The Beast and The Bride

Interpreting Revelation
in the light of history

Brad Molles
The Beast and The Bride

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material in this book, but it may not be sold or re-published without
the express permission of the author.
In grateful acknowledgment of His grace and guidance, I give thanks to the Lord for all He has given me. I want to also thank my dear and devoted wife Donna, who has had to listen to my ideas, act interested when I relate the endless historical material and opinions of scholars, read what I write and help me improve it. She has been my source of joy and encouragement.

_Ecclesiastes 9:9_

Enjoy life with the woman whom you love all the days of your fleeting life which He has given to you under the sun; for this is your reward in the life of your toil in which you have labored under the sun.
# The Beast and The Bride

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INTRODUCTION

I suppose that the many previous authors of works on Revelation felt they had something to add to the body of works already available. Maybe they had a unique insight into a particular prophetic vision or an interest in promoting a particular viewpoint. But all the authors of works on Revelation have at least one thing in common. They all build on the ideas of the interpreters that came before them. They take an interpretation from a previous work and build on it and add details to it or use it as the basis for an idea that would have never occurred to those previous generations of authors. In the same way I have tried to stand on the shoulders of the great scholars that came before me, using their research and writings to benefit my studies and ultimately you as the reader of this work. I have really written almost nothing new.

So why write another work on Revelation? Good question. After all, there have been hundreds of books already written on this interesting and complex subject.

It sometimes happens that a viewpoint becomes so popular and is so widely taught that other ideas are for a time pushed aside and forgotten. Such is the case in our day. For years the Futurist interpretation of Revelation has been the most often taught interpretation of Revelation in America. In recent years there has also been a resurgence of the Preterist interpretation of Revelation. But there is another interpretation, and that is the Historical interpretation which views Revelation as a grand overall view of the church in history, complete with its struggles, persecutions and triumphs. The Historical interpretation was the interpretation most widely accepted until the nineteenth century.

My purpose in writing this book was simply to revive a viewpoint that most Christians today do not realize even exists. I wanted to take what can be an almost overwhelming amount of information and condense it to the important facts in an easy to read handbook on the Historical interpretation of Revelation.

HOW DID WE GET HERE FROM THERE?

There are four basic styles of interpretation to the book of
Revelation. These are the Preterist, Historist, Futurist, and Spiritualist. Each of the four basic views have variances within themselves also. This book covers the historical interpretation of Revelation.

Because of the recent popularity of the futurist view of the book of Revelation, most people believe in it as if it were an unalterable truth of scripture. I was taught and believed this view until I studied prophecy and learned of the different views that were held concerning Revelation. Historically the protestant churches all believed in a historical interpretation of Revelation and believed the identity of the man of sin to be found in the Roman church. Such famous theologians as John Wycliffe, John Huss, Martin Luther, John Calvin, John Knox, Huldreich Zwingli, William Tyndale, King James, Sir Isaac Newton, John Wesley and many more, all shared this belief. Many of the great church confessions either name or imply that the pope is the man of sin.

Cotton Mather (1663-1728) wrote; "The oracles of God foretold the rising of an Antichrist in the Christian Church: and in the Pope of Rome, all the characteristics of that Antichrist are so marvelously answered that if any who read the Scriptures do not see it, there is a marvelous blindness upon them." From The Fall of Babylon by Cotton Mather quoted by LeRoy Froom in The Prophetic Faith of Our Fathers, Vol. 3, pg. 113.

Westminster Confession of Faith 1647 Chapter XXV, article VI: "There is no other head of the Church, but the Lord Jesus Christ; nor can the Pope of Rome, in any sense, be head thereof; but is that Antichrist, that man of sin, and son of perdition, that exalteth himself in the Church against Christ, and all that is called God."

How then did we start believing in a future antichrist, and the Futurist view of interpretation? During the Reformation, The Roman Church was under the pall of the protestant belief that the Pope was the man of sin. Therefore they had two other interpretations published as part of the Counter-Reformation.

In the late 16th and early 17th centuries the Jesuits published both the modern Preterist and modern Futurist views. In 1614 The
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Jesuit Alcazar of Seville was responsible for the Preterist view which puts all of Revelation in the first couple of centuries A.D. and names Nero as the man of sin.

In 1590 the Jesuit Francisco Ribera published a 500 page commentary on the man of sin. He put the first few chapters of Revelation in the first century. Then he went on to assign the remainder of Revelation to the last three and a half years at the end of time. He taught that the Jewish temple would be rebuilt, and that an individual antichrist would come, deny Christ, put himself up as God and conquer the world.

Another Jesuit, Emmanuel Lacunza, was influential in further promoting the futurist view. Lacunza wrote "The Coming of Messiah in Glory and Majesty," under the name Juan Josafat Ben-Ezra. The Jesuits had been expelled from Portugal in 1759, from France in 1764, from Spain and Naples in 1767. As a Jesuit in exile, Lacunza took on the identity of a Jewish convert. This information is taken from the introduction of the translation of his book into English by Edward Irving. Lacunza took Ribera's ideas and expanded on them, originating dispensationalism by teaching that Jesus would "rapture" His church to save them from a future antichrist. This book was very influential in bringing attention to the futurist view when it was published in English in 1827.

