

It Is Finished

Chapter One God's Last Book

This message begins a series from the last book of the Bible called The Revelation.

Each day brings us closer to the fulfillment of all the predictions in the Bible. Born-again Christians have always been students of prophecy and careful observers of current events. The Book of Revelation holds special interest for us. It is GOD'S LAST BOOK, the last words God has given to man in the Bible.

Last words are cherished. Think of the Lord Jesus' last words to the disciples before He ascended to glory. He gave them the great commission and instructed them to go into all the world to preach the gospel to every creature.

In the book of Revelation we have His last words after His ascension. Then He had another message for His people. It begins with Revelation 1:1-3, GOD'S LAST BOOK, a fitting introduction.

1 The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, to shew unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass; and he sent and signified it by his angel unto his servant John:

2 Who bare record of the word of God, and of the testimony of Jesus Christ, and of all things that he saw.

3 Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein: for the time is at hand.

We look at this phrase from several points of view. The phrase "of Jesus Christ" in our English language could mean that it belongs to Jesus Christ. And if we consider the revelation to belong to Jesus Christ which God gave to Him we are not wrong.

However, we can also understand the phrase "of Jesus Christ" to mean "about Jesus Christ." That certainly is also true. There can be no doubt that in the Book of Revelation there are new disclosures about Jesus Christ. We will see Him functioning in ways that the Gospels and the Epistles do not show Him. It is, therefore, important to understand that HE is the subject of God's Last Book.

In its scope we observe that the text states, "things which must shortly come to pass." In other words the Book of Revelation is a prophecy, a prediction. It predicts events that are to come to pass. It is not history. These words convey to us that the content of the book is predictive prophecy. Any study should approach it from that standpoint. Surely Jesus should know what the book is about. He said there are events "which must shortly come to pass."

We should also notice its surety. John, Jesus' servant, bore witness of the word of God and of the testimony of Jesus Christ and of all things which He saw.

The Apostle John who recorded this book says 28 times that he heard voices, heard angelic praise and the like. And he says 44 times that he saw visions of various kinds. He saw what others were not permitted to see. These are two valid ways of learning--what he heard and what he saw.

That should settle it. The content of God's Last Book has been well verified by valid ways of learning.

The third Insight; The extent of the Last Book

A special challenge lies in the third verse. Here a word of blessing is pronounced upon all those who pay attention to the Book of Revelation. "Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein for the time is at hand."

There is a challenge in the extent of this Last Book. Blessing is pronounced upon him who reads and him who hears. Such a blessing should urge us to read the Book of Revelation often and carefully.

There is also the charge in the extent of the Last Book because a blessing is pronounced upon those who keep those things which are written in the book. The word “keep” contains the idea of observing to do, not simply to preserve, in the sense of keeping, but in the sense of obeying and following its truth.

And there is the calendar in God’s Last Book, “the time is at hand.” That is the time frame. Notice again in verse 1, “things which must shortly come to pass.” And then in verse 3 “the time is at hand.” The time is near, the season is near. These events must shortly come to pass and will be fulfilled.

The Apostle John wrote near the close of the first century which means he wrote this book many years ago. You might question the propriety that he said, “shortly come to pass,” and “the time is at hand.” Don’t forget, Revelation is a book of predictions. As far as God is concerned, time is a negligible factor. God is not bound by time. Time is only important as far as events of time are brought together in human history. Thus, the calendar is “the time is at hand.” The extent is concentrated in the challenge and the charge, and the calendar before us.

No other book of the Bible has any greater proof of its divine origin and its defined purpose. For these reasons we cannot afford to neglect the study of it. Surely by this time the predictions in God’s Last Book must hold special interest for us for the time is at hand.

Chapter Two

A Word From God

Some years ago a friend of mine was asked what he saw as the central emphasis needed by the church. He answered, “A stronger theological substance. We need a more healthy Biblical attention, more Bible study and Bible preaching.” I agreed with him 100 percent.

If it were true then it is certainly more so today. The battleground today is, “Do we have a word from the Lord?” I believe we do. If God is silent it is an unbearable silence! But God has not been silent. The Bible is God’s Word verified by hundreds of proofs. So then, our day demands a return to an unqualified belief in the Bible as God’s Book.”

In this foundational introduction, Revelation 1:4-8 presents A WORD FROM GOD.

4 John to the seven churches which are in Asia: Grace be unto you, and peace, from him which is, and which was, and which is to come; and from the seven Spirits which are before his throne;

5 And from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood,

6 And hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.

7 Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him. Even so, Amen.

8 I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty.

This text carries certain spiritual REALITIES which confirm our faith in the Word from God.

The first Reality; There is Direct Access

John is the writer, not the author. He is the writer. And so he writes, “John to the seven churches which are in Asia.” He is the one who has received, recorded and sent this word from God.

God is the bestower. John says, “Grace be unto you, and peace, from him who is, and who was, and who is to come; and from the seven Spirits which are before his throne.” So God is the Eternal One. He is

the great I Am who came to Moses on the backside of the desert as we learn in the book of Exodus. And when Moses asked God, "Whom shall I say sent me?" God replied, "I Am that I Am."

Here the word comes to us in a similar way, "Who is, who was, and who is to come." The flow of grace and peace is conveyed or bestowed from Him who is and who was and who is to come.

We believe this must refer to the Holy Spirit when he mentions the seven Spirits which are before His throne. And then he continues, "And from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth." One must see that Jesus Christ is here pictured in His threefold ministry.

The faithful witness points to His Prophetic ministry. The first begotten of the dead refers to His Priestly ministry and the prince of the kings of the earth refers to His Princely or Kingly ministry.

By this direct access we are in touch with the non-material. We are more than lumps of clay. We have free and direct access, a contact that is in touch with the non-material. We have access to the triune God: Father, Spirit and Son! Surely this should confirm our trust in the Word from God.

The second Reality; There is Divine Action

First, for us, He loved us. His super-abounding love was toward us. The Apostle John wrote in an earlier letter, "Not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins." He loved us. That is divine action for us.

There is also the divine action in us. He washed us from our sins in His own blood. Without the shedding of blood there is no remission of sins. We can be made absolutely clean by the washing of regeneration by the word and in His precious blood. There is divine action in us, washing us from our sins in His own blood.

There is also the divine action to us, making us kings and priests unto our God to whom be glory forever and ever.

This divine action by all means should confirm our faith and trust in the Word from God. Divine action for us, His great love. Divine action in us, He washed us by His blood. Divine action to us, making us kings and priests of God.

What we are unable to do for ourselves, He has done for us. Yes, He did! Praise the Lord!

The third Reality; There is Decisive Answer

It is a Word from God by His appearance. This certainly is most decisive. Jesus spoke about that when He was before the council during His trial. He spoke up to them when the high priest questioned Him as to who He was. He said, "I say unto you, hereafter shall you see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power and coming in the clouds of heaven." Notice this statement in Revelation 1:7, "Behold He comes with clouds." He left in a cloud. He will return with clouds.

This will be decisive answer beyond all possibility of refuting. Furthermore, "Every eye shall see Him, and they also who pierced Him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him." Every eye shall see Him. Those who have ridiculed and blasphemed Him. Those who have neglected Him. They all will see Him.

This is decisive answer, the appearance of the Lord of glory. He will silence every argument by His appearance.

The Word from God is guaranteed by these realities. There is direct access by which grace and peace are ministered to us by the triune God: Father, Spirit and Son. There is divine action for us and in us and to us. There is decisive answer by His personal appearance, and every eye shall see Him and they also that pierced Him.

Our Scripture text closes with a great affirmation, "I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, who is, and who was, and who is to come, the Almighty."

Indeed, there is a Word from God. We have it in the last book of the Bible. Oh, friend, accept that Word from God.

Chapter Three

John On Patmos

We learn from the study of church history, that the early church experienced great persecutions. We can say, by the close of the first century, an all out effort was made to put a stop to what the Emperor thought was nonsense in following Christ. The Roman Emperors demanded worship. Romans were to say, "Caesar is lord." This true believers could not do. It was for this reason that the Apostle John was banished to the island of Patmos.

Revelation 1:9-11 records JOHN ON PATMOS.

9 I John, who also am your brother, and companion in tribulation, and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ, was in the isle that is called Patmos, for the word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ.

10 I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and heard behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet,

11 Saying, I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last: and, What thou seest, write in a book, and send it unto the seven churches which are in Asia; unto Ephesus, and unto Smyrna, and unto Pergamos, and unto Thyatira, and unto Sardis, and unto Philadelphia, and unto Laodicea.

Here are several strategic VIEWPOINTS that will secure a better understanding of this last book.

The first Viewpoint; The Lord's Disciple

Surely, the one speaking here is John the Apostle, known as the beloved disciple during the lifetime of Jesus. As nearly as we can tell from the Gospel record he was the youngest of the twelve disciples. And as far as we know, he was the only one who died a natural death. All the other disciples were martyred.

You may remember that when Jesus was on the cross, He spoke to John and committed the care of His mother to the beloved disciple. Here now, in our text, he had been exiled to the Island of Patmos, just off the coast of Asia Minor.

There is a grotto, a cave, half way up the mountain, where tradition tells us the Apostle John saw his visions and heard the Word of the Lord. There is a Greek Orthodox Church built on the mountain and the Monastery of Saint John. It is not a rock-bound island as some suppose. It is a beautiful island of white washed cottages and vineyards on the mountain sides.

But why was the Lord's disciple on the Island of Patmos? He tells us, "for the Word of God and for the testimony of Jesus Christ." The early church experienced persecution because the loyalty of believers to Jesus Christ threatened the power of the Emperor. So, John the Apostle was banished, exiled to the Island of Patmos. That, however, was used of God to provide for us this last book of the Bible. John, the Apostle, made no compromise in his faith. For that reason God could use him.

The second Viewpoint; The Lord's Day

First the Lord's Disciple, now the Lord's Day. I am sure, your mind immediately goes to our Sunday. But let me help you understand what this really means in the Book of Revelation.

I point out to you that Sunday was not referred to as the Lord's Day until much later than when John wrote this book. In the New Testament the disciples referred to the first day of the week, not the Lord's Day. They gathered on the first day of the week, the evening of the seventh day. But the Sabbath Day was their real day of worship. I am pointing out to you that the phrase, "The Lord's Day," in Revelation 1:10 does not refer to Sunday.

There is a way to translate this verse which gives us the correct meaning. In English it should read like this: "I came to be in the Spirit in the Day of the Lord."

The Old Testament prophets knew about such a time, which they called "The Day of the Lord." And they understood and predicted that it will be a day of judgment and divine wrath. Ponder how much difference that makes in understanding the book of Revelation. It means that John the Apostle was transported by the Spirit into the future Day of the Lord which Old Testament prophets spoke of as the day of judgment. We must therefore affirm on the basis of this viewpoint an understanding of events to take place in "the Day of the Lord" which is a day of judgment.

The third Viewpoint; The Lord's Directive

Look at the Lord's announcement to the Apostle John, "I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last." The first letter of the Greek alphabet is alpha and the last is omega. Our Lord was saying, "I am the first and the last, the beginning and the end."

He then gives him a command like this, "What thou seest, write in a book, and send it to the seven churches which are in Asia; unto Ephesus, and unto Smyrna, and unto Pergamos, and unto Thyatira, and unto Sardis, and unto Philadelphia, and unto Laodicea ."

He was told to write what he saw. To be transported in the Spirit into the Day of the Lord means that these events which he saw would be visions of truth. Being in the Spirit means that he would see what the eye could not normally see. He would have a new kind of sight, the sight of the Spirit.

Then, he was to write down, a very mechanical process, but very necessary. And, after having written it down he was to send it to the seven churches.

Those seven churches were actual churches in Asia Minor. It is thought that they all were located on a main road in the Roman Empire when the Apostle John wrote.

The Lord's directive to John the Apostle was to write down what he saw and send it to those seven churches in Asia. Jesus was superintending what John saw and wrote.

From these viewpoints we should gather truth and trust in God's Word. There was the Lord's Disciple who received a commission. There was the Day of the Lord which visions he would be given. And there was the Lord's Directive to write down what he saw and send it to the seven churches.

Now, from these viewpoints we ought to pay attention to this last book. It deserves our careful study.

Chapter Four

Jesus In Exaltation

In our humanity we often wish we could see beyond this life. We may have loved ones in glory. We wish we could communicate with them. But our flesh is a barrier to that. We must content ourselves with the here and now, except as the Bible gives us a few glimpses of the hereafter.

The Apostle John was one of those rare persons who was permitted to see beyond. He was transported by the Spirit into the Day of the Lord. And he heard that voice behind him like a trumpet. He turned to see.

In Revelation 1:12-18, JESUS IN EXALTATION is presented in sight and sound.

12 And I turned to see the voice that spake with me. And being turned, I saw seven golden candlesticks;

13 And in the midst of the seven candlesticks one like unto the Son of man, clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt about the paps with a golden girdle.

14 His head and his hairs were white like wool, as white as snow; and his eyes were as a flame of fire;

15 And his feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace; and his voice as the sound of many waters.

16 And he had in his right hand seven stars: and out of his mouth went a sharp twoedged sword: and his countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength.

17 And when I saw him, I fell at his feet as dead. And he laid his right hand upon me, saying unto me, Fear not; I am the first and the last:

18 I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death.

These verses present the CREDENTIALS exalting Jesus in His Glory as King of kings, Lord of lords.

The first Credential;

The Glory of His Position

When John turned to see the voice that spoke with him he saw seven golden lamp stands. Surely these lamps were lit and burning. He saw in the midst of these lamp stands “One like the Son of man.” We should pay close attention to the position of Jesus. He was in the midst of these lamp stands. That speaks of intimacy. It also speaks of control. And notice, He was wearing a garment down to His feet.

In the Old Testament we learn that the Prophet Daniel, in his book, chapter 7:13,14, said he saw the Son of man when He came to the Ancient of days to receive a kingdom.

Here the Apostle John saw Jesus in the midst of these seven lamp stands, appearing to be in complete charge. He was that way when He was on earth in the flesh. We may recall from our reading of the Gospel record that He was always in charge. The glory of His position here is in the midst of the seven lamp stands. Surely no one can doubt that He has been exalted and glorified.

The second Credential; The Glory of His Person

No one ever saw Jesus like John saw Him. Stephen, the first martyr, saw Jesus, but He was standing at the right hand of God. Before that the three disciples, Peter, James and John, saw Jesus transfigured before His crucifixion. His garment was whiter than any one on earth could white it and His face shone like the sun.

Another writes the symbolism about these various descriptions that John wrote of. Here they are:

“In the midst of the seven candlesticks designates love and familiarity. Clothed with a garment down to the foot: righteousness and dignity. Girt about the breast with a golden girdle: compassion and verity. His head and his hairs. ..white like wool, as white as snow: eternity and wisdom. His eyes...as a flame of fire: omniscience and scrutiny. His feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace: judgment and purity.

His appearance was most striking. Only John the Apostle was permitted to see the glorified Jesus like that. Here is credential number two, the glory of His person. But we are not finished.

Not only His appearance, but His authority. What did His voice sound like? It sounded like a trumpet. Then like many waters. Then He had in His right hand seven stars and out of His mouth went a sharp two-edged sword.

His voice as many waters suggests grandeur and dignity. And in His right hand seven stars, that means omnipotence. Out of His mouth went a two-edged sword: truth and severity. His countenance, as the sun shineth in His strength: holiness and glory. The glory of His person is transcendent and exalted over all. Surely no one can doubt His exaltation. What sight He must have been. What an impact on John!

The third Credential; The Glory Of His Pronouncement

Notice the effect on John, “When I saw him, I fell at his feet as dead.” That should really not surprise us for the finite in the presence of the Infinite can hardly exist. Here is a creature in the presence of the Creator.

Only a few of the biblical prophets ever had a similar experience. Ezekiel, Daniel, and John. But the voice of Jesus aroused him. The hand of Jesus touched him. And Jesus said to him, “Fear not; I am the first and the last.” He came over that again to make it clear. There is nobody ahead of Him and nobody behind Him. He is first and He is last.

Verse 18 highlights for us the victory of Jesus. He said, “I am He that liveth, and was dead; behold, I am alive for evermore.”

Peter, at Pentecost, testified to the fact that He is alive. He quoted from Psalm 16 where David said that God would not leave His body in the grave nor suffer His Holy One to see corruption.

Praise the Lord! No way can corruption set in to the body of Jesus, because He has been resurrected. By His own word He was dead. But now He is alive forevermore. And beyond that He said, He has “the keys of hell and of death.”

In Hebrews chapter 2 we learn that Jesus took upon Him the nature of man so that He could destroy death. He did that by rising from the dead. Now He possesses the keys of authority, the keys of hell and of death. This pronouncement marks Jesus as Lord of lords.

By these credentials we see Him exalted: the glory of His Position in the midst of the seven golden lamp stands; the glory of His Person, radiant in all His beauty; the glory of His Pronouncement, He has attained victory over the last enemy, death. Hallelujah!

Chapter Five

New Information

The book of Revelation is called in Greek “The Apocalypse.” That means an unveiling, drawing aside of the curtain or new insights into God’s purpose and program. We need to accept these new insights or else the book is not a revelation. God repeats sometimes for emphasis, but this is more than a repetition in the book of Revelation. It is a REVELATION. We discover new ideas about Jesus Christ.

Watch very closely for the interpretation of symbols and figures of speech the Bible gives us.

In Revelation 1:19,20 NEW INFORMATION is revealed.

19 Write the things which thou hast seen, and the things which are, and the things which shall be hereafter;

20 The mystery of the seven stars which thou sawest in my right hand, and the seven golden candlesticks. The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches: and the seven candlesticks which thou sawest are the seven churches.

In this study information is made available to us by two significant DISCLOSURES.

The first Disclosure; The Inspired Outline

The first word of verse 19 is “write.” John received the mandate to write. He wrote these words for his contemporaries, those who lived in his day. He was instructed earlier in this chapter to send his writings to the seven churches which are in Asia. They are Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamos, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia and Laodicea.

This mandate to write was for the benefit of those who lived in his day. I shall quickly add that his mandate to write was also to preserve his words for those who came later, like us. So the record has been here for all these years.

There was also the material of the writing. Observe very carefully what he was told to write: “Write the things which thou hast seen, and the things which are, and the things which shall be hereafter.”

First was “what you have seen.” He had just seen a vision of the glorified Christ like no one else had ever seen Him!

This is an amazing revelation. He saw one like the Son of man. The description is set forth for us in verses 12-18. No wonder he was told to write what he had seen; here was an outstanding revelation. No other person ever witnessed such a revelation of Jesus Christ.

The second was “the things which are.” We already know what some things were in the days of the Apostle John, such as these seven churches. So the things which are, are the seven churches.

The third was “the things which shall be hereafter.” Let me explain what that phrase really means. In Greek it is “meta tauta,” which means “the things after these things.” After what things we may ask ourselves. It means after the things which are. Here then is a divine outline: past, present and future.

This would seem to say to us that while this letter was to the churches, the seven churches in Asia, it had a much wider intention. So it is worthwhile to study this today.

Be sure to notice that Jesus gave John a three-fold outline: the things which thou hast seen, and the things which are, and the things which shall be after these things. Our understanding of the book of Revelation is significantly tied to verse 19. We must not underestimate what Jesus was telling the Apostle John and showing to us the new information by the disclosure of the inspired outline in chapter 1, verse 19.

The second Disclosure; The Interpreted Mystery

The second word in verse 20 is “mystery.” For us the word mystery means something unsolvable, something without an answer. But in the Bible many times the word mystery means, that which had not been known before but is now being revealed. That is exactly the case here.

When John saw the Son of man, He was in the midst of the seven lampstands and held in His hand seven stars. Now Jesus said to John that He will explain that mystery to him. Otherwise the Apostle John would never have known what the seven stars meant or what the seven lampstands meant.

But these two symbols are now interpreted and explained by Jesus. He said to John, “The seven stars are the seven angels of the seven churches.” The Bible tells us in Hebrews 1:14 that the angels are ministering spirits sent forth by God to minister to those who should afterwards receive salvation.

Now it is true that the Greek word “angelos,” translated angels, may very well mean messenger. That is quite true. But I would also point out to you that the Greek language of the New Testament has a word for pastor. It is the word “shepherd,” in Greek “poimen.” The language of the New Testament has also a word for “bishop,” “episcopos,” “overseer.” Now if Jesus had meant to say that the seven stars are the pastors of the seven churches, He would have had a word at His command and He could have said bishops of the seven churches. But He did not say that. He said, “these are the angels of the seven churches.” We, therefore, take them to be what Jesus said they were, “The seven stars are the seven angels of the seven churches.”

“The seven lampstands are the seven churches.” Strangely enough, nobody has argued about the second part of the interpretation. But many have argued about the first part of the interpretation. Those lampstands are the seven churches. He was positioned in the midst of the seven churches for His inspection of them.

Let us make it clear right now, when Jesus interpreted the mystery, we accept what He said. “The seven stars are the seven angels.” This should give us no particular difficulty because we understand there are angels of children, angels of nations. The ministry of angels is very broad.

There are 72 times the word angel is used in the book of Revelation. Most of the time it refers to Spirit beings ministering for God.

Thus, the new information effects our interpretation of this last book: The Inspired Outline, The Interpreted Mystery. Both of these disclosures make it much clearer to us that this book is revelation, a disclosure of the purpose and plan of God.

As Jesus was able to interpret this mystery of the seven stars and seven lampstands to John, so He is able to look into our hearts and see what we are.

Chapter Six

HE CHURCH OF WANING AFFECTION

The last book of the Bible gives us information not found anywhere else regarding the Lord's purpose and plan for our planet.

We raise the question; why did Jesus select these seven churches and speak to them? Those reasons must have been clear to Him. Perhaps they can be clearer to us if we just listen a little.

Each message addressed to the angels of the churches was concluded like this, "He that hath an ear let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches." That tells us the message was directed, not only to the church addressed, but to other churches as well and to the church universal.

In each case the Lord of the church presented Himself as the omniscient One. He says, "I know thy works." Walking among the seven golden candlesticks, of course, put Him in a position of real understanding. Seiss, a Bible teacher of the last century says it well: "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."

Jesus was walking, not standing, among the seven churches in complete control.

THE CHURCH OF WANING AFFECTION is Jesus' message to the first of the seven churches of Asia from Revelation 2:1-7.

1 Unto the angel of the church of Ephesus write; These things saith he that holdeth the seven stars in his right hand, who walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks;

2 I know thy works, and thy labour, and thy patience, and how thou canst not bear them which are evil: and thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars:

3 And hast borne, and hast patience, and for my name's sake hast laboured, and hast not fainted.

4 Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love.

5 Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent.

6 But this thou hast, that thou hatest the deeds of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate.

7 He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God.

We must take to heart several COMMANDS contained in this message that we might be better people.

The first Command; Reflect on the Lord of the Church

He was presented to the church at Ephesus as the One who holds the seven stars in His right hand. Remember, Jesus said the seven stars are the angels of the seven churches. These angels being held in the hand of Him who is standing there means that He had absolute and complete control. They did His bidding. They came and went as He commanded them. He held these seven stars in His right hand.

Now He was not standing among the seven lampstands, he was walking among them. It is as though He were patrolling the churches, inspecting them. The omnipresent Lord was making an inspection of the churches. He was patrolling the churches, inspecting them. He was in the solemn act of inspection.

The One who walked in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks had the right to remove a lampstand out of its place if that church did not respond properly to the message. He knew the real conditions of that church because He said, "I know thy works."

Reflect a moment on the Lord of the church. His credentials are no less today. This command is a very important one. Reflect on the Lord of the church.

The second Command;

Remember from Whence You Have Fallen

These are the words of Jesus, "Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen." This referred to a former, more blessed state. They had occupied a more desirable position than they were now in.

Note that Jesus said to them, "Thou hast left thy first love." Now there is a marked difference between leaving something and losing something. This text is frequently misquoted, "Thou hast lost thy first love." No. Jesus said they had left their first love, which suggests a deliberate departure.

Jesus said to the church at Ephesus, "Remember from whence you have fallen. You have left your first love."

The church of Ephesus had some commendable traits. But it is a very serious thing, my dear friend, to fall from a high estate, to leave your first love. Waning love is a paralyzing disease. From there it gets progressively worse.

The third Command; Repent and Do the First Works

There is only one cure for waning love and Jesus made it absolutely clear what that is. "Repent and do the first works."

I remember some years ago ministering to a man who had been in one of our great cities. He was down and out. He said he got converted one night. The next morning he was in one of the restaurants downtown drinking a cup of coffee, reading his New Testament and smoking a cigarette. And all at once the Lord spoke to him and said, "Charlie, these things don't go together." He threw away the cigarette and never took another one.

You see, first love is accompanied by first works. And failure to do those first works means judgment. Jesus said, "Repent and do the first works; or else I will come unto you quickly and remove your lampstand out of its place." The Lord of the church requires the first love of the church.

Now listen to the Spirit, "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God." Do you want that reward? Make sure that you maintain the fervor of your first love.

Chapter Seven

The Church of Increasing Persecution

The townsite of Smyrna is one of the few of these chosen churches still occupied. Smyrna was some 30 miles north of Ephesus and right along the seacoast. In the days of John, the Apostle, the city was an important seaport. It still is. It was a flourishing trade center and a rival for Ephesus. Smyrna has a good natural harbor. The harbor at Ephesus has long ago silted in. But the harbor at Smyrna is still usable. The modern city is named Izmir.

We are interested in analyzing the message to the church at Smyrna. There is meaning to gain that the Lord laid no complaint against this church.

This message which Jesus gave to the second church, Smyrna, I have called THE CHURCH OF INCREASING PERSECUTION, Revelation 2:8-11.

8 And unto the angel of the church in Smyrna write; These things saith the first and the last, which was dead, and is alive;

9 I know thy works, and tribulation, and poverty, (but thou art rich) and I know the blasphemy of them which say they are Jews, and are not, but are the synagogue of Satan.

10 Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days: be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.

11 He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; He that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death.

To strengthen the church of increasing persecution, the Lord of the church laid down certain basic CONSIDERATIONS.

The first Consideration; Leadership of the Lord of the Church

Notice how Jesus presented Himself to them, “These things saith the first and the last.” Here the Lord’s eternity is set forth. Jesus could prescribe limitations on everyone but Himself because being first there was none before Him, being last there was none to follow Him.

He is also the One who was dead and is alive. Here we understand His self-existence. To be sure He was crucified. He was buried, He arose from the dead. The record makes that unmistakably clear. He appeared and presented Himself to the disciples, as many as 500 at one time.

It is important that Jesus presented Himself as this kind of leader to the church at Smyrna, the church that was to experience great persecution.

It was as though He was preparing them with the fact that He had also died but was now alive. So fear of martyrdom and persecution could be completely erased since He had gone the entire route and returned alive. He would be a model for them. And certainly this would be proof there is life beyond death.

The second Consideration; Analysis of the Lord of the Church

He said, “I know thy works,” and then mentioned tribulation and poverty. It may appear to us that neither of these is much work but their endurance, their patience under tribulation must certainly have been outstanding.

He mentioned the condition of poverty, but immediately followed it with this statement, “but thou art rich.” On the surface it appeared as though this church was poor. But in actuality it was not poor, it was rich. Does that not teach us that the divine judgment may be different from human judgment?

And then there was the hypocrisy. The hypocrisy of those who said they were Jews and were not, but rather were of the synagogue of Satan.

Probably no other area of life is so beset by hypocrites as the area of religion. More religious people try to be what they are not, or try to have people believe they are what they are not, than anywhere else.

Then the Lord said, “I know them who say they are Jews and are not.” I know there are some who claim to take the place of Jews. There are those who claim to be Jews and are not. But to give them this kind of a characterization draws us up short. “Those who claim to be Jews and are not but are of the synagogue of Satan.”

This is the analysis of the Lord of the church. He saw the conditions and evaluated the hypocrisy.

The third Consideration; Comfort of the Lord of the Church

Suffering is not to be feared for He said to them, “Fear not.” These two words occur 25 times in the Bible. It is of considerable interest that we notice how it is used here. “Fear none of these things which thou shalt suffer.” Most of us shrink from suffering. But the Lord of the church encouraged the church of Smyrna not to be afraid.

There was a good reason for calming their fears. He told them after they had endured they would be rewarded. He predicted that they would have great trial of affliction. The devil would see to it that they were cast into prison and tried. And they would have tribulation for 10 days.

But martyrdom does not stop the church. No wonder Jesus came with comfort to them and helped them and encouraged them. It has been rightly said, “The blood of the martyrs is the seed of the church.”

The fourth Consideration;

Promise of Lord of the Church

He promised them a crown of life. It was based upon their faithfulness. He said, “Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.” What a joyous reward that will be!!

Even beyond that He promised them victory over the second death. They would have part in the first resurrection. The resurrection over which the second death will have no power. It will be the first resurrection described in Revelation chapter 20 and verse 6.

Here then we have the church of increasing persecution, the church at Smyrna. The Lord of the church brought great assurance to this church because He had experienced similar conditions. He knew the true situation.

He brought comfort in time of trial. He promised reward with the crown of life and victory over the second death. The church of increasing persecution would follow her Lord to complete victory.

Chapter Eight

The Church of Disappearing Separation

Something very significant happened in the history of the church in the year 313 AD. In this particular year Constantine was the emperor of the Roman Empire. He issued what has come to be known as the Edict of Milan in which he declared that Christianity was now a legal religion. A few years later he made it the religion of the Roman Empire. Now there was a marriage of the church and the state.

There is significance in the name of Pergamos, the word gamos meaning marriage or union. Located 75 miles north and east of Ephesus, most favorably situated as a citadel. We are told by the archaeologist the library housed two hundred thousand volumes. It was a thriving city. But Jesus said that Satan dwelled there. This is not surprising because the ruins of four pagan temples can still be seen.

This message from Revelation 2:12-17, THE CHURCH OF DISAPPEARING SEPARATION, to the church at Pergamos was addressed to a particular condition.

12 And to the angel of the church in Pergamos write; These things saith he which hath the sharp sword with two edges;

13 I know thy works, and where thou dwellest, even where Satan's seat is: and thou holdest fast my name, and hast not denied my faith, even in those days wherein Antipas was my faithful martyr, who was slain among you, where Satan dwelleth.

14 But I have a few things against thee, because thou hast there them that hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balac to cast a stumblingblock before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed unto idols, and to commit fornication

15 So hast thou also them that hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitans, which thing I hate.

16 Repent; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will fight against them with the sword of my mouth.

17 He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna, and will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it.

The Lord of the church presents His message that she might correct her ways. Listen to several VIEWPOINTS.

The first Viewpoint; The Authority of the Lord of the Church

His description is quite imposing. He is the one who has the sharp sword with two edges. In the first chapter of the book of Revelation we learn that that sharp sword with two edges proceeded out of His mouth. His Word is a sharp two edged sword. The book of Hebrews tell us that, "The word of God is quick and powerful, sharper than a two edged sword." Here is the one who presented Himself with such authority.

And then Jesus said, "I have a few things against you." The One who had the sharp sword with two edges had the right to execute judgment. His authority goes unquestioned.

Nothing gets past this One with the sharp sword. When Jesus was here on earth He said, "The words that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day," John 12:48. He has the sword with two edges. He exercises His authority.

The second Viewpoint; The Awfulness of Compromise in the Church

Jesus mentioned two doctrines. First is "the doctrine of Balaam who taught Balak to cast a stumbling block before the children of Israel." The record of this is contained in Numbers, chapters 22-24.

Balaam, was called by King Balak with a gift of money, to come with him and to curse the children of Israel. Being a prophet of God, Balaam inquired of the Lord whether or not he should go with King Balak. The Lord did not give him permission. Finally, the Lord said, "You will say what I put in your mouth." And when Balaam the prophet opened his mouth to curse the children of Israel he blessed them instead and Balak was very angry.

Later, Balaam set stumbling blocks before Israel and showed Balak how to entice them so they would not become his enemies. They were to forget who they were and mingle freely with Balak's people, taking their daughters to be the wives of their sons and giving their daughters to Balak's sons.

Separation disappeared. They were seduced to erase the distinctions that absolutely should have been maintained. This is the doctrine of Balaam, the disappearing distinction between God's people and those who are not His.

There is a second doctrine where they also compromised, the doctrine of the Nicolaitanes. Earlier to the churches of Ephesus and Pergamos He said, "You have the deeds of the Nicolaitans, which I hate."

Historically this was the time of the development of hierarchy when the true Head of the church was supplanted. The rise of the bishopric and ruler elders led to the word of Christ having no effect. Their authority could override the plain word of God.

No wonder Jesus would say, "I hate the doctrine of the Nicolaitans."

We have all kinds of compromising emphases today. We have clergymen and lay-people who would like to be totally at home where Satan dwells. Not all of this awful compromise disappeared when Pergamos was destroyed.

No, there is still the awfulness of compromise. To erase the distinction between the people of God and the world is the doctrine of Balaam. To exercise over-lordship is the doctrine of the Nicolaitans. Compromise, my friend, only results in ruin.

The third Viewpoint; The Appeal to Steadfastness in the Church

Jesus said, "Hold fast my name." There is a tradition of antiquity. We have an exclusive faith! We need to stand by that which we have received. But I hear it, on many fronts, "Let's change." But the Bible says we are to be "steadfast, immovable always abounding in the work of the Lord."

Jesus said to the church at Pergamos they were to hold fast His name. That is the appeal to steadfastness.

He also said they would need to repent of their compromises. And if they did not He would come and fight against them with the sword of His mouth.

But the overcomer will have a new name, a white stone, and the hidden manna. It is worth it, my friend, it is worth it. The Lord of the church may exercise the authority vested in Him because He is the bearer of the sword with two edges. The church must abandon compromise and come out clear for the Lord. The church must maintain steadfastness. It is no credit to change.

