12
- Zec. 8:7**³ - 2.4.3, 2.13.4, 3.14.1
- Zec. 8:8**³ - 2.4.3, 2.13.4, 3.14.1
- Zec. 8:9** - 2.4.3
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- Zec. 8:12** - 2.4.3
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- Zec. 8:14** - 2.4.3
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- Zec. 8:20**⁶ - 4.11.4², 3.3.9, 3.15.4, 4.5.2, 4.16.5.10.1
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- Zec. 8:22**⁶ - 4.11.4², 3.3.9, 3.15.4, 4.5.2, 4.16.5.10.1
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- Zec. 9:9**⁵ - 2.3.1, 2.13.3, 3.7.10, 3.12.6, 3.19.7
- Zec. 9:10**⁶ - 2.13.3, 3.2.28, 3.10.1.1, 3.10.2, 3.12.6, 4.11.4
- Zec. 9:11**² - 3.1.5, 3.5.9
- Zec. 9:14** - 3.8.6
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- Zec. 11:17**⁸ - 4.2.6², 3.7.17, 3.13.3, 3.17.8, 4.2.1, 4.2.7.1, 4.3.2.13
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- Zec. 12:2**⁹ - 2.13.5.4, 3.6.12, 3.11.15, 3.14.10, 4.5.2, 4.5.3.6, 4.5.4, 4.5.5, 4.16.3
- Zec. 12:3**¹¹ - 2.13.5.4, 3.1.7, 3.6.12, 3.11.15, 3.14.10, 4.5.2, 4.5.3.6, 4.5.4, 4.5.5, 4.5.6, 4.16.3
- Zec. 12:4**⁶ - 2.13.5.4, 3.6.12, 3.11.15, 3.14.10, 4.5.3.6, 4.5.5
- Zec. 12:5**⁵ - 2.13.5.4, 3.6.12, 3.11.15, 4.5.3.6, 4.5.5
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- Zec. 12:7**⁷ - 4.5.4², 2.13.5.4, 3.6.12, 3.11.15, 4.5.3.6, 4.5.5
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- Zec. 12:9**⁷ - 2.13.4, 2.13.5.4, 3.1.7, 3.6.12, 3.11.15, 4.5.3.6, 4.5.5
- Zec. 12:10**¹³ - 3.1.7⁶, 2.9.3.4, 3.5.6, 3.12.2, 3.12.6, 4.5.3.6, 4.5.4, 4.5.5
- Zec. 12:11**⁵ - 4.5.3.1², 3.16.16, 4.5.3.6, 4.5.5
- Zec. 12:12**² - 3.1.7, 4.5.5
- Zec. 12:13** - 3.7.4
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- Zec. 13:1**⁵ - 3.4.6, 3.12.2, 3.12.6, 3.21.6, 4.5.4
- Zec. 13:2**² - 2.13.4²
- Zec. 13:7**⁶ - 3.3.10², 3.12.6, 3.12.6.1, 3.12.17, 4.5.4
- Zec. 13:8**¹³ - 3.3.10², 3.12.17², 2.7.5.2, 2.13.4, 3.2.9, 3.12.6, 3.12.6.1, 3.19.21, 3.21.3, 4.5.4, 4.17.3.2.3
- Zec. 13:9**¹⁵ - 3.3.10², 3.12.17², 2.7.5.2, 2.13.4, 2.13.5.4, 3.2.9, 3.12.6, 3.12.6.1, 3.19.21, 3.21.3, 3.21.18, 4.5.4, 4.17.3.2.3
- Zec. 13:11**⁶ - 2.4.3, 3.1.5, 3.10.7, 3.11.15, 4.11.4, 4.11.7
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- Zec. 13:16**⁹ - 3.7.9², 4.1.3.4, 4.1.3.5.2, 4.1.4.2.3, 4.11.4, 4.11.7, 4.16.5, 4.16.5.10.2
- Zec. 13:17**⁹ - 3.1.7⁴, 4.1.4.2.3, 4.11.4, 4.11.7, 4.16.5, 4.16.5.10.2
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- Zec. 14:1**¹² - 2.13.3⁴, 2.7.5.4.2, 2.13.5.4, 3.6.12, 3.11.15, 3.14.20, 4.5.4, 4.5.5, 4.16.5.9
- Zec. 14:2**¹³ - 2.13.3³, 4.5.4², 2.13.5.4, 3.6.12, 3.11.15, 3.14.20, 4.5.2, 4.5.3.6, 4.5.5, 4.5.6
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- Zec. 14:5**⁸ - 4.5.4², 2.13.3, 2.13.5.4, 3.6.12, 3.11.15, 3.17.14, 4.5.5
- Zec. 14:6**⁴ - 2.13.3, 3.6.12, 3.11.15, 4.5.4
- Zec. 14:7**³ - 2.13.3, 3.11.15, 4.5.4
- Zec. 14:8**¹² - 2.4.3, 2.13.3, 3.1.5, 3.4.6, 3.7.17, 3.11.15, 3.21.6, 3.22.1, 4.5.4, 4.11.4, 4.11.5, 4.11.7
- Zec. 14:9**¹¹ - 2.4.3, 2.13.3, 2.13.4, 3.1.5, 3.11.15, 4.1.4.2.3, 4.5.2, 4.5.4, 4.11.4, 4.11.5, 4.11.7
- Zec. 14:10**⁶ - 2.4.3, 3.1.5, 3.11.15, 3.16.20, 4.11.4, 4.11.7
- Zec. 14:11**⁶ - 2.4.3, 3.1.5, 3.10.7, 3.11.15, 4.11.4, 4.11.7
- Zec. 14:12**⁶ - 2.13.3², 4.5.4², 3.6.12, 3.16.1
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- Zec. 14:14**⁴ - 4.5.4², 2.13.3, 3.6.12
- Zec. 14:15**³ - 4.5.4², 2.13.3
- Zec. 14:16**⁹ - 3.7.9², 4.1.3.4, 4.1.3.5.2, 4.1.4.2.3, 4.11.4, 4.11.7, 4.16.5, 4.16.5.10.2
- Zec. 14:17**⁹ - 3.1.7⁴, 4.1.4.2.3, 4.11.4, 4.11.7, 4.16.5, 4.16.5.10.2
- Zec. 14:18**⁶ - 3.1.7, 4.1.4.2.3, 4.11.4, 4.11.7, 4.16.5, 4.16.5.10.2
- Zec. 14:19**⁵ - 4.1.4.2.3, 4.11.4, 4.11.7, 4.16.5, 4.16.5.10.2