After this the family tree of the futurist view is easy to follow. Edward Irving (1792-1834), was the man who translated Lacunza's book into English. He was a Church of Scotland minister, he was involved in the Albury Park prophecy conferences. He taught extensively the ideas found in Lacunza's book. The Plymouth Brethren supported these views and one of their leaders, J.N. Darby (1800-1882), further promoted these ideas with a splash of his own ideas added. Dr. James H. Brooks was pastor of the Compton Avenue Presbyterian Church in St. Louis, and a follower of the teachings of Darby. C.I. Scofield gained his futurist ideas from Dr. Brooks. Scofield's reference bible has been one of the biggest influences on the doctrine yet.

The Spiritualist view sees Revelation completely allegorically and symbolic. This view does not have many followers and has never been a popular viewpoint.

In this book I have tried to present the historical view in a manner that is easy to understand. Rather than trying to give every
detail (which I do not know anyway), I chose to provide enough
detail to give the reader a good basic foundation for further study.
Many books written on specific topics are much more detailed and
I encourage the reader who would like to further his study of the
historical view to seek these out.

I am very aware of the many fine scholars and Godly men that
have held and taught different viewpoints on Revelation. Even
though the study of the book of Revelation can be very interesting
and rewarding, differences in our viewpoint on Revelation should
never be a divisive thing in the church. Eschatology is not a cardinal
doctrine and therefore we should have liberty and charity regarding
the views of others. Isaiah 1:18 says “Come now, and let us reason
together, saith the Lord…” I believe that it is good to investigate
the different viewpoints concerning Revelation in order to make an
informed or “reasoned” decision concerning the viewpoint we will
hold. In the end I think we will all be surprised that no matter what
viewpoint we hold we were only partially correct. God’s ways are so
much higher than ours that I do believe there will be a few surprises
on that great day. I hope and pray that if the Historical and
Amillennial interpretation of Revelation is new to the reader, that
they be like those “noble” Bereans that “…received the word with
all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether
those things were so.”
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Dating Revelation

Why would it matter when the book of Revelation was written? Beyond the historical interest of understanding when to date the writing of the book, one interpretation in particular stands or falls on the date Revelation was written. The Preterist interpretation, also known as Preterism, depends upon a pre 70 A.D. date for the writing of Revelation.

Preter means past or beyond. Preterism is an eschatological view which interprets Revelation along with Matthew 24 and some of Daniel as being fulfilled in connection with the fall of Jerusalem in 70 A.D. Therefore if Revelation was really written in 96 A.D. the preterist viewpoint loses the main pillar holding it up. So, as there are other evidences against Preterism, all that is necessary to prove is that Revelation indeed had a later date for its writing than 70 A.D.

Was Revelation written by John on the Isle of Patmos in 96 A.D. or was it written at an earlier date? Historical evidence points to the later date.

Polycarp (69 A.D. - 155 A.D.) was the Bishop of Smyrna and a martyr. Polycarp was the disciple of the apostle John who wrote Revelation. This would put Polycarp in a unique situation to hear first hand from John about the Revelation. Iranaeus (125 A.D. - 202 A.D.) was the Bishop of Lyons. He had been Polycarp's disciple and therefore one could assume that he would have heard about John and the Revelation from Polycarp. When speaking of the number of the Beast in the Apocalypse, he says: “for it (the Apocalypse) was seen no very long time ago; but almost in our age, towards the end of the reign of Domitian.” Domitian ruled the Roman Empire from 81 A.D. to 96 A.D.

Tertullian (b. 160 A.D.) was an ecclesiastical writer of the second and third centuries and considered one of the early church fathers. He wrote works such as “To The Martyrs,” “To Nations,” and “Apologetics.” He placed the first imperial persecution of Christians under Nero, where Christians were actually killed and was apparently confined to Rome. This was the fate of Peter and Paul, but no mention was made of John in this persecution. The second persecution Tertullian placed under Domitian, but this was by banishment, which we know that John suffered.
There is unbroken agreement on the date of revelation for three centuries.

The author of The People's New Testament, B.W. Johnson writes: "...but it is not until the sixth century that we find the opinion expressed that the banishment belonged to the persecution of the reign of Nero, and up to the twelfth century there are only two writers who endorse this date. They cannot be called witnesses, since the earliest of them was separated from the death of John by a period greater than that which separates us from the discovery of America by Christopher Columbus. Hence, it is no misstatement of the facts to say that the historical proof, in favor of the later date, is uniform, clear and convincing." (The People's New Testament, 1891).

Concerning internal evidence in Revelation for a later date of writing B.W. Johnson says "The historical conclusion is corroborated by convincing internal testimony." He gives the following points on the question of the date of Revelation.