Oh that we might be sure that we are on God's side. Where are you? Will you stand up and be counted for God?

Chapter Nine

The Church of Seducing Instruction

We may be sure that Jesus chose the church in Thyatira because it illustrated the way people can depart from the truth. He expressed His intolerance of false teaching. In this church Jesus found the truth being perverted.

Thyatira was famous in the early times for its color-fast dye. We learn in Acts of the Apostles that Lydia, a seller of purple, who was the first convert in Europe, was a native of Thyatira. Little of the old town is left now. In fact, the modern town of Akhisar occupies the ancient site.

Jesus warned the disciples before His crucifixion that they should be careful not to be deceived. The Apostle Paul warned Timothy in his last letter that evil men and seducers will get worse and worse. It is no surprise that Jesus had a word for Thyatira.

We will examine the Lord's message to the church in Thyatira, THE CHURCH OF SEDUCING INSTRUCTION, from Revelation 2:18-29.

18 And unto the angel of the church in Thyatira write; These things saith the Son of God, who hath his eyes like unto a flame of fire, and his feet are like fine brass;

19 I know thy works, and charity, and service, and faith, and thy patience, and thy works; and the last to be more than the first.

20 Notwithstanding I have a few things against thee, because thou sufferest that woman Jezebel, which calleth herself a prophetess, to teach and to seduce my servants to commit fornication, and to eat things sacrificed unto idols.

21 And I gave her space to repent of her fornication; and she repented not.

22 Behold, I will cast her into a bed, and them that commit adultery with her into great tribulation, except they repent of their deeds.

23 And I will kill her children with death; and all the churches shall know that I am he which searcheth the reins and hearts: and I will give unto every one of you according to your works.

24 But unto you I say, and unto the rest in Thyatira, as many as have not this doctrine, and which have not known the depths of Satan, as they speak; I will put upon you none other burden.

25 But that which ye have already hold fast till I come.

26 And he that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations:

27 And he shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers: even as I received of my Father.

28 And I will give him the morning star.

29 He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.

The Lord moved to block the course of seducing instruction in the church by issuing several pointed WARNINGS.

The first Warning; The Warning of His Distinct Position

He had the right of investigation by how He appeared unto them. Here is how He described Himself, “These things saith the Son of God who hath his eyes like a flame of fire and his feet like unto fine brass.” This suggests to us that His eyes had penetrating ability. They could pierce through all the church used to cover up her true condition. Nothing could evade His view.

Further, His feet looked like burnished brass from which all the dross had been removed by fire. This is a symbol of the absolute divine holiness of Jesus Christ. And His name? He is called the Son of God. Later He said He was going to exercise a judgment upon this church and the result would be, “All the churches shall know that I am He that searcheth the reins and hearts.” His commanding position gave Him the right to investigate the church: His eyes like fire, His feet like fine brass, and His name the Son of God.

To be a true church certain doctrines must be unshakeably held. The theological foundation cannot be altered. If the theology is not based on God’s Word, the church should be honest enough to change its name and call itself a social or religious club.

We must pray for a return to the original Biblical doctrines of the faith once delivered unto the saints.

The second Warning; The Warning of Demonic Penetration

They had works abundant. He said, “I know thy works, and charity, and service, and faith, and thy patience, and thy works; and the last to be more than the first.” As we examine these categories of activity we note they are all on the horizontal level; man to man. Where these are the most important, the church is always wrong. We do not say that acts of charity, service, faith and patience are not to be engaged in by genuine Christians. But Jesus said in spite of all these activities He had something against the church at Thyatira.

Everywhere these days, emphasis is placed on activity, works. But it is more important to be than it is to do. It is more important to be than it is to do.

Israel of old is a prime example of activity without profit. They built altars under every green tree and on every high hill. Their spirituality, their devotion to God had drained away. So activity was increased to make up for the glaring lack of spirituality in their lives.

I believe that is true today. Activity abounds when really the spiritual content is sorely absent.

And there was an uncritical attitude. There was no discipline. There was something more important in their relationship with Him than their works. He said what they were, “I have somewhat against thee because thou sufferest that woman Jezebel...to teach and to seduce my servants to commit fornication.” The church’s tolerance within her leadership of that kind of conduct caused Jesus to reprimand them severely. Seductive error had been sheltered; other loyalties claimed first place and Jesus called the church to repentance. They did not deal with their problem because they had lost the cutting edge of truth, the Holy Bible.

The third Warning; The Warning of Drastic Punishment

Mercy was ignored. He said, “I gave her space to repent of her fornication; and she repented not.”

Here was an opportunity to repent that was passed by. And the opportunity once past never returns, for Jesus said, “Behold, I will cast her into a bed, and them that commit adultery with her into great tribulation, except they repent of their deeds.” Punishment must come if mercy has been ignored or turned down. To be God He must be just!

He said there would be great tribulation for those who were partners with Jezebel, the seducer. And the reward will be according to their deeds. There can be no escape.

But hear what else He said. He said to those who have not known the depths of Satan that they were to hold fast. If you are a Christian I appeal to you in the Name of Jesus, hold fast I say, HOLD FAST!

It is time we face the warnings Jesus gave to the church in Thyatira. He is an intolerant Christ. He will not tolerate falsehood mixed with truth. His call is a call to repentance.

We cannot expect the blessing of the Lord to rest upon our activities when we tolerate the seductive teachings which have found their way into the church. May we hear the call to repentance.

Chapter Ten

The Church of Wavering Attention

In this message from Revelation particular attention is given to the church at Sardis and the Lord's message to that church. The history of Sardis is disturbingly parallel to the condition in the church today. Historians inform us that the city was captured because of wavering attention. At an unguarded area of the wall the enemy crept up and captured the city.

In 1971 when we were at Sardis, we climbed the Acropolis to verify that there was such a possibility of the crevice at the back of the wall. We found it to be true.

Now, if the church in Thyatira pictures the dark ages from 500-1500 when there was heresy on every side, then Sardis pictures the dim awakening of the reformation with just a few who had not defiled their garments.

This certainly calls us to constant watchfulness. We wonder what had happened to the church in Sardis. How had they come to be so far short of the Lord's intention? He who had the seven Spirits and held the seven stars in His hand and walked among the seven candlesticks had a word for that church.

“THE CHURCH OF WAVERING ATTENTION” has not changed much in our day. There are a few found in most denominations who are still alert. May the message from Revelation 3:1-6 speak to us.

1 And unto the angel of the church in Sardis write; These things saith he that hath the seven Spirits of God, and the seven stars; I know thy works, that thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead.

2 Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die: for I have not found thy works perfect before God.

3 Remember therefore how thou hast received and heard, and hold fast, and repent. If therefore thou shalt not watch, I will come on thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee.

4 Thou hast a few names even in Sardis which have not defiled their garments; and they shall walk with me in white: for they are worthy.

5 He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels.

6 He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.

His message to this church of wavering attention brings certain Accusations against them.

The first Accusation; They Lived Insincerely

Public opinion had it that they were alive. By all outward appearance it would seem that here was a church of throbbing life. To the contrary, Jesus said, “You are dead.”

It was like that during the ministry of Jesus, too. Some looked like beautifully decorated tombs. But inside they were full of dead men's bones. And Jesus lodged an accusation against them because they did not appear like they really were. Jesus did the same thing with this church in Sardis. He took note that their

outward appearance was not like their inner life. He said, "I know your works. Public opinion would say you are alive, but in reality you are dead." The divine accusation must be faced.

My friend, it is very important for us to remember that the Lord does not look only on the outward appearance, He looks also upon the heart. There is where true life is. If not, there an awful death occurs.

But they were living insincerely. They gloried in the appearance of life without taking seriously the fact of death.

Our Lord brought another accusation against them,

The second Accusation; They Lived Indifferently

He said, "Strengthen what remains," I am reminded of the slogan which says, "Where there is life there is hope." But where there is death how can you hope for anything. So Jesus said to them, understand the need of the hour. Strengthen what remains. Concentrate where it counts. We must declare with Habakkuk, the prophet, many years ago when he cried out and said, "The just shall live by faith." We need to strengthen that today for we have observed a rash of down grading of the grace of God and the justification which He alone makes possible by His abundant grace.

Now watch in verse 3 and notice the important words, "remember how you have received and how you heard and hold fast and repent." Without the unshakable truths the indifference can never be overcome. Our attention must be concentrated on what remains.

I pray that I may somehow convey to you the importance of this. We will never get the task finished if we misunderstand where the emphasis must be. We must strengthen the things which remain. I urge you, do that in your church.

The third Accusation; They Lived Insensibly

He said He is coming unannounced. He said, "If therefore thou shalt not watch, I will come on thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee." Oh, yes, watchfulness is important. Time rolls on. And Jesus, by this statement, clearly stated there will be an end. There will be a time when He will come. Don't put it off, my friend. Jesus said, "no one knows the day or the hour that the Father has kept in His own hand." But His coming will be sure and it will be like a thief if you not watching.

His reward is assured. Those few who are overcomers. A few names, He said, were there in Sardis who had not defiled their garments. They shall overcome because they are worthy, because they have confessed His name, because they have walked with Him. Now they will walk with Him in white. And they shall be sure that He will confess their names before the Father and before His holy angels.

God has dealt with remnants before. He has dealt with remnants at the close of every age. We may know of surety that at the close of this age He will also deal in remnants.

But, my friend, the accusation that Jesus leveled against the church at Sardis was their insensibility as to the time. We must not become so engrossed with our business that we forget that Jesus Christ is coming. God's business must claim our attention. We must give ourselves to His business. These accusations that Jesus directed against the church at Sardis must be faced with openness or we also may find ourselves in a similar situation.

I repeat them for you: Their insincerity--they were dead instead of alive. Their indifference--they neglected the basics. We must apply our energies and resources where it really counts by strengthening the things that remain. Their insensibility as to the Lord's return-- we must be watchful lest that day come upon us as a thief.

How modern is this church! Where are you as you face these accusations and the uncertainties of the future.

Chapter Eleven

The Church of Outstanding Devotion

In religion some don't care. It was Karl Marx who said, "Religion is an opiate of the people." And some use it as a cloak to hide behind. But I am very happy to tell you that there are genuine people who love the Lord sincerely. "Is our devotion of lasting quality?"

THE CHURCH OF OUTSTANDING DEVOTION from Revelation 3:7-13 is the second church to be encouraged to hold fast.

7 And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write; These things saith he that is holy, he that is true, he that hath the key of David, he that openeth, and no man shutteth; and shutteth, and no man openeth;

8 I know thy works: behold, I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it: for thou hast a little strength, and hast kept my word, and hast not denied my name.

9 Behold, I will make them of the synagogue of Satan, which say they are Jews, and are not, but do lie; behold, I will make them to come and worship before thy feet, and to know that I have loved thee.

10 Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth.

11 Behold, I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown.

12 Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out: and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, which is new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God: and I will write upon him my new name.

13 He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.

From the Lord's counsel to the church of outstanding devotion we may gather several encouraging WORDS.

The first Word; An Open Door

He said, "I have set before you an open door." He also said He has the key of David. The key of David must surely symbolize authority. Especially as He made the association between opening and closing doors. The door the Lord opens nobody else can shut. And the door He shuts, none can open.

He said to the church of Philadelphia, "I have set before you an open door." That surely must have meant they were to enter that door. He said, "You have a little strength left yet," which implies, use the strength that you have and enter that door.

I have indicated on several occasions in the study of these messages to the churches that they may represent the span of church history. This one is especially interesting when we remember that in the year 1793 there came a great awakening all across the evangelical church. It was what we call a missionary awakening.

By the middle of the next century the year 1846, the Evangelical Alliance was founded. Its basic tenants included nine major doctrines that evangelicals hold this very day. It was indeed an open door which Jesus set before the church in that particular era. And His words were to stir them to enter that door.

The second Word; I Have Loved Thee

Please pay close attention to verse 9. Here the Lord says, "I am going to make a separation." Some claimed to be Jews and were not. When we study the church in Smyrna we learned that Jesus had much the

same to say to them. He said, "I know the blasphemy of them who say they are Jews and are not, but are the synagogue of Satan."

Jesus can never tolerate pretense or false claims. It is of considerable importance for us, as well, to remember that currently there are also people who claim to be Jews.

There are those who argue that the church is Israel. This can be traced back to the famous Bishop Augustine, Bishop of Hippo, in the 1400's when he wrote that famous treatise called, "The City of God" in which he identified Rome as being that great city.

But Jesus' words are words of comfort to us because they vindicate those who truly love the Lord, or, shall we say, whom He truly loves. He said, "I have loved you."

The third Word; I Will Keep Thee

Note, however, that in order for this word to have any effect it must be a kind of pay-back. In other words, He said, "You have kept the word of my patience and therefore I will keep you."

When we respond to God with the proper attitude, then He responds to us. I quote my wife, Mrs. Yoder, "The Lord never mocks the trusting soul."

But what will He do? He will keep that trusting soul out of the temptation, the hour of temptation, for the Greek text makes it abundantly clear that this is not the idea of keeping within the hour of temptation, but keeping out of it. Notice it will be a particular hour and the universal temptation which shall try them who dwell on the earth.

There are clear Biblical examples of how the Lord works: Noah was in the ark seven days before God poured out judgment upon the unrepentant people of his time; the angels took Lot by the hand out of Sodom before God poured out judgment on Sodom and Gomorrah

There is no doubt left in my mind but what the preservation means, "I will keep you out of the hour of temptation, which shall try all those who dwell on the earth," which in our inspired outline of Revelation begins at chapter 14.

The fourth Word; A New Name

Most assuredly it will be "redeemed." Redeemed from the presence of sin at last and anchored in the temple of God as a pillar.

Our imagination, though sanctified, cannot really grasp all that Jesus is here saying to the church of outstanding devotion. To overcome and to be part of that great multitude who will come into the presence of the Lord and Saviour and have a new name! What a tremendous word, a word of encouragement, the glorification!

These encouraging words can have a strengthening effect on your life: the word of stimulation, "I have opened a door;" the word of vindication, "I have loved you; the word of preservation, "I will keep you;" and the word of glorification, "I will write upon him my new name."

Chapter Twelve

The Church of Threatening Rejection

There is striking parallelism between the seven churches which Jesus chose of all the churches in Asia Minor and the span of church history. There are some most interesting parallels. It is my studied opinion that we are now in what may well be called the age of Laodicea.

Laodicea was a town 45 miles southeast of Philadelphia. There were three towns together in the same general locality: Colossae, Hieropolis and Laodicea. Very little is left of any of these. The Near Eastern Archeological Society has been excavating Colossae in recent years. One can see some remains left of Hieropolis where are a number of hot water springs. But as for Laodicea there is very little there, only

rubble covered with earth. A few ruins remain such as the stadium, the amphitheaters, several of them, and a few other ruins. Everything is covered over with earth so that now farmers farm the land each season.

The human family since Adam has had an irresistible down-pull. Some examples from Biblical history will help us to understand this. In the book of Genesis at the time of Noah, man's heart was only evil continually. All that men thought about was to conjure up evil deeds. God became so distressed that He destroyed the world, saving only Noah, his wife, his three sons and their wives and for the most part a pair of each of the animals.

Some years later God called Abraham to become the father of the Hebrew race. The people of Israel, descendants of Jacob's twelve sons, were constituted a nation 400 some years after Abraham when they came out of Egypt under the leadership of Moses and camped at Mount Sinai. The problem was they had this irresistible down-pull and became involved in the idolatry of the surrounding Canaanite tribes when they settled in the Promised Land. This became so rank that the Lord let the neighboring nations come in and capture the country and carry away His people into Assyria and Babylon.

Again there was a new start when they came back from Babylon. And the Messiah was born in Bethlehem, Ephrata in the land of Judah. But that was not the end of the downward pull for the Holy City was destroyed in 70 AD and completely leveled to the ground in 135 AD.

But where are we now? Has that irresistible downward pull had any effect on the 20th century church? Yes, indeed. Some years ago several theologians announced to the world that God is dead. They had to learn the hard way that that is not true. But now they tell us that we have no sure word from the Almighty. Some tell us we have outlived the Bible. Some argue that if Paul were here today he would not write as he did in the first century. Listen, my dear friend, if we have no word from God we are in a most unbearable period of silence.

These words of Jesus in Revelation 3:14-22 describe for us the church of the Laodiceans, THE CHURCH OF THREATENING REJECTION.

14 And unto the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write; These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God;

15 I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot.

16 So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth.

17 Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked:

18 I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see.

19 As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent.

20 Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.

21 To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne.

22 He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.

We must take to heart the several solemn WARNINGS the LORD issued to the church at Laodicea.

The first Warning; The Forceful Expulsion

He based it upon His careful examination. He calls Himself “the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God.” This certainly gives Him the right that cannot be questioned. He may examine the condition of this church. He may pass judgment upon it.

He expressed His great displeasure because He said, “I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot.” Only lukewarm. It may well be that the mineral springs near by illustrated well Jesus’ disgust with their condition. That water is surely unfit to drink.

He threatened them with forceful expulsion. This is His first warning to the Laodiceans.

But, my friend, I must make a direct application today. Many churchmen have no voice of authority. They have been captured by the people. They only preach what tickles the ears and warms the hearts of the listeners.

But Jesus warned the Laodiceans of a forceful expulsion, “I will spue you out of my mouth.” This is not a “perhaps.” This is not an “as it were.” This is a specific statement by the Lord of the church.

This is warning number one of the forceful expulsion.

The second Warning; The Faithful Exhortation

This was based on the true condition. They had very high self-esteem. They said they were increased with goods, were rich, and had need of nothing.

But Jesus made a very significant statement when He said, “And knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked.” Their self-esteem could not take care of their true situation as lukewarm followers of Jesus.

When He brought His faithful exhortation, He exposed their real condition. He then directed them toward lasting values. He said, “Buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eye-salve, that thou mayest see.”

Now look a little farther, “Be zealous therefore, and repent.” Surely the church in Laodicea should have thanked the Lord for His warning of faithful exhortation, that the true condition was exposed and they should be able to do something about their condition.

I make an observation, however: often today the condition of the church is measured more by the grandeur of the sanctuary in the building than by the grace of sanctification of the body. It was so in Jesus’ day and the day of the Laodiceans. It is so today.

Jesus alone has those items so essential for true spiritual help. Where do you go to get gold tried in the fire and raiment and eyesalve?

You go to Jesus. It is to this end He issued the warning of faithful exhortation.

The third Warning: The Fearful Extremity

Some of the saddest words are found in this text: “I stand at the door and knock.” It seems almost unthinkable that the Lord of the church would be outside of the church but it is sadly true, sadly true today in many situations. It was true then. Salvation has always been an individual matter. But yet in the community of faith the Saviour should be welcomed even as He was among the disciples while He was here on earth.

Can Jesus be found in the house of God? That depends where you go. There may be places called after the Name of God where you can not find Him. Some theologians have denied the virgin birth, the sinless life of Jesus, His atoning death, His bodily resurrection. They have forced Him outside of their so-called churches. He is on the outside.

But I am glad to tell you, when anyone opens the door He will come in. Praise God!! But this is a very sad picture of Jesus Christ on the outside of the church.

Friend, I urge you to take to heart these solemn warnings from Jesus: the warning of Forceful Expulsion, “I will spue you out of my mouth because you are luke-warm;” the warning of Faithful Exhortation, “buy of me gold tried in the fire and repent;” the warning of Fearful Extremity, “on the outside.” But open the door of your heart to Him, your Saviour and Lord.

Chapter Thirteen God’s Plan For Action

Another truth we must receive is this book reveals to us how human history will come to its close.

I often remind you that the Lord God is in control of history. He knows the end from the beginning. How gracious of Him to let us learn of the conditions which will lead up to the final closing of time.

But let us consider again the messages to the seven churches, the revelation of the things that are. We are still in that time, historically. Those seven churches chosen by the Lord to receive His special messages illustrate the complete history of Christianity from the beginning to the end. In five of the seven churches the Lord called them to repent.

In Laodicea it was the sorrowful truth that the Lord of His church was outside knocking for entrance.

One great fact we must keep in mind is that God is sovereign over all. While it may appear sometimes otherwise, make certain of this, God is the supreme being. The Apostle John on the Island of Patmos was permitted to be God’s seer, to see and record some very exciting and important events yet to come.

In the study of the Revelation we are ready now to leave the disappointing conditions of earth and go with John to heaven to see what is yet to come to pass.

By the inspired outline we have now covered parts one and two. The inspired outline is located in chapter one, verse 19. I quote, “Write the things which thou hast seen, and the things which are, and the things which shall be hereafter.” So we have covered parts one and two, “the things which thou hast seen and the things which are.”

Revelation 4:1-5 we believe, marks the beginning of part three, things which shall be hereafter. GOD’S PLAN FOR ACTION.

1 After this I looked, and, behold, a door was opened in heaven: and the first voice which I heard was as it were of a trumpet talking with me; which said, Come up hither, and I will shew thee things which must be hereafter.

2 And immediately I was in the spirit: and, behold, a throne was set in heaven, and one sat on the throne.

3 And he that sat was to look upon like a jasper and a sardine stone: and there was a rainbow round about the throne, in sight like unto an emerald.

4 And round about the throne were four and twenty seats: and upon the seats I saw four and twenty elders sitting, clothed in white raiment; and they had on their heads crowns of gold.

5 And out of the throne proceeded lightnings and thunderings and voices: and there were seven lamps of fire burning before the throne, which are the seven Spirits of God.

In these verses we see the preliminary PREPARATIONS which God made for His plan of action.

The first Preparation; The Open Door

The Apostle John said he looked and behold there was a door opened. It was a door in heaven. Please notice very carefully the shift from earth to heaven. He was bodily on the isle of Patmos. He was transported in the Spirit and he was looking and saw in heaven an open door. Then he heard a voice like a trumpet. That voice was similar to the one which he heard in chapter 1, verse 10, “I came to be in the Spirit

in the day of the Lord and heard behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet.” There we have the trumpet voice explained as being the voice of Jesus.

Here again in chapter 4, verse 1, the trumpet voice most likely is the voice of Jesus. Now notice what He said, “Come up here and I will show you things to come after these things.” So he was transported by the Spirit, and in the spirit, to another location, to heaven.

Be very careful to notice exactly what Jesus said, “I will show you things to come after these things.” Remember in chapter 1, verse 19, we have the things which thou hast seen, the things which are, and the things which shall be after the things which are. So in chapter 4, verse 1, we have Jesus telling John that He is going to show him some of those things that are going to come after these things. The open door is the first preparation.

The second Preparation; The Glorious Throne

Notice again that he was in the Spirit, “and, behold, a throne was set in heaven, and one sat on the throne.” To be in the Spirit was to be in the true experience of the prophet. He had a prophetic experience by being transported in the Spirit. Chapter 1, verse 10 is a very important Scripture text for the understanding of the book of Revelation.

Here then, in chapter 4, verse 2, we have a repetition of that. “I was in the Spirit.” And being in the Spirit he saw that throne set. It is a special throne, a particular throne. And One sat on the throne. He “was to look upon like a jasper and a sardine stone: and there was a rainbow round about the throne, in sight like an emerald.” It is the throne of the sovereign God. It is a glorious throne. But there is a shift of relationship here because ONE sits upon the throne.

In Revelation 3:20 Jesus said that because He overcame He had sat down with the Father in His throne. The book of Hebrews tells us that He is seated at the right hand of the majesty on high. He is interceding for us. However, in chapter 4, verse 3, we are told ONE sat on the throne. There must be a change, a shift in relationship between God the Almighty, and God the Son by the very fact that ONE is on this glorious sovereign throne.

The third Preparation; The Twenty-Four Elders

The twenty-four elders are round about the throne of God, perhaps encircling the throne. And the number is 24. I have no explanation why there were 24. They seem to be representatives. We will see that when we get to chapter 5.

But there is a readiness here. They are clothed with white raiment and they have crowns on their heads. This would surely seem to indicate they have triumphed and they are being crowned for their triumph. The Apostle Paul said in that day the Lord will give to him a crown of righteousness.

One of the preparations is these 24 elders sitting upon 24 thrones. “Out of the throne proceedeth thunders and lightnings and voices and the seven Spirits of God.”

I suggest to you then that heaven has made certain preparations for action unlike any before. And John was permitted to see and record for us what those actions will be. This is God’s plan for action. Let there be no doubt about that in your mind. God has not given over His role of management to anyone else. He is the sovereign God who will carry out His plan and purpose. It is therefore of the utmost importance that we relate properly to that sovereign God.

Chapter Fourteen Heavenly Worship

A most wonderful scene in heaven, how the sovereign God is worshiped. The living creatures ascribe holiness to the Lord. Witness how the four and twenty elders worship God as the Creator of all things.

It seems so much of the worship in our churches today is man centered. In heaven worship is God centered.

Revelation 4:6-11 gives a beautiful picture of HEAVENLY WORSHIP.

6 And before the throne there was a sea of glass like unto crystal: and in the midst of the throne, and round about the throne, were four beasts full of eyes before and behind.

7 And the first beast was like a lion, and the second beast like a calf, and the third beast had a face as a man, and the fourth beast was like a flying eagle.

8 And the four beasts had each of them six wings about him; and they were full of eyes within: and they rest not day and night, saying, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come.

9 And when those beasts give glory and honour and thanks to him that sat on the throne, who liveth for ever and ever,

10 The four and twenty elders fall down before him that sat on the throne, and worship him that liveth for ever and ever, and cast their crowns before the throne, saying,

11 Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created.

We are permitted to see ELEMENTS of worship in heaven that should lead us to a more meaningful experience in worship.

The first Element; The Explanation of the Four Living Creatures

Verse 6 gives us the setting of the throne. We are told there was a sea of glass like crystal, pure, beautiful, clear. And in the midst of the throne, and around about the throne, were the four living creatures. In the third verse we see something more about the description of that throne. The One who sat on the throne was to look upon like a jasper and sardine stone and there was a rainbow round about the throne in sight like an emerald.

The sea of glass, like crystal, most likely was reflecting all the beauty of the throne above. And around that throne were these four living creatures or beasts. They are not ferocious beasts. I checked in my Greek Testament and I found the word is “Zoa,” which is living creatures. We get our English word zoology from the basic Greek word. So they are not ferocious beasts but living creatures unlike any John had ever seen before, full of eyes. And notice the description, the first was like a lion, the second like a calf, the third like a man, and the fourth like a flying eagle. These are the four living creatures and the explanation of them is clear. We may not know what all these symbolisms mean but at least we have a picture of them around the throne.

More important than how they looked was the second element in the worship experience.

The second Element; The Glorification of the Four Living Creatures

They were somewhat like the seraphim in Isaiah’s experience; they had 6 wings. In Isaiah 6 the seraphim used two of their wings to cover their faces and two of their wings to cover their feet and two of their wings to fly.

Here nothing is said about the wings, what they do with them. But they do have six wings and they are continually on call. They rest not day or night. They are spiritual beings. They are certainly not mortal beings. They are immortal creatures there before the throne of God in their constant ministry of holy glorification.

They say, “Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was and is and is to come.” In the book of Isaiah the seraphim said, “Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of hosts.” The repetition of the word holy, three times, may refer to the triunity of God. In Revelation He is called the Lord God Almighty.

We have His eternity emphasized in those three phrases, “which was, which is, and which is to come.” But there was One on the throne. The glorification of these four living creatures was to ascribe holiness unto the Lord God Almighty.

The third Element; The Adoration of the Twenty-Four Elders

We notice their thrones earlier in the chapter as being around the throne of God. Watch what happens when these four living creatures offer their glorification. “Then the twenty-four elders fall down before him that is seated on the throne, and worship him.” They cast their crowns before the throne. There is prostration, they kneel before the throne. They show true deference to the Lord God Almighty by taking off their crowns and throwing them down.

In every way the One who sits upon the throne is accorded His majesty, and His ruling power. There is that word of adoration. They begin by saying, “Thou art worthy, O Lord.” I gather from this that they immediately recognized no one equal and no one superior to Him who sits upon His sovereign throne and before Whom the living creatures constantly say Holy, holy, holy. “Worthy art Thou, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created.”

This three-fold adoration of glory and honor and power may have some reference to the triunity of God. Think of it this way: Glory to the Father, Honor to the Son, and Power to the Spirit. Note that He created all things for His pleasure. And all things exist now for His pleasure.

What a scene to behold! Perfect coordination, all activity concentrated on God who is seated on the throne. That is what worship means. The sovereign Creator is worthy of all glorification and all adoration. Now since we are a part of the creation, we too are created for His pleasure. I want to ask you, do you give God any pleasure?

Chapter Fifteen Who Will Open The Scroll?

There are two worlds that we must reckon with: the physical world and the spiritual world. We are involved in both. We are involved much in the physical. But we are also involved in the spiritual. Our present order keeps us confined largely to the physical. We depend upon God to break through the spiritual. But we do have these two worlds of which we are in some measure a part.

We only know the spiritual, however, by faith, unless or until God reveals Himself to us. I am glad to tell you He has revealed Himself to us in the Holy Bible. John, the Apostle, on the Island of Patmos was permitted to see the world of the spiritual. And he recorded what he saw in the book of Revelation.

Some of what John saw we will consider in this message, Revelation 5:1-7, WHO WILL OPEN THE SCROLL?

1 And I saw in the right hand of him that sat on the throne a book written within and on the backside, sealed with seven seals.

2 And I saw a strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice, Who is worthy to open the book, and to loose the seals thereof?

3 And no man in heaven, nor in earth, neither under the earth, was able to open the book, neither to look thereon.

4 And I wept much, because no man was found worthy to open and to read the book, neither to look thereon.

5 And one of the elders saith unto me, Weep not: behold, the Lion of the tribe of Juda, the Root of David, hath prevailed to open the book, and to loose the seven seals thereof.

6 And I beheld, and, lo, in the midst of the throne and of the four beasts, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent forth into all the earth.

7 And he came and took the book out of the right hand of him that sat upon the throne.

In this brief look into heaven, we are permitted to see SITUATIONS which should expand our understanding.

The first Situation; The Futile Search

Notice who has the book. The Apostle John said, "And I saw in the right hand of him who sat on the throne a scroll written." The right hand is the ruling hand of the ancient sovereigns. And in that right hand He who sat on the throne held the scroll. It was written on the inside and the outside, within and on the back and was sealed with seven seals. Apparently this was a secret document. Some very important conditions were contained in this sealed scroll.

Then an angel asked a question. It was a strong angel, he had a loud voice and apparently he said it loud enough that all possible candidates could hear. And he asked, "Who is worthy to open the scroll and to loose its seals?" Worthy? Who is strong enough? Who is qualified? It was an important designation. Who is worthy? Heaven wanted a volunteer but no one stepped forward.

Can you see the angels walk out all over the heaven? No one was found. See them checking everyone on earth. No one could be found. See them checking everyone in the demonic world. No one was found. It was a futile search.

The search was on for a man, for one. It was an exhaustive search and no man was found. Notice how extensive the search went on, heaven, earth and under the earth. They searched the whole universe: heaven, the area of the angelic hosts, earth the area of man and the demonic sphere, under the earth. But nobody was found.

The holder of the scroll had no intention of opening the scroll Himself. It was to be the task of someone else. But no one was found. The content, so it appeared, would never be known unless someone could be found. No wonder the seer wept much. If no one could be found the book would be forever closed.

The second Situation; The Slain Lamb

But watch, watch how this is revealed. One of the elders, one of the twenty-four, said, "Weep not." What a word of comfort to John! "Weep not: behold, one has been found." The Lion of the tribe of Judah, the root of David. What a word of comfort to the weeping prophet. It was a word of triumph, too, because the elder said, "The Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, hath prevailed, hath overcome."

I am reminded of the prophecy of Jacob regarding his son Judah, Genesis 49:10. "Thou art a lion's whelp." He also said "The scepter shall not depart from Judah until Shiloh come: and unto him shall the gathering of the people be." The elder must have known about the prophecy of Jacob, and the promise to David. God had promised to David that there would be one from his loins to sit upon his throne forever. He is here, the Root of David. He hath overcome. He hath triumphed to open the scroll.

And the seer looked to see the Lion of the tribe of Judah and the Root of David, but what he saw was a lamb, "a lamb as though it had been slain having seven horns and seven eyes which are the seven Spirits of God." A lamb, a slain lamb. That teaches us that triumph is through death and resurrection. He is the one who through His death and resurrection has triumphed, prevailed to take the scroll and open the book.

He came and took the book out of the right hand of Him that sat on the throne. Jesus in John 5 said, "All judgment is given unto the Son." Right there in heaven when He stepped forward and took the scroll from the right hand of the Sovereign God He received His role as Judge.

To us these may be strange situations: the futile search and the slain Lamb. But to God they may be regularities. The great truth to see is the Lion, the Root of David, the Lamb has overcome. He will carry out His role as Judge.

Chapter Sixteen

SING TO THE LAMB

Through the years the great compositions of music have centered on Jesus Christ. Some of our finest hymns have set forth the adoration and worship of Jesus. Right now I am thinking of Handel's great masterpiece, The Messiah! Everybody has appreciated the tremendous ministry that oratorio, "The Messiah," performs each Christmas season.

It is God's intent that all, everybody, shall praise the Lord, the Lamb that was slain to receive honor and glory and majesty and power.

In Revelation 5:8-14, we learn from the Apostle John what the song of the Lamb will be, SING TO THE LAMB.

8 And when he had taken the book, the four beasts and four and twenty elders fell down before the Lamb, having every one of them harps, and golden vials full of odours, which are the prayers of saints.

9 And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation;

10 And hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth.

11 And I beheld, and I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne and the beasts and the elders: and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands;

12 Saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing.

13 And every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying, Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever.

14 And the four beasts said, Amen. And the four and twenty elders fell down and worshipped him that liveth for ever and ever.