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Mal. 3:14 - 3.10.1

Mal. 4

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Mtt. 1

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Mtt. 1:2² - 3.5.5,
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Mtt. 1:3² - 3.5.5,
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Mtt. 1:6³ - 3.1.13,
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Mtt. 1:17² - 3.5.5,
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Mtt. 1:20³ - 3.1.1,
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Mtt. 1:21 - 3.1.1

Mtt. 1:25² - 3.12.1,
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Mtt. 2

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Mtt. 2:2⁵ - 3.13.8.2²,

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Mtt. 2:5² - 2.3.1,
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Mtt. 2:6⁴ - 3.7.17²,
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Mtt. 2:11 - 3.2.8

Mtt. 2:15 - 3.12.6

Mtt. 2:16² - 3.12.4²

Mtt. 2:20 - 3.6.9

Mtt. 3

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Mtt. 3:2² - 2.4.3, 3.14.6

Mtt. 3:3 - 3.14.6

Mtt. 3:4 - 3.15.6

Mtt. 3:9 - 3.2.9

Mtt. 3:11³ - 3.4.5,
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Mtt. 3:12⁷ - 3.14.18²,
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Mtt. 4:3⁵ - 3.12.6²,
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Mtt. 4:4² - 3.9.20,
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Mtt. 4:5² - 3.9.20,
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Mtt. 4:6³ - 3.9.20,
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Mtt. 4:10⁶ - 3.19.10²,
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Mtt. 4:15 - 3.16.19

Mtt. 4:17³ - 3.14.6²,
3.1.6

Mtt. 4:19 - 2.7.5.3.7

Mtt. 4:23 - 3.14.6

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Mtt. 5:17² - 2.7.5.3.1, 3.11.3

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Mtt. 6:8 - 3.6.16

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Mtt. 6:24² - 3.3.15, 3.7.14

Mtt. 6:25² - 3.6.9²

Mtt. 6:26 - 3.12.14

Mtt. 6:32 - 3.16.19

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Mtt. 7:21³ - 2.4.3, 3.11.15, 3.22.14

Mtt. 7:22⁶ - 2.4.3, 3.2.4, 3.11.15, 3.13.13, 3.20.15, 3.22.14

Mtt. 7:23⁴ - 3.2.4, 3.13.13, 3.20.15, 3.22.14

Mtt. 7:25 - 3.12.15

Mtt. 8

Mtt. 8:2³ - 3.13.8.2², 3.7.10

Mtt. 8:3 - 3.1.18

Mtt. 8:6 - 3.11.10

Mtt. 8:10 - 3.19.9

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2.13.5.5, 2.14.3, 3.1.3,
3.2.7, 3.14.13, 3.21.12,
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