(1.) "The condition of the churches indicated" in the second and third chapters renders the early date improbable. These churches were not founded before A.D. 55-58. Paul wrote to two of these churches, Ephesus and Colosse, in A.D. 62 or 63; Peter wrote to all the churches of that region several years later still; Paul wrote his second letter to Timothy, at Ephesus, probably as late as A.D. 67; in these letters there is no hint of John being in that section of the world, or of the spiritual decay revealed in the letters to the angels of the churches of Ephesus, Sardis and Laodicea; yet this theory requires us to believe that not later than A.D. 68 or 69, John found these churches spiritually dead. There is no reasonable doubt but that the second and third chapters of Revelation describe a condition which could only have arisen a generation later than the date of Paul’s last intercourse with these churches.

(2.) Godet notes the fact that an ecclesiastical organization reveals itself in the seven churches which did not reveal itself until about the close of the first century. In each church there is one man, "the angel of the church," through whom the whole church is addressed. There is no hint of any individual enjoying a distinction like this until about the beginning of the second (century).
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(3.) The expression, "The Lord’s-day," does not occur in the earlier apostolical writings. They always speak of the "First Day of the week" instead. [See Mt 28:1 Mr 16:2,9 Lu 24:1 Joh 20:1,19 Ac 20:7 1Co 16:2.] The term used in A.D. 68 was "the First Day of the week," but the writers of the second century from the beginning use "the Lord’s-day." This term, then, points to a period near the beginning of the second century as the date of Revelation.

(4.) The expression in Re 2:9 and Re 3:9 points to a complete separation between the church and the synagogue. This complete separation did not take place until the epoch of the destruction of Jerusalem. Such language as we find in these two places can only be accounted for by a fact so momentous as the overthrow of the Jewish state, and hence belongs to a later date. (The People's New Testament, 1891)

The real date for Revelation is only important to the Preterist view and therefore the Preterists need Revelation to fit the earlier date. The Futurist view and the Historical view in the vast majority of cases hold to the later date of 96 A.D, but could use the earlier date without changing their interpretations.

On this subject of dating Revelation I have found two invaluable resources. E.B. Elliott covers this in detail in the Horae Apocalypticae, Essay II, The Date of The Apocalypse. B.W. Johnson covers this in The People's New Testament, Introduction to Revelation. For a more in depth study of the dating of Revelation the books mentioned here are great places to start your research.
Revelation 1

PART i

REVELATION 1

REVELATION 1:1-3
"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: Who bare record of the word of God, and of the testimony of Jesus Christ, and of all things that he saw. 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."

These verses are the introduction to the book and tell us what its purpose is. John tells us in verse one that this is "The Revelation of Jesus Christ." This does not just mean that Jesus gave the vision to John but that the book reveals Jesus Christ, and his victory over Satan and the world. It might be better to say it reveals Jesus as victor over all enemies. It reveals Jesus as the Alpha and Omega, the first and last, (vs. 11), obvious references to God and Jesus being one. God is the first and the last according to Isaiah 44:6. Many verses back up this simple example that show the deity of Christ, that Christ and the Father are coequal, coexistent, and coeternal. This book reveals Jesus as glorified, (see his description in vs. 13-18). We see Him holding the seven candlesticks, which suggests his power over the seven spirits of the churches. His appearance is glorious, His hair white as snow or, shining with great light. Eyes that are as a flame, feet shining like brass. We notice that all parts of His body that can be seen outside His garment are radiant. His voice like many waters. The sound of great waves crashing on the shore or does this refer to the voice being heard by many nations and people? His countenance was like the shining of the sun. Out of His mouth was a sharp two-edged sword in Hebrews 4:12 which is the word of God. We know this is Jesus, He says again "I am the first and the last" verse 17, and "I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold I am alive evermore, Amen" in verse 18.

Returning to verse one; we see the further purpose of this book is to show what “must shortly come to pass.” Over the years there has
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been a lot of controversy over this phrase. For those who believe that Revelation was written before 70 A.D. the phrase refers to the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D. which would soon take place. For those who believe that the book was written in 96 A.D. the phrase takes the meaning of “quickly begin to be” and refers to events concerning the church throughout the ages.

I would think the phrase would be enough to cast some doubt in the validity of a two thousand years gap in the fulfillment of the Revelation prophecy. This is one of the problems with a futurist interpretation of the book of revelation.

This vision was sent by angelic messenger to John, who wrote it so that others, including not just the seven churches but you and I could be blessed by it. "Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy," verse 3.

How are we blessed by reading this book? This question has at least a twofold answer.

1) Through the reading of this book we come to see Jesus as he is presented here. As victor, ruler, all powerful, defeating all enemies, glorified, worthy of power, riches, wisdom, strength, honor and glory blessing. This we read in Rev. 5:12.

2) Through the reading of this book we are blessed in times of trial and tribulation because we see the wickedness is not prevailing. God has ordained these things to be, he foreknew all these events and has and will manage history to fit His own will. This way we do not feel forsaken or forgotten when under persecution. We realize that God has control even of adverse circumstances such as the Imperial persecutions and the Papal persecutions of the church. Those Christians knew they were not forsaken. Even when heavily persecuted they knew God was in control and would prevail in the end. According to Matthew 10:39 those who would lose their lives for Christ, gained their lives with Christ forever.