Look at these CHOIRS with me as they bring praises unto the Lamb.

The first Choir; Twenty-Four Elders

They were shown as having certain instruments of praise. They had harps. Earlier we are told that they were clothed with white raiment and had crowns of gold on their heads. Later we learn that when they worshiped the Lord, they fell before Him and cast their crowns before the throne. Now they had harps and golden bowls full of incense, instruments of praise to God.

And they sang a new song. Notice very carefully what they said in their song. First of all they ascribed worthiness to the Lamb. He has overcome, prevailed, and is worthy to take the scroll and open its seals. The reason is, "Thou wast slain and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood." Notice the blood.

Oh yes, my friend, redemption is only possible by the precious blood of the Lamb of God. Take note now where they are from: "Every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation." Praise God!

These twenty-four elders apparently were representatives because here they said they have been redeemed from every kindred, tongue, and people and nation. Well, Hallelujah! God is no respecter of persons.

And they further said they are going to reign on the earth. They were not on earth, they were in heaven. Yet they said they are going to reign on earth sometime. These twenty-four elders were the first choir.

The second Choir; Innumerable Angels

Some people mistake this next choir and think it is people. But the Bible plainly informs us that these were angels and there were ten thousand times ten thousand and thousands of thousands of them. They were gathered in a great choir to bring praise and honor and glory unto the Lamb. They had no instruments of praise, but they praised with a loud voice. The innumerable multitude of angels said together in perfect rhythm, “Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing.”

The angels ascribed to the Lamb seven great qualities of character. Those angels were not speaking of any personal redemption like the twenty-four elders did. Rather they ascribed seven great qualities of character. Observe what they were: power, riches, wisdom, strength, honour, glory and blessing. Let the composite impact strike you. Those angels surely, of all the choirs, should know how worthy the Lamb is. They gave a great acclamation of praise. The angels were the second choir.

The third Choir; The Whole World

Every creature, everywhere! Notice, “In heaven, on earth, under the earth, and in the sea.” You and I are not aware of the kind of music which is going on around us all the time even now.

Here all creatures everywhere brought their praise to the Lord. It was a four-fold praise, “Blessing and honor and glory and power.” In their acclamation of praise they included “Him who sits on the throne, and unto the Lamb, forever and ever.” Every creature everywhere brought his word of praise, joining together to ascribe unto God and the Lamb this four-fold ascription: blessing and honor and glory and power.

Then the living creatures said, “Amen.” And the four and twenty elders fell down and worshiped Him that lives forever and ever. What a tremendous sight! What a tremendous musical concert!

These three choirs brought praise to the Lamb! The choir of the Twenty-Four, the choir of the Innumerable Angels, and the choir of the Whole World.

Yes, there will come a time, my friend, when Jesus will receive proper praise. Praise the Lord! You can get ready to be part of the choir when the time comes. You can praise Him now. He is Lord. Oh yes, He is Lord. Acknowledge Him now and you can have a part then in that great musical concert.

Chapter Seventeen Breaking The Seals Part I

In this study we need to remind ourselves that in the 5th chapter, the opening verse, we saw that One was sitting on the throne with a scroll in His right hand. We said this indicated authority. The sovereign God was the only One occupying the throne.

Then we learned further in chapter 5 that there was only One who prevailed and was worthy to take the scroll and break the seals of it. He was the Lamb. He was identified as the Lion of the tribe of Judah and as the Root of David.

In the last message we noted that there were three great choirs that brought acclamations of praise to the Lamb and to Him who sits upon the throne. So He has prevailed to exercise divine judgment on mankind. We learn from chapter 6 that the judgment begins upon the living. And we believe that is yet future.

BREAKING THE SEALS, Revelation 6:1-8 we have the horsemen released by the breaking of the first four seals of this sealed book. We are not informed in the breaking of these seals how much time occurs between one seal and the other, or how closely they come together.

1 And I saw when the Lamb opened one of the seals, and I heard, as it were the noise of thunder, one of the four beasts saying, Come and see.

2 And I saw, and behold a white horse: and he that sat on him had a bow; and a crown was given unto him: and he went forth conquering, and to conquer.

3 And when he had opened the second seal, I heard the second beast say, Come and see.

4 And there went out another horse that was red: and power was given to him that sat thereon to take peace from the earth, and that they should kill one another: and there was given unto him a great sword.

5 And when he had opened the third seal, I heard the third beast say, Come and see. And I beheld, and lo a black horse; and he that sat on him had a pair of balances in his hand.

6 And I heard a voice in the midst of the four beasts say, A measure of wheat for a penny, and three measures of barley for a penny; and see thou hurt not the oil and the wine.

7 And when he had opened the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the fourth beast say, Come and see.

8 And I looked, and behold a pale horse: and his name that sat on him was Death, and Hell followed with him. And power was given unto them over the fourth part of the earth, to kill with sword, and with hunger, and with death, and with the beasts of the earth.

Let us examine the HORSEMEN as judgment begins upon the living.

The first Horseman;

The White Horse

Obviously, the color has some symbolism in it. White, in other places in the book of Revelation, is the symbol of purity. Here, it may well be the symbol of hypocrisy. Notice the rider's equipment. He has a bow and a crown and he is sent forth conquering and to conquer. He has the bow as the instrument of conquering and he has the crown as a symbol of authority to rule the conquered.

It surely must be clear that this white horse rider is not Christ. We may go too far or attach a significance or an analogy to this text which it does not require, in fact, does not carry. Jesus will come riding a white horse in Revelation 19, but this is not that. Because here the Lamb is breaking the seal, and so the white horse rider cannot be the one who is breaking the seal. The white horse rider rides forth.

The second Horseman; The Red Horse

Red is a symbol of war. We understand from the pagans, particularly from the Greek-Roman pagans, that the god of war was always red. The idol Mars, the god of war, was red.

Notice the instrument the rider of the red horse carried. "To him was given a great sword." And he was to take peace from the earth. He is to inspire people to kill one another. What an awful conflict, what carnage, what a war, when the red horse rider rides forth.

Power is given to him that he should take peace from the earth. How the politicians and diplomats today are struggling for peace and still keep building greater armaments. This red horse rider has the authority to take peace from the earth. There will be great conflict.

The third Horseman; The Black Horse

Black is always the symbol of distress. In practically all cultures of the world black is a symbol of mourning, of distress, of trouble, of sorrow. His instrument is a scales to weigh out a measure of wheat and a measure of barley.

We hear much today about economic problems the world over. But what we see here pales in comparison anything we've seen. When this black horse rider rides forth, it will cost a man his day's wages to keep himself alive, with a measure of wheat. We are told in Biblical language that a measure of wheat was a man's daily need. Three measures of barley might keep a small family going. It will be a time of "hand to mouth" existence.

Jesus predicted a time when there would be pestilence and famine in various places. According to this text, the luxuries of life, wine and oil, will be plentiful. The necessities of life, wheat and barley, will be scarce. Prices will be out of bounds.

The fourth Horseman; The Pale Green Horse

Pale green is always a symbol of death the color when the blood is drained out of the body. This rider is the only one who is named. His name is Death. He has a companion who follows with him called Hell. They have power to kill one-fourth of the world's population.

We have no idea what the world population will be at that time. Right now it is just over six billion. One fourth of the world's population will be killed by the sword, by hunger, by death, and by the beasts of the earth. A quarter of the world population is killed when the pale green horseman rides forth.

Jesus is pictured here as opening these first four seals of the sealed scroll. He exercises divine judgment. My friend, I want you to notice that these judgments originate in heaven. These will be divinely arranged. Do not reduce them to mere symbols. The facts given here demand reality, for John reported what he saw and heard.

This seven sealed scroll contains divine judgments ministered by the Lamb who was slain and who is risen from the dead. This should not surprise us because Jesus said to the disciples on one occasion that the Father had committed all judgment unto the Son. That, my friend, is future for us. The opening of the sealed book is not history. It is not behind us, it is in the future.

Chapter Eighteen Breaking The Seals Part II

With the rise of evil by the increased population it might look as though God has given up His sovereign throne. Never let that enter your mind. God has not given up His throne. The time is coming when He will mete out to all their just sentence. Mark that down, keep that before you.

Some have stressed God's love. The slogan sometime ago was very popular here in the USA, "Smile, God loves you." Oh yes, that is true, He does. But remember this, too, my friend, God is righteous, He is Holy. Unless men turn to God in response to His love He must pass judgment upon them. So when you say, "Smile, God loves you," you have not said all the truth. You have spoken a very profound truth, but you have not said it all.

Revelation 6:9-17 explains the truth of divine judgment in **BREAKING THE SEALS** numbers 5 and 6.

9 And when he had opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held:

10 And they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?

11 And white robes were given unto every one of them; and it was said unto them, that they should rest yet for a little season, until their fellowservants also and their brethren, that should be killed as they were, should be fulfilled.

12 And I beheld when he had opened the sixth seal, and, lo, there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became as blood;

13 And the stars of heaven fell unto the earth, even as a fig tree casteth her untimely figs, when she is shaken of a mighty wind.

14 And the heaven departed as a scroll when it is rolled together; and every mountain and island were moved out of their places.

15 And the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every bondman, and every free man, hid themselves in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains;

16 And said to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb:

17 For the great day of his wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?

In the breaking of these seals we find unmistakable EVIDENCES of divine justice.

The first Evidence; The Seal of the Martyrs

Notice where these martyrs were. We are told that John saw their souls under the altar. The altar being symbolic of their martyrdom. They had been so to speak, sacrificed for God or to God.

The reason for their martyrdom is clearly given in our text. They were martyred for, "The Word of God, and for the testimony which they held." In other words, they gave their lives because they believed God. They accepted the Word of God and gave testimony in harmony with that Word, and so they were martyred.

There under the altar, the Apostle John heard them say they wanted God to exercise divine justice and avenge them of their blood, because they had been martyred by those who dwell on the earth. They ask God to exercise His justice.

We may wonder how it is that these who had suffered would call out to God in this way. Bear in mind, God is righteous; God is holy. Because He is righteous and because He is holy He must exercise the justice that is due. He must mete out judgment upon those who violate divine laws.

A consolation is given to those who were under the altar. White robes were given to them. And then they were told they must wait. God did not say, "I will never exercise judgment." He promised them that the time of divine justice will come. That fact is absolutely sure in the Bible.

The second Evidence; The Seal of the Earthquake

See how extensive the effect of this seal was. When Jesus broke the sixth seal, heaven was affected. The sun became black as sackcloth of hair, the moon became like blood, and the stars of heaven fell like a fig tree shaking its foul figs in a wind. Heaven was drastically affected.

Colossians 1:17 tells us that God holds everything together "by Him," making direct reference to Jesus Christ. When Jesus opened the sixth seal, apparently He let go of the sun, moon and stars, and everything started coming apart.

The earth also was affected; we read the mountains and islands were moved out of their places, the heaven was rolled up like a scroll. Nothing seemed to be stable; everything shifted; the whole universe started coming apart; all creation was seriously shaken.

Take a look at it again; sun, moon, and stars, heavens, mountains, islands, everything disrupted by the breaking of seal number 6. We have two evidences of divine justice: the seal of the martyrs and seal of the earthquake.

The third Evidence; The Outcry of the People

Notice carefully our Scripture text, verses 15-17. The whole race of people was involved: kings, great men, chief captains, mightymen, every slave and every free man. In the rich men we have the industrialists. In the chief captains and mighty men we have the CEO and the working man. With every free man we have all the rest. All are involved. They were seized with fear because of the earthquake.

See what they do and say, "They hid themselves in dens and rocks of the mountains: and say to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne and from the wrath of the lamb: For the great day of his wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?"

All of these people asked for death rather than face the Sovereign God and the Lamb. They knew they had violated God's holy standard and they deserved divine justice.

The justice of God will come. Too many of us have the picture of Jesus only as given to us in the Gospel record. It is a beautiful picture of the meek and lowly Jesus who came and took His place among men. He was maligned. He was insulted. He was crucified without resistance. But the time will come when that same Lamb of God who went without murmur to the cross will exercise His right of justice. No wonder these people, all of them, say, "The great day of His wrath is come."

These evidences of divine justice call us to take careful account of our relation with the Creator and the Lamb. Righteousness will be manifested by the divine intervention of God. How much better to call on the Lamb now, than to call on the rocks then.

Chapter Nineteen

Seal The Jew

There is a thread of truth which runs through the Bible, all the way from Genesis to Revelation. That truth is the purpose and plan of God. He has showed us in the Bible how all will come to the final end.

During the history of man certain people have filled a large place in the purpose and plan of God. Those people are the descendants of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. God chose them to be a special people unto Him. By them He revealed His will in the Holy Bible. By them He provided the plan of the redemption for all mankind through the death of Jesus Christ, a Jew. God told us in the Holy Bible what He will do. We should desire to know what that is.

Israel's prophets centuries before the birth of Christ predicted the dispersion; that is, that the Jews would be cast out of their land and they would be traveling, traveling, traveling. Those same prophets also predicted the regathering; a return to the land promised to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

There are many references in the Bible which tell us how God is going to deal with the sons of Jacob as the end times come. In SEAL THE JEWS, Revelation 7:1-8, John writes of one such time.

1 And after these things I saw four angels standing on the four corners of the earth, holding the four winds of the earth, that the wind should not blow on the earth, nor on the sea, nor on any tree.

2 And I saw another angel ascending from the east, having the seal of the living God: and he cried with a loud voice to the four angels, to whom it was given to hurt the earth and the sea,

3 Saying, Hurt not the earth, neither the sea, nor the trees, till we have sealed the servants of our God in their foreheads.

4 And I heard the number of them which were sealed: and there were sealed an hundred and forty and four thousand of all the tribes of the children of Israel.

5 Of the tribe of Juda were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Reuben were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Gad were sealed twelve thousand.

6 Of the tribe of Aser were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Nephtalim were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Manasses were sealed twelve thousand.

7 Of the tribe of Simeon were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Levi were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Issachar were sealed twelve thousand.

8 Of the tribe of Zabulon were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Joseph were sealed twelve thousand.

This text gives us in detail the COMMANDS from God when a certain number of Jews are to be sealed.

The first Command; Hold The Winds

Here is a unique word. Are there really four corners of the earth? Some years ago TIME magazine carried a picture of the earth taken by American astronauts on their way to the moon. The article with the picture referred to the four corners of the earth! They were quite visible in the picture.

Here we are told that the angels control the winds. That may be a new idea for you. No doubt our weathermen who forecast the weather have other explanations for the winds. We hear them speak of high and low pressure systems accompanied by winds of varying velocities. But in our text is something else. This is not the normal way weather acts.

Bear in mind that the Book of Revelation ushers us into a number of extraordinary situations principally characterized by the fact that God will be directly involved in the close of human history.

Be assured that the purposes God has determined will be exactly carried out. He will assign specific functions to angels whom He can trust to fulfill His will. What may earlier have been left to natural laws will then be under His definite control.

We must never doubt that God who created all things and who controls all things will also consume all things. So the command was given to these four angels to hold the winds.

The second Command; Hold the Judgment

Here a special messenger, an angel from heaven, is introduced having the seal of the living God in his hand. He arose from the east, the rising of the sun, and said that there is a certain program that must be carried out. Hold the judgment until he accomplishes his task.

Now notice verse 3, "Hurt not the earth, neither the sea, nor the trees, till we have sealed the servants of our God in their foreheads." Here is a special messenger with a special assignment and that assignment has a special timing. He had the seal of the living God and he was to seal the servants of God.

I was very much interested to discover in my study that the same word "seal" is used in Ephesians 1:13, where it is stated that he who believes in Jesus Christ is sealed with the Holy Spirit. The Bible does not disclose for us the full meaning of the seal of the living God in our Revelation passage. It does very clearly emphasize that this angel and whoever was accompanying him, had a special assignment to seal the servants of God. And the judgment was to be held up until that was accomplished.

The third Command; Select The Jews

The Bible makes this absolutely clear; 144,000 of all the tribes of the children of Israel. There are 12,000 from each tribe listed here.

A man came to my door some years ago and tried to tell me that these are not really Jews. I had to say, "Well, I must read the Bible like it is written." They are Jews, they are the children of Israel. There was a tribe of Reuben, a tribe of Gad, a tribe of Asher, a tribe of Naphtali, a tribe of Manassah, and so forth.

The question is immediately raised in some people's minds, "Can the Jews trace their family line back to their ancestors?" And the answer is "no" for the most part. The genealogies were most likely lost when the temple was destroyed in 70 AD or in 135 AD.

Whether the Jews can trace their family line back to their ancestors is not important. Here a command was given to the angel. The angel was under orders from God to seal the servants of our God in their foreheads. So whether it will be humanly possible to trace the family ancestors back is not the question. The point to be made is that God knows who they are and why they will be sealed. They were called the servants of God.

We must see then very plainly that God has yet a future for the sons of Jacob. He knows them that are His. It would be proper for us to let God be God.

Chapter Twenty

Who Are These?

Some time ago I found a book on a book rack. It is entitled, WW III, Signs of the Impending Battle of Armageddon. The book was written by John Wesley White, an Associate of the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association. In his book, Evangelist White refers to nineteen signs of the coming battle.

One cannot read a book like this without developing a feeling of gloom. At the same time, we take courage and renew our hope in the prophecy and the promises of God's holy Word. One of the glaring facts which Evangelist White brings out is, as the age winds down people everywhere will seem to take delight in the horrible things of life. We already see that on every hand. Terrorists kill simply to kill. There seems to be little regard for life.

We can be sure before man blows up the world God will step into human history once again. He did it before when all the world was corrupt and man's imagination was only evil continually. That time, in the days of Noah, God destroyed civilization with water. The next time, according to Biblical predictions, He will destroy the world with fire.

It is a frightening fact that man discovered how to kindle such a fire when he split the atom. There can, therefore, be no doubt as to the possibility of such a destruction. The only question is, When?

We must never forget that God has not turned over the management of the universe to human creatures or demons.

We will study Revelation 7:9-17 with the question which the elder asked John, WHO ARE THESE?

9 After this I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands;

10 And cried with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb.

11 And all the angels stood round about the throne, and about the elders and the four beasts, and fell before the throne on their faces, and worshipped God,

12 Saying, Amen: Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honour, and power, and might, be unto our God for ever and ever. Amen.

13 And one of the elders answered, saying unto me, What are these which are arrayed in white robes? and whence came they?

14 And I said unto him, Sir, thou knowest. And he said to me, These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.

15 Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple: and he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them.

16 They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat.

17 For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes.

The text gives us several great PARTICULARS in the answer to this question.

The first Particular; The Great Congregation

The Apostle John said he saw a great multitude which no man could number. They were standing before the throne and the Lamb. Where did they come from? From all areas. Notice, they are "of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues."

They are a world-wide group. They have come from all ethnic groups, all family divisions, all national divisions, all language divisions. Some from every kindred, tribe and nation. And they are before the throne and the Lamb.

And there is a great acclamation. They say, “Salvation to our God who sits upon the throne, and unto the Lamb.” Surely these are people who have been redeemed, a great congregation. I point out to you that they are not a part of the four and twenty elders. They are a separate group, a great congregation.

The second Particular; The Great Affirmation

All the angels stood round about the throne and witnessed, and worshipped, and affirmed what was going on. The angels are also a separate and distinct group. They stood round about the throne and the elders and the four living creatures. And they worshipped and witnessed unto the great wisdom, power and might of God.

The angels bring to the Lord a seven-fold praise: “Blessing, glory, wisdom, thanksgiving, honour, power, and might, be unto our God for ever and ever. Amen!” For the angels one word, we quickly note, is absent. It is the word “salvation.” However this great affirmation gathers together those attributes of God which are His because of His sovereign power. It is a great affirmation by the angels who fell on their faces before the sovereign Almighty God.

The third Particular; The Great Tribulation

One of the elders asked the question, “Who are these?” So the group is not a part of the elders. We already suggested that the elders represent the bride of Christ, the church. When the elder asked John, “Who are these?” John very wisely answered “Thou knowest.”

Observe carefully the elder’s reply. He said, “These are they who came out of the great tribulation.” Let me point out to you that in our Greek New Testament special emphasis is laid upon this tribulation. If we translate it carefully and literally it will read like this: “These are they who came out of the tribulation, that is, the great one.”

We must also realize that the use of the word tribulation in the book of Revelation refers to the righteous judgment of God which He will bring upon the rebelling world of mankind. This multitude came out of that great tribulation. They have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. When the fifth seal is opened there will be martyrs. Here is a great multitude of blood-washed saints who came out of the great tribulation.

Mercy will be available even during the great tribulation so that a great congregation will be saved. Praise the Lord for the wonderful grace of Jesus!

Use your eyes of faith to visualize the Great Congregation, a multitude which no man can number. Hear the Great Affirmation of worship and praise. Contemplate the mercy of God even in the Great Tribulation. Amen.

Chapter Twenty-One

The Awful Silence

Oh friend, we are highly privileged to study what John was allowed to see and hear as he was in the Spirit in the Day of the Lord. And I believe that God, the Creator, is able to speak the language of man whom He made. We should therefore expect to take the words of the Bible as they are.

We must let God say what He says and believe what He said. Now I admit not everything which God has said is easy to understand. But just because we may not be able to understand it does not change the truth. So I take the position of the Apostle Paul in Romans 3:3, and part of 4, “For what if some did not believe? Shall their unbelief make the faith of God without effect? God forbid: yea, let God be true, but every man a liar.”

In other words, no man can stand up to God and charge Him with untruth. God, by His very nature, cannot lie. He always speaks the truth and we had better believe Him.

Did you know that the Bible tells us of a time when there will be about a half hour of silence in heaven? In Revelation 8:1-6, THE AWFUL SILENCE is this period of silence, the calm just before the storm?

1 And when he had opened the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven about the space of half an hour.

2 And I saw the seven angels which stood before God; and to them were given seven trumpets.

3 And another angel came and stood at the altar, having a golden censer; and there was given unto him much incense, that he should offer it with the prayers of all saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne.

4 And the smoke of the incense, which came with the prayers of the saints, ascended up before God out of the angel's hand.

5 And the angel took the censer, and filled it with fire of the altar, and cast it into the earth: and there were voices, and thunderings, and lightnings, and an earthquake.

6 And the seven angels which had the seven trumpets prepared themselves to sound.

This scene in heaven gives us several ACTIONS of the Lamb, describing the reality of God's judgment.

The first Action; The Silence Is Imposed

The Lamb opened the seventh seal. In chapter 6 we saw Him open the first six seals. And when He opened the sixth seal there was a great convulsion of the heaven and the earth. And men cried out for the rocks and mountains to fall on them and hide them from the wrath of the Lamb.

Earlier, in chapter 5, there were three great choirs that offered praise unto the Lamb: the twenty-four elders, the innumerable angels, and every creature everywhere. In our text, verse 1, we are told that all at once all this acclamation of praise ceased. The silence was imposed in heaven.

After all those great acclamations of praise in chapter five, and all the acclamations of praise in chapter seven, that there should be thirty minutes of absolute silence must have been a very ominous and awful silence. Everybody was waiting silently for the next move of the sovereign God.

Believe me, my friend, that silence suggests some awful events to come. The inhabitants of heaven seem stunned by the magnitude of what is about to take place. It seems almost unthinkable that in the presence of God there would be absolute silence for thirty minutes! I believe that silence was pregnant with the dread of impending judgment.

The second Action; The Silence Is Employed

Perhaps during that half hour of silence seven angels were designated. We're told they were the seven angels that stood before God, and that each of the seven were given a trumpet. They are ministers of God; they do His bidding. What His sovereign will decrees, they perform.

Then another angel comes on the scene. This angel ministered at the altar, the golden altar. We recall that in the tabernacle Moses built in the wilderness the golden altar was located just in front of the veil separating the holy place from the most holy place. That altar was the altar of prayer. It was the place where they offered the incense before God. Now, the reality becomes clear to us because here the angel ministered at the golden altar with much incense. Our text tells us the incense is offered with the prayers of the saints. The smoke of the incense and the prayers of the saints ascend up together before God out of the angel's hand.

The martyrs under the altar (chapter 6, verse 9) prayed and asked God to avenge their blood. They had been martyred by the people of the earth. But here all the prayers of all the saints are ascending up to God.

Prayers of praise, prayers of intercession, prayers of adoration, prayers of humility are ascending before God. Therefore, surely the saints are not subject to these coming judgments, because their prayers come up before God from the golden altar.

The third Action; The Silence is Broken

The angel took the censer with which he had been offering the incense before God with the prayers of the saints, filled it with fire from the altar and cast it upon the earth.

We must see that God is acting in His own particular right. The angel, ministering according to His will, takes that censer filled with fire from the altar; and casts it to the earth.

Now note what happened: "And there were voices, and thunderings, and lightnings, and a great earthquake." And then the seven angels with the seven trumpets prepared to blow their trumpets.

It is difficult to imagine the bedlam, the confusion, that censer full of fire created when there were voices, and thunderings, and lightnings, and an earthquake. But that is not all, for now the seven angels prepare to sound their trumpets.

This awful silence, imposed by the Lamb, precludes a series of judgments carried out by angels. This silence is not without activity as the angel is employed at the golden altar. Finally, the silence is broken when the censer full of fire is cast to the earth.

By these actions we understand the reality of the coming judgment on wicked men. Let us praise God for the truth of His judgment, love and grace.

Chapter Twenty-Two

Sound The Trumpets

The first four of the seven trumpets sounded. Each brings the judgments of God upon rebelling men on earth. They are not the same as the seal judgments as we shall see. They are more extensive and more severe in description.

In this message from Revelation 8:7-13 we come to the beginning of the second series of seven judgments, the trumpet judgments, SOUND THE TRUMPETS.

7 The first angel sounded, and there followed hail and fire mingled with blood, and they were cast upon the earth: and the third part of trees was burnt up, and all green grass was burnt up.

8 And the second angel sounded, and as it were a great mountain burning with fire was cast into the sea: and the third part of the sea became blood;

9 And the third part of the creatures which were in the sea, and had life, died; and the third part of the ships were destroyed.

10 And the third angel sounded, and there fell a great star from heaven, burning as it were a lamp, and it fell upon the third part of the rivers, and upon the fountains of waters;

11 And the name of the star is called Wormwood: and the third part of the waters became wormwood; and many men died of the waters, because they were made bitter.

12 And the fourth angel sounded, and the third part of the sun was smitten, and the third part of the moon, and the third part of the stars; so as the third part of them was darkened, and the day shone not for a third part of it, and the night likewise.

13. And I beheld, and heard an angel flying through the midst of heaven, saying with a loud voice, Woe, woe, woe, to the inhabitants of the earth by reason of the other voices of the trumpet of the three angels, which are yet to sound!

Here the Apostle shares with us the SCENES of the coming judgment as the angels blow the first four trumpets.

The first Scene; The Parched Earth

The first angel sounded his trumpet, and there was an outpouring of divine judgment. “There followed hail and fire mixed with blood, and they were cast upon the earth.” Because the text does not indicate otherwise, these descriptions must be taken literally.

Historically this is not at all impossible. In Exodus 9:23,24 we read the account of the Egyptian plagues. “And Moses stretched forth his rod toward heaven: and the Lord sent thunder and hail, and the fire ran along upon the ground; and the Lord rained hail upon the land of Egypt. So there was hail, and fire mingled with the hail, very grievous, such as there was not like in all the land of Egypt since it became a nation.”

What happened in the past can happen in the future. What God did once in judgment, He can do again. The result of this first trumpet is a third part of the trees were burned up and all the green grass was burned up.

The second Scene; The Plagued Seas

The second trumpeter sounded and there was an outpouring of judgment. Notice carefully that here we have a symbol. The words, as it were, will indicate that clearly to us, “The second angel sounded, and, as it were, a great mountain burning with fire was cast into the sea.” It was like a mountain falling from the sky. And one third of the sea became blood and a third part of the creatures which were in the sea and had life, died. And a third part of the ships were destroyed.

Again, in the Egyptian plagues Moses lifted his rod and all the waters of Egypt turned to blood, and men died; the whole land had a reeking odor about it.

Now to quote another teacher, “The simple truth is, that if it does not mean what it says, as men ordinarily use language, no man can tell what it does mean; and the opinion of one is just as good and just as bad as that of another. I, therefore, take it as it is written, because there is no other way of taking it which yields any certain or reliable sense.”

We have the parched earth and the plagued seas.

The third Scene; The Polluted Water

“And the third angel sounded, and there fell a great star from heaven, burning as though it were a lamp, and it fell upon the third part of the rivers, and upon the fountains of waters.” It was called Wormwood. One third of the rivers, the springs of water, and one third of the water turned to Wormwood and many men died.

I read again from another teacher, “On the 21st of March, 1823, in one of the Aleutian Islands there was a great volcanic explosion, one of the results, the river water assumed the color of beer and was so extremely bitter as to be unfit for use. God is at no loss for means to affect His end.”

The third trumpet brings poisonous, bitter water so that many men die.

The fourth Scene; The Perverted Heavens

The fourth angel sounded his trumpet. Notice what happened. A third part of the sun, a third part of the moon, and a third part of the stars went out. As a result, a third part of the day did not shine and a third part of the night did not shine. Light and darkness will be perverted or corrupted.

The Prophet Isaiah 700 years before Christ made a similar prediction. “Behold, the day of the Lord cometh, cruel both with wrath and fierce anger, to lay the land desolate: and he shall destroy the sinners thereof out of it. For the stars of heaven and the constellations thereof shall not give their light: the sun shall be darkened in his going forth, and the moon shall not cause her light to shine,” Isaiah 13:9,10.

Notice the last verse of chapter 8, “And I beheld, and heard an angel flying through the midst of heaven, saying with a loud voice, Woe, woe, woe, to the inhabitants of the earth by reason of the other voices of the trumpets of the three angels, which are yet to sound!”

We must conclude there is a period of severe judgment ahead. Angels will participate. The earth, the sea, the water, the heavens will be affected. Surely, you do not want to be here when that happens, do you? Find your hiding place now in Jesus!

Chapter Twenty-Three Creatures From The Pit

We are privileged to see from this awesome picture in Revelation 9:1-12, CREATURES FROM THE PIT.

1 And the fifth angel sounded, and I saw a star fall from heaven unto the earth: and to him was given the key of the bottomless pit.

2 And he opened the bottomless pit; and there arose a smoke out of the pit, as the smoke of a great furnace; and the sun and the air were darkened by reason of the smoke of the pit.

3 And there came out of the smoke locusts upon the earth: and unto them was given power, as the scorpions of the earth have power.

4 And it was commanded them that they should not hurt the grass of the earth, neither any green thing, neither any tree; but only those men which have not the seal of God in their foreheads.

5 And to them it was given that they should not kill them, but that they should be tormented five months: and their torment was as the torment of a scorpion, when he striketh a man.

6 And in those days shall men seek death, and shall not find it; and shall desire to die, and death shall flee from them.

7 And the shapes of the locusts were like unto horses prepared unto battle; and on their heads were as it were crowns like gold, and their faces were as the faces of men.

8 And they had hair as the hair of women, and their teeth were as the teeth of lions.

9 And they had breastplates, as it were breastplates of iron; and the sound of their wings was as the sound of chariots of many horses running to battle.

10 And they had tails like unto scorpions, and there were stings in their tails: and their power was to hurt men five months.

11 And they had a king over them, which is the angel of the bottomless pit, whose name in the Hebrew tongue is Abaddon, but in the Greek tongue hath his name Apollyon.

12 One woe is past; and, behold, there come two woes more hereafter.

We will see the DEVELOPMENTS of God’s judgment through these creatures from the pit.

The first Development; The Key to the Pit

We read that a star fell from heaven. Expositors go in different ways about that star. Some feel it was Satan himself. Hardly. Surely, it is not a star as we know stars. We learned in the first chapter of Revelation that the stars in Jesus’ right hand were the angels of the seven churches. So it is quite likely this star is also an angel. It is unlikely that God would have given this key to Satan, more likely to Michael.

We do know that to the angel was given the key to the bottomless pit. Apparently he used the key to open the pit. And when he did, smoke came out like the smoke of a great furnace, so much so that the sun was darkened.

Out of that smoke came locusts, extraordinary locusts. They were like scorpions, that is, they had the power of scorpions. They were not a regular species of locusts. Now, the question is, are they real? Once when we were discussing this chapter a man asked me, "Have you ever seen any locusts like that?" And I said, "No, sir, I haven't. However, just because I have never seen locusts like that, I would not like to say there couldn't be any locusts like that, would you?" He had nothing to say.

If I accept only those things I have seen myself, then I have limited my understanding considerably. That is especially true when it comes to the Book of God.

Are these locusts real? Yes, sir. They come from the infernal world, from the bottomless pit, from the smoke of the furnace.

The second Development; The Command to the Creatures

Indeed, these are extraordinary locusts. They are commanded not to hurt the grass of the earth, nor any green thing, neither any tree. Rather they are to torment men.

Therefore, they are not insects. They must be intelligent demonic spirits. They are able to make selection and avoid those who have the seal of God in their foreheads.

Notice the uniqueness of this command. They were told not to kill the men, but to torment them with a strike like the strike of a scorpion for five months. And the command to them is to torment men who have not the seal of God in their foreheads. Their sting will be so painful men will want to die, but death will not be available. Against their will they will live on in torment.

This text tells us there are hordes of these locusts spreading out over the earth to torment those who do not have the seal of God in their foreheads.

The third Development; The Comparisons of the Creatures

Open your Bible and look carefully at what the Scripture says. Verse 7 says the locusts were like horses prepared unto battle. On their heads they had, as it were, crowns like gold. Their faces were not like horses but were like the faces of men. They had hair like the hair of women, and their teeth were like the teeth of lions. What a combination: horses, men, women, lions. They must be grotesque with this kind of mixture. They also had wings and breastplates of iron. They had tails like scorpions; there were stings in their tails.