Isaiah 48:5 says; “I have even from the beginning declared it to thee; before it came to pass I shewed it thee: lest thou shouldest say, Mine idol hath done them, and my graven image, and my molten image, hath commanded them.”
Revelation 1

Abraham had faith to believe his son would be raised from the dead if God called him to be sacrificed because Abraham believed God’s promise to him concerning his son, which could not come to pass with his son dead.

In this same way if we understand God’s promises to us the circumstances don’t matter for God can do miracles and manage history to His own ends.

REVELATION 1:4-8
"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; 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, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever Amen. 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. 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."

John here is addressing the letter to the seven churches in Asia. They are seven literal churches in cities existing in that day. John sends blessings along with his letter, "grace be unto you and peace" from John, the seven spirits, and Jesus.

The Seven Churches:

There was not just one church in each city. The Revelation of Jesus was not addressed to a church building, these did not exist as we know of churches today. The letter was written to the many groups of believers lead by different pastors, probably meeting in houses or open fields. All the different groups were considered the church of that city by this book, and was meant to be read in each city be each group.
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By John including Jesus as having given the blessing to the churches John has added the authority of Christ to the blessing and emphasizes the authority in verse five by saying Jesus is; the faithful witness (John 8:14,18). The first begotten of the dead (Colossians 1:18). The prince of the kings of the earth (Ephesians 1:20).

From the middle of verse five to verse eight, there is further identification and praise of Jesus. He is the one; that loved us (John 13:34), and washed us from our sins in his own blood (Hebrews 9:12-14). He has made us kings and priests or a kingdom of priests unto God (Exodus 19:6). To him be glory and dominion for ever and ever Amen. He comes on clouds and every eye will see him (no secret rapture here) all the earth will cry in fear and sorrow because they did not know him. He is the eternal one who has always been and always will be the Almighty God. It is exciting to see the powerful way in which our lord is described.

REVELATION 1:9-10
"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. I was in the spirit on the Lords day, and heard behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet."

In verse nine John begins the actual telling of the vision and how he received it. Two things stand out in the first half of verse nine.

1) We all could learn a lesson from John's humility. He calls himself our brother and truly he was their brother and ours now. But as the last living apostle of Jesus, he carried more wisdom and personal firsthand knowledge of Jesus than anyone else at that time. He was always close to Jesus and refers to himself as the disciple who Jesus loved in John 13:23. But here he claims not to be pastor or head elder or to have more authority than others, but to be a brother and companion in the tribulation. Probably the greatest spiritual leader alive at the time and he makes no great claims, but in humility counts us brothers with him. This is truly an example of Jesus' command in Matthew 23:12. John humbled himself and God exalted him and gave him this vision. John truly had a loving character. Did he learn this from Jesus as the disciple who Jesus loved? Ecclesiastical history tells
Revelation 1

us that John, when he was too old to walk strongly, was carried into
church saying to others "little children, love one another."

2) John calls himself their companion in tribulation. In the King
James bible this says only "companion in tribulation" the word "the"
is not there. The modern translations say "companion in the
tribulation" (see the NASV). The article "the" is in the greek so the
modern translations include it. This may seem insignificant to some,
but when compared to Revelation 7:14 where the futurists
interpretation says these were taken out of the great tribulation, the
futurists are referring to the seven year period of future tribulation.
However the word "the" is not in Revelation 7:14 in KJV either. John
has given us a time reference, if he was a companion in "the"
tribulation mentioned later as "the" tribulation in Revelation 7:14, how
could they be separated by any significant amount of time as the
futurist interpretation would claim? The meaning in both places seems
to fit the idea of the Christians having tribulation in the world in
general. Jesus said "In the world ye shall have tribulation" (John
16:33). Jesus said we would have tribulation but in John 17:15 he
prays, "I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but
that thou shouldest keep them from the evil."

Verse nine goes on to say "in the kingdom and patience of Jesus
Christ." John, like us had a dual citizenship. He was in the world with
its tribulations but at the same time he was a citizen of the kingdom of
God and was patiently awaiting the Lord's coming. If John believed he
was in the kingdom of God then the kingdom of God was established
already back in John's time. Therefore, those who believe that the
kingdom being established is a future event are not taking into
account the testimony of John.

John says he was on the island called Patmos. Patmos is one of the
Dodecanese islands in the Aegean sea located off the coast of Asia
Minor, (Turkey). John was banished to Patmos for being a Christian in
the fourteenth year of the reign of the emperor Domitian (81-96 A.D.)
which would be approximately 94-95 A.D. John was recalled to
Ephesus by emperor Nerva in 96 A.D. Arguments abound on the
dates of John’s banishment. Those who interpret the events in
Revelation as referring to the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D. need
an earlier date and use Nero as the emperor who banished John about
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65-68 A.D. For more information on the dating of Revelation see Dating Revelation in the beginning of this book.

John was in the spirit. Certainly he was baptized in the Holy Spirit and was probably worshipping God in the spirit on the Lord's day. The Lord's day was Sunday, the first day of the week. This day was set aside by the early church as the day to worship God in remembrance of Christ's resurrection on this day of the week. So we can deduce that John was going through personal worship of God and meditation upon Him on the Lord's day when the vision came to him.

REvelation 1:11
"Saying, I am the 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"

John has just previously heard a great voice. This voice says "I am the Alpha and Omega, the first and last." This identifies the voice with Jesus who commands John to write what he is going to see in a book and send the book to the seven churches in Asia. These seven churches are mentioned in the order they are placed on the map making a rough triangle. From the bottom left of the triangle that made the seven churches: first Ephesus, then Smyrna to the north, further north Pergamos, then southeast to Thyatira, southeast to Sardis, southeast to Philadelphia, southeast to Laodicea and straight west to Ephesus again.

Revelation 1:12-18
"And I turned to see the voice that spake with me. And being turned, I saw seven golden candlesticks; 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. His head and his hairs were white like wool, as white as snow; and his eyes were as a flame of fire; and his feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace; and his voice as the sound of many waters. And he had in his right hand seven stars: and out of his mouth went a sharp two-edged sword: and his countenance was as the sun
Revelation 1

shineth in his strength. 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; I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive forvermore Amen; and have the keys of hell and death."

John turns to see who is speaking to him and sees the glorified Christ in verses 13-18. Shining like the sun, radiant in glory and power, having the seven spirits in his power (which is the working of the Holy Spirit) and also the keys of hell and death. This is an indication of what our spiritual bodies will be like. We are sown in corruption, raised in incorruption (1 COR 15:42, 51-54). The bible says that we shall be like him. Because Jesus has the keys of hell and death, we need not fear them. Jesus rules over them, he has defeated them, this is why Paul could say "O death where is thy sting, O grave, where is thy victory," 1 Cor. 15:55. We are free from them because Jesus has the keys. Jesus' appearance was so fantastic and awe inspiring that words can't describe it. But we get the feel of it in verse 17 when John says "and when I saw him I fell at his feet as dead. And he laid his right hand upon me, (the right hand is the hand of blessing) saying fear not I am the first and the last." Isn't this just like our gentle Lord? So great and so powerful, people will hide under rocks and beg hills to fall on them so that Jesus might not see them. Yet to those who love him, he is a loving and tender and concerned Lord.

REVELATION 1:19-20
"Write the things which thou hast seen, and the things which are, and the things which shall be hereafter; the mystery of the seven stars which thou sawest in my 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."
Revelation 2

John was told to write what he would see, both the things which are, these are the things that were happening to John's time, and the things which shall be hereafter, these are the future events that John would see in this vision. Jesus then explains part of the mystery of the first vision which is the vision of the glorified Christ. In verse 16 there were seven stars in the Lord's hand. Jesus reveals these to be the seven angels of the seven churches. These might symbolize the leading elders or bishops of the churches, or more likely represent the church in the heavenlies. If this is true than the principalities see the church represented this way. The seven candlesticks are seen to be representing the seven churches themselves.

REVELATION 2: The seven churches in Asia

Chapters two and three of Revelation show the Lord's perception of each of the seven churches. Each church could read about itself and its fellow churches. Even though these were written to seven literal churches of the time, we can still appraise the churches of today by these letters. We can compare ourselves personally also, the warnings and promises are still good for us today.

The seven churches have been interpreted by some as referring to seven church ages in history. Many modern interpreters have compared this contemporary time to the Laodicean church and therefore call this the "Laodicean church age.” This view has each church age in succession from the early New Testament time of the first century until now. In this view we are now in the seventh and last church age and therefore Jesus must come soon. Here is a general outline of the church ages idea;

Ephesus—the apostolic church, from Christ to about A.D. 100.
Smyrna—the persecuted church, 100 to 313.
Pergamos—the exalted church, 313 to 538.
Thyatira—the church in the wilderness, 538 to the 1560s.
Sardis—the church of the Reformation, from the 1560s to the 1790s.
Philadelphia—the judgment-hour church, from the 1790s to the 1840s.
Laodicea—the lukewarm, end time church, from the 1840s to the second coming of Christ.

However, we can find aspects of each church in every age.
The Beast and The Bride

Because of this fact I believe that it is more correct to compare each church along with its weaknesses and strengths to where we are personally in our relationship with the Lord. Where we are weak we need to repent and allow the Lord to cleanse us so that we will be included in those He says are overcomers. We also need to keep in mind that when reading chapters one to three they are not part of the predictive Revelation and are warnings to churches in existence at the time. Another argument against the "Laodicean age" is that we now have more missionaries spreading the gospel to more people than at any other time in history. This fact would belie a lukewarm church. There are multitudes of believers willing to die for their belief and in fact that have sacrificed themselves in order to believe or spread the gospel. Complacency is something we have to battle in our human natures when we get used to something. We need to keep the "first love," hold fast to what we believe and be those who walk with God in the resurrection.

In each of the letters to the seven churches, there are four recurring phrases;

"These things saith he" to Ephesus 2:1, to Smyrna 2:8, to Pergamos 2:12, to Thyatira 2:18, to Sardis 3:1, to Philadelphia 3:8, to Laodicea 3:14.