In this text there are more comparisons than any other text of similar length in all the Bible. The Apostle John is describing for us the appearance of these creatures from the pit. They looked like horses, but had faces like men. They had hair like women, and teeth like lions. They had power to hurt men five months.

The fourth Development; The King of the Creatures

The king over those locusts is the angel of the bottomless pit. So these locusts must be demonic beings who have taken on this particular shape in the purpose of God. The Lord will use these demonic spirits to bring judgment on those who do not have His seal in their foreheads.

This angel from the bottomless pit must be none other than Satan. He is called in the Hebrew language, "Abaddon." In the Greek language he is called, "Apollyon," meaning destroyer.

There is one great lesson I see in this: those who serve the devil will experience great distress. It will come from him whom they serve. This will be God's way of bringing judgment on them for their wickedness and refusal to repent.

I am most grateful to God that He never treats His servants like that. Praise God!

Chapter Twenty-Four Strange Horses

We wonder how the last days of history will be. Well, God has been good to us and has given us the last book in the Bible, the book of Revelation, which tells us how the last days will be.

In the record of Divine Revelation in history, God has used a variety of ways to bring men to their knees. For example the world wide flood at the time of Noah. That was God's judgment upon the wicked world that he said "was only worthy of destruction." Noah and his three sons and their wives, the eight of them, were the only ones who were saved.

During the time of Israel's wandering in the wilderness God had to deal with them to bring them to their knees. On one occasion he sent poisonous snakes among them and many of them who were bitten died, until Moses lifted up the brazen serpent on the pole and everyone who looked to that serpent was healed.

God has used a variety of ways to bring men to their knees in Revelation History. But still, man has gone on away from God. Today conditions have worsened. It seems that many people have stopped their ears, turned their backs on God. How long will it be until God must unleash His righteous judgment. You must remember, my friend, not only does God love you, but God is a holy righteous God who must also judge you.

Now let us examine these STRANGE HORSES which John saw in the vision in Revelation 9:13-21.

13 And the sixth angel sounded, and I heard a voice from the four horns of the golden altar which is before God,

14 Saying to the sixth angel which had the trumpet, Loose the four angels which are bound in the great river Euphrates.

15 And the four angels were loosed, which were prepared for an hour, and a day, and a month, and a year, for to slay the third part of men.

16 And the number of the army of the horsemen were two hundred thousand thousand: and I heard the number of them.

17 And thus I saw the horses in the vision, and them that sat on them, having breastplates of fire, and of jacinth, and brimstone: and the heads of the horses were as the heads of lions; and out of their mouths issued fire and smoke and brimstone.

18 By these three was the third part of men killed, by the fire, and by the smoke, and by the brimstone, which issued out of their mouths.

19 For their power is in their mouth, and in their tails: for their tails were like unto serpents, and had heads, and with them they do hurt.

20 And the rest of the men which were not killed by these plagues yet repented not of the works of their hands, that they should not worship devils, and idols of gold, and silver, and brass, and stone, and of wood: which neither can see, nor hear, nor walk:

21 Neither repented they of their murders, nor of their sorceries, nor of their fornication, nor of their thefts.

We find specific INDICATORS that the eternal God directs human history.

The first Indicator; The Specific Time

The sixth angel sounded his trumpet and when he did John said, "I heard a voice from the four horns of the golden altar." This was the altar of incense, the altar of prayers. It was the place where the angel ministered with the incense of the prayers of the saints of God. He heard a voice from the four horns of the golden altar saying, "Loose the four angels which are bound in the river Euphrates."

It is remarkable that these four angels were selected and the exact time was specified, right down to the hour: An hour and a day and a month and a year. We are to understand from the selection of the angels and the exact timing that God has a plan for history.

Notice, there is also an explicit command for these angels to kill one-third of the population. They were prepared for an hour and a day and a month and a year to slay the third part of men. That sounds like an awful command, but that is the divine justice of God.

The second Indicator;. The Specific Troops

The Apostle John said, “I heard the number of them, two hundred thousand thousand.” Translated into our language that is two hundred million! Two hundred million horsemen, what an army.

I did a little calculating to see how much space these two hundred million horses would require. I estimated three feet per animal, if they stood abreast. My calculations led me to this conclusion: 200,000,000 horsemen standing side by side, allowing three feet per animal, would circle the globe four and one-half times at the equator! Let’s line them up in a block fifty miles wide allowing three feet in width, and seven feet in length for each animal. We would have a block fifty miles wide and 5411 miles long. Two hundred million horsemen with breastplates of fire, jacinth and brimstone.

They had weapons too. The heads of the horses were like heads of lions and out of their mouths issued fire, and smoke, and brimstone. By these a third part of men were to be killed. Some awful announcements came to this specific troop, two hundred million to carry out such a destruction of the human family.

The third Indicator; The Specific Turmoil

Notice the kind of perverted worship that these people were engaging in. The rest of the men, who were not killed by these plagues, repented not of the works of their hands, that they should not worship the works of their hands.

Look at the works of their hands. Demons, and idols of gold and silver, bronze, stone and wood which can neither see nor hear, nor walk. Note the composition of those idols: Gold, silver, brass, or bronze and stone and wood.

Oh, how I praise the Lord that there is an escape from this. Here is specific turmoil because men refuse to repent. After all this evidence of divine justice and judgment they persisted in their rebellion. They did not repent of “their idol worship, nor their murders nor their sorceries, nor their fornication, nor of their thefts.”

I’m thinking of the conditions in our world today when people murder unborn babies by the millions. And the kind of drug use and occult practices that are being promoted all over the world. The fornication and the promiscuity, the sexual deviancy, and all of that. The lack of respect for personal property, how people take what they want.

God is going to pour out His judgments by these strange horses. Yet we learn that when this specific turmoil will come men refuse to repent. What a tragedy.

I quote from another commentator on the Book of Revelation. Here are his words, “And as these people against all the light and warning sent them still drive on in their devil worship, idolatry, murders, sorceries, and lewdness and dishonesties until they have filled the measure of their guilt and wearied out the patience of the indulgent God. The horses of hell are let loose on them to sweep one-third of them to speedy perdition.”

These Strange Horses will carry out the righteous judgment of God in His specific time, with their specific troops, and their specific turmoil. Today there is mercy. The day is coming when Divine Judgment must be administered. Turn now, and seek divine mercy.

Chapter Twenty-Five

God’s Celestial Messenger

Some years ago I received a communication from someone from another area. He claimed he was writing with a red hot pen. He claimed to have a direct hotline, we might say, to heaven. He affirmed that what he was writing, was given to him as new revelation. Later, I received several letters from a certain

man claiming that he is the Christ returned to earth. He claimed to have the marks in his hands and in his head. We must be careful because God's word tells us such claims will be made as the age winds down.

The book of Revelation makes it clear that there are angels. One such angel I call GOD'S CELESTIAL MESSENGER of whom John reports in Revelation 10:1-11.

1 And I saw another mighty angel come down from heaven, clothed with a cloud: and a rainbow was upon his head, and his face was as it were the sun, and his feet as pillars of fire:

2 And he had in his hand a little book open: and he set his right foot upon the sea, and his left foot on the earth,

3 And cried with a loud voice, as when a lion roareth: and when he had cried, seven thunders uttered their voices.

4 And when the seven thunders had uttered their voices, I was about to write: and I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Seal up those things which the seven thunders uttered, and write them not.

5 And the angel which I saw stand upon the sea and upon the earth lifted up his hand to heaven,

6 And sware by him that liveth for ever and ever, who created heaven, and the things that therein are, and the earth, and the things that therein are, and the sea, and the things which are therein, that there should be time no longer:

7 But in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he shall begin to sound, the mystery of God should be finished, as he hath declared to his servants the prophets.

8 And the voice which I heard from heaven spake unto me again, and said, Go and take the little book which is open in the hand of the angel which standeth upon the sea and upon the earth.

9 And I went unto the angel, and said unto him, Give me the little book. And he said unto me, Take it, and eat it up; and it shall make thy belly bitter, but it shall be in thy mouth sweet as honey.

10 And I took the little book out of the angel's hand, and ate it up; and it was in my mouth sweet as honey: and as soon as I had eaten it, my belly was bitter.

11 And he said unto me, Thou must prophesy again before many peoples, and nations, and tongues, and kings.

Since this messenger is definitely said to be from heaven, we should be interested in several definite OBSERVATIONS we can make about Him.

The first Observation; The Stirring Sight of His Person

John said, "He is a mighty one, a mighty angel." Evidently, some angels are not as mighty as this one. In addition, he was clothed with a cloud. A cloud is the characteristic of heaven, of deity. When God met Moses on Mount Sinai the Scripture says, "God came down in a thick cloud." When Jesus went to glory the Bible tells us that a cloud received Him out of the sight of the disciples.

This celestial messenger is clothed with a cloud, and has a rainbow about his head. Revelation 5 tells us that a rainbow was round about the throne of Him who sat on the throne. Is this rainbow round the head of the angel something of a wreath of victory to give him the recognition he is due?

Notice too, the stirring sight of his person. His face was as the sun. When Jesus was on the Mount of Transfiguration the Bible tells us that His face shone like the sun. So too in Revelation 1, when John saw

Him first as the glorified Christ, “His face shone like the sun.” We learn later that the Lamb will be the light of the Holy City.

Also, he had feet like pillars of fire, suggesting an absoluteness. Again I am reminded of the vision of the glorified Christ when His feet were like burnished brass. Here is a stirring sight of the person of this celestial messenger. This is no earth creature. He is a celestial being.

The second Observation; The Stimulating Shout of His Proclamation

He had in his hand a little scroll which gave him a certain authority. He placed his right foot on the sea and his left foot on the earth indicating possession. Hear his shout of victory. He cried with a loud voice as a lion roars.

Then come seven resounding thunders. We don’t know what the thunder said for John received communication from heaven not to write down what those thunders said. Some have speculated, but we do not know. We do know, in the book of Revelation, that thunder is associated with judgment. We learn that from the three series of judgments: the seal judgments, the trumpet judgments and the bowl judgments.

From the stimulating shout of his proclamation we can conclude that no one will be able to resist his complete control.

The third Observation; The Striking Signal of His Prediction

He raised his right hand to heaven standing on the sea and on the land and swore an oath by the absolute Creator. This must mean there can be no violation or change of what the angel said. And please observe it was by the absolute Creator of all things, things in heaven, things in earth and things in the sea.

His prediction, there should be delay no longer. We learn from this that God has a time schedule which He is working. At this particular time the mystery of God should be finished. It is a striking signal of prediction. God has everything in control. No one knows the zero hour except God. The angel predicted the time when all this would be accomplished, when the mystery of God would be finished.

The fourth Observation; The Sweet, Bitter Scroll of His Predicament

We noted in the third verse the angel had a scroll in his hand. Here we see it again. So the Apostle went to him by the command of the voice from Heaven and asked him for the scroll. And the angel said “take it and eat it up; you will find it sweet in your mouth and bitter in your belly.”

Not all things are pleasant in prophecy, to be sure. There is a certain interest today in prophetic messages and prophetic themes. It is a pleasant experience to think God’s thoughts after Him, to see how God is going to wind it up, to see how God is going to finish His mystery. But there is some bitterness about it, too.

This celestial messenger has a message for us. What is that message? Time is short. Only God knows the zero hour.

I must tell you that human history has an end. I ask you a very sober question, “Are you ready?”

Chapter Twenty-Six **God’s Two Earthly Messengers**

I have noted earth wide trends that tell us the human race is on a crash course away from God. Ever since the Garden of Eden man has been hiding from God, trying to get away from God. And that situation has intensified, I believe, in recent years. Unless there is a heaven sent revival our days are numbered.

Revelation 11 tells us of another disaster when men will refuse to seek God. Revelation 11:1-11 reports on God’s two EARTHLY MESSENGERS.

I And there was given me a reed like unto a rod: and the angel stood, saying, Rise, and measure the temple of God, and the altar, and them that worship therein.

2 But the court which is without the temple leave out, and measure it not; for it is given unto the Gentiles: and the holy city shall they tread under foot forty and two months.

3 And I will give power unto my two witnesses, and they shall prophesy a thousand two hundred and threescore days, clothed in sackcloth.

4 These are the two olive trees, and the two candlesticks standing before the God of the earth.

5 And if any man will hurt them, fire proceedeth out of their mouth, and devoureth their enemies: and if any man will hurt them, he must in this manner be killed.

6 These have power to shut heaven, that it rain not in the days of their prophecy: and have power over waters to turn them to blood, and to smite the earth with all plagues, as often as they will.

7 And when they shall have finished their testimony, the beast that ascendeth out of the bottomless pit shall make war against them, and shall overcome them, and kill them.

8 And their dead bodies shall lie in the street of the great city, which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified.

9 And they of the people and kindreds and tongues and nations shall see their dead bodies three days and an half, and shall not suffer their dead bodies to be put in graves.

10 And they that dwell upon the earth shall rejoice over them, and make merry, and shall send gifts one to another; because these two prophets tormented them that dwelt on the earth.

11 And after three days and an half the Spirit of life from God entered into them, and they stood upon their feet; and great fear fell upon them which saw them.

12 And they heard a great voice from heaven saying unto them, Come up hither. And they ascended up to heaven in a cloud; and their enemies beheld them.

13 And the same hour was there a great earthquake, and the tenth part of the city fell, and in the earthquake were slain of men seven thousand: and the remnant were affrighted, and gave glory to the God of heaven.

14 The second woe is past; and, behold, the third woe cometh quickly.

While we may not clearly understand everything about these messengers, we will examine several remarkable PARTICULARS about them.

The first Particular; Their Authorization

Notice, the time has been set and the term of their services established; one thousand two hundred and sixty days. Divide that figure by thirty and you get 42 months, or three and a half years. Their term of service is clearly established by the Lord.

The fact that they are clothed in sackcloth has a particular significance. Sackcloth in the Bible always represents repentance and contrition of heart. They will wear sackcloth as a model trying to call people to repentance.

Their authorization is certainly from God. They are said to be before the God of the earth. And their authorization includes the security they have. No one is able to do anything to them until their time is finished. If anyone tries to hurt them they are immediately killed; killed by the fire that proceeds out of their mouths. No one will be able to subdue them. They have been authorized by God and that cannot be set aside.

They also have power of judgment. They can shut heaven. They can turn water to blood. They can smite the earth with plagues as often as they will.

Moses was able to turn water to blood in Egypt at the time of the exodus. Elijah was able by prayer to shut the heaven so it could not rain for three and a half years. So some have identified these two witnesses as Moses and Elijah. The implications are quite clear, I think.

The second Particular; Their Assassination

We saw earlier that the time of their service was established, three and one half years, or 1,260 days. But when their testimony is finished, the beast of the bottomless pit is going to make war with them, and overcome them, and kill them. They will be assassinated by the beast out of the pit. And it will be in the place where our Lord was crucified. Can there be any question where that is? The Bible makes it clear that our Lord was crucified just outside the city wall of Jerusalem. Now that should tell us something about the conditions in the Middle East at that time. The beast out of the bottomless pit will have control of the Holy city.

But notice something else about the assassination: After they are killed their dead bodies were permitted to lie in the streets for three and a half days! The authorities did not even bother to bury them. The Bible says that the people and kindreds and tongues and nations shall see their dead bodies.

Thirty-five years ago people would have said that is utterly impossible. But not now. Our satellite TV transmission makes it possible. And we further notice that people on earth rejoiced over them and made merry. With the way this electronic technology is advancing these days we have a confirmation that the Bible is true, my friend.

Their assassination causes great joy around the world because they tormented those that dwell upon the earth. How did they torment them? By wearing sackcloth and trying to bring men and women to repentance. That's how they tormented them. They troubled their conscience. Conviction from God is very troubling and that is what these two earthly messengers were doing. Their assassination, I say, came when their term of service was finished and it was done by the beast out of the bottomless pit. And all people rejoiced over it.

The third Particular; Their Animation

After three days and a half, the spirit of life from God entered into them. Praise the Lord! The Lord is never out done by the wicked. He brought new life to His two earthly messengers after the three days and a half.

Notice what else happened: Great fear fell upon them who saw them. Imagine the dead bodies lying in the streets for three days and a half... all at once they stood up on their feet. No wonder great fear seized them. But there was also a great voice from heaven saying to them, "Come up here." And there was a great earthquake. Over seven thousand men were killed in that city by the earthquake. The animation vindicated that they were divine messengers, God's messengers to bring men to repentance.

Mankind must face God's judgment. Of this there can be no doubt. I want to tell you that it is far better to come to the Lord while there is opportunity.

Chapter Twenty-Seven **The Divine "Take Over"**

Governments that seem to be stable are suddenly overthrown these days. Unrest is everywhere. Will such conditions continue indefinitely? Perhaps as we look at it from the political standpoint it may well be that unrest will continue.

But looking at it from the Bible standpoint, we can say emphatically, "No, such conditions will not continue indefinitely. God is going to take over."

Bible expositors have always interpreted Genesis 9 as the beginning of human government. It happened after the flood. God said to Noah, "Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed." Conservative Bible expositors have looked upon that statement as inaugurating human government.

How well has man done during the centuries since the flood? In many instances not very well. Human government was intended to restrain violence. Before the flood, God characterized conditions like this: “the earth was filled with violence.” After the flood human government, I say, was intended to restrain violence. To the contrary, some leaders of government have employed violence in order to establish their position. They have killed thousands of innocent people.

The Bible predicts more outbreaks of violence as the age closes. Jesus predicted, “as it was in the days of Noah, so shall it be in the days of the coming of the Son of man.”

Revelation 11:15-19, THE DIVINE “TAKE OVER” of world governments by Jesus Christ follows the sounding of the seventh angel.

15 And the seventh angel sounded; and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever.

16 And the four and twenty elders, which sat before God on their seats, fell upon their faces, and worshipped God,

17 Saying, We give thee thanks, O Lord God Almighty, which art, and wast, and art to come; because thou hast taken to thee thy great power, and hast reigned.

18 And the nations were angry, and thy wrath is come, and the time of the dead, that they should be judged, and that thou shouldest give reward unto thy servants the prophets, and to the saints, and them that fear thy name, small and great; and shouldest destroy them which destroy the earth.

19 And the temple of God was opened in heaven, and there was seen in his temple the ark of his testament: and there were lightnings, and voices, and thunderings, and an earthquake, and great hail.

Here in the sounding of the seventh trumpet there are certain exact DETAILS.

The first Detail; The Explanation of Kingship

A certain time is identified; when the seventh angel sounds his trumpet. In Revelation 10:7 we read, “But in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he shall begin to sound, the mystery of God should be finished, as he hath declared to his servants the prophets.”

We must conclude that this is a future event when the explanation of the kingship will come. “The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ,” the announcement said.

This use of the verbal tense is explained by the grammarians as “the prophetic future,” though it is not the future tense. Future events in the Bible are many times stated as though they had already come to pass, so certain is the future when predicted by God.

Praise the Lord! Jesus refused cooperation with Satan when He was tempted before the beginning of His ministry. Satan told Jesus, “if you fall down and worship me I will give you all the kingdoms of the world.” The devil must know that one day Jesus is going to be Lord of Lords and King of Kings. But Jesus refused to cooperate with the devil and chose, as one expositor put it, war. That war is going on now and will continue until the end.

But the explanation of the kingdom is that He will take over and of His kingdom there will be no end. We cannot say that the kingdom is now. For this explanation of the kingship says that in the days of the seventh angel it will come. The King is still absent now. But the explanation makes it clear that there will be a divine “take-over.”

The second Detail; The Experience of Worship

Here again are the 24 elders sitting on their thrones before God. Earlier, in chapter 4, we discovered they were sitting around the throne of God, they were clothed in white raiment and had on their heads crowns of gold.

Now they prostrate themselves in worship before God and worship Him for His sovereignty. In Revelation 5 they worship the Lamb for their redemption. Here they worship God for His sovereignty. At last He takes over, takes over the kingdoms of this world in power and majesty.

Notice too that He is the eternal One; “O Lord God Almighty, who art, and wast, and art to come.” The eternal One is going to take over.

The remaining clause in verse 17 reads, “because thou hast taken to thee thy great power, and hast reigned.” Again the Bible makes the future so completely certain by casting it in the past tense.

We can be totally confident that God will take over when the time comes. And these four and twenty elders, representatives of the redeemed, worship before God and acclaim His power and majesty.

The third Detail; The Expression of Judgment

These twenty four elders continue bringing acclamation to God by referring to the time when the wicked are to be punished in these words, “And the time of the dead, that they should be judged,....and that thou shouldest destroy them who destroyed the earth.”

There will come a time when the wicked will be called to account before the Judge of all the earth. These 24 elders say that the nations were angry. It is an echo of Psalm 2:1; “Why do the nations rage and the people imagine a vain thing?” Oh, there is one reason for that. The reason is, Satan has planted the idea of independence in the heart and mind of everybody. So the nations rage because they do not want to be controlled in any way by the divine “take-over.”

So the wicked must be punished, the dead must be judged, the destroyers of the earth must be destroyed. Here it is specifically stated that God is going to exercise His right of justice.

But not only will the wicked be punished, the saints will be rewarded. There are four different categories of persons who are going to be rewarded at this particular time: First are the servants, then the prophets, then the saints, and then them that fear the Name of God.

One of the details of the divine “take-over” is the expression of judgeship. Notice the last verse of our chapter, “The temple of God was opened in heaven, and there was seen in His temple the ark of the covenant.”

Here then are the details that will characterize the divine “take-over;” the explanation of the kingship, the experience of worship, and the expression of judgeship.

Chapter Twenty-Eight

The Divine Drama

One great fact we must affirm is God has designed history from the beginning to the end. History is not a series of happenings. History is a series of plannings. God has designed how human history shall run. And the devil has planned how he will oppose God.

The second fact is God’s plan is being carried out through the centuries. Yes, my friend, God has never abandoned His original plan. He does not work by trial and error. He knows where He is going and is able to carry out His particular and original plan in spite of what Satan will do.

A third fact is God uses men and women, nations and angels, to develop His plan and bring it to a perfect finish. We are still in process, of course. But our Scripture text, Revelation 12:1-6, will help us to understand how God has laid out THE DIVINE DRAMA with the stage and the actors.

1 And there appeared a great wonder in heaven; a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars:

2 And she being with child cried, travailing in birth, and pained to be delivered.

3 And there appeared another wonder in heaven; and behold a great red dragon, having seven heads and ten horns, and seven crowns upon his heads.

4 And his tail drew the third part of the stars of heaven, and did cast them to the earth: and the dragon stood before the woman which was ready to be delivered, for to devour her child as soon as it was born.

5 And she brought forth a man child, who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron: and her child was caught up unto God, and to his throne.

6 And the woman fled into the wilderness, where she hath a place prepared of God, that they should feed her there a thousand two hundred and threescore days.

As this Divine Drama unfolds, three ACTORS appear on the world stage.

The first Actor;

The Strange Woman

There was a great wonder in heaven. The word “wonder” is the Greek word which is often translated “sign.” In fact, in John’s Gospel it is translated “miracle” 13 times. Here it is a sign to draw attention to the plan and purpose of God.

A great sign is this strange woman. Not exactly what one would expect in heaven. Look at this strange woman’s appearance. She is clothed with the sun and the moon is under her feet and upon her head a crown of 12 stars. It would seem to indicate to us that this woman has considerable prominence. It reminds us of the dream that Joseph had, as recorded in Genesis 37. He dreamed about the sun, moon, and 12 stars.

We learn further of this strange woman’s condition. She is with child, ready to be delivered. We ask, who is this strange woman clothed with the sun with a starry crown and the moon under her feet and ready to give birth to a child? The identity of this woman, it seems clear, is the nation of Israel. They were exalted by the word and purpose of God above all others to be a peculiar treasure unto Him.

There is a particular reason for this because the people of Israel were to bear the Messiah. This then is a sign in heaven. The choice of a people to be the bearers of the Messiah. This marks the divine drama; the first actor is the strange woman.

The second Actor; The Seven Headed Dragon

Again, a great wonder in heaven, another sign. The dragon is red. Notice he is an unusual dragon having seven heads and ten horns. And there are crowns upon his heads. This appears to be a travesty upon the role and purpose of Jesus Christ. The Bible says of Him that He is King of kings and Lord of lords.

Look at the influence which he bears. With his tail he drew a third part of the stars of heaven and cast them to the earth. In this particular context it seems quite clear that the stars are angels, especially from verse 9 where his angels were cast out with him. What a powerful influence the seven-headed dragon had that he was able to control one third of the angelic population.

This seven-headed dragon had a particular intention; to devour the child of the woman as soon as it was born. Consider what the Lord said to the serpent in the garden of Eden. He said that the seed of the woman would crush the serpent’s head. This great red dragon had the intention of devouring the child as soon as it was born. Consider, too, that when Jesus was born in Bethlehem, Herod sent out his soldiers to kill Him. They murdered all babies two years old and under who were in the area of Bethlehem.

Verse 9 gives the identity of this seven-headed dragon? The dragon is the devil. There can no longer be any question, the seven-headed dragon heads up the demonic defiance. He is the second Actor.

The third Actor; The Certain Male Child

The woman brought forth the male child. The time came when He was born. Galatians 4:4,5 makes it clear, "...When the fullness of time was come, God sent forth His Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law."

In the divine drama there was a time when the male child was born. He was to rule all nations with a rod of iron. The Psalmist in 2:8 picked up that idea. He said He is going to rule the nations with a rod of iron and dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel.

Why then would the red dragon want to devour the male child as soon as he was born? Because here was the rightful ruler of the nations. His plan to kill the child was wrecked, her child was caught up unto God and to His throne.

The woman fled into the wilderness where she has a place prepared by God where she will be for 1,260 days. Now it is plain that the certain male child is the Messiah so identified with His calling. This surely marks divine determination. The Divine Drama was designed without flaw, and the Certain Male Child is the third Actor.

Thus, the principal actors in the divine drama are: the woman, the dragon, and the child. The outcome will mean that the victor takes all. We can be assured God has planned our redemption and Israel's preservation to bring it all to a perfect finish.

Chapter Twenty-Nine The Satanic Plot

The conflict between good and evil is intensifying daily. Oh yes. Satan has a deceptive plot he is working at. Too many people seem unaware of what is really going on and what it will all lead to.

To clarify this for you I refer to a paperback I obtained. On the outside back cover I read these words.. "What in the World is Happening?" The answer may shock you. A drama so intense that the entire universe will feel its power is unfolding.

So many predictions about the end of the world have proved false that even Christians are affected by a what-difference-does-it-make attitude. But someday while people are saying, "peace and safety," destruction will come upon them suddenly. Beyond a shadow of doubt, centuries-old prophecies are today's headlines.

In this study John recorded what he saw as the conflict between good and evil took another leap. He saw a war in heaven. Satan will be cast out to the earth. The earth then will become a horrible place. The inhabitants of earth will then learn what it means to be a servant of Satan.

In Revelation 12:7-12 we learn of THE SATANIC PLOT.

7 And there was war in heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels,

8 And prevailed not; neither was their place found any more in heaven.

9 And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him.

10 And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night.

11 And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death.

12 Therefore rejoice, ye heavens, and ye that dwell in them. Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and of the sea! for the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time.

Here we see the magnitude of The Satanic Plot and the ACTUALITIES which develop.

A first Actuality;

Satan's Ghastly Defiance

He will try to unseat the Almighty. Can you imagine Satan's ghastly defiance to take his battle right into heaven? Almost 800 years before John saw this scene, Isaiah wrote, "For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north: I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High," Isaiah 14:13,14. Satan's ghastly defiance is to unseat the Almighty. Can you imagine, the creature, defying the Creator, God?

There he faces Michael, the archangel; the prince he is called. Michael matches his strength with the dragon. Satan has his infernal plot ready when the time comes. It's almost impossible to believe that a creature angel would in such a ghastly way defy the Creator, God. But he will. His object is to unseat the Almighty.

A second actuality; Satan's Gigantic Defeat

Praise the Lord! Michael, the archangel, was able to defeat him because there was no place found any more in heaven for Satan. The Bible tells us that he was cast out into the earth. This is a severe personal blow. The deceiver "Who deceiveth the whole world," is completely overcome by Michael and his angels. Praise the Lord!

This prince of angels overcame the prince of darkness and cast him and his angels to the earth. One third of the angelic population was cast out with him. Verse 4 says the dragon drew the third part of the stars of heaven and cast them to earth. He certainly was powerful, but this gigantic defeat gave him that personal blow.

In addition, there will be permanent restraint. Listen to the great voice from heaven. "Now is come salvation and strength and the kingdom of our God and the power of his Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, who accused them before our God day and night." Hallelujah!

Finally salvation will be completely cleared. No longer from this time on will the accuser have any access to accuse us before God. There will be permanent restraint by the power of Christ, because the accuser has been cast down. What a joy! His infernal plot was foiled by his gigantic defeat by Michael and his angels. Praise the Lord!

A third Actuality; Satan's Grim Determination

Even after he is cast down from heaven he does not give up. But, the Scripture tells us here, "they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony." That's what I call God's gracious protection. It is the object Satan despises. But that precious blood of Jesus shed on Calvary's tree is God's gracious protection.

If you are a believer, you can claim, by the authority of the Word of God, the blood of the Lamb as your protection. But there can be no self-protection. "They loved not their lives unto the death." That's a martyr's commitment. God's gracious protection is the blood of the Lamb, the word of their testimony, and the fact that they loved not their lives unto death. There's joy among heaven's citizens by this great fact that Satan is cast out.

But He has obstinate purpose, he knows no defeat. A warning is pronounced to those who are earth dwellers, "Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and of the sea!" Denied access to heaven, he is going to

double his energy and carry on his purposes here with obstinacy. His purpose is to wreck God's plan in every possible way.

No longer will he be permitted to roam at will. He will be confined to the earth. And he has great wrath because he knows his time is short. When Satan will be confined to earth, conditions will get worse fast. He has a grim determination to carry out his infernal plot, even though he suffered a gigantic defeat. He plans to be successful.

After considering Satan's plot, no sane person would want to have any part with him. Our text discloses the actualities of that plot: Satan's ghastly defiance, his gigantic defeat and yet his grim determination to keep on.

Chapter Thirty

Can Israel Survive?

Looking at the Middle East today we wonder, how will peace ever come to this troubled land? Just to remind you again that from the days of Abraham, the first Jew, his offspring have had survival problems. They went through famine, slavery, and exile. Several attempts have been made to exterminate them. In Ancient history it was Pharaoh, the king of Egypt, who decreed to destroy all the boy babies, and thus bring the population to stagnation and eventually they would all die off. It was Haman who planned to exterminate all the Jews in the Persian Empire. Then it was Hitler in Germany who had determined to exterminate all the Jews and succeeded up to the point of 6,000,000, about 1/3 of the Jews in the world.

Even today certain people vow the Jews extermination. According to Biblical prophecy, Revelation 12:12-17, there will be yet another attempt directed by the devil to exterminate the Jewish people. CAN ISRAEL SURVIVE?

12 Therefore rejoice, ye heavens, and ye that dwell in them. Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and of the sea! for the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time.

13 And when the dragon saw that he was cast unto the earth, he persecuted the woman which brought forth the man child.

14 And to the woman were given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness, into her place, where she is nourished for a time, and times, and half a time, from the face of the serpent.

15 And the serpent cast out of his mouth water as a flood after the woman, that he might cause her to be carried away of the flood.

16 And the earth helped the woman, and the earth opened her mouth, and swallowed up the flood which the dragon cast out of his mouth.

17 And the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ.

Observe the supernatural FORCES which interact to determine whether or not Israel can survive.

The first Force;

Her Demonic Persecutor

The dragon has a demonic madness that is intensified because of the brevity of time. He has great wrath because he knows his time is short. He embarks on a program of persecution directed against the woman who bore the male child.

In the earlier part of this chapter, I indicated to you from the Bible that the woman in this chapter refers to Israel. She was the bearer of the Messiah, the male child, who was caught up to God in heaven. The dragon has uncontrolled madness to persecute the woman who bore the child.

When his efforts to kill the child are frustrated, verse 17 tells us that he begins a ruthless persecution of the remnant of her seed. “He was angry with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed.” The Jews have traveled in many countries of the world, and everywhere they have gone, he has followed up his demonic plan. They have been persecuted more consistently and severely than any other ethnic group in the world.

Reference is made here to a specific time: after the devil has been cast out of heaven. He will be furious to eliminate them. The woman, Israel, has a demonic persecutor.

The second Force; Her Earthly Protector

The devil, the serpent, has a method which he intends to use, which has been predicted that he will use. I find it in verse 15, “The serpent cast out of his mouth water like a flood after the woman, that he might cause her to be carried away by the flood.”

The topography of the Holy Land would easily provide such an opportunity. It need not surprise us that the dragon will employ such a method. But I want you to notice that the earth cooperated with the woman, and opened her mouth and swallowed up the flood which the dragon cast out of his mouth.

Now, that’s not impossible either. I know what the topography looks like. I know how easy it would be for a flood to race down through those valleys. And I know, too, how some subterranean passage could very easily open itself up and all the water disappear.

The Bible tells us of different occasions before when the earth cooperated. For example, on their way from Egypt to Canaan when the Israelites were in the Sinai Desert, the earth opened her mouth and swallowed up some false prophets, according to the record.

O yes, the woman has an earthly protector. The earth opens and protects the woman from being drowned by the demonic persecutor who spews out a flood of water after her. There you have the interacting forces which determine whether or not Israel can survive.

The third Force; Her Heavenly Provider

I’d like to concentrate on verse 14. Notice, she is going to be airlifted. According to the Scripture she was given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness, into her place. A wilderness in the Bible is not a jungle. A wilderness is a place where nobody lives. Our text says the woman will be airlifted to that wilderness. It is her hiding place because it has been prepared for her. She will be nourished there for time, times and half a time. A wonderful provision has been made for her security and safety.