"He that hath an ear to hear let him hear" to Ephesus 2:7, Smyrna 2:11, Pergamos 2:17, Thyatira 2:29, Sardis 3:6, Philadelphia 3:13, Laodicea 3:22. This is warning to the churches to take seriously what God is saying to each church. Those with a spiritual ear to hear, would also do what the Spirit said and thereby be "overcomers." They would not be in danger of the second death (2:11) which is spiritual death and means separation from God in the lake of fire.

REVELATION 2:1-7
"Unto the angel of the church of Ephesus write: These things
Revelation 2

saith he that holdeth the seven stars in his right hand, who walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks; I know thy works, and thy labor, 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: And hast borne and hast patience, and for my name's sake hast labored and hast not fainted. Nevertheless, I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love. Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and I will remove thy candlestick from out of his place, except thou repent. But this thou hast, that thou hateth the deeds of the Nicolaitanes, which I also hate. 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."

It was in Ephesus that John spent his later years, it was his own church. John wrote his gospel, three epistles and Revelation from Ephesus. Paul also wrote three epistles that pertained to Ephesus. Ephesians, and 1 and 2 Timothy. Timothy spent most of his time in Ephesus and was martyred there in the same persecution which exiled John to Patmos under the emperor Domitian.

The letter was addressed to the angel of the Church, which was probably the leader or bishop in charge of the Church in that city not just one local body. "He that holdeth the seven stars in his right hand" is referring to Jesus and his power over the churches. "Who walketh in the midst of the seven candlesticks" this is an interesting statement. It is Christ who is supposed to be walking in the midst of our churches. But notice that in Revelation 3:20 Jesus pictures himself standing at the door knocking to be let in to his own church. We commonly use this verse to witness to the unsaved and show them that Christ is waiting to be let into their lives. However Jesus is speaking to a Christian church in verse 20. Do we let Jesus have free reign to walk in the midst of our churches and do as he wishes or do we keep Jesus locked outside with our own traditions that do not leave room for the free moving of God? Do we keep Him locked out of the deepest recesses or our hearts? Allowing Him only so deep but not deeper, afraid that he will hurt us or uncover our secret sins?
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Jesus knew the works of the Ephesians, how hard they worked for the kingdom and their patient waiting. They did not let evil into the church. They did not allow false apostles to creep into the church.

These false apostles claimed to know Christ and have knowledge others did not have. Paul warned us of those who would preach another gospel in Galatians 1:6-9. Paul also had the Corinthians “examine yourselves” as proof of his apostleship. Jesus Christ was in them and that was because Paul had preached to them, 2 Cor 13:3-5. The Ephesian church was not deceived, the false apostles were proved to be liars and expelled.

The Ephesians were recognized by Jesus as having worked hard and labored for God (vs. 2-3) and not fainted from their work. What could be found wrong with a church like this that was diligently doing the Lord's work? Jesus says, "thou hast left thy first love" (vs. 4).

They were burning out, they did things out of habit not out of love for Jesus. How often do we ourselves or as a church do things because we know we're supposed to, because it's expected of us, or simply because we've always done it? Jesus said these are the wrong motives. We, like the Ephesians, need to be motivated and do things because we love him who first loved us.

In verse 5 Jesus said to remember how they used to be, "you once did things out of love but now you have just made it a habit. Remember and repent, do your first works." If they did not, Jesus told them that he would remove the angel’s candlestick from its place. In other words, God would cause this church to fail or be removed if the leaders did not start turning this church around.

After threatening to remove the candlestick from out of its place, which seemed to be hard words from the Lord. Jesus comes back in verse 6 and gives a word of encouragement to his sheep. "But this thou hast, thou hastest the deeds of the Nicolaitanes, which I also hate." Who were the Nicolaitanes? It is thought that they were a sect who advocated immoral conduct as the proper way of life and along with the false apostles tried to unite the pagan immoralities with Christian worship. Ephesus was the center of the pagan cult worshipping Diana. The temple of Diana in Ephesus was one of the seven wonders of the ancient world. She was goddess of fertility, and her worship included ritualistic prostitution. It was already difficult in Ephesus and other places to be a chaste person. But to be faced with such perversion trying to infiltrate and unite with Christianity was an
Revelation 2

extra burden, and some churches fell to it such as Pergamos and Thyatira. In verse 7 "he that hath an ear let him hear." To him who overcomes Jesus promised they would eat of the tree of life which is in paradise, a promise of something better than the riches and luxury of great Ephesus. The very phrase "to him that overcometh" indicates there will be some who do not overcome. And their fate? The second death. Jesus said he would remove their candlestick from out of its place. I hope that all Christians today will have ears to hear this message and overcome.