We learned earlier in chapter 12 that this place in the wilderness had been prepared by the Lord. There she will be fed for 1,260 days. Bible expositors have understood time, times, and half a time to mean 3½ years. That equals 1,260 days. Beautiful, isn’t it, how God is her heavenly provider?

There is a place hidden away in the wilderness. It is called Petra. Some Bible expositors sincerely believe that this is God’s hiding place. It is only visible from the air. Driving along the highway you would never know that this place exists. Here, her heavenly provider tucks her away from the onslaught of her demonic persecutor in this place for three and one half years.

Say, this is wonderful! Can Israel survive? Without God, no. But, with God, yes. Why is Satan so determined to exterminate the Jews? Because they are the earthly link to the Almighty by the very promises that God has made regarding His people.

These supernatural forces interact in the survival of Israel: the demonic persecutor, the earthly protector, and the heavenly provider.

Chapter Thirty-One

Satan's Hand-Picked Man

To give us some background for this message, SATAN'S HAND-PICKED MAN, go with me to Satan's deceptive approach to Eve in Eden. By his subtlety he overcame her better knowledge and she ate of the forbidden fruit. The result of that act of disobedience has affected you and me and all the human family from that early day to this.

In Genesis 3:15 God referred to the serpent's seed when He pronounced that curse upon him. He said. "I will put enmity between thee and the woman and between thy seed and her seed." Can it be that Satan will be able to incarnate himself in human flesh and deceive the world? Is it possible that he in going to be able to counterfeit the incarnation of Jesus Christ?

I turned to the Encyclopedia Judaica to see what the Jews have to say about the anti-christ. It was an enlightening discussion. I find that the sages of Jewish history spoke about the rise of the anti-christ. In fact, that article points out clearly that the thought of a wicked king in the last generation is Jewish in background. Well, all the prophets of the Old Testament were Jewish, and some of them referred to it, for example, Ezekiel and Daniel.

Now, we must think together about Satan's hand-picked man. When it comes to Revelation 13:1-10, and other Scripture texts that deal with the rise of this person, over-zealous interpreters of the past and the present have tried to match men with God's prediction of Satan's hand-picked man. So far they have all been wrong.

I caution us to be careful and Scriptural when we read God's Word, and not to force the hand of God in what we think ought to be the fulfillment of these predictions.

Read and notice how the Bible describes SATAN'S HAND-PICKED MAN in Revelation 13:1-10.

1 And I stood upon the sand of the sea, and saw a beast rise up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and upon his horns ten crowns, and upon his heads the name of blasphemy.

2 And the beast which I saw was like unto a leopard, and his feet were as the feet of a bear, and his mouth as the mouth of a lion: and the dragon gave him his power, and his seat, and great authority.

3 And I saw one of his heads as it were wounded to death; and his deadly wound was healed: and all the world wondered after the beast.

4 And they worshipped the dragon which gave power unto the beast: and they worshipped the beast, saying, Who is like unto the beast? who is able to make war with him?

5 And there was given unto him a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies; and power was given unto him to continue forty and two months.

6 And he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme his name, and his tabernacle, and them that dwell in heaven.

7 And it was given unto him to make war with the saints, and to overcome them: and power was given him over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations.

8 And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.

9 If any man have an ear, let him hear.

10 He that leadeth into captivity shall go into captivity: he that killeth with the sword must be killed with the sword. Here is the patience and the faith of the saints.

In the text we can identify the unmistakable INDICATORS of Satan's hand-picked man.

The first Indicator; The Source of the Hand-Picked Man's Authority

He is seen as the beast which emerged out of the sea. He has a formidable appearance: seven heads and ten horns. He has crowns on his horns and on his head the name of blasphemy. And we learned in chapter 12 that he appeared like a great red dragon, the great wonder in heaven.

Satan desires to take God's place. He has planned that the beast will assume the place of Jesus, the Son. So the beast has the characteristics of the dragon, seven heads and ten horns. Consequently, anyone who sees the beast sees the dragon. This is a mockery of the words of Jesus to Philip, "he that hath seen me hath seen the Father," John 14:9.

Note in verse 2 that he has a very strange composition. He is made up of a leopard, a bear and a lion. These are all fighting animals. In other Scriptures animals in visions refer to nations. Here is a combination of several.

And he has a patron, the dragon. The dragon gave him his power and his throne and great authority. The devil will give him his authority. Remember, this scene is on earth, because chapter 12 informed us that the devil was cast out of heaven and he had come down upon the earth.

Here is a man who will be heading a world government. He is going to receive his authority, his power, his throne, from the dragon. At one time Satan offered this to the Lord Jesus in a temptation. But Jesus refused it. At last, Satan will find the man he wants and who will receive his authority from the devil. Here is Satan's hand-picked man authorized by Satan to head an empire and to oppose God.

The second Indicator; The Sway of the Hand-Picked Man's Popularity

We may understand the beast to be both a person and a system. Verse 3 tells us one of his heads had been wounded as it were to death, and the deadly wound was healed. This revival will be a travesty on the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Slain, now healed. Dead, now alive. At least it will appear to be so.

Some expositors point out that the true character of the Roman empire at the time of the Apostle John never actually died. It only appeared to die. But if there were a revival of that empire, it would appear to have been resurrected. Is the European Union a beginning of the revival of the Roman Empire? It is something to consider. At any rate, the beast has been revived.

And there is also his renown. The last clause in verse 3 tells us that all the world wondered after the beast. They worshipped the beast, and they worshipped the dragon who gave power unto the beast. Here is a claim to deity. That is not new among dictators, or emperors. In the time of the Apostle John it was quite common that the emperors of the Roman Empire claimed deity.

He also will have great speaking ability because he will be given a mouth to speak great words and blasphemies. And his reign will last for 42 months. That is interesting, because we learned in chapter 12 that the woman is going to be hidden for 42 months.

Notice the sway of Satan's hand-picked man; his popularity. The world will ask two great questions: "Who is like the beast? Who is able to make war with him?" Here is a man whose popularity is inspired by Satan. Observe the loyalty and worship of people everywhere.

The third Indicator; The Scope of the Hand-Picked Man's Hostility

The Bible clearly points out to us in other texts that the devil's chief aim is to pull God down from His position. That's how he started out in the Garden of Eden to bring insult against God and His name. And the Beast "opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme His name, and His tabernacle, and them that dwell in heaven." The scope of his hostility is his direct assault upon God and everything that is sacred and holy.

From verse 7 we know that he is going to make war with the saints and overcome them. The scope of his hostility will be a direct assault upon God by an attack upon the saints. His will be a world empire with only this exception, those written in the Lamb's book of life.

Well, praise the Lord! There is a possibility of escaping from Satan's Hand-Picked Man. Three unmistakable indicators; the source of his authority, the devil; the sway of his popularity, worldwide; and the scope of his hostility, God and saints.

Chapter Thirty-Two

Satan's Minister of Internal Affairs

Oh, our times are calling for people of dedication. However, the object of dedication is of utmost importance. There are smooth-tongued orators who can persuade easily swayed people. Have you ever been taken in by such a person? Well, let me tell you SATAN'S MINISTER OF INTERNAL AFFAIRS will be such a person. There is a clear Scripture informing us of that man who is coming.

When God created Adam He told him that he was to have dominion of the sea, the air and the land. He said, the fish of the sea, the fowl of the air and the animals of the land. Adam missed it by a trick the devil pulled on him. And Jesus refused it when Satan tempted Him to bow down and worship him. The time will come when Satan will find his man and put together a support minister to try to fulfill his fiendish ambition to take God's place.

When you study closely the movement of the devil as recorded in the Bible, and when you survey what is happening in the world today, you will agree with me, I'm sure, that in every way Satan is aiming to take God's place as the Almighty. Without a doubt the Bible has revealed this to us. From the beginning of history he has aimed to wreck God's plan. He has meant to take God's place.

His final attempt will be when he brings together the triad of evil. It is his attempt to replace the trinity of God, the tri-unity of the Godhead. There will be three very important functional persons, in this triad. In Revelation 13 we learn first of it as the dragon, the devil, gives his throne and authority to the beast, his hand-picked man. In this message we learn of Satan's minister of internal affairs. The three are made up like this: Satan, the beast, and the false prophet in Revelation 13:11-18.

11 And I beheld another beast coming up out of the earth; and he had two horns like a lamb, and he spake as a dragon.

12 And he exerciseth all the power of the first beast before him, and causeth the earth and them which dwell therein to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed.

13 And he doeth great wonders, so that he maketh fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men,

14 And deceiveth them that dwell on the earth by the means of those miracles which he had power to do in the sight of the beast; saying to them that dwell on the earth, that they should make an image to the beast, which had the wound by a sword, and did live.

15 And he had power to give life unto the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak, and cause that as many as would not worship the image of the beast should be killed.

16 And he causeth all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads:

17 And that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name.

18 Here is wisdom. Let him that hath understanding count the number of the beast: for it is the number of a man; and his number is Six hundred threescore and six.

To consolidate the rule of the beast, he will carry out several well designed SCHEMES.

The first Scheme; He will Centralize The Power of Government

He will emerge out of the earth, and he will have two horns like a lamb and speak like a dragon. He will look docile. He will appear to be peaceful, but when his voice is heard, it will be vicious.

We noticed earlier in the chapter the first beast rose out of the sea. This second beast will be out of the earth. Let's keep in mind that the powerful celestial messenger of chapter 10 set his right foot on the sea and his left foot on the earth.

This beast out of the earth begins to centralize the power of government. He has all the power of the first beast before him. And the first beast got his power from the devil. There will be a change of operation, not a change of order. So the second beast will become the head of government. To accomplish the purposes assigned to him he will be what I have called the minister of internal affairs.

Observe two words in verse 12, "exercise" and "cause." That tells me that he is going to centralize power. No longer will it be possible to have the free exercise of government. From that time on it will be by his decree.

This is not at all impossible because certain countries in the world have already experienced the centralization of government. This will be his first scheme.

The second Scheme; He will Legalize the Practice of Religion

He will go about it in a very interesting way. First he will do it by deception. The text says that he will make fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men. His wonders may be real, but the purpose is to deceive people.

In the time of Ahab, Elijah the Prophet brought everybody together on Mt. Carmel. The people agreed that the God who answers by fire shall be God. The prophets of Baal tried all day but got no response. Elijah prayed a very simple prayer and God answered with a fire that burned up the sacrifice and licked up the water and the dust. You see how important this deceptive miracle will be?

And he will convince the people to make an image to the beast that had a wound by a sword and did live. So, they do. He will have power to give life to the image of the beast; at least it appears the image of the beast has life.

We now have computers that can respond by voice. It will not be difficult for this minister of internal affairs to make it appear as though the image is alive. First, he will legalize the practice of religion by deception, and then by creating this image, and then by decree.

Notice the last part of verse 15, "and as many as would not worship the image of the beast should be killed." An interesting progression; legalizing the practice of religion by deception, by making the image appear to live, and then by decreeing that everybody who does not worship will be killed. No longer will there be a free exercise of religion. He will legalize the practice of religion and everybody will be expected to do what he says!

This third Scheme; He will Nationalize The Process of Business

Very gently and unsuspectingly he will cause all people to receive a mark in the right hand or in the forehead, probably with the idea of convenience. The mark will most likely be visible only with the right kind of equipment.

By mandate he will nationalize the process of business. Once everyone has been so conveniently identified, the decree goes out, "No man can buy or sell except he have the mark or the name of the beast or the number of his name." Very simple. Once he has so centralized government, he can nationalize the business process by simply stating that nobody will be able to either buy or sell without this kind of identification. Those who refuse the mark will soon be identified. So there will no longer be the free exercise of business.

Satan's Minister of Internal Affairs will so nationalize the process of business that there will be no free exercise at all. It will be completely controlled. Satan's Minister of Internal Affairs will carry out these well-designed schemes according to the Biblical record to accomplish complete allegiance to the Beast, incarnate Satan, who gives to that beast power and authority and a throne.

The minister of internal affairs will centralize the power of government, he will legalize the practice of religion, and he will nationalize the process of business. Trends today are pointing that way.

Chapter Thirty-Three

Heaven's Peculiar Minority

I know that every true believer in every age has been looking for the return of Jesus for His church. But everybody is not going to heaven. Not everybody who says, "Lord, Lord," is going to heaven. It is therefore, important for us to make sure we are on the right track. Of this we can be confident that God is no respecter of persons. But everyone everywhere who truly and sincerely calls upon God can be saved.

Now we join John to look at HEAVEN'S PECULIAR MINORITY in Revelation 14:1-5.

1 And I looked, and, lo, a Lamb stood on the mount Sion, and with him an hundred forty and four thousand, having his Father's name written in their foreheads.

2 And I heard a voice from heaven, as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of a great thunder: and I heard the voice of harpers harping with their harps:

3 And they sung as it were a new song before the throne, and before the four beasts, and the elders: and no man could learn that song but the hundred and forty and four thousand, which were redeemed from the earth.

4 These are they which were not defiled with women; for they are virgins. These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth. These were redeemed from among men, being the firstfruits unto God and to the Lamb.

5 And in their mouth was found no guile: for they are without fault before the throne of God.

We should carefully examine their several distinguishing MARKS so we know who they are.

The first Mark; Their Noteworthy Selection

Did you notice that they are numbered: 144,000? We learned earlier in our study, from Revelation 7:4, that out of the 12 tribes of Israel, 12,000 will be sealed from each tribe, making a total of 144,000.

Before John explains this detail in chapter seven, he sees an angel ascending from the east having the seal of the living God, and he was to seal the servants of God in their foreheads with the seal of the ever living God. This is the first picture of 144,000.

Note in Revelation 14:1 that the 144,000 were with the lamb on Mount Zion. Notice the association they had. They were with the Lamb, the Lamb of God, of course.

They also had a certain identification; the Lamb's Father's name written in their foreheads. Now in Revelation 7 it says that they were sealed in their foreheads with the seal of God. And apparently that was the identification of the Father's name on their foreheads.

Remember from the last month's message the beast out of the earth is going to require all his followers to be sealed with the mark of the beast, either in the right hand or in the forehead. What a counterfeit. The beast is going to try to do exactly what God said He is going to do with the 144,000. Here we have, then, heaven's peculiar minority marked by noteworthy selection, 144,000 associated with the Lamb, identified by the Father's name in their foreheads.

The second Mark; Their Redemption Song

Listen to the accompaniment. There is a great voice from heaven. It has three parts to it: the sound of many waters, and the voice of great thunder, and the sound of harpers harping their harps.

Then they perform the recital. Now watch, who is the audience? They sing a new song before the throne of God, and before the four living creatures, and the elders. So the four living creatures and the elders do not participate. The recital is performed in the presence of God, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders.

This peculiar minority is going to give a recital composed of a new song. We do not know what that song is because there is a restriction to it. Nobody can learn that song except the 144,000 who are redeemed from the earth. It must be a great song of redemption, because they are with the Lamb and they have their Father's name in their foreheads. It is a redemption song because they bring praise and honor and glory and majesty to the Lamb.

The third Mark; Their Personal Specialties

They have certain specialties. First they are undefiled sexually; they are virgins; 144,000 men who have had no relationships with women.

In addition, they are totally dedicated to the Lamb. They follow the Lamb wherever He goes.

Their third specialty is that they are definitely redeemed. The Bible says here, "These were redeemed from among men, being the firstfruits unto God and to the Lamb." They have been rescued from the hand of Satan and brought into the presence and fellowship of Jesus.

And they are completely faultless. In their mouth was found no guile, and they are without fault before the throne of God. That means that anything they have ever committed has been taken care of by the blood of Jesus. So no justifiable argument can be laid against them. They are absolutely, completely faultless before God. They are blameless. Praise the Lord! This is their personal specialty.

They have four specialties: sexually undefiled, totally dedicated, definitely redeemed, completely faultless. The 144,000 are marked by their personal specialties as heaven's peculiar minority, distinct, separate.

We see from this how God deals with each according to His purpose and according to His glory. This in no way bars anyone else. It rather points out to us that this minority group, 144,000, carry certain distinguishing marks: their noteworthy selection, companions with the Lamb and confirmed by the seal of their Father's name in their foreheads; by their redemption song which they sing before the throne and nobody can learn it but they; and their personal specialties so beautifully outlined here for us. This is Heaven's Peculiar Minority.

Chapter Thirty-Four Angelic Pronouncements

Through the years the church has been the holder and proclaimer of the truth of the Gospel. I believe that today we need to return to the central fact of salvation and the message of the church, the message the Saviour left in our hands to proclaim.

Through the centuries of time God has used angels to bring His messages to mankind. Revelation 14:6-13, ANGELIC PRONOUNCEMENTS, is such a report.

6 And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people,

7 Saying with a loud voice, Fear God, and give glory to him; for the hour of his judgment is come: and worship him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters.

8 And there followed another angel, saying, Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city, because she made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication.

9 And the third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand,

10 The same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb:

11 And the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever: and they have no rest day nor night, who worship the beast and his image, and whosoever receiveth the mark of his name.

12 Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus.

13 And I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them.

In brief but bold sketches the angelic messenger brings awful PRONOUNCEMENTS, solemn warnings of what is coming.

The first Pronouncement; The Call For Judgment

Before Jesus ascended to glory, He put the great commission into the hands of the disciples. As we trace the history of these predictive passages in the book of Revelation, chapter 11 records the two witnesses whose mission and ministry were unstoppable UNTIL the beast from the bottomless pit overcame them. Then, he took charge.

From time to time the devil has thought he had things under his control. He did not know God had other plans. So here, the call for judgment comes from the heavenly messenger, the angel flying through the midst of heaven.

See how far that judgment extends. "Every nation, tongue, and people." That is a universal message. The Gospel is proclaimed from the mouth of every nation, kindred, tongue and people.

Observe the content of the message. "Give glory to Him for the hour of His judgment is come: and worship Him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters." The appeal is made to God as Creator. That is a fact that everyone must realize.

In Revelation 4:11 when the four and twenty elders fall down and cast their crowns before the throne, they say, "Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honor and power, for thou hast created all things and for thy pleasure they are and were created."

Apostasy begins with the denial of the Creator. The call for judgment comes upon men who have denied God His rightful place. The second Pronouncement;

The Citadel of Judgment

The doom is certain. Babylon is fallen. Here again the verb tense is stated as though the fact had already come to pass. That is how sure God can be when He makes a pronouncement of the future. He can write it down as having already been accomplished.

Notice that the city is named, Babylon. Most Bible expositors of the book of Revelation see Babylon to have a symbolic reference to another city on the Tiber, Rome, as contrasted with Babylon on the Euphrates.

But the conclusion is clear because she made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication. The anti-christ's appeal was for total allegiance. In Revelation 13 we saw almost total rebellion against

God. Babylon will come up before God for judgment, because she led the world in rebellion and spiritual fornication.

The third Pronouncement; The Citizens of Judgment

Because there seems to be no other way to get to mankind, the angel follows with a loud voice warning those who may be inclined to worship the beast and his image and receive his mark. That is what I call the unthinkable option. Worship the beast? Worship the dragon who gave power to the beast? The unthinkable option.

And then the unavoidable object. The wrath of God must fall on those who will do such an unthinkable act. "The same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, and will be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and of the lamb." This cannot be avoided. All who take this step will find themselves in this unavoidable position.

And there will be an unending anguish. Notice verse 11, "they have no rest day or night, who worship the beast and his image, and whosoever receiveth the mark of his name." What remorse! In the presence of the holy angels and of the One whom they might have received and through whom they could have avoided this awful end. Oh, but the devil has such subtle ways. He never shows his victims their end. But God has been gracious to reveal the end to us.

The fourth Pronouncement; The Consolation in Judgment

Here is heavenly comfort. Bless God. In the presence of the Lord there is eternal rest. What a contrast to those who have no rest.

Oh, listen to this beatitude found right here in Revelation 14:13, "Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: yea, saith the spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them." Praise the Lord! There is consolation in judgment for those who are sincere, for those who will remain true until the end. This is heaven's comfort.

To be in the Lord's presence will be eternal rest.

Chapter Thirty-Five EARTH HARVEST

Sometimes, to us, it may seem that evil will take over. The Bible predicts a terrible rise of evil, but God will not be defeated. He is above all the Holy Sovereign God. He will bring about His purposes.

Several great questions are facing us that we seek answers for, but often are unable to come up with satisfactory answers. The first question is, will evil triumph? Will evil triumph? When you see the mounting tide of wickedness, the question is not out of order.

We know that God will never, never relinquish His right of justice. As the Sovereign, Holy God He has determined a reckoning day. That day is coming.

Only the Bible has the answer for us today. In Revelation 14:14-20, EARTH HARVEST, you will find the answer.

14 And I looked, and behold a white cloud, and upon the cloud one sat like unto the Son of man, having on his head a golden crown, and in his hand a sharp sickle.

15 And another angel came out of the temple, crying with a loud voice to him that sat on the cloud, Thrust in thy sickle, and reap: for the time is come for thee to reap; for the harvest of the earth is ripe.

16 And he that sat on the cloud thrust in his sickle on the earth; and the earth was reaped.

17 And another angel came out of the temple which is in heaven, he also having a sharp sickle.

18 And another angel came out from the altar, which had power over fire; and cried with a loud cry to him that had the sharp sickle, saying, Thrust in thy sharp sickle, and gather the clusters of the vine of the earth; for her grapes are fully ripe.

19 And the angel thrust in his sickle into the earth, and gathered the vine of the earth, and cast it into the great winepress of the wrath of God.

20 And the winepress was trodden without the city, and blood came out of the winepress, even unto the horse bridles, by the space of a thousand and six hundred furlongs.

This text provides a vantage point from which we view the precise DEVELOPMENTS of Earth Harvest.

The first Development; The Vision of the Son

There is the cloud. The seer looked and he saw a white cloud; a sign of deity. The presence of the Lord came down in a shekinah glory cloud at the time of Moses. And when Jesus went to glory, a cloud received Him out of the sight of the disciples. Jesus said He will come in power and great glory, with the clouds of heaven. The Apostle Paul informs us that when we are caught up to the Lord, we will meet the Lord in the clouds.

On that cloud was one like the Son of Man. In Revelation chapter 1 we are introduced to Him who is like the Son of Man. He is in the midst of seven golden candle sticks. He has in His right hand seven stars. He has no crown on His head, but His head and His hairs were white like wool, as white as snow and His eyes were like flames of fire.

In Revelation 14, He has a golden crown. Now leaf on to the 19th chapter of Revelation and verse 11, "I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war. His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on his head were many crowns." Yes, many crowns because then He will come as King of Kings and Lord of Lords.

In Revelation 14, He has one crown and in His hand a sharp sickle. When Jesus was here on earth He told the Jews that the Father has committed all judgment unto the Son. Here we see He is seated on a cloud and He has a sharp sickle in His hand. That is the vision of the Son.

The second Development; The Voice of the Angel

Another angel came out from the temple. We must relate this angel to the previous three angels in chapter 14. The last one was the one who announced the awfulness of the judgment upon those who receive the mark of the beast.

This was another angel who came out from the temple. He cried with a loud voice; "Thrust in thy sickle, and reap; for the time is come for thee to reap; for the harvest of the earth is ripe."

God can and will stop the rise of evil. He who sits upon the cloud with a sickle in His hand will be ordered to thrust in his sickle because the time will have come. Jesus Christ will do it. How will He do it? What is His method? "He that sat on the cloud thrust in his sickle on the earth; and the earth was reaped." He will do it, thrust in his sickle. We are not told how. We are not told how long. But the fact that He will is clear.

The third Development; The Vintage of the Grapes

Yet another angel came out of the temple in heaven, he also having a sharp sickle. This angel came directly from God's presence, and came with a sharp sickle.

"And another angel came out from the altar, which had power over the fire." The altar fire; this must be the brazen altar, the altar of sacrifice, the place where atoning sacrifices were offered and accepted. That angel came and "cried with a loud voice to him that had the sharp sickle, saying, thrust in thy sharp sickle, and gather the clusters of the vine of the earth; for her grapes are fully ripe." This is the grape harvest, the time has come when the vintage of the grapes is to be gathered. This is what we may call earth harvest.

Note the wine press of God's wrath, "The angel thrust in his sickle into the earth, and gathered the vine of the earth, and cast it into the great wine press of the wrath of God." What an awful picture! "For the wine press was trodden without the city, and blood came out of the wine press, even unto the horse bridles, by space of a thousand, and six hundred furlongs." The wine press is the wrath of an all-holy God. And that wine press is outside the city. What city? The Holy City.

Sixteen hundred furlongs, reduced to our measurements means 200 miles or 300 kilometers. Bloodshed bridle deep for 200 miles or 300 kilometers.

The Creator must vindicate His righteousness! The Creator must take His position as Sovereign God and administer justice. God can and will put down the rise of evil. Earth harvest is coming. God will arise to judge the world. Man so long in defiance must face the eternal Holy God. This is what we may call earth harvest. What an awesome day! What an awesome time!

Today there is time to avoid this awful experience that is surely coming. Make sure you have made your peace with God, through Jesus Christ our Saviour now.

Chapter Thirty-Six Heaven's Readiness

At times men have mistaken God's longsuffering to be His inability to deal with evil and evil men. Sometimes they wonder whether God really exists because the rise of evil is so prominent and prevalent everywhere.

We should learn from the book of Revelation that God's justice will come. We do not glory in the fact that men will suffer. We rejoice in this rather that the Holy God will put down evil, and He will triumph.

We live in the day of grace, a time when mankind can find pardon from sin. But Revelation 15:1-8 records HEAVEN'S READINESS for God's justice.

1 And I saw another sign in heaven, great and marvellous, seven angels having the seven last plagues; for in them is filled up the wrath of God.

2 And I saw as it were a sea of glass mingled with fire: and them that had gotten the victory over the beast, and over his image, and over his mark, and over the number of his name, stand on the sea of glass, having the harps of God.

3 And they sing the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, Great and marvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints.

4 Who shall not fear thee, O Lord, and glorify thy name? for thou only art holy: for all nations shall come and worship before thee; for thy judgments are made manifest.

5 And after that I looked, and, behold, the temple of the tabernacle of the testimony in heaven was opened:

6 And the seven angels came out of the temple, having the seven plagues, clothed in pure and white linen, and having their breasts girded with golden girdles.

7 And one of the four beasts gave unto the seven angels seven golden vials full of the wrath of God, who liveth for ever and ever.

8 And the temple was filled with smoke from the glory of God, and from his power; and no man was able to enter into the temple, till the seven plagues of the seven angels were fulfilled.

Through the eyes of the seer we look upon several significant SCENES as heaven gets ready for the final series of judgments.

The first Scene; The Sign in Heaven

The Apostle saw, “another sign in heaven great and marvellous.” It immediately caught his attention. It was an unusual scene.

There were “seven angels having seven last plagues.” I want you to notice that we are approaching the end, for these angels have the last seven plagues. In our study of the book of Revelation we have observed that there are three series of seven judgments, and now the seven last plagues. And the angels have authority to administer them.

The Scripture defines them in verse 1, “for in them is filled up the wrath of God.” The mercy of God has come to an end. Only wrath remains, and these seven angels administer the wrath of God. Because God is holy, He must act in justice. We are convinced that He will. So, there is the first scene, The Sign in Heaven.

The second Scene; The Song of Moses

John said, “I saw, as it were, a sea of glass mingled with fire, and those who had gotten the victory over the beast.” Try to imagine the setting of this song of Moses. Try to visualize what a sea of glass mingled with fire would look like.

And here were the singers of the song, the ones who had gotten victory over the beast and his mark and the number of his name. They overcame the beast “by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto death.”

Look at their song. “Great and marvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints. Who shall not fear thee, O Lord, and glorify thy name? for thou only art holy: for all nations shall come and worship before thee; for thy judgments are made manifest.”

There are three particulars about this song that I want you to notice. First, they praise God for His justice. They say, “just and true are thy ways.” Second, they praise His majesty, “Who shall not fear thee, O Lord, and glorify thy name?” Third, they praise His holiness, “For thou art holy.”

The last clause in verse 4 tells us all nations shall come and worship before Him. The singers magnify God for His justice, majesty and holiness. God’s actions deserve our praise. Especially when we see how He exercises absolute justice.

The third Scene; The Seven Angels of the Temple

These have been introduced to us in verse 1. But in the latter part of this chapter the Apostle said, “And after that I looked, and, behold, the temple of the tabernacle of the testimony in heaven was opened: And the seven angels came out of the temple.” They apparently emerge from the temple. They come, therefore, from the immediate presence of God. That may well be the reason why the song of Moses magnifies the Lord God Almighty.

They are clothed in pure white linen, and have golden girdles about their breasts. That will be a tremendous sight. No wonder the Apostle John said, “I saw another sign, great and marvellous.”

They have their appointment. “One of the four living creatures gave unto the seven angels seven golden bowls full of the wrath of God, who liveth for ever and ever.” I looked this up in the dictionary, the Greek language dictionary, to see what kind of bowls they might be. I found that they were rather shallow bowls.

They were the kind of bowls from which one could easily throw out the contents. But these bowls were filled with an awful material. They were filled with the wrath of God who lives for ever and ever.

While the angels emptied their bowls the glory of God was so intense that nobody could enter the temple until the seven plagues were fulfilled. Smoke from the glory of God filled the temple. The justice of God was being exercised without restraint.

From these three scenes we are assured God is ready to meet the devil’s rebellion. It will be an awful time, but out of it will come the complete vindication of God’s justice, majesty and holiness.

I believe those scenes of heaven's readiness are still ahead of us, my friend. Today there is still time to seek God's mercy. God's mercy has not yet come to an end. Praise the Lord!

Chapter Thirty-Seven Torments Of God's Wrath

Several times in history Satan has tried to set up his man to rule the world. When he tempted Jesus on that high mountain he said that he would give Him all the kingdoms of the world if He would fall down and worship him. His attempts have not been successful. I would say Hitler, Dictator of Germany in the 1940's, was such a man to whom and through whom Satan hoped to accomplish his purpose.

During the Nazi program special hate was vented on the Jews and on the church. Although Hitler failed, what he did should tell us to what length men will go to accomplish their demonically inspired ends.

According to the creation account God made this world as the dwelling place for His highest mortal creature--man. He formed the dry land, He gathered the sea, He caused the plants to grow, He stocked the ocean and rivers with fish, and the air was for the fowls and the animals on the land. To man He gave dominion rights. "Have dominion," God said.

Man's history has been sporadic. There have been the rise and fall of civilizations. And those ancient civilizations showed great feats of accomplishment, architecturally and, you might say, agriculturally. Modern technology has shown a mastery of the elements.

Radio beams is a marvelous fact. My voice travels to you at the rate of 186,000 miles per second.

But as the age closes, man has set himself against the Almighty to climax in the Beast Cult, as I call it. I believe we can see these event shaping up, even today.

God will not be ruled out. Notice carefully in Revelation 16:1-11 the **TORMENTS OF GOD'S WRATH**.

1 And I heard a great voice out of the temple saying to the seven angels, Go your ways, and pour out the vials of the wrath of God upon the earth.

2 And the first went, and poured out his vial upon the earth; and there fell a noisome and grievous sore upon the men which had the mark of the beast, and upon them which worshipped his image.

3 And the second angel poured out his vial upon the sea; and it became as the blood of a dead man: and every living soul died in the sea.

4 And the third angel poured out his vial upon the rivers and fountains of waters; and they became blood.

5 And I heard the angel of the waters say, Thou art righteous, O Lord, which art, and wast, and shalt be, because thou hast judged thus.

6 For they have shed the blood of saints and prophets, and thou hast given them blood to drink; for they are worthy.

7 And I heard another out of the altar say, Even so, Lord God Almighty, true and righteous are thy judgments.

8 And the fourth angel poured out his vial upon the sun; and power was given unto him to scorch men with fire.

9 And men were scorched with great heat, and blasphemed the name of God, which hath power over these plagues: and they repented not to give him glory.

10 And the fifth angel poured out his vial upon the seat of the beast; and his kingdom was full of darkness; and they gnawed their tongues for pain,

11 And blasphemed the God of heaven because of their pains and their sores, and repented not of their deeds.

As these angels pour out their bowls of judgment, certain OBJECTS come into focus as God's wrath turns upon rebellious mankind.

The first Object; The Earth

The first angel emptied his bowl upon the earth. The area God created for man and over which he was given dominion. The bowl of wrath poured upon the earth sought out those men who had taken the oath of allegiance to the beast. They had received his mark and worshiped his image. Upon them fell a "foul and painful boil." They broke out like the plagues of Egypt.

No Environmental Protection Agency will have control at that time. Indeed the wrath of God is in that bowl and it sought out these men who rebelled against God by following the beast out of the sea.

The second Object; The Sea

Remember that 4/5 of the earth's surface is water. It contains almost unimaginable quantities of minerals and protein. The Encyclopedia Britannica tells us man reaps 60 million tons of food from the ocean annually. With greater efficiency, they could yield 2 billion tons!

There are an estimated 1 trillion barrels of crude oil available from off-shore drilling. The sea contains 20 trillion tons of phosphate in the Pacific Ocean alone. And 1 1/2 trillion tons of manganese nodules. They are forming at the rate of 10 million tons per year. They contain copper, nickel, cobalt, and manganese. What untapped wealth!

When the wrath of God is poured out upon the sea, everything will stop. It will become like blood, the blood of a dead man. Every living soul will die.

The third Object; The Rivers and Waters

Fresh water is highly essential. Our technical industries require adequate supplies of fresh water. Rivers and fountains are being polluted by pesticides and herbicides, and fungicides. But that will be nothing, nothing compared to the pollution yet to come. The third angel pours out his bowl upon the rivers and fountains of water and they become blood. This source of life's existence completely stops.

But notice heaven's response. The seer said, "I heard the angel of the waters say, Thou art righteous, O Lord, which art, and wast, and shall be, because thou hast judged thus. For they have shed blood of saints and prophets, and thou hast given them blood to drink; for they are worthy." Another angel said, "Even so, Lord God Almighty, true and righteous are thy judgments." That third bowl of wrath sought out rivers and fountains of water.

The fourth Object; The Sun

The fourth angel poured out his bowl upon the sun. The Genesis record of creation tells us that the sun was created by a word from God. It was created and placed in the sky to sustain life. Scientists have catalogued as many as 59 elements in the sun, with hydrogen making up the bulk of the solar gas.

Were it not for the three filtering layers between us and the sun, the sun's rays would scorch everything. But the ionosphere, the stratosphere, and the atmosphere filter the sun's rays.

And then there are the solar flares on the sun. One flare of the sun releases enough energy to furnish electric power for the whole world for 1 million years!

I want you to observe that those who were subject to this great heat blasphemed the name of God, but they did not repent to give Him glory. The sun will scorch men but they refuse to repent.

The fifth Object; The Throne of the Beast

This is man's highest rebellion. The beast, according to Revelation 13 aspired to, and presumed to, take Christ's place. He thought he had everything under control. He had government, he had religion, he had economics in his hand. He thought he had everything under control.

But the first four bowls of wrath, the very elements upon which life depends for sustenance were made useless: the earth, the sea, the rivers and the waters, and the sun. With bowl five the wrath of God renders his kingdom totally powerless, for it is full of darkness. From intense heat to total darkness.

However they did not repent of their deeds. No repentance at all; still expecting to overcome God Almighty, believing somehow they will succeed; they hold out against Him. God's wrath is poured out to stop man's rebellion by striking at the very sources of existence: earth, sea, waters, and sun. The torments of God's wrath are awesome and totally unstoppable.

Chapter Thirty-Eight

The Great Day of God Almighty

The Bible affirms the END to human history in a worldwide revolt against God led by the devil. Undoubtedly we are seeing movements today preparing the way for thauniversal revolt.

Unbelief is subtly peddled today. Hope is placed in man's achievements. Admittedly some of those achievements are illustrious, but they are honeycombed with serious veins of doubt so that man begins to believe that given time and his limitless ingenuity, he will be able to conquer the world.

For more than 100 years theologians in the West have led this honey-combing of doubt by their attacks on the Bible. I speak not from hear-say, my friend. I have heard some of them, and I have read some of them. It is time that we Christians who profess to believe the Bible return to our faith and root it firmly in this great Book of God.

I believe the great apostasy is on the way. And unless we take a firm stand with God's book. We will be swept along with it.

Revelation 16:12-16 pictures THE GREAT DAY OF GOD ALMIGHTY.

12 And the sixth angel poured out his vial upon the great river Euphrates; and the water thereof was dried up, that the way of the kings of the east might be prepared.

13 And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs come out of the mouth of the dragon, and out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet.

14 For they are the spirits of devils, working miracles, which go forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty.

15 Behold, I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame.

16 And he gathered them together into a place called in the Hebrew tongue Armageddon.

To bring in the great day of God Almighty certain AREAS of preparation need to be completed.

The first Area; The Physical Preparation

The sixth bowl was poured out upon the river Euphrates. The river arises in the mountains of Turkey from two sources and has been a boundary between the east and the west for centuries. It is approximately 1600 miles long and varies from 300 to 1200 yards wide, and from 9 feet to 30 feet. deep. In ancient times it was a formidable barrier. Today it flows through Syria and Iraq to the Persian Gulf.

The Scripture tells us the time will come when the angel will pour out his bowl upon the river and the waters will be dried up. The reason is "that the way of the kings of the east might be prepared."

This will not be the first time that God stopped water, or dried up a river. When the children of Israel came out of the land of Egypt by the hand of Moses, God divided the Red Sea and they came across the

Red Sea on dry land. After they had wandered through the Sinai Desert for all those forty years, they came to the east side of the River of Jordan. And the Lord stopped the water of the Jordan River and Israel passed over on dry land.

The second Area; The Psychological Preparation

The Apostle John saw three unclean spirits like frogs come out of the mouths of the dragon, the beast, and the false prophet. This is striking, because here we have the demonic triad, the dragon, the beast, and the false prophet.

The dragon we have already identified from Revelation chapter 12 as the devil. And the beast we have identified in chapter 13 as Satan's man, and a system of government. The false prophet we've identified as Satan's minister of internal affairs. So here is the demonic or devilish triad.

The Apostle Paul writing in I Timothy 4:1 says "Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils."

There will be the psychological preparation. Other predictions indicate to us that there will be a brainwashing time: programming the mind, setting the mind against God, working miracles. And notice how widespread it will be, "the kings of the earth and of the whole world to gather them together to the battle of the great day of God Almighty."

The third Area; The Spiritual Preparation

Here comes a voice. It states, "Behold, I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame." This must be the voice of Jesus. He is warning those who are being pressured. It may be at this late hour that there will be a few who will have successfully resisted the encroachments of the beast and the false prophet, motivated as they are, by the devil.

There is a unequivocal call to watchfulness. Uncertainty demands vigilance. The Lord introduced His comment by saying, "I come as a thief." At another time when the Lord was here He said, "What I say unto you, I say unto all, watch." So the spiritual preparation is important, very important.

I am glad to tell you that those who are faithful and true to the Lord in this hour, this very hour, I sincerely believe will be called up to the Lord before this time I am describing from Revelation 16.

However, it is very important for us to get the fact here that this is also an area of preparation, a spiritual preparation.

The final Area; The Geographical Preparation

In verse 16 the subject of the sentence is "he." "And he gathered them together." Does this not refer to God Almighty?

God stages the battle and God chooses the place, Armageddon. I have been there many times, right there in the heart of the Valley of Megiddo. I have seen this place and I would agree with the great Napoleon when he said, "This is the perfect battlefield." Practically every time I have been there the guide said, "Here is the valley of which prediction says the last great battle will be fought, right here." Well, that is true. Armageddon, the place has been chosen by the Lord.

With these areas of preparation: the physical preparation, the psychological preparation, the spiritual preparation, and the geographical preparation, we must take to heart the Saviour's call. "Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame." I urge you, therefore, to take careful account of your standing with Him.

Chapter Thirty-Nine

The Last Bowl of Wrath

The Sovereign God has planned history, all of it, and He will carry it out according to His plan. On the other side, the devil from the beginning has aimed to take God's place and direct history to his end.

So we have these conflicting forces outside of our control, molding, shaping and directing history.

Before history's final closing there will come a world-wide revolt to be put down by the direct acts of God. I praise the Lord right now that He has not left us in the darkness about that time.

Revelation 16:17-21 describes when THE LAST BOWL OF WRATH will be poured out.

17 And the seventh angel poured out his vial into the air; and there came a great voice out of the temple of heaven, from the throne, saying, It is done.

18 And there were voices, and thunders, and lightnings; and there was a great earthquake, such as was not since men were upon the earth, so mighty an earthquake, and so great.

19 And the great city was divided into three parts, and the cities of the nations fell: and great Babylon came in remembrance before God, to give unto her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of his wrath.

20 And every island fled away, and the mountains were not found.

21 And there fell upon men a great hail out of heaven, every stone about the weight of a talent: and men blasphemed God because of the plague of the hail; for the plague thereof was exceeding great.

With the last bowl of wrath being poured out, several MANIFESTATIONS will be disclosed.

The first Manifestation; The Voice from Heaven

The seventh angel will pour out his vial into the air. Remember, the devil is the prince of the power of the air. I am especially impressed that the air is going to be affected when the seventh angel pours out his bowl. "Then came a great voice out of the temple of heaven, from the throne." Now who do you suppose spoke? God, of course.

He spoke with finality and said, "It is done." Perhaps more literally translated it would say, "It has come to pass." This will mark a significant point in history. This voice is not an angelic voice. It is the voice of God. With that voice from heaven came an earthquake with voices, thundering and lightnings.

Yes, God is going to shake the heavens and the earth and the sea and dry land. And when that great and mighty earthquake comes, that outpouring of the seventh bowl of wrath, there will be no Richter scale big enough to measure it.

This proves that God is in absolute control, for the voice from heaven comes from the temple, from the throne.

The second Manifestation; The Vengeance of Heaven

When that earthquake strikes, the great city will be divided into three parts. We may ask for the identity of the great city. While the name is not given in the text, we conclude it is Jerusalem. The Lord said by the Prophet Ezekiel that He had set Jerusalem in the midst of the nations round about. We assume that the great city that was divided into three parts will be Jerusalem.

Notice that the cities of the nations fell, all across the world. Such a shaking, such a traumatic movement of God's vengeance, that the cities of the nations fall.

And the great Babylon came up in remembrance before God. In Revelation 14:8 we learn that an angel will fly through the midst of heaven saying, "Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city, because she made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication." The vengeance from heaven will be measured out to Babylon, to give to her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of God's wrath.

Notice the change in topography, verse 20, "Every island fled away, and the mountains were not found." There will be topographical changes when God's vengeance is poured out on Babylon.

A third Manifestation; The Vindication of Heaven

Great hail fell upon men and every stone weighed about a talent. A talent varies from 25 pounds to 140 pounds. Let's use a figure of about 45 pounds. Hail stones of 45 pound weight crashing down on men everywhere.

In Constantinople, in the month of October 1831, there was an uncommon hail storm. I quote, "After an uncommonly sultry night, threatening clouds arose about six in the morning, and a noise, between thunder and tempest, and yet not to be compared to either, increased every moment, and the inhabitants of the capital, roused from their sleep, awaited with anxious expectation the issue of this threatening phenomenon. Their uncertainty was not of long duration; lumps of ice as large as a man's foot, falling singly, and then like a thick shower of stones, which destroyed everything with which they came in contact.

The dreadful storm passed over Constantinople, Therapia, Bojukden, and Belgrade; and the fairest, nay, the only hope of this beautiful and fertile tract, the vintage, just commenced, was destroyed in a day! Animals of all kinds, and even some persons, were killed, an innumerable number were wounded, and the damage done to the houses is incalculable. The force of the falling masses of ice was so great that they broke to atoms all the tiles on the roofs, and, like musket-balls, shattered planks."

But when this terrible hail storm comes with stones weighing 45 pounds each, what a devastating storm it will be. But it will not bring about great faith. No, rather great unbelief, because men blasphemed God! Helpless, yet rebellious. Those who pledged allegiance to the beast will have no hope.

These manifestations should convince any and all that God will not be unseated by all the demonic and human forces that may gather against Him. The last bowl of wrath will be poured out on that great day of God Almighty.

We should, therefore, seek His mercy while there is time and opportunity. May God move upon our hearts.

Chapter Forty

A Woman Drunk with Blood

We like to think of God's love and it is proper that we do, but we should also remember that God is just and He is holy. So being just and holy, He must deal with the sin of mankind. The Bible explains to us how He will do this.

In the beginning Adam needed a companion--and I use that word companion deliberately because Eve, his wife, was to be one who could be his helper, one suitable for him, to stand beside him, to be loved and to love. Woman has been important from that day on. She has the powers to challenge and she has the powers to corrupt.

In the Old Testament, Israel is referred to as the wife of Jehovah. However, in the prophets, Israel is often referred to as being an unfaithful wife. She is characterized as going after lovers who really could not help her.

In fact, the entire prophecy of Hosea is something of an allegory of God and Israel. Hosea's wife turned out to be a prostitute. She went after other lovers. And yet God told the prophet to go and buy her off the slave block and bring her back to himself.

Now, in the New Testament the church is referred to as the bride of Christ. Surely that symbolism should be a strong deterrent to the promiscuous wife swapping so prevalent today in our country.

In the Old Testament and the New Testament apostasy, a departure from God, is always viewed as adultery and seriously condemned.

Revelation 17:1-6 is a scene of outrageous dimensions, as we stand beside the Seer viewing the scene of A WOMAN DRUNK WITH BLOOD.

1 And there came one of the seven angels which had the seven vials, and talked with me, saying unto me, Come hither; I will shew unto thee the judgment of the great whore that sitteth upon many waters:

2 With whom the kings of the earth have committed fornication, and the inhabitants of the earth have been made drunk with the wine of her fornication.

3 So he carried me away in the spirit into the wilderness: and I saw a woman sit upon a scarlet coloured beast, full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns.

4 And the woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet colour, and decked with gold and precious stones and pearls, having a golden cup in her hand full of abominations and filthiness of her fornication:

5 And upon her forehead was a name written, MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH.

6 And I saw the woman drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus: and when I saw her, I wondered with great admiration.

In this text we note certain STAGES as the scene is developed.

The first Stage;

The Invitation from the Angel

The angel is one of the seven which had the seven bowls of wrath, the seven last plagues. The Apostle John had witnessed each one of them emptying the bowls they held when the time came.

The invitation from the angel is a special privilege to see the judgment of the great harlot. Harlotry, in the spiritual sense, is apostasy--departing from the living God, from true doctrine, departing from the Bible. John was invited to see the judgment of the harlot.

We learn that this great whore, "had committed fornication with the kings of the earth, and inhabitants of the earth had been made drunk with the wine of her fornication." She had a golden cup, the cup of her fornication, full of abomination. She had a seductive strategy, "drink of my cup," her fornication.

The harlot had been effective in making a compact to commit fornication. It appears to be an unholy union of the church and state. This interaction is forthrightly condemned by the Holy Scriptures. It is never, never right that the people of God forget their distinctive role and sit down with the ungodly. The invitation of the angel is to see this great seductive whore.

The second Stage; The Presentation of the Woman

The Apostle was carried into the wilderness where he saw this woman. She was "seated upon a scarlet colored beast full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns."

This is, indeed, a strange scene but not altogether unfamiliar in our study of the book of Revelation. In chapter 12, verse 3, we saw that there was a great wonder in heaven, a great red dragon having seven heads and ten horns.

This beast the woman sits on is a scarlet colored beast, too. And the beast is full of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns. In chapter 13 of Revelation a beast which rises out of the sea has seven heads and ten horns and upon his head the name of blasphemy.

I'm getting a connection here. The beast on which the woman sits must have some connection with the beast out of the sea and with the great red dragon in Revelation 12. In chapter 13 we learned that religion will be under the control of the government, because all who do not worship the beast will be killed. There is a connection between the great whore and the beast.

Notice how she was clothed, "in purple and scarlet colour, and decked with gold and precious stones and pearls." Nothing speaks more directly of royalty than the way she was clothed.

In Revelation 21 we have the Lamb's wife described. She also has precious stones and pearls and gold. It appears that the presentation of this woman is a mockery of the true bride of Christ.

In addition, "she has a golden cup in her hand full of abomination and filthiness of her fornication." A golden cup full. Those who partake with her are guilty of fornication.

Now all these, the purple, the scarlet, the gold, the precious stones and pearls and golden cup, are highly prized and highly priced. There you see the woman.

The Third Stage; The Consternation of the Seer

He saw a name on this woman's forehead. "MYSTERY, BABYLON the great, the mother of harlots and abomination of the earth."

When God sealed the 144,000 out of the twelve tribes of Israel, he gave them the seal of God in their foreheads. When the beast wanted to mark his people, he gave the sign either in the forehead or in the right hand. Here, the woman has this name on her forehead.

She is called the mother of harlots and abomination of the earth. Nothing is as revolting to God as hypocrisy and apostasy. And this woman is drunk with the blood of saints. It is such an awe inspiring scene that John wondered with great wonder when he saw it.

This awe inspiring scene should call loudly to each of us. There is flagrant harlotry abroad today. People pose as God's people but they flirt and fraternize with the devil's crowd. It is an abomination in the earth.

What John saw is evident today. We are well beyond the beginning of apostasy. Jesus analyzed the church of Laodicea. It was lukewarm. And the church of Laodicea may well develop into the harlot riding the Beast.

Chapter Forty-One A Mystery Explained

Divine revelation is the disclosure of mysteries--the explanation of conditions or situations otherwise unknowable. Therefore, we must depend upon the Bible to explain itself! Of particular importance is this text in Revelation 17:7-13, A MYSTERY EXPLAINED.

7 And the angel said unto me, Wherefore didst thou marvel? I will tell thee the mystery of the woman, and of the beast that carrieth her, which hath the seven heads and ten horns.

8 The beast that thou sawest was, and is not; and shall ascend out of the bottomless pit, and go into perdition: and they that dwell on the earth shall wonder, whose names were not written in the book of life from the foundation of the world, when they behold the beast that was, and is not, and yet is.

9 And here is the mind which hath wisdom. The seven heads are seven mountains, on which the woman sitteth.

10 And there are seven kings: five are fallen, and one is, and the other is not yet come; and when he cometh, he must continue a short space.

11 And the beast that was, and is not, even he is the eighth, and is of the seven, and goeth into perdition.

12 And the ten horns which thou sawest are ten kings, which have received no kingdom as yet; but receive power as kings one hour with the beast.

13 These have one mind, and shall give their power and strength unto the beast.

Most people find mysteries intriguing. In Revelation 17:7-13 the angel explains a mystery to John by listing the several PARTS of the scene before him.

The first Part;

The Beast

The angel said, "I will tell thee the mystery of the woman, and of the beast that carrieth her." Remember, that when heavenly angels speak we ought to listen. The Apostle John knew that and without further word he listened. Here is the revealing word.

The beast was unique because he "was, and is not, and shall be." I believe this is the devil's mockery. In the Old Testament God told Israel that if they did not adhere to His covenant He would cast them out of the promised land and they would be wanderers across the face of the globe. Later, the prophets said that God would bring them back, plant them in their land and never pluck them up. They are now back in the land of their fathers!

So, Israel is a nation that was and is not and shall be, now is. And here the devil in this reconstitution of the beast who was, and is not, and shall be, creates a mockery of God's intention for the people of Israel. Do you see that?

The origin of the beast is from the pit. At least he "shall ascend out of the bottomless pit, and go into perdition." This very clearly is a product of Satan. And all the world will wonder after the beast that was, and is not, and yet is.

Revelation 13 plainly tells us that the whole world will marvel at the beast and say, "Who is able to make war with him." Such a revival is an outstanding phenomenon! Here the beast who comes up out of the pit was, and is not, and shall be.

The second Part; The Seven Heads

First, they have a geographical interpretation. The angel said, "The seven heads are seven mountains on which the woman sitteth." There is one international city that is built upon seven hills, seven mountains. It is the city of Rome.

But there is more to these seven heads than seven mountains. Verse 10 tells us that there are seven kings, or as it probably should be translated, "and they are seven kings," that is, the seven heads are seven kings.

Commentators have speculated as to what or who these seven kings might be. We are not going to enter into that controversy, but simply point out that the angel said that these seven heads are seven kings.

The revival of the system will require a revival of the organization. We are informed that the seventh continues for a short time. We learned about the beast that rises out of the sea who is going to exist for 42 months. You can read that in Revelation 13:5.

The third Part; The Ten Horns

Further, the angel says, "the ten horns which thou sawest are ten kings." Those ten kings have not yet received a kingdom, but they will receive kingdoms and they will "receive power as kings one hour with the beast." Those ten kings are waiting for the proper timing. Their "hour" will be brief.

These kings will function under the "head" yet to come. Compare this description and explanation with Daniel's vision of that dreadful beast that had seven heads and ten horns. He was also informed that the ten horns are ten kings.

When King Nebuchadnezzar had his dream of the great image, he saw it had ten toes. In the interpretation of the dream, Daniel was informed by God Almighty that in the days of these kings, referring to the ten toes, the God of heaven will set up a kingdom.

So watch the ten kings represented by the ten horns and the ten toes. They have no kingdom as of yet. This most likely will be a consolidation around the world. Some have argued with some effectiveness that this means the revival of the Roman Empire.

I think we need to be careful that we do not overstate the biblical case. Obviously this will be universal, for the system of the kingdoms will be just as the angel describes it, “ten kings, ten kingdoms, and under one head, the beast.”

Here is the union of church and state with the church in charge. The great whore is astride the beast. God will deal with the harlot through the hatred of the kings.

Present day movements warn us of the fulfillment of these conditions. Plans are being laid by demonic forces to accomplish the very thing that John saw and the explanation that was given to the mystery by one of the seven angels. In light of this we must make sure that we have the proper relationship with Jesus Christ NOW!

Chapter Forty-Two The Planned Revolt

A revolt is an “insurrection against or willful refusal to obey constituted...authority.” Our times have seen a number of plans, to overthrow government. Some that were planned did not succeed. But we have seen the overthrow of governments, the insurrection against constituted authority.

The Bible forecasts several world-wide attempts at insurrection against God and His rule. The devil is right in the middle of it and he has been waging an age-long battle against God. He expects to throw all his effort into this as the age draws to a close. Now from Revelation 17:12-18, THE PLANNED REVOLT is outlined.

12 And the ten horns which thou sawest are ten kings, which have received no kingdom as yet; but receive power as kings one hour with the beast.

13 These have one mind, and shall give their power and strength unto the beast.

14 These shall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them: for he is Lord of lords, and King of kings: and they that are with him are called, and chosen, and faithful.

15 And he saith unto me, The waters which thou sawest, where the whore sitteth, are peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues.

16 And the ten horns which thou sawest upon the beast, these shall hate the whore, and shall make her desolate and naked, and shall eat her flesh, and burn her with fire.

17 For God hath put in their hearts to fulfil his will, and to agree, and give their kingdom unto the beast, until the words of God shall be fulfilled.

18 And the woman which thou sawest is that great city, which reigneth over the kings of the earth.

Within our text we can discern several well marked MOVEMENTS converging as the planned revolt unfolds.

The first Movement; The Defiance of the Beast

Carefully observe his central power: one head. These ten kings give their power to the beast for one hour. They will be of one mind and one power. They will converge, there will be a coalition; one head to accomplish this defiance of God. There will be total unity, a remarkable coalition of power and mind and determination.

The central purpose will be to make war with the Lamb. In other words, the beast means to take on God. He will by his seductive manner erode practically all of the human base by which God might operate. We observed in Revelation chapter 16 that God has other options which the devil apparently will not expect. God has access to the elements by pouring out the seven bowls of wrath.

So, there is only one other obstruction to the total control of the devil and his henchmen. It is the Lamb! And so war must be made against the Lamb. But this mutiny, this defiance by the beast, cannot succeed. The Scripture tells us the Lamb shall overcome them because He is LORD of lords and KING of kings. The beast and his forces will meet certain defeat.

The Scripture teaches us in another place that Jesus Christ must reign until He has put all enemies under His feet. Our text outlines that planned revolt by the beast and his followers. These ten kings, empowered by the beast, will through their defiance make war with the Lamb.

The second Movement; The Desolation of the Harlot

The Scripture gives us the definition of the waters. In verse 15 we have the explanation. I read, "And he saith unto me, The waters which thou sawest, where the harlot sits, are peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues."

From this we conclude that the harlot's influence and control is universal. It is a world-wide organization. She must be the religious head, for she is called in chapter 17, verse 5, "Mystery, Babylon the great, the mother of harlots and abomination of the earth." She has a universal, world-wide organization that covers peoples, multitudes, nations and tongues.

Now observe how she will be dethroned. Her loss will come from within the organization she controls. The ten horns are ten kings and these shall turn upon the harlot, hate her, make her desolate and naked, eat her flesh and burn her with fire. This will be complete desolation. There will be an internal disruption when these ten kings turn upon the woman. The second movement, the desolation of the harlot, will be complete and final.

The third Movement; The Dominion of the Creator

We are told that God has a program. He has put it into the hearts of these ten kings to fulfill His will. They will give their kingdom unto the beast until the word of God is fulfilled. His word will be fulfilled, my friend. Let there never be any doubt in your mind about that.

God has the strategy and the ability to accomplish His will and purpose on the earth. Yes, indeed. He has all conditions in His hand so that His words will be fulfilled. Even the wicked will do His will without realizing it. Here we see that the wicked destroy the wicked. God has done that on other occasions in Biblical history.

No one can really assume to take God's place. But that is exactly what the beast tries to do. He assumes to take God's place, but he cannot take it and survive.

Chapter Forty-Three Doomsday For Babylon

The Bible predicts a union of religions beyond the church. The endtime religion will be a union of all religions by the decree of the beast out of the land foretold in Revelation 13. Preparations now are being made for that decree, though not all church people are aware of what is going on.

One solemn truth: we must all face up to the fact of doomsday--the final judgment. The philosophy of many today coincides with those illfated passengers on the ship, the Titanic. They riddled and frittered away the time mistakenly believing that the ship could not sink. As a result, they went to a watery grave in 1912. I say, the philosophy of many today is like that.

The more wicked men become, the more easily they put doomsday far away. But that day is marked on God's calendar. Do not forget it. It is important for us to search out God's word; to learn all we can.

There is a final day of judgment coming for all mankind. DOOMSDAY FOR BABYLON is described in Revelation 18:1-8.

1 And after these things I saw another angel come down from heaven, having great power; and the earth was lightened with his glory.

2 And he cried mightily with a strong voice, saying, Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and is become the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird.

3 For all nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication, and the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her, and the merchants of the earth are waxed rich through the abundance of her delicacies.

4 And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues.

5 For her sins have reached unto heaven, and God hath remembered her iniquities.

6 Reward her even as she rewarded you, and double unto her double according to her works: in the cup which she hath filled fill to her double.

7 How much she hath glorified herself, and lived deliciously, so much torment and sorrow give her: for she saith in her heart, I sit a queen, and am no widow, and shall see no sorrow.

8 Therefore shall her plagues come in one day, death, and mourning, and famine; and she shall be utterly burned with fire: for strong is the Lord God who judgeth her.

In this Scripture text we are permitted to witness the PROCEDURES by which the Almighty will bring Babylon to her doom.

The first Procedure; To Deliver the Announcement

A heavenly angel is sent to proclaim this announcement. He comes with great power and great glory. His great voice booms out across the ether waves announcing the fall of Babylon, "Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and is become the habitation of demons, and the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird." This angelic voice sounds across the world making it clear that Babylon has gone as far as she will ever go. This is DOOMSDAY FOR BABYLON!

Why should there be such a day marked on God's calendar? The reason is clearly given in verse 3. "For all nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication, and the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her, and the merchants of the earth are grown rich through the abundance of her delicacies." The central motivation of all nations, kings and merchants was wealth, to get rich, to accumulate, to have more, more.

The first procedure of the Almighty was to deliver the announcement by the angel.

The second Procedure; To Delineate the Judgment

Babylon was seductive in her sins. Her relationship with the kings is called fornication. But there is another word from heaven addressed to those who find themselves in her shadow. The call is, "Come out of her, my people." There is always the danger of the people of God being so tightly woven into the fabric of society that they partake of the sins of the society. The voice from heaven warns them not to partake of her sins lest they also be subject to the plagues that will be poured out upon her.

Note the size of her sins, "For her sins have reached unto heaven." Jeremiah 51:52,53 speaks of ancient Babylon on the river Euphrates, "Wherefore, behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will execute judgment upon her carved images: and through all her land the wounded shall groan. Though Babylon should mount up to heaven, and fortify the height of her strength, yet from me shall spoilers come unto her, saith the LORD."

End-time Babylon has sins stacked up to heaven. But God remembers her iniquities. Jeremiah 51:54-56 says, "A sound of a cry cometh from Babylon, and great destruction from the land of the Chaldeans: Because the LORD hath spoiled Babylon, and destroyed out of her the great voice; when her waves do roar

like great waters, a noise of their voice is uttered: Because the spoiler is come upon her, even upon Babylon, and her mighty men are taken, every one of their bows is broken: for the LORD God of recompence shall surely requite." Yes, God has delineated her judgment.

The third Procedure; To Decree the Punishment

God said her punishment will be double. Give her double according to her works; multiply it, make it more devastating. She has caused all men to drink of the cup of her fornication, give her twice to the full the cup of God's wrath.

As she lived luxuriously, so give her torment and sorrow to balance that. She said, "I am no widow, I have many lovers." Therefore send to her swift execution in one day death, and mourning and famine.

Read the words of another, "The saints are to reign, but while the devil reigns their kingdom is in abeyance. And Babylon talks and congratulates herself with having in reality what they have only in empty promise. While Christ is away the church is in widowhood, her husband is absent. All her hope is in his return. Babylon boasts that she experiences no such privation. She is no widow. Her lovers are plenteous. Her joy is full.

The people of God have perpetual sorrow and trial on earth. Like their LORD, they are poor, despised, and persecuted. Babylon glories in being far above a condition so mean. She is rich; she is mighty; she hath all her necessary goods secure; she is not the one to see mourning. Thus she vaunts, professes, and glorifies herself.

Though the world from the beginning is crowded with monuments of the wrath of heaven upon every spirit, and though through all the long gallery of ages a voice comes echoing down, 'They that walk in pride, God is able to abase,' she heeds not the lesson, and defies all judgment. Hence Jehovah writes it once more in larger letters, drawn with the black cinders of her eternal desolation, that all the universe may read and tremble." This decree of the punishment will mean doomsday for Babylon.

Chapter Forty-Four

Mourners Wait For Babylon

I wish to talk with you about some personal matters in your life. We have needs for survival--food, clothing and shelter.

Jesus spoke about those needs. He urged His disciples to trust in the LORD and not to worry. In His sermon on the Mount He said these words. Matthew 6:25-34.

"Therefore I say to you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink; nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food and the body more than clothing? Look at the birds of the air, for they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? Which of you by worrying can add one cubit to his stature? So why do you worry about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin; and yet I say to you that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. Now if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is, and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will He not much more clothe you, O you of little faith? Therefore do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' For after all these things the Gentiles seek. For your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.

Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about its own things. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble.

We have come to Revelation 18:9-19 and we learn how the several groups wept at the destruction of a great city. MOURNERS WAIT FOR BABYLON.

9 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,

10 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.

11 And the merchants of the earth will weep and mourn over her, for no one buys their merchandise anymore:

12 Merchandise of gold and silver, precious stones and pearls, fine linen and purple, silk and scarlet, every kind of citron wood, every kind of object of ivory, every kind of object of most precious wood, bronze, iron, and marble;

13 And cinnamon and incense, fragrant oil and frankincense, wine and oil, fine flour and wheat, cattle and sheep, horses and chariots, and slaves and souls of men.

14 The fruit that your soul longed for has gone from you, and all the things which are rich and splendid have gone from you, and you shall find them no more at all.

15 The merchants of these things, who became rich by her, will stand at a distance for fear of her torment, weeping and wailing,

16 And saying, Alas, alas, that great city that was clothed in fine linen, purple, and scarlet, and adorned with gold and precious stones and pearls!

17 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

18 And cried out when they saw the smoke of her burning, saying, What city is like this great city?

19 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.

The Apostle was given a preview of the three groups of MOURNERS who wail for Babylon.

The first Group; The Kings

They represent the political aspect of this picture. And we learn that they had committed fornication and lived luxuriously with her. These were sinful relationships, improper relationships. We learn from our study of the Bible that fornication in this context may well mean spiritual departure, apostasy from the truth of God, and lived luxuriously. They shall lament and beat their breasts because of the tragedy of the destruction. They will be standing afar off.

This one who rode the beast, who was in charge of the political activities, apparently, suddenly comes to nothing. All that judgment in one hour. And they shall say, "Alas, alas, that great city."

It might be pointed out that as John heard this on the Island of Patmos he heard words that conveyed more of their meaning by their sound. These who stood afar off in Greek would say, "ouai, ouai." I say the meaning of this is conveyed by the sound. Standing afar off to see all this destruction are the kings, the political rulers of the world.

The second Group; The Merchants

They represent the commercial aspect of this picture. The source of their sales is gone. They say, "Who is going to buy?" Nobody will buy their merchandise anymore. What kind of merchandise? I turn to Dr. Smith as he outlined them: "Costly ornaments: gold, and silver, precious stones, and pearls. Costly clothes: fine linen and purple, and silk, and scarlet. Costly furnishings: all thyme wood, and all manner vessels of ivory, and all manner vessels of most precious wood, and of brass, and iron, and marble. Costly perfumes:

cinnamon, and odours, and ointments, and frankincense. Costly foods: wine, oil, fine flour, wheat, beasts and sheep. Costly conveyances: Horses and chariots. Costly chattel: slaves and souls of men.”

What a catalog of merchandise! What a merchandise mart! What a shopping mall! They surely fared sumptuously every day. They were made rich by the abundance of her delicacies. But they also stand afar off and say, “ouai, ouai.” So we have the kings and the merchants.

The third Group; The Shipmasters

They represent transportation, those who were plying their trade across the waters from country to country, from city to city. They also look upon the destruction. And they cry, “What city is like unto this great city!” “They cast dust on their heads and cried, weeping and wailing, ouai, ouai, that great city, in which were made rich all that had ships in the sea by reason of her costliness!”

Money, riches, greed, the importance of it all suddenly comes to nothing but ruins.

Those mourners: the kings, the merchants, the shipmasters were distressed because the source of their wealth had been destroyed. Earthly values gone in an hour.

The spiritual aspect of life was completely eclipsed. They had what the politicians call “the good life,” but only for time with no thought for eternity.

Chapter Forty-Five The “No More” City

It was August 6, 1945 when the first nuclear bomb was used in war. It was exploded 2000 feet over Hiroshima, Japan. At that height it destroyed 2/3 of the city. Three days later, August 9, a second nuclear bomb was exploded over Nagasaki, Japan and destroyed 50% of the town. The total casualties of those two bombs was placed at 200,000 people.

From that day on we have been living in the dread of the possibility of extinction by choice or demonic desire for world domination. With the proliferation of nuclear know-how and the stockpiling of weaponry with multiple-warheads the situation is becoming more and more fragile. It is almost too frightening to think about what would happen by the pushing of a couple of buttons?