NICOLAITANES:
Eusebius, Church History, CHAPTER 29
Nicolaus and the Sect named after him
At this time the so-called sect of the Nicolaitans made its appearance and lasted for a very short time. Mention is made of it in the Apocalypse of John. They boasted that the author of their sect was Nicolaus, one of the deacons who, with Stephen, were appointed by the apostles for the purpose of ministering to the poor. Clement of Alexandria, in the third book of his Stromata, relates the following things concerning him. "They say that he had a beautiful wife, and after the ascension of the Saviour, being accused by the apostles of jealousy, he led her into their midst and gave permission to any one that wished to marry her. For they say that this was in accord with that saying of his, that one ought to abuse the flesh. And those that have followed his heresy, imitating blindly and foolishly that which was done and said, commit fornication without shame. But I understand that Nicolaus had to do with no other woman than her to whom he was married, and that, so far as his children are concerned, his daughters continued in a state of virginity until old age, and his son remained uncorrupt. If this is so, when he brought his wife, whom he jealously loved, into the midst of the apostles, he was evidently renouncing his passion; and when he used the expression, 'to abuse the flesh,' he was inculcating self-control in the face of those pleasures that are eagerly pursued. For I suppose that, in accordance with the command of the Saviour, he did not wish to serve two masters, pleasure and the Lord. But they say that Matthias also taught in the same manner that we ought to fight against and abuse the flesh, and not give way to it for the sake of pleasure, but strengthen the soul by faith and knowledge." So much concerning those who then attempted
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to pervert the truth, but in less time than it has taken to tell it became entirely extinct.

From Irenæus of Lyons, Against All Heresies, 1:26. The Nicolaitanes are the followers of that Nicolas who was one of the seven first ordained to the diaconate by the apostles. They lead lives of unrestrained indulgence. The character of these men is very plainly pointed out in the Apocalypse of John, [when they are represented] as teaching that it is a matter of indifference to practise adultery, and to eat things sacrificed to idols. Wherefore the Word has also spoken of them thus: "But this thou hast, that thou hastest the deeds of the Nicolaitanes, which I also hate."

REVELATION 2:8-11
"And unto the angel of the church in Smyrna write; these things saith the first and the last, which was dead, and is alive; 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 of the synagogue of Satan. 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. 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."

The bishop of Smyrna at this time was Polycarp, who according to Irenæus was appointed bishop by John himself. This church was a poor church (verse. 9), but Jesus calls them rich. The Lord had no words of rebuke for this church that had kept themselves pure and was suffering persecution, only words of comfort and promise. In verse 8 the Lord calls himself "the first and the last, which was dead and is alive." This to a church about to suffer great tribulation. "Fear none of the things which that shalt suffer" Jesus is telling them, if you lose your life for my sake you will be alive with me.

Jesus lets them know that he already suffered but has defeated death and they will partake of his resurrection, "be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life" (verse 10). "He that
Revelation 2

overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death" (verse 11). This was a church being persecuted and about to go through more. "Ten days" has a couple of possible meanings and since we can not be sure the commentators vary in opinions. Ten days could be counted on the principle of a day for a year which runs through this book and would indicate ten years. This was the duration of the Diocletian persecution of the churches. Or it could be a reference to the frequency and abundance of the persecution as pointed out in Adam Clarke’s commentary with scriptures such as Genesis 31:7, Numbers 14:22, Daniel 1:20. In Albert Barne’s commentary he points out that this may indicate a few days or a short time as in Gen 24:55, 1 Sam 25:38, Dan 1:12. Others have pointed out that it may refer to the ten imperial persecutions. Whatever the exact interpretation might be the scriptures indicate a brutal time of persecution but one with a definite end. They would die physical deaths, but Jesus tells them if they overcame they would not die the spiritual second death.

REVELATION 2:12-17
"And to the angel of the church in Pergamos write; These things saith he which hath the sharp sword with two edges; 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. 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. So hast thou also them that hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitanes, which thing I hate. Repent or else I will come quickly, and will fight against them with the sword of my mouth. 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."

In verse 12 the Lord begins the letter to Pergamos with "these things saith he which hath the sword with two edges". In verse 13 the
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Lord said that he knew their works and where they dwelt. Those in Pergamos had held fast to Jesus' name and had not denied the faith and even suffered martyrdom. They lived where Satan's seat is and where Satan dwelled. When the Lord mentions Satan's seat and where Satan dwelled, he is probably referring to the fact that Pergamos was a seat of emperor worship where incense was burned before a statue of the emperor as to a god. In Pergamos, there was also an altar to Jupiter or Zeus, and a temple of Esclapius, a healing god shaped like a serpent (Satan).

It would seem that with all that evil in the society this church was doing fairly well. But in verse 12 Jesus said he had the sharp sword as a warning of his power. In verse 14 Christ says "but I have a few things against thee." Apparently Pergamos was also a stronghold of Balaamite and Nicolaitane teachers which had infiltrated the church with the sexual vices associated with them. In Numbers 31:16 & 25 the bible says that Balaam's advice to the Israelites caused them to play the harlot with Midianite women. The teachers in the church of Pergamos had caused them to commit fornication by teaching their false doctrines. In verse 16 Jesus warns "repent or else I will come to thee quickly and I will fight against them with the sword of my mouth." This is the sharp sword that he started his letter of warning with in verse 12. We see in verse 17 the promise to those who overcome these things in the church. God will give them hidden manna, spiritual food from God that the sinners do not have and do not know about, this is the same as the fruit of the tree of life as in Revelation 2:7. God will give to the overcomer a white (pure) stone and make him part of the temple of God, and give him a new name, the name of God (see Rev 3:12). The white stone has many historical references. In ancient times judges would pronounce the verdict by giving a white or black stone. White for innocence and black for guilty. There was also a custom of giving a white stone (tessera) with a name inscribed on it to special guests or friends that would guarantee hospitality when it was produced. These were like open invitations to feasts or homes. The idea being conveyed in this verse is that the possessor of the white stone would be counted as innocent having his sins forgiven and that he would be welcome to the marriage feast of the Lamb. This was something that no one could take away.