Just imagine, population centers, and industrial complexes would be wiped out in a moment. Radio active fallout, it is argued, would prohibit any rehabilitation of the territory for years to come.

In 1962 Sister Yoder and I were walking over the ancient town of Ras Shamra, which is north of Beirut, Lebanon. That town existed in the time of Moses. It was an exciting experience because when the archeologist discovered this site they found clay tablets that had been written before the time of Moses, and in a language that is a sister of the Hebrew language, called the Ugaritic language. Since that discovery men have made a study of Ugaritic.

We toured the Roman towns of Turkey in 1962. Some of them are completely gone. For example, Antioch in Pisidia, one of the places where the Apostle Paul preached his message to the population now lies in total ruins.

Most of these ancient cities that lie in ruins are that way because of war and conquest, and perhaps, divine judgment. The Bible predicts the complete destruction of Babylon by the repetition of “no more.”

In Revelation 18:20-24 we read of the final overthrow of Babylon that makes it THE “NO MORE” CITY.

20 Rejoice over her, O heaven, and you holy apostles and prophets, for God has avenged you on her!

21 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.

22 The sound of harpists, musicians, flutists, and trumpeters shall not be heard in you anymore. No craftsman of any craft shall be found in you anymore, and the sound of a millstone shall not be heard in you anymore.

23 The light of a lamp shall not shine in you anymore, and the voices of bridegroom and bride shall not be heard in you anymore. For your merchants were the great men of the earth, for by your sorcery all the nations were deceived.

24 And in her was found the blood of prophets and saints, and of all who were slain on the earth."

By divine revelation we are furnished with INSIGHTS into the final overthrow of Babylon.

The first Insight; The Storm of Vengeance

Notice the prophet was told, "God has avenged you on her." Vengeance, the vengeance of God was as a storm, gathering in its fury. Finally it struck this city, proud, greedy, sensuous, lifted up, and destroyed it.

That storm of vengeance, however, stimulate joy. The word says, "Rejoice over her, thou heaven, and ye holy apostles." And then to read more carefully, the redeemed, the saints, the apostles and prophets are invited to rejoice as well because the storm of vengeance has struck and the city has been reduced to nothing.

These saints, apostles and prophets may have been the martyrs who had suffered under the sword of the anti-christ. But then an angel symbolizes the storm of vengeance on Babylon. He picks up a great stone, like a great millstone, and throws it into the sea where it disappears from sight. And he says that, this is how Babylon is to be thrown down and shall be found no more at all. This is the "no more" city, subject to the storm of divine vengeance where there will never again be a city.

A second Insight; The Shock of Silence

You can imagine from what is portrayed earlier in the chapter that this had been a city of great activity: kings, merchants, shipmasters, merchandise of all kinds, transportation coming and going. All at once, all at once, the shock of silence. This is classified in three different areas.

The area of entertainment. There will be no more harpers, minstrels, flute players, or trumpeters. This is the area of entertainment. Joy, merry-making, all ceases when the "no more" city comes to her end: a strange and eerie silence.

No more enterprises. The technicians of every craft are finished. I have seen them, stonemasons, potters, woodworkers, metal crafters, all of them busy, each one in his own way in some of those cities of the Middle East. But now, the shock of silence puts an end to the craftsmen. There will be no enterprises, no technical enterprises, no practical enterprises because the millstone will be quiet. I have seen those millstones at the ancient city of Capernaum. This has to do with home affairs and food supplies --all stopped. No more grinding at the mill.

No more espousal, no light of the candle, no marriage joys. The voice of the bridegroom and of the bride shall be quiet. The shock of silence. "No more," "no more." All those busy activities will come absolutely to a halt. The silence is an eerie silence.

The third Insight; The Show of Evidence

Her trick of deception. Did you notice at the ending of verse 23, the merchants were the great men of the earth? But by her sorceries all nations were deceived. Now I checked on that word sorceries and I find that it is the word from which we get our English word pharmacy, "pharmaka." She was able to trick these

merchants into riches instead of character. And her seduction of all nations was by her magical powers or by her drugs. Deception, the evidence of deception.

And then you note her troop of destruction: prophets and saints and all that were slain: their blood was found in that city. All that were slain. All doubt must now be removed. Her annihilation is absolutely and amply justified by the evidence, by the circumstantial evidence. The trick of her deception and the troop of her destruction.

Babylon will become a “no more” city. The divine revelation of her destruction affords us some valuable insights: the storm of vengeance, the shock of silence and the show of evidence. I believe any thinking person will take warning. I urge you not to trifle with God’s justice. Turn your heart in simple faith to Him now and confess your need of Jesus Christ as your own personal Saviour. He will accept you.

I must appeal to you friend. Make sure now that you have made your peace with God. He has provided for this through His only beloved Son, Jesus Christ, and His death on the cross. It was on the cross where the Lord Jesus shed His blood that you and I might be forgiven, forgiven of our sins and brought into right relationship with God so we can escape the judgment of God so openly described in the text we have just expounded. Let me urge you therefore to come.

Chapter Forty-Six **SAY ALLELUJAH!**

We have many reasons to give thanks to God. Most likely the best loved oratorio, and most often performed at Christmas time is George Frederick Handel’s The Messiah. Of all the choruses in the total composition the “Hallelujah Chorus” probably takes first place.

You may remember, so moving is its composition that at the first performance the Queen of England rose to her feet when the “Hallelujah Chorus” was sung. Think what it will be like when the multitudes of the redeemed will sing Hallelujah together. Amen!

Jesus warned once. He said, “Marvel not if the world hates you. You know it hated me before it hated you. But be of good comfort, I have overcome the world.” Yes we can sing hallelujah because we are assured of final victory. Our Lord has overcome the world. Amen!

Notice how many times in these six verses the multitude of heaven SAY ALLELUJAH in Revelation 19:1-6.

1 And after these things I heard a great voice of much people in heaven, saying, Alleluia; Salvation, and glory, and honour, and power, unto the Lord our God:

2 For true and righteous are his judgments: for he hath judged the great whore, which did corrupt the earth with her fornication, and hath avenged the blood of his servants at her hand.

3 And again they said, Alleluia. And her smoke rose up for ever and ever.

4 And the four and twenty elders and the four beasts fell down and worshipped God that sat on the throne, saying, Amen; Alleluia.

5 And a voice came out of the throne, saying, Praise our God, all ye his servants, and ye that fear him, both small and great.

6 And I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunderings, saying, Alleluia: for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth.

Let’s meditate on two outstanding ATTRIBUTES of God as revealed in this text.

The first Attribute; His Holiness

God's holiness is basic to His character. It tempers every act He performs. He cannot lie and cannot sin. Holiness in the Bible means, "Separation from and hostility to all evil and defilement." So God must, and will, destroy the harlot, that religious counterfeit.

The text tells how the multitudes in heaven will say, "Allelujah." And they will do so with respect to His holiness. The holiness of God effects salvation. Our salvation was accomplished by Jesus on the cross. There He shed His blood to make an atonement for our sins. When we accept that death, salvation can be our experience.

The holiness of God effects His glory and honor. His glory is described in Revelation 4:2 and 3. "And immediately I was in the spirit; and behold, a throne was set in heaven, and one sat on the throne. And he that sat was to look upon like a jasper and sardine stone: and there was a rainbow round about the throne, in sight like unto an emerald." Wonderful, precious, glorious, resplendent!

In Revelation 15:8, we note a further description of His glory, "And no man was able to enter into the temple, till the seven plagues of the seven angels were fulfilled." The brilliant glory of God was demonstrated when Jesus was transfigured. His clothes were whiter than any fuller on earth could white them. And His face was like the sun with the glory of God.

The holiness of God also effects His power. The word used for power here in Revelation 19:1 is the strongest word in the New Testament. It is self possessing power that belongs only unto God. Salvation and glory, honor and power unto the LORD our God.

The holiness of God also effects His justice. His holiness calls for hostility against evil. God's justice is required. As a holy God He must put down the creature's self-corrupting revolt against Him.

Notice verse 2, "For true and righteous are his judgments: for he hath judged the great harlot, which did corrupt the earth with her fornication, and hath avenged the blood of his servants at her hand. And again they say, Allelujah and her smoke rose up forever and ever." Thus the holiness of God will be totally vindicated.

God has set boundaries for our actions by His holiness. Any infringement upon His holiness requires God to respond in righteous judgment. Revelation most clearly pictures this for us.

The second Attribute; His Omnipotence

Note the last sentence of verse 6, "For the Lord God omnipotent reigneth." Omnipotence is basic to His nature. Either God is all powerful or He is not. No other religion teaches the omnipotence of God as does the Bible. Our Bible begins with the words, "In the beginning God" And the Bible restates that truth in many places.

His omnipotence calls for response in this climax of hallelujahs. The voice from heaven urges His servants to praise God in awe and reverence. Most likely His servants are the redeemed, though more may be implied. All His servants and all who fear Him, but all in reverence, the small and the great, all levels of society join in praising God.

And then from a great multitude, notice, a great multitude that sounded like the voice of many waters, and the voice of mighty peals of thunder said, "The LORD God omnipotent reigneth." How different from those who knew and refused to repent.

I refer to chapter 16, verse 11. Those suffering from the bowls of wrath knew from whence the wrath came, but they "blasphemed the God of heaven because of their pains and their sores, and repented not of their deeds." And after the great storm of hail stones from heaven, we are told they blasphemed God because of the plague of hail.

Oh, what a difference. Here are the redeemed bringing praise and honor and glory unto God, "for the LORD God omnipotent reigneth." God has bounded man's actions by His omnipotence. Any revolt against that omnipotence requires God to respond in righteous judgment.

The judgment of the harlot will eliminate the apostate, anti-God religious organization. It deals with the spiritual and religious attitude of the human creature. That judgment will manifest how God must act as the all-holy and all-powerful God. In this we should take great courage for His grace has provided salvation for all who believe.

Chapter Forty-Seven The Great Wedding Day

The record in Genesis makes clear that the first woman was created to be a companion to man. After Adam had named all the animals, God was looking for a companion for him and there wasn't any. No other mortal creature was found to be suitable for Adam. God met this need then by creating a woman from Adam's side. When Adam saw her, he responded with these words, "Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother and shall cleave unto his wife and they shall be one flesh." That is a far-reaching statement for the first husband to make. It reaches to us.

There are some conclusions we need to draw from Adam's statement. In the statement he said there must be a break. A man must leave his father and mother.

He also said there must be a harmony. That man who leaves his father and mother is to be joined unto his wife, to cleave unto his wife. That is harmony.

There is also contained in that statement an individuality--they, the two of them shall become one flesh. Yet they continue to be two. There is individuality.

And there is finally a unity, one flesh--neither is complete without the other. "Therefore shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall cleave unto his wife, and they shall be one flesh." A break, a harmony, an individuality and a unity were expressed in this statement by the first married man.

Whenever anyone loses this high view of marriage, he also loses the intention of the Creator for human happiness. Because of human perverseness, serious inroads have been made on this divine intention.

Now let us give attention to Revelation 19:7-10 for THE GREAT WEDDING DAY.

7 Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready.

8 And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints.

9 And he saith unto me, Write, Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb. And he saith unto me, These are the true sayings of God.

10 And I fell at his feet to worship him. And he said unto me, See thou do it not: I am thy fellowservant, and of thy brethren that have the testimony of Jesus: worship God: for the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.

The great wedding day will bring special ACTIONS which should stimulate us to new joy and hope.

The first Action; The Preparation of the Bride

The wedding announcement is first, the day has come, the marriage of the Lamb has come, that day has come. What long extended wait there was! But it was marked, it was marked on God's calendar. Be sure of that. And the bride has made herself ready--all necessary preparation.

Ah! This bride made herself ready and she was granted a wedding garment, a wedding dress. It almost sounds as though she was given this wedding dress. To her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen. Could this be from the bridegroom? Oh yes, it could be, yes. It was a simple dress, a very simple dress. "Fine linen, clean and white."

I contrast that with the harlot described in chapter 17. “And the woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet color, and decked with gold and precious stones and pearls, having a golden cup in her hand.” The bride of Christ has her dress that is clean and white, fine linen, a very simple wedding garment.

That great multitude that was saved out of the tribulation also had white garments. They wore robes, robes that reached to the ankles and they were washed and made white in the blood of the lamb.

The wedding dress is described as “linen, clean and white, for the fine linen is the righteousness of the saints.” That’s personal righteousness, but not self-righteousness. We have the preparation of the bride, the wedding announcement and the wedding dress and everything is now ready.

The second Action; The Invitation to the Guests

It was a special message for the seer, John the Apostle, apparently almost forgot to write it down. So he had to be encouraged to write. He was told, “Write, blessed are they who are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb.”

Well, who are these anyway? Who are these that are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb? The bride has made herself ready, so it can hardly be the bride. Without going into a long discussion let me point out that these most likely are Old Testament saints and tribulation saints, for the church of our particular age is constituted the bride of Christ--His wife.

And then there is a special confirmation, for John’s informer says, “These are the true sayings of God.”

I remember Jesus once gave a parable of a wedding. He said the guests were there, and among the guests was found a man who didn’t have a wedding garment. He was asked how he got in and he was speechless. The governor of the wedding said, “Cast him out into outer darkness where there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.”

The second action for the great wedding day is the invitation to the guests, we believe they all have proper garments.

The third Action, The Adoration of John

When John saw and heard all this he was amazed. A wonderful climax it was to the destruction of the harlot and he was so overcome that he fell at the feet of his informer to worship. But he did wrong. He did wrong, because his informer said to him, “See thou do it not: I am thy fellowservant, and of thy brethren that have the testimony of Jesus.” Likely this was an angel, his informer was an angel, a fellowservant. He said, “Worship God.” Oh, that’s always a true command, “Worship God.” And then he added, “For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.”

Yes, as it were, our Lord Jesus Christ marches across the pages of the Holy Bible. Almost everywhere you can find some reference to Him, from the first book to the last. He is the central object of all prophecy. The perfect God-man, the incarnate Son of God, the One who came to be our Saviour, and our Lord. The great wedding day will climax the long wait of the saints.

I want you to notice the sequence of this. Only when the harlot has been removed can this event take place. I believe that John recorded this in proper order. Maybe all the particulars are not given about the wedding feast, but these actions are clear; the preparation for the bride, the invitation to the guests, and the adoration of John the apostle.

Now, my friend, you can have part in that the great wedding day. However, to have part then, you must prepare now. You must respond now to the Saviour’s call.

Chapter Forty-Eight

The King is Coming

For many years the earth has languished for her rightful ruler. But when Adam lost his right of dominion in the garden of Eden, a usurper took over. He is called there the serpent. All during these years he has made every devilish effort to seize complete control.

Only for a short 30 years was the rightful King among men, and then He came to inaugurate some important procedures by which the great plan of God could be and would be carried out.

It is indeed an exciting fact that Jesus Christ is coming back to earth to take His rightful place as King of kings and Lord of lords. Praise God, the day is coming! And that day may be soon! Revelation 19:11-16 describes THE KING IS COMING.

11 And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war.

12 His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on his head were many crowns; and he had a name written, that no man knew, but he himself.

13 And he was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and his name is called The Word of God.

14 And the armies which were in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean.

15 And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God.

16 And he hath on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS.

From this Scripture I wish to raise several QUESTIONS to help us understand more fully what the coming of Jesus Christ in power and great glory will mean.

The first Question; What Is His Name?

We have some new insights as to the character of Jesus Christ by the names He bears in our text. The first name given to Him is in verse 11. He is called Faithful and True. Jesus said when He was here the first time, "I do always those things that please the Father." He also said, "I am the way, the truth and the life; no man comes unto the Father but by me." That surely demonstrates that He is the Faithful and True One.

His second name is the Unknown Name. The Bible tells us that this name is known to no one but He Himself.

The third is the Word of God. You notice this in verse 13, "And his name is called the Word of God." He was so designated in John's Gospel. "In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God." Note accurately the Word is God. We must be reminded that the Scripture further tells us that when God created the world He did so by Jesus Christ, the Word of God.

The fourth name occurs in verse 16 where He is called KINGS OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS. He has the preeminence. Nobody is nearly His equal. He has no peer and no one is above Him. That in all things He might have the preeminence. He is called KINGS OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS

The second Question; What Is His Appearance?

Follow me very carefully because there are six descriptions about His appearance. First of all He is on a white horse. Heaven opens and behold a white horse and one sits upon the horse. A white horse is always the symbol of victory. He comes as the Victorious One, truly equipped and ready on His white horse.

Further, He has eyes like a flame of fire. That surely must indicate the penetration of His gaze. I note and remember that in chapter one He is also described as having eyes like a flame of fire in verse 14; that is Revelation 1:14, "And his eyes were like a flame of fire."

Then He is crowned with many crowns. I note this in verse 12, "And on his head were many crowns." The dragon had seven heads and seven crowns on his heads, and the Beast out of the sea had seven heads and ten horns and ten crowns on his horns. Here Jesus Christ the coming King has been crowned with many crowns, describing His total dominion. How vain it was that the devil offered Him the kingdoms of the world!

And then He has a vesture dipped in blood. This must have some reference to His priestly work. When He was here the first time, He offered Himself! He has not lost that priestly function forever.

Notice further that He is accompanied by the armies of heaven. They that follow Him are also on white horses and clothed in fine linen, white and clean. In the earlier part of the chapter the bride, who made herself ready, was dressed in fine linen, clean and white. And the fine linen is the righteousness of the saints, we learned. This must be then the multitude of the redeemed who accompany Him in His coming. There is a final description about His appearance. There is a sharp sword proceeding out of His mouth. Again in chapter 1, verse 16, we see, when He was among the churches in John's early vision of Him, that He has a sharp two-edged sword proceeding out of His mouth.

The Bible tells us in Hebrews 4:12 that the Word of God is sharper than any two-edged sword. Here then in His appearance that Word takes the shape of a sharp sword that proceeds out of His mouth. Quite an arresting appearance. It is fitting for the **KINGS OF KINGS**.

The third Question; What Is His Conquest?

He is coming to accomplish His conquest in four parts. First to judge and to make war. This is quite different from His first advent, because then He came without even quenching the smoking flax. He came very humbly. He was born in a humble stable. He lived with a humble family in Nazareth. His foster father, Joseph, was a humble carpenter. He had no place to lay His head when He was here the first time. So now in this tremendous revelation of the **KINGS OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS** He is coming in power and great glory to judge and to make war.

The second part of His conquest is to smite the nations. With that sharp sword proceeding out of His mouth He will smite the nations. Those rebellious nations, the mob, the crowds, the multitudes that have been taken up with the devil's line and lie, those He will smite. The Apostle Paul writing to the Thessalonians speaks about those who have believed **THE LIE**. Jesus Christ when He comes in power and great glory is going to smite those nations with the sword of His mouth, in other words, with the Word of God.

But then the third part of His conquest is to rule with a rod of iron. Here we are reminded of Psalms 2:9 where He will dash the nations in pieces with the rod of iron. And we are reminded also of Revelation 12 when the Man Child who was born was the One who was to rule the nations with the rod of iron.

There is a final part to His conquest: to tread the wine press of the fierceness and wrath of God Almighty. No opposition can possibly be successful.

What is His conquest? To judge and make war, to smite the nations, to rule with the rod of iron and to tread the wine press of the wrath of Almighty God.

When the King comes back there will be no lingering doubt as to who He is. His names make that very clear. His appearance will undoubtedly be convincing. And His conquest will surely be in His own right. He will come in power and great glory to tread the wine press of the wrath of God Almighty. This great event will inaugurate the closing phase of God's plan for the ages.

Chapter Forty-Nine

The Battle With The Beast

Let me remind you that ever since Adam and Eve ate of the forbidden fruit in the Garden of Eden, there has not been a day without battle. Today “we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities and powers, against spiritual wickedness in high places,” the Apostle Paul informs us.

But a day is coming when the devil’s man will do battle with God’s Man. That battle will be a battle to the finish. Up to now wars have been mainly between mortals. Men and nations have launched battles against each other. THE BATTLE WITH THE BEAST will be a different kind of war. The plans have been made and revealed in God’s Holy Word. Here is the difference. Mortals will do battle, or attempt to do battle against God. They will be lured on by the devil, and the devil believes he can win. In order to win he must engage the battle with Jesus Christ who will return to earth.

The Bible tells us of a coming day when there will be a terrible war--a war between Satan’s man and God’s Man. Revelation 19:17-21 reports THE BATTLE WITH THE BEAST.

17 And I saw an angel standing in the sun; and he cried with a loud voice, saying to all the fowls that fly in the midst of heaven, Come and gather yourselves together unto the supper of the great God;

18 That ye may eat the flesh of kings, and the flesh of captains, and the flesh of mighty men, and the flesh of horses, and of them that sit on them, and the flesh of all men, both free and bond, both small and great.

19 And I saw the beast, and the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against him that sat on the horse, and against his army.

20 And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshipped his image. These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone.

21 And the remnant were slain with the sword of him that sat upon the horse, which sword proceeded out of his mouth: and all the fowls were filled with their flesh.

From this text we find the PLANS which will be used.

The first Plan; The Total Invitation to the Birds

That invitation will be given by the angel. The Apostle John said, “I saw an angel standing in the sun.” A most glorious place to stand, to be sure. And the angel called with a loud voice. He announced the invitation to all the birds that fly in the midst of heaven.

Now, unfortunately, some people have gotten what you might call prophecy happy and have been circulating a tract in which the author claims to have information that the vultures in the Valley of Armageddon in Israel are multiplying four times faster than they used to.

I have been to Israel many times, and there is absolutely no truth in that tract. Bear in mind, God is able, to do whatever He has promised without the ideas of men.

Here is the total invitation to the birds. The announcement goes out to all of them to come; to gather, to eat. So, indeed as God was able to bring the animals to Noah’s ark, so He will bring the birds to this battle with the beast for a great feast!

And you will note what their supper will be made of, “the flesh of the kings, the flesh of the captains, the flesh of the mighty men, the flesh of horses and them that sit upon them. The flesh of all men, both free and bond, both small and great.” By this invitation victory is expected.

This is the psychological plan, because here is the total invitation to all the birds for preparation.

The second Plan; The Total Mobilization Under The Beast

In Revelation, 13, 17 & 18 we can see humanism gone to seed. What do I mean by this? This: the mortal creature sets himself up as God. The beast out of the sea acclaims and promotes the worship of himself. That is what I call humanism gone to seed. And the beast out of the land promotes that religion even more. The mortal creature plans to make war with God! Notice in verse 19 of our text the express purpose of mobilization under the Beast is to make war against Him who sits on the horse. That One is Jesus!

God will permit this, the demonic self-exaltation so as to bring such intention to absolute ruin. It will be the battle with the beast where this total mobilization goes on with the devil's man on one side and God's Man on the other. Observe, "the Beast, the kings of the earth and their armies" will gather.

Chapter 17 informs us that God will put it in the hearts of those ten horns, the ten kings, to give their power and authority to the Beast for one hour. In chapter 13 we learn that the Beast out of the sea receives his power and great authority from the dragon, the devil. Thus in chapter 19 humanism controlled by demonism comes to its final hour through total mobilization under the Beast to fight the Lamb, Jesus.

Here is the numerical plan; the force of numbers, the beast, the kings of the earth and their armies. From this prediction it will be total mobilization under the Beast.

The third Plan; The Total Subjugation To the Lamb

Praise the Lord! Look what else happens in the battle with the beast. First, that beast and the false prophet are taken alive! The one in charge, the top man and his lieutenant, are taken alive. And that false prophet is identified as the one who wrought miracles before the Beast and who deceived all people who had received the mark or who worshiped the image of the Beast. The Beast worship will be completely shattered.

Remember in the beginning we noted the battle with the beast is about a religious question: whether people will worship the devil or worship God.

Now observe also that when these are taken they are cast into the lake of fire alive! Does that give you any problem? We can solve it quickly. Enoch and Elijah, the Bible informs us, went to heaven without dying. If two persons can go to heaven without dying, surely two persons can go to the lake of fire without dying.

The total subjugation to the Lamb also involves the remnant, those that were left: the armies, and the kings. They were slain with the sword of Him that sat upon the horse. Because they had sworn absolute and total allegiance to the Beast they were beyond the possibility of divine mercy.

Keep in mind God is a God of justice as well as the God of mercy. In fact, there could be no mercy without justice. But the Bible clearly instructs us that there will come a time beyond which there is no longer any mercy. Judgment is all that is left.

"And they were slain with the sword of him that sat upon the horse." That should not startle you.

So just by a word, the remnant is finished. These mortals!

And the supper of the great God has been prepared by the battle with the beast. All the fowls, we are told, were filled with their flesh. This is the judicial plan to meet out justice to all! The total subjugation to the Lamb.

In the battle with the beast the worst in man will be evident. That thought implanted in the mind of Eve in the garden of Eden to be like God will climax in this demonic revolt. Man's desire to be God will end up in a war against Jesus. It seems unbelievable. However, the PLANS used will assure Jesus the victory: the total invitation to the birds, the total mobilization under the Beast, and the total subjugation to the Lamb.

Praise God! He is **KINGS OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS**. Get all excited, Jesus Christ is King!

Chapter Fifty

When King Messiah Reigns Part I

Governments often change. Some rulers have been good rulers. Others have not been good. Some have been just rulers wanting to help people. Others have not been just. A time is coming, my friend, when the One who rules the world will be perfectly just. I refer to the time when King Messiah reigns.

It seems in times of prosperity, little thought is given to the next era. Throughout the history of the church and the world, certain men somehow have felt if they had the right hold on things they would be able to bring in an era of peace. How sorely they have failed is evident on every side.

Jesus predicted that before the end of the age would come there would be “wars and rumors of wars, pestilences and earthquakes in diverse places.” With events transpiring today all over the world as they are, I think it is time for us to listen to the words of Jesus when He said, “When you see these things begin to come to pass then lift up your heads and look up because your redemption draws near.”

A time is coming when the One who rules the world will be perfectly just. The time WHEN KING MESSIAH REIGNS, Revelation 20:1-6, is fulfillment of many prophecies.

1 And I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand.

2 And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years,

3 And cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled: and after that he must be loosed a little season.

4 And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years.

5 But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection.

6 Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years.

These verses compel us to draw several obvious CONCLUSIONS regarding the reign of Messiah.

The first Conclusion; Satan Will Be Bound

The time is very clearly set. In context from chapter 19 there are certain important events that precede the binding of Satan.

Chapter 19 discloses for us the coming of the Lord in power and great glory. The battle stage is set, when He overcomes the beast, the false prophet. He consigns them to the lake of fire burning with brimstone. Then we are told that an angel came down from heaven and bound Satan. So the time will follow the overthrow of the anti-christ.

The duration of the time is very clearly stated. The duration is one thousand years and that is earth time. The Bible tells us what heaven time is in II Peter 3:8 where we are informed that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years and a thousand years as one day. But whenever God deals with earth time He deals in specific years. So then we can be sure that the duration of the time when Satan will be bound will be one thousand years.

Then there is a condition. The angel which came down from heaven had a great chain in his hand. He laid hold upon the dragon, that old serpent who is the Devil and Satan, and bound him a thousand years. Some people wonder how a spirit can be bound with a chain. My answer is simple---God uses the materials that are required. The word in the Greek New Testament is indeed the word chain. But that should give us no problem, because God will use whatever is required to bind Satan. He has the kind of chains that bind spirits. Of this we can be absolutely confident.

What is the point of binding Satan? The reason is given in verse 3, “that he should deceive the nations no more.”

There must be a distinction made between the nations and the church. Our New Testament language has a distinct word for nations, *ethnos*, and a distinct word for the church, *ecclesia*. These are never to be confused in the Bible. The reason the devil is to be bound for a thousand years is so that he will not deceive the nations during that thousand year period. There is no connection whatever between the word nation and the word church.

The Apostle Paul writing to the Corinthians in his second letter referred to the way the Devil is able to transform himself into an angel of light. When he wrote to the Ephesians in 6:16 he said that it is imperative to take the shield of faith whereby we are able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one. When Peter wrote his first epistle, he said we are to resist the Devil because he goes about as a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour. The conclusion is that Satan is not bound now. But he will be bound.

The second Conclusion; The Messiah Will Reign

The time of Messiah’s reign is stated twice and specifically. It will be at the same time as the thousand years of Satan being shut up. This means that Messiah will reign after the overthrow of the beast, when He comes in power and great glory. Then He will discomfit the armies of the beast and the false prophet. He will cast the beast and the false prophet into the bottomless pit. The Messiah will reign at that particular time after the judgment of His enemies, and the binding of Satan.

This will be a fulfillment of many Old Testament Scriptures. There is Isaiah 9:6 and 7, “For unto us a child is born, unto us a Son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be Wonderful, Counselor, the mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever.” How can we be sure of this? Ah, focus on the last sentence; “The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this.” The Psalmist understood Messiah’s reign. He stated it plainly in Psalm 110:1 and 2. “The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool. The LORD shall send the rod of thy strength out of Zion: rule thou in the midst of thine enemies.”

The New Testament as well has words for us regarding the reign of the Messiah. When Gabriel came to Mary to announce to her that she would give birth to the Holy Child, he said to her, “Fear not, Mary, for thou hast found favor with God. And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name JESUS. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David: And he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end.” So in Luke 1, verses 30-33, Messiah will reign on the throne of his father David, and over the house of Jacob forever.

Jesus, when He was asked by the disciples what to expect for the way they had followed Him, He answered, “Verily I say unto you, that ye which have followed me, in the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel,” Matthew 19:28.

From Paul’s letter to the Romans, we discover how it was well known in the early church that the reign of Christ would reconstitute the world and bring back the conditions that characterized Eden. Romans 8:19-23 are exciting words: “For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God. For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected

the same in hope, Because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now. And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body.”

From these Scriptures it must be clear that Messiah will reign on earth, and that He is not reigning now in the sense in which He will reign.

Chapter Fifty-One

When King Messiah Reigns Part II

Now friend, it is highly important that we learn exactly how the Word of God describes the Messiah’s reign. In the prayer that Jesus taught his disciples, there is a petition for the coming of God’s kingdom. Jesus said we should pray like this; “Let Thy kingdom come, let Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.”

From a careful study of those words of Jesus I have learned that the kingdom will come as an event rather than a process. That is a very important consideration. Over the centuries certain men have taught and believed if they try hard enough they will be able to bring in God’s kingdom. But as we look on the world today, men are no nearer to bringing in the kingdom now than they were hundreds of years ago. In many respects they are further away from the kingdom. With all the injustices, wars, pestilences, famines, men are not bringing in the kingdom at all.

According to the Bible, Messiah will bring in the kingdom and His rule will be with impartial justice. He will rule the nations with His rod of iron. He will judge righteous judgments. Jesus once stated that God the Father has given all judgment to the Son. So when Messiah reigns there will be absolute justice and peace.

We continue in Revelation 20:1-6, WHEN KING MESSIAH REIGNS PART II.

1 And I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand.

2 And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years,

3 And cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled: and after that he must be loosed a little season.

4 And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years.

5 But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection.

6 Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years.

It is highly important that we learn exactly how the Word of God describes the Messiah’s reign.

I stated that these verses compel us to draw several obvious conclusions. Let us now review the conclusions that I addressed in the previous chapter.

First was Satan will be Bound. I showed that the binding of Satan is future. He is not bound now. But he will be bound for 1000 years, just as the Bible tells us here. Now he comes sometimes as an angel of light

and other times he may come as a roaring lion, so the Bible teaches us. He is always the deceiver. But when he is bound he will not be able to deceive the nations for a thousand years.

The second conclusion I spoke about was The Messiah will Reign. I pointed out that the Messiah will reign during the same time Satan is bound. His reign is predicted in a number of books of the Bible. The Messiah's rule will be characterized by peace, true peace.

Remember Jesus taught us to pray, "Let Thy kingdom come, let Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven." So what is the third conclusion we are compelled to draw?

The third Conclusion; The Saints Will Share

The groups reigning with Christ are distinguished in Revelation 20:4. Three groups are clearly distinguished. First, there are those who sit upon the thrones. To help identify them, we refer to Revelation 4 where the 24 elders seated on thrones are redeemed from every tribe, kindred tongue and nation.

Then there will be the martyrs--those who were killed, were beheaded, literally axed to death, for the witness of Jesus. In Revelation 6, we learn of the martyrs of the fifth seal under the altar, and how they cried for vengeance.

The third group is the objectors to the beast. We learn in Revelation 13 that not all will bow to the beast, and those who do not will be martyred when they are found.

So we have the throne sitters, the martyrs and the objectors to the beast here described as being those who will share with the Messiah in His reign, the end of verse 4 tells us, "they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years."

Their role is designated, for they will reign with Christ, in verses 4 and 6, one thousand years. Jesus said when He spoke to the church in Laodicea in Revelation 3:20, "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I have overcome and am set down with my Father in his throne."

And, of course, they will have resurrected bodies and the rest of the dead will not be resurrected until after the thousand years. The saints who share in the reign of Christ will have taken part in the first resurrection when they were caught away at the sound of the trumpet. It is clear in I Corinthians 15:50 that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God. Therefore, in order to have part in that kingdom there must be the first resurrection in which the saints will all participate.

Their security has been assured for Revelation 20:6 says, "Blessed and holy is he that has part in the first resurrection." Please notice that they are protected from the second death, because, "On such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years."

Surely, it must be plain that a time will come when the saints will reign with Christ. For that glorious day we long and wait. The Apostle John wrote, "We know that when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is." We assure our hearts before God on the truth of these conclusions: Satan will be bound, the Messiah will reign, and the saints will share. Praise the Lord!

To have part in that glorious experience which Revelation 20, verses 1-6 describes, it is necessary for you to plan now. God has provided by the first coming of His Son for your salvation and preparation. Be sure you make your confession now. The Scripture says, "Every knee shall bow and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father." So it is not a matter of whether you are going to make that confession, friend, it is a matter of when you are going to make it. Make it now and you can have part in that great and glorious day.

I do urge you to receive Jesus as your personal Lord and Saviour now. Please do not neglect this important decision.

Chapter Fifty-Two

Satan's Last Revolt

Right now we are living in an era of Satanic domination. The Scripture informs us that as the age draws to a close he will be much more vicious in his attacks. He will attempt to accomplish his demonic purpose through all kinds of means. Satan has his plan for world take-over. Demonic activity is on the rise. There is no question about that. His strategy is to counterfeit every plan of God that he can anticipate. He plans on world rulership and world worship.

During the thousand years of his jail sentence mankind will experience relief from his deception. But those living then must be given the opportunity to choose to serve the Lord. And that's where our text comes in.

Revelation 20:7-10, SATAN'S LAST REVOLT, closes Satan's history.

7 And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison,

8 And shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle: the number of whom is as the sand of the sea.

9 And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city: and fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them.

10 And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever.

From these verses we can construct the DETAILS of SATAN'S LAST REVOLT.

The first Detail; His Determination

Certainly if you can consider nothing else about him, you must consider in some fashion his zeal. He doesn't know when he is defeated.

We are informed in Revelation 19 that the beast and the false prophet were defeated by the very appearance of the Lord of glory, the Lamb, King of kings and Lord of lords. But that does not hold back the devil. In fact, that one thousand year jail sentence in chains in the bottomless pit did not make him change his mind. We are informed in our text that as soon as he was released he took up where he left off. He went out to deceive the nations. That was what he had been doing all along until he was sealed in the bottomless pit with chains. He has no sense of defeat. He hangs in there like no mortal could.

So, after a one-thousand-year jail sentence in chains, the devil will go out and collect nations from all the earth, Gog and Magog. After one thousand years of the greatest joy and peace on earth, the nations of the world are deceived. He brings them together, a great multitude, so many as the sand of the sea, the Scripture informs us. Surely this shows us that the depraved human spirit will join the devil in revolt. His determination is amazing.

The second Detail; His Defeat

Notice the object of this massing of great forces, demonic forces, "And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city." The saints and the beloved city are the object of this last revolt of the devil. I believe that means the redeemed and Jerusalem. The saints may well be the resurrected saints as well as the living saints.

He somehow feels that he is going to be able to overcome these who had been gathered out of corruption and mortality and given incorruption and immortality.

There had been several other times in the world's history when the devil made a special effort against God's chosen earthly people. In the days of Pharaoh he tried to kill them off by killing the boy babies. In Haman's day he tried to kill them off by the decree from the king. In the days of Hitler he killed 6 million

Jews. The devil slandered God and His people all through history. In this case his effort is directed toward the activities of Satan coming to a close. Praise the Lord! He will not carry on in the world to come. His area of operation has to do with mortal man and mortal history. So when mortal history closes, that closes Satan's liberty. The Bible tells us he was taken and cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, there to share the eternal doom of the beast and the false prophet. Praise God! His last revolt will be put down summarily by the hand of God with eternal sentence. This time it is not a thousand years. This time it is forever and ever. Satan's last revolt must end in his final doom.

As I see it, his determination became his trap. His defeat left him absolutely alone. All his cohorts were destroyed by fire from God out of heaven. His doom is forever and ever.

Surely, surely, my friend, any sober thinking person will turn away from the service of Satan and serve God. Friend, it is important for you to take an account right now of where you are between these two opponents. Have you cast your lot with God through Jesus Christ our Lord? If not, do so now!

Chapter Fifty-Three

The Final Judgment

Every society on this earth has a court of justice. It may not be like the court of justice we know but it is a court of justice according to the standards of the people.

In the heart of every person there is a sense of what is right. We may not all come to our conclusions the same way, but we do have ideas of right and wrong. We were born with the ability to discern. By our teaching and training we further developed those concepts of right and wrong. Most people care how they live. They want the approval of their consciences.

The Apostle Paul said that when people refuse to listen to God they become reprobate. The reprobate person has no sense of right or wrong. People with the right mind have a purpose to do right. And I'm glad to tell you, my friend, there is a guidebook. There is a guidebook on how to do right. It is the Bible, the Word of God. And yet because of the perversion of the human heart men pursue wickedness instead of righteousness by disobeying the plain teaching of God's Word.

God has given us a guidebook by which to determine what is right and wrong. He can not stand aside and just let people go on unchecked and unrestrained. God must take a strong hand to mete out justice to all. The final judgment will come after the arch enemy, Satan, has been defeated. We noted in the previous chapter.

Now from Revelation 20:11-15 we may learn what happens at THE FINAL JUDGMENT.

11 And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them.

12 And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works.

13 And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works.

14 And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death.

15 And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.

From this scene in the Bible of the final judgment we can make several significant OBSERVATIONS which will help to clarify our understanding of how the justice of God will be applied.

The first Observation; The Seat of Judgment

It is a special seat of judgment. The Bible calls it a great white throne. There is none other like it. No judge on earth has that kind of seat of judgment. No judicial bench will in any way compare with that great white throne. It is the place from which the Judge of all the earth will administer justice.

Note the characteristics of the judge. He sat upon the great white throne--the seat of judgment. And from His face the earth and heaven fled away and there was no place found for them.

One commentator suggested then that evidently the great white throne will be suspended in space--heaven and earth fled away. There was something of a scrambling to get away from this awesome judge--the seat of judgment.

While heaven and earth fled away from before the face of Him who sat on the throne, people came. I want you to notice them. Look at verse 12, "And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God." The rest of the dead.

The Bible describes earlier in Revelation 20 the first resurrection. It also informs us that the rest of the dead lived not again until the 1000 years were finished. We may therefore conclude that this seat of judgment, this great white throne, will be set up after the thousand years, when Christ will reign. But I want you to notice who it is that comes to this judgment bar, this seat of judgment. They are the small and great, and the dead that were in the sea will come forth. And death and hell will deliver those which they held.

In other words, all of those who did not have part in the first resurrection will participate in this one and they will be there. There is no evasion of this, to appear before the judgment seat of God, the great white throne judgment. All the rest will be there.

The second Observation; The Standard of Judgment

The Bible tells us here that the books will be opened. Perhaps you didn't know that God is a bookkeeper, a very accurate bookkeeper. All the acts of men are recorded.

The Bible calls it here "books." I'm willing to take it just like it reads. God is a bookkeeper. And so the books are going to be opened and circumstantial evidence will be there. The standard of judgment will be the books that God has kept.

There will be another book opened called the book of life. The book of life will be there in case someone objects. All those whose names are not in the book of life will be cast into the lake of fire. So God will do the judging.

This is not, my friend, a trial by jury. You will not be able to solicit the help of your friends if you should be so unfortunate as to be among those who appear before this seat of judgment to be judged by this standard of judgment. No, this is an act of God. The standard of judgment will be the books. And there will be no opportunity to reply. There will be no possibility of appealing the sentence. The book will be open and the book of life will be there as a checkpoint.

The third Observation; The Sentence of the Judgment

As I read this text I note that the intermediate state will be completely disposed of, the sea, death and hell. In fact, the Bible tells us that death and hell are to be cast into the lake of fire. So all the intermediate state will be completely done away with. There will be no more mortals to die. Mortality and mortal existence will come to an end. It will come to an end at this eventful day. From then on it will be the eternal state. There will be no tomorrow! All who are not found in the book of life will be cast into the lake of fire.

Make careful notation of what the lake of fire is, "The lake that burneth with fire and brimstone." I refer you to Revelation 19:20 where the beast and the false prophet were cast into the lake of fire. Here it is defined as a lake burning with fire and brimstone. And it is called the second death.

Without doubt this will be the eternal state. For since death and hell will be disposed of there is no intermediate state left anymore. This will be forever.

But the lake of fire was not prepared for us or for any human being. The Bible makes it clear to us that the lake of fire was prepared for the devil and his angels. The tragedy is many people do not realize that if they cast their lot with the devil here they are going to be forced to cast their lot with him there. Those who choose him now will be confined with him forever in the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone. Friend, observe that the sentence of judgment is forever to be consigned to the lake of fire.

I am fully aware of how some people try to evade the truth of the Bible. But here it is clearly stated, there will be a final judgment. And we observed its unique seat, the throne of God. We observed its single standard, the books, the works of men. We observed its final sentence, forever.

Let me appeal to you, dear friend. I plead with you in the language of the Bible--today it you hear his voice, harden not your heart.

Chapter Fifty-Four

FORMER THINGS ARE PASSED AWAY

For thousands of years men have tried to create a good society. In fact, we might say, that ever since Adam and Eve sinned in the Garden of Eden and were cast out, men have tried to create a so called Garden of Eden.

As I say, for thousands of years men have hoped to create a good society. In the western world in recent generations they have also tried to create a decent society. Before World War I it was a good society, so to speak. And when the war broke out in 1914, Woodrow Wilson, President of the United States, said, "This is the war to end all wars." At the conclusion of the war they set up the League of Nations, believing in this way they would be able to outlaw wars.

But, unfortunately only twenty-one years later another terrible war broke out called World War II. It was a terrible war, vast destruction. Then they set up the United Nations, hoping again that by negotiation they would be able to outlaw war. But that has not happened.

There was a Gulf Crisis. One shudders to think of all the devastation that can be created with the weapons of war today: the missiles, nuclear war heads, chemical and biological warheads. Just the thought of all the devastation that is possible makes us shudder. And, yet, with all this history and current affairs certain church men still believe that they will be able to bring in the golden age, bring in the age of peace, bring in, as they refer to it, the Kingdom of God. But, it seems, the harder they try the further they are from the goal.

Now for the message from Revelation 21:1-8, stating FORMER THINGS ARE PASSED AWAY.

1 And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea.

2 And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.

3 And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God.

4 And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away.

5 And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new. And he said unto me, Write: for these words are true and faithful.

6 And he said unto me, It is done. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely.

7 He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son.

8 But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death.

When the former things have passed away there will be certain accompanying CONDITIONS.

The first Condition; There will be a New Creation

Be sure to observe how we read it in Revelation 21, right there in the first verse. "And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea." The first heaven and the first earth is the earth that we are now living in. And the Apostle Peter when he wrote his second epistle mentioned this as well.

I turn now to II Peter 3:10-14. Find that text in your Bible right away.

"But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up. Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness, Looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat? Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness. Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless.

The first heaven and the first earth will pass away. There will be a new creation and a new order. Let's go back now again to Revelation the 21st chapter and we notice some more outstanding conditions. There will be a new creation, I said. There will be no more sea. No more sea. God created the sea and the dry land when he first created the world. According to this in the new heaven and new earth there will be no sea.

And there will be the Holy city, the new Jerusalem, the Scripture tells us here, coming down from God out of heaven as a bride adorned for her husband. The new city, holy Jerusalem, a 1500 mile cube. Glorious in every way. The Scripture says it will be the tabernacle of God, because He will dwell with them and they shall be His people.

Do you see, my friend, that when the former things are passed away there will be a new creation completely different from what we now know?

The second Condition; There Will Be a New Relation

A new relation between God and man. We are told that God will dwell with His people. He will dwell among men. It will be Emmanuel, God with us forever! This is the final culmination of God's purpose. When He created the first man, Adam, He planted a garden for his pleasure and enjoyment. And it appears from the book of Genesis that God came in the cool of the day to fellowship with Adam. There was intimacy which was lost when Eve and Adam sinned. It will be regained when the new heaven and the new earth is created. There will be a new relationship, a return to the relationship that was so precious in the Garden of Eden, divine/human fellowship. When God created man he said, "Let us make man in our image and after our likeness."

God will be intimate with His people. So much so that the Scripture tells us He will wipe all tears from their eyes. In reality, every tear drop. No more death. No more sorrow. No more crying. No more pain. Because the former things have passed away.

Those people who inherit or inhabit that new creation will be there in their resurrected bodies. No more mortality. No more corruption. They will be there like Jesus. Completely escaping all the pain, sorrow and death of the present world order.

There will be that new relationship between man and God. Praise the Lord!

The third Condition; There will be a New Separation

For indeed He said, "I am alpha and omega. I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely." Oh, that is for right now. You can have a drink from the fountain of life if you are thirsty. Are you thirsty? Do you long for that which you do not have in your heart? He said He would give water to the thirsty. And if you are thirsty and come to Him, He will give you of the water of life so that you never need to thirst again

Let us note a little more about that separation; he that overcomes will inherit all things. The son will receive the inheritance, for indeed He said, "I will be his God and he shall be my son." A beautiful family relationship. And God said that son will inherit everything! That family relationship will never break up. Never! It will always hold for those who overcome will be the inheritance. Isn't that beautiful? Isn't that wonderful that Jesus will give the water of life to the thirsty and inheritance to the overcomers!

We close on a sad note, because of the outcast. To the outcast is nothing but the lake of fire, "the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone." And yet with all that sorrow there is a kind of settled joy and peace for all the moral filth will be consigned forever to the lake of fire. Never, never again will man be tempted, oppressed, thrown down, harassed. All that is evil will be cast out. What a joy. That separation will be forever.

These scenes should create within us a deep longing for that great consummation day: the scene of the new creation, the scene of the new relation, and the scene of the new separation. They should also move us with compassion because that conclusion day is coming. We have time now but we do not have much time. And I appeal to you to use your time wisely. Think about those others who do not know Him.

Chapter Fifty-Five

THAT GREAT CITY

Christians are like the Patriarchs of the Old Testament. They have no abiding city here. But we seek one to come. Like them, we are pilgrims, and strangers. "This world is not my home, I am only passing through!"

The Apostle John exiled on the island of Patmos was permitted to hear and see what no one else has heard or seen. With eyes refined by the Spirit John saw the Great City, the eternal dwelling place of all the born again people of the world and of all time.

Many commentators shy away from the reality of John's vision. They think it is all symbolic. I believe what John saw and reported is the real great city.

His record is given in Revelation 21:10-27, THAT GREAT CITY.

10 And he carried me away in the spirit to a great and high mountain, and shewed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God,

11 Having the glory of God: and her light was like unto a stone most precious, even like a jasper stone, clear as crystal;

12 And had a wall great and high, and had twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels, and names written thereon, which are the names of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel:

13 On the east three gates; on the north three gates; on the south three gates; and on the west three gates.

14 And the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and in them the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb.

15 And he that talked with me had a golden reed to measure the city, and the gates thereof, and the wall thereof.

16 And the city lieth foursquare, and the length is as large as the breadth: and he measured the city with the reed, twelve thousand furlongs. The length and the breadth and the height of it are equal.

17 And he measured the wall thereof, an hundred and forty and four cubits, according to the measure of a man, that is, of the angel.

18 And the building of the wall of it was of jasper: and the city was pure gold, like unto clear glass.

19 And the foundations of the wall of the city were garnished with all manner of precious stones. The first foundation was jasper; the second, sapphire; the third, a chalcedony; the fourth, an emerald;

20 The fifth, sardonyx; the sixth, sardius; the seventh, chrysolite; the eighth, beryl; the ninth, a topaz; the tenth, a chrysoprasus; the eleventh, a jacinth; the twelfth, an amethyst.

21 And the twelve gates were twelve pearls; every several gate was of one pearl: and the street of the city was pure gold, as it were transparent glass.

22 And I saw no temple therein: for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it.

23 And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof.

24 And the nations of them which are saved shall walk in the light of it: and the kings of the earth do bring their glory and honour into it.

25 And the gates of it shall not be shut at all by day: for there shall be no night there.

26 And they shall bring the glory and honour of the nations into it.

27 And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life.

Join me now as I lead you to consider several DETAILS of THAT GREAT CITY.

The first Detail; It is the Descending City

The Apostle John had an informing angel. That angel was one of the seven angels that had the seven last plagues. He was in the Spirit. This compares quite well with the Revelation 1:10, when he said, "I came to be in the Spirit in the day of the Lord." Now he was in the Spirit and was carried to a great and high mountain to be shown the Holy City. The Great City was coming down out of heaven from God. I reflect on the fact that Moses was told when he was building the tabernacle to make it exactly like what he had seen in the heavens. Now we are permitted to see this Great City coming down from God.

Now view carefully its description. It had the glory of God. I am reading verse 11. "Having the glory of God: and her light was like unto a stone most precious, even like a jasper stone, clear as crystal; And had a wall great and high, And had twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels, and names written thereon, which are the names of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel."

We do not know exactly why there were twelve apostles and twelve tribes. It is a wonderful confirmation that the all wise, all merciful God, never had two plans to reach the human race, rather only one.

The Old Testament and the New Testament belong together like the foundation of a house belongs to the house. So we have a single unit of Revelation, the Old and New Testaments. Here we have the joining of the tribes of Israel and the apostles of the Lamb. This was the descending city coming down out of heaven from God.

The second Detail; It is the Resplendent City

Look at its measurements. The angel had a golden reed and he measured the city and the gates and the wall thereof. And it is 12,000 furlongs square. Generally computed that means 1,500 miles or 2,437 kilometers. It is a cube, like The Holy of Holies in the Tabernacle and the Temple. That was the dwelling place of God. He said, that He was going to meet with His people in the Holy of Holies by the Ark of the Covenant overshadowed by the cherubim. And the wall was a 144 cubits thick that means 96 feet or more than 33 meters thick.

Its material was of jasper. And the city was pure gold. Now the foundation stones are described, these various precious stones. I am going to quote from the J. B. Smith Commentary page 290 where he has a beautiful description of the precious stones.

"King, in his Precious Stones and Gems, quoted in the Bible Commentary gives the description of the respective gems as follows: jasper, dark green; sapphire, blue; chalcedony, greenish sort of emerald; emerald, bright green; sardonyx, red and white; sardius, bright red; chrysolite, golden yellow; beryl, bluish green; topaz, yellowish green; chrysoprasus, apple-green; jacinth, blue; amethyst, violet and purple.

Beginning from the last color mentioned, a marked similarity can be seen with seven prismatic colors--violet, indigo, blue, green, yellow, orange, red. The first jasper is identical with the color of the wall above and there can be no doubt but that the colors blend harmoniously with the wall of jasper, the first mentioned, and consequently with that of the wall." That is a wonderfully resplendent city.

The third Detail; It is the Transcendent City

No temple there. There is no need for a temple because there is no need for mediation. There will be direct access to God.

No sun. No moon. The Glory of God will shine in it. Oh, yes, I remember how when Saul of Tarsus was on the way to Damascus, a light brighter than the noon day sun struck him to the ground. The glory of God is penetrating, radiant, transcendent light. Jesus said, "I am the light of the world."

We read then that the "nations" of them which are saved shall walk in the light of it. We must remember that the word nations comes from the Greek word "ethnos" which can also mean a company. So the company of the saved will walk in the light of it. And the glory of the nations of the earth will be brought into it. A transcendent city. The gates will always be open. There will be no night. No defilement. All truth will be there. And the Lamb's Book of Life. The Lamb's Book of Life where the names are inscribed. The transcendent city. No evil anywhere. That Great City is described in detail.

I review for you the three outstanding details.

It is the Descending City coming down from God. He is the maker and builder.

It is the Resplendent City. Gorgeous in all its beauty.

It is the Transcendent City. Free from all defilement.

Now friend, again I call your attention to verse 27.

"And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie, but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life."

Therefore to enjoy that city then you must prepare now. Call on the Lord now! Confess to Him that you are a sinner. Plead your pardon on the ground of the shed blood of Jesus Christ on the Cross. Claim His forgiveness. Prepare now for that time then when the Great City will descend from God out of heaven.

Chapter Fifty-Six

HOME AT LAST

No other book can bring us hope like the Bible. The Hope in the Bible is founded upon the Word of the Holy and Living God. He is trustworthy, He never makes a promise He does not keep. Bear that in mind, friend. You can depend upon the promises of God.

One great promise He has made is the promise of a home in His presence forever. Blessed be the Lord.

Jesus said near the close of His life as He was ministering to the disciples, right before His crucifixion, He said. "In my Father's house are many mansions, If it were not so I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you." I trust you have a hope that is steadfast and sure to take you to that home at last.

And you know, my friend, for us, we are not at home here. The closer we walk with the Lord, the more real our pilgrimage is. We are only strangers and pilgrims in this world. This world is not our home,

Your heart doesn't need to be troubled. If you are really trusting in Jesus, you will come to your HOME AT LAST, described in Revelation 22:1-5

1 And he shewed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb.

2 In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was there the tree of life, which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.

3 And there shall be no more curse: but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it; and his servants shall serve him:

4 And they shall see his face; and his name shall be in their foreheads.

5 And there shall be no night there; and they need no candle, neither light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth them light: and they shall reign for ever and ever.

As believers we are assured perpetual COMFORTS when at last we reach Home! I want to share them with you.

There is first; The Comfort of Eternal Life

The water of life will issue from the throne of God. Life is a word of mystery. It comes first for us as human beings from God's breath in Adam. After God had formed Adam from the dust of the ground. He breathed in him the breath of life and Adam became a living soul.

Here in our text the water of life comes from the throne of God. Now do you understand the significance of that, of that breath of God and of that water of life from the throne of God? That suggests to us that this life is eternal life, life is forever coming from God!

There is the water of life, the river of life, and the tree of life mentioned in our text. When the early pair sinned in the Garden of Eden, God said He would need to drive them out because they might eat of the tree of life and live forever. In that first book in the Bible man was denied access to the tree of life because he was in his sinful condition. When we reach home at last, we will have free access to the tree of life.

It bears twelve kinds of fruit: Every month it yields its fruit. The leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations. Oh, I know somebody is going to come up and raise a lot of questions because in eternity we don't count time. Never mind, never mind, my God is describing for us the comfort of eternal life when we get home at last. Praise the Lord!

There death is forever banished! There the water of life proceeds from the throne of God. There is the tree of life. Life from God is for all believers eternally. Praise the Lord!

There is second; The Comfort of Eternal Love

Love is a word of emotion. We may also say absolutely that love comes from God.

"For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish but have everlasting Life."

Yes, love proceeds from the throne of God. "We love Him," the Apostle John wrote in his first epistle. "We love Him because He first loved us." Why, my friend, nobody would know anything about love, true love, were it not for the love that God has had toward us. We only know true love through Him.

Especially notice too that His servants serve Him. "The throne of God and of the Lamb shall be there and His servants shall serve him," in a face to face relationship. That which we may have longed for often in this life will become a reality, a glorious reality then.

And it will be forever. Forever, because His name will be in their foreheads. Ownership will never, never be denied or confiscated. Praise the Lord! We have the comfort of eternal love when we get home at last. There hate is forever banished. The Scripture says in our text, verse 3, "There shall be no more curse" We shall be forever in the love of God. "The Love of God is greater far than tongue or pen can ever tell." The comfort of eternal love.

There is third; The Comfort of Eternal Light

Light is a word of illumination. On the first day of creation week recorded in the book of Genesis, God said, "Let there be light." And there was light.

In the first chapter of John's Gospel the Apostle John writing about Jesus said, "He was that true light that lighteth every man that cometh into the world."

Jesus also said, "I am the light of the world." But, He said that men love darkness rather than light because their deeds are evil. "Men love darkness."

When we get home at last we will have the comfort of eternal light. God's eternal day. There shall be no night. We shall have the glorious experience of living constantly in the light of God because there will be no lamp, no light of the sun, the Lord God will give us light. Our light, the light that we shall have when we are home at last will be light from God. He is the source of light. There darkness is forever banished. No more night; forever in the light of God.

Notice the last clause of verse 5, "And they shall reign forever and ever." What comfort God has provided for us when we get home at last! These comforts, my friend, should spur us on to greater diligence so as to attain the highest here and to reach our home at last.

Meditate upon these comforts. Let them bless your heart now: the comfort of eternal life, God's life which means eternal life; the comfort of eternal love, God's love which means eternal love; the comfort of eternal light, God's light which means eternal light. Yes, when we get home at last we will be able to share these comforts of God.

We are nearer home now than we have ever been before. Are you eager for that home where life, love and light come from God? Are you eager for it? If you're going to enjoy those comforts then it is important that you get ready now!

Chapter Fifty-Seven IN CONCLUSION

How wonderful it is that we can have a time together to study the Holy Book of the Living God, the Bible. I know you have been disappointed, too, when some person went back on his word and didn't fulfill the promise he had made. The next time you were more careful about believing what he told you, weren't you? In God's book, every word is true. You can rest your hope securely on God's Holy Book.

I learned in my study that one of the principles of speech making or writing is to bring your most compelling point in last. There you drive home the truth. It is logical. The human mind operates that way.

We may well expect that in the conclusion of the book of Revelation there will be some very emphatic truths established.

The Holy Spirit knew that. This last book of the Bible deserves our most serious study, especially today. Now then, to John's IN CONCLUSION in Revelation 22:6-15.

6 And he said unto me, These sayings are faithful and true: and the Lord God of the holy prophets sent his angel to shew unto his servants the things which must shortly be done.

7 Behold, I come quickly: blessed is he that keepeth the sayings of the prophecy of this book.

8 And I John saw these things, and heard them. And when I had heard and seen, I fell down to worship before the feet of the angel which shewed me these things.

9 Then saith he unto me, See thou do it not: for I am thy fellowservant, and of thy brethren the prophets, and of them which keep the sayings of this book: worship God.

10 And he saith unto me, Seal not the sayings of the prophecy of this book: for the time is at hand.

11 He that is unjust, let him be unjust still: and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still: and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still: and he that is holy, let him be holy still.

12 And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be.

13 I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last.

14 Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city.

15 For without are dogs, and sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie.

John brings his book to its close with several serious WARNINGS for us all.

The first Warning; The Warning to Exercise Proper Respect

These words are from God. It is precisely stated in our text that God sent His angel to show unto His servants the things which must shortly be done. He sent the heavenly messenger right from Himself to bring this message and these words to the Apostle John, His servant.

He brought truth which otherwise could never be known. These words are faithful and true. We should, therefore, have proper respect for them and not begin to readjust them as we think they ought to be.

And I observe that a blessing is pronounced upon the one who diligently keeps the words of the prophecy of this book. The word, "keep," in this text would suggest "to do," that is, to observe to do what the word instructs us to do. It may also imply, to keep them intact, not to assume any privilege or responsibility to reshape them, redesign them, or in any way change the impact which they teach.

We must, therefore exercise proper respect for this book of Revelation. That is the Apostle John's first warning in his conclusion.

The second Warning; The Warning to Express Proper Reverence

You and I have never experienced what John experienced. I treasure in my memory the summer of 1962 when Mrs. Yoder and I were privileged to visit the Island of Patmos. We walked about the place. We went up to the top of the mountain, east of the harbor where the monastery, to honor the Apostle John, is located. We walked down to the church built over the cave where tradition says the Apostle John saw the visions and heard what he recorded in the book of Revelation. That was an inspiring experience.

We had taken a ship from Athens to Patmos. We began to read the book of Revelation aloud on board the ship. We read and read. There in the church over the cave we read some more. We tried to feel how he felt, and yet we couldn't quite. I'm not surprised as he reviewed and thought about all the things he had seen and heard that he was over-awed as he realized what a privilege had been afforded him. And that the angel had been his informer and had shown him all these things.

I am not surprised as he understood that the scenes were closing and he was in the conclusion of this book that he would fall down and attempt to worship the angel. But he was immediately restrained. The angel said, "See thou do it not: for I am your servant, the servant of your brethren, the prophets, and servant of them who keep the words of this book, Worship God!" John was then instructed not to seal the book because the time is at hand.

There will be a time when reformation will no longer be possible. No changes will be possible after that particular point in time. When that time comes the one who is filthy will still be filthy. The one who is unjust will still be unjust. Ah, but the one who is righteous will still be righteous: And the one who is holy will still be holy.

We are encouraged by John's warning to express proper reverence for God. He is the only One worthy of our worship.

The third Warning; The Warning to Expect Proper Reward

Yes, the Rewarder is coming. He said so. He is coming quickly which means unannounced. When once He begins to come, He will not delay. The Rewarder is coming and He bears the reward with Him according to every man's work.

Please note as well that the Rewarder is the Beginning and the End, the Alpha and Omega. Let me remind you these are the two terminal letters of the Greek alphabet. Alpha is the first letter and Omega in the last letter. There are no letters before or after these two which means, of course if He is Alpha and Omega, He is the Beginning and the End. Nothing before and nothing after. There is no one before Him and there is no one after Him.

The Rewarder is faithful. He brings His reward with Him. So He pronounces the blessing on those who are prepared, those who do His commandments and have right to the tree of life, who may enter in through the gates into the city. The Rewarder is just, faithful, and gracious. Inside the city are those who do His commandments. Outside are dogs, sorcerers, fornicators, murderers, idolaters, and liars.

This then is the warning, to expect a proper reward. We should expect what we deserve. But I must quickly say that by the grace of God we receive from His hand more than we deserve, because He, the Rewarder, the Alpha and the Omega, by the grace of God, tasted death for every man so you and I can be of those who go in and out through the gates into the city. Praise God!

As John concluded his book he was compelled to issue these serious warnings. I repeat them for you: exercise proper respect, these words are faithful and true; express proper reverence, for only God is worthy of worship; expect proper reward, for He who comes with His reward will give to every man according as his work shall be.

Of these serious warnings there can be no moderation. And from them no deviation. May the Lord help us to understand what this conclusion must mean to us!

Friend, this is the time for action! Do not delay. Believe on Jesus Christ now. He is the Saviour. He will give you peace and hope. All true believers have a secure hope for the life after death.

Chapter Fifty-Eight

JESUS' FINAL MESSAGE

Since they are the last recorded words of Jesus we ought to pay careful attention to them. Not only ought we pay attention but we also ought to help others to hear them.

With complete assurance of the authority and inerrancy of the Bible we proclaim its truth without apology. We believe what is given us in this Holy Book is what people need everywhere.

For us, last words are important, I suspect right now, perhaps you think of some loved one who died. Perhaps you recall with longing and bright memory those last words.

The words of Jesus are even more important than the words which we might say, and I'm eager to know what they are.

Now, my friend, here is JESUS' FINAL MESSAGE, the last one He gave. You'll find it in Revelation 22:16-21.

16 I Jesus have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things in the churches. I am the root and the offspring of David, and the bright and morning star.

17 And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.

18 For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book:

19 And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book.

20 He which testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly. Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus.

21 The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.

Jesus left us with several most stimulating WORDS to keep us pressing on.

The first Word; His Word of Universal Invitation

Be sure to notice the credentials of His office. He says He is the root and offspring of David. The Prophet Isaiah saw this 700 years before Christ when he was writing his prophecy. In the 11th chapter of his book, he saw it. He said that there would be a rod out of the stem of Jesse and the branch would grow out of his roots. Now let me read it exactly like it is, "And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a branch shall grow out of his roots." Isaiah 11:1. The root and off spring of David. Those are His credentials.

And I turn to Revelation the 5th chapter, verse 5, and I find there a similar expression when one of the elders told John not to weep because no one was found worthy to open the book and break its seals. And he said, "Weep not, behold the lion of the tribe of Judah, the root of David hath prevailed." His credentials give Him a unique right, a privilege to issue this word of universal invitation.

See how He put it, "Come." He said, "The Spirit and the bride say Come." He said, "Let him that heareth say come." He said, "Let him that is athirst come." And He said, "And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely" What does that say to you?

This is what it says to me. Here is the last universal invitation from Jesus, and all of His companions joining together to issue that invitation to come. So anyone who wills may take of the water of life freely. Praise the Lord! This is a universal invitation. Whoever will, let him come. This is Jesus' final word of universal invitation.

The second Word; His Word of Unique Confirmation

This a very necessary word today. No one has the right to exercise the judge's position over the Bible. For if anyone takes from or adds to, he shall have what the Lord said in these two verses, 18 and 19. "For I testify unto every man that hearth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book; And if any man shall take away

from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book."

Our Lord's unique confirmation of the words of the prophecy of this book attach to it a surety that forbids deceitful handling of the Bible. It's a sober word. No one has any right to add or subtract from this book. And that is also true of the entire Bible. I believe we have no right to alter the Bible! Jesus said there would be certain penalties attached to the one who added to or subtracted from the prophecy of this book.

Here our Lord's word of unique confirmation emphasizes the authority of the Bible, the authority of the Holy Book of the Living God. I sincerely believe, my friend, that if people today will take the Bible seriously for what it is, the Holy Book of the Living God, we will see a great revival break out in every denomination across our land. Amen! This is a word of unique confirmation which Jesus gives us. Indeed, we have no right to add or subtract from these words.

The third Word; His Word of Urgent Anticipation

And this is also an important word today. Maybe you have wondered, "When will the Lord come?" Quit fretting. Do not listen to those who set dates, or to those who would postpone the coming of the Lord. There are plenty of warnings in the Bible that we are to give no attention to those people. Be careful that you are not deceived.

Jesus issued a warning before His crucifixion about the one who would say, "My Lord delays his coming." We need to be on guard, as well, of those who come to say, "I have had a vision, Jesus is coming." and then try to set a date for His coming. No, No, my friend, that's not the point of our Lord's urgent anticipation, The point is this, we must be alert and ready. Jesus said, "Surely I come quickly," that means in a split second, without any delay. Oh yes, my friend, this is His word of urgent anticipation. It emphasizes His second coming; His coming for us, in great glory and power.

What is the believers response to this urgent anticipation? Just exactly like the Apostle John said, "Even so, come, Lord Jesus." Praise the Lord! He is coming, and He is coming soon. Maybe we can say He is coming sooner.

This is a word of urgent anticipation. These are stimulating words. Therefore, Jesus in His final message brings us these stimulating words to stir up our hope and faith: the word of universal invitation, "Whosoever will, let him come;" The word of unique confirmation, "Let nobody tamper with the Holy Book of God;" the word of urgent anticipation, He is coming, "And even so, come, Lord Jesus,"