Jesus wants his church to be separate from society, even while living among it. As Christians we live in society but we are not to
follow society's rules of conduct. Sexual uncleanness is not allowed in the Lord's church, thus the warning in verse 16. It does not matter what society says is acceptable or what may appeal to our human natures. We as Christians must follow God whose ways are higher than ours. We must strive to reach the high place of God's standards, not to fall to the low gutter level of the world's standards. Some who read that statement that a Christian must strive to enter into the place that God would have us to be will not like it because of the word "strive" but I did not say it, Jesus did in Luke 13:21.

REVELATION 2:18-29
"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; I know thy works, and charity and service, and faith, and thy patience, and thy works; the last to be more than the first. 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. And I gave her space to repent of her fornication; and she repented not. Behold, I will cast her into a bed, and them that commit adultery with her into great tribulation, except they repent of their deeds. 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. But unto you I say, and unto the rest in Thyatira, as many as have not this doctrine, and which have not known the depth of Satan, as they speak; I will put upon you non other burden. But that which ye have already hold fast till I come. And he that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations: And he shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers: even as I received of my father. And I will give him the morning star. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches."

Just as in the letters to the other churches, Jesus uses part of his
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description from Chapter 1 to emphasize who is speaking. Here Jesus shows himself as having "eyes like unto a flame of fire." He sees the inner man and the hearts of man are laid open to him, he knows their sinful hearts. Jesus recognized their works. They had charity and service to others and God. They had faith and patience. They were growing in zeal, for verse 19 says "and thy works; the last to be more than the first." This was the opposite of the Ephesian church that had the works but was losing their first love.

There still seemed to be a problem with the church though. Jesus said, "I have a few things against thee." This church that was so on fire for God seemed to be suffering a woman to bring the pagan sexual vices into the church. This woman was probably a prominent devotee to Diana. Thyatira was famous for a great temple to Artemis or Diana. This false female deity was the same as Ashtoreth the goddess of the Zidonians, which was worshipped with sexual rites. Jezebel was a Zidonian princess who brought Baal worship and probably Ashtoreth worship to Israel. Although it was originally introduced by Solomon (1 Kings 11:5). God hated these abominations. This woman likened to Jezebel by Jesus, attached herself to the now becoming popular Christian church in Thyatira but insisted on the right to teach and practice the pagan licentious indulgences. She was apparently influencing a lot of people to also indulge in these practices, and nobody in authority in the church was doing much about it. In verse 20 Jesus said they suffered the woman to teach and seduce his servants to commit fornication. Jesus said that he had given her a chance to repent and she did not repent (vs. 21).

Therefore unless she and her deceived paramours repent, they will be given great tribulation. In fact Christ says unless they repent they would be killed, spiritually probably. But we should not ignore the fact that God in His wisdom and judgment has caused catastrophic events to take place and lives to be lost because people would not repent after repeated warnings. Jesus knows and searches the hearts of men and will judge them according to their works (vs. 23). Those who have not followed this devilish doctrine, Christ graciously gives no other burden. Sometimes just keeping ourselves clean in the midst of an ungodly and unclean society or even a troubled church is all the work the Lord requires. This shows us that there were some Christians keeping themselves clean and God was pleased with them.
Revelation 3

But the church city wide had accepted this doctrine which he calls the depths of Satan in verse 24. Those who remain pure, Christ exhorts to hold fast to what they are doing until Jesus comes. He who overcomes will rule with Christ (vs. 26 & 27). Christ will give them the morning star (himself; see 2 Pet 1:19). Still Christ exhorts them and us, "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith to the churches."

REVELATION 3

REVELATION 3:1-6
"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. Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die: for I have not found thy works perfect before God. 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. 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. 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. He that hath an ear, let him hear the Spirit saith unto the churches."

Jesus describes himself as the one holding the seven Spirits of God and the seven stars, an indication of his power and authority over the church. Jesus says, "I know thy works, that thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead." Jesus was telling the church in Sardis that because they existed they thought they were a live healthy church. Jesus said they were dead. This may refer to the church living on its reputation which would be an allusion to the city of Sardis itself. In the 6th century B.C., Sardis had been one of the richest, most powerful cities on earth. The great earthquake of 17 A.D. ruined Sardis financially and physically. Rome contributed ten million sesterces to the rebuilding of Sardis but it never attained its former
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glory. Thus, Christ's allusion that they had a name but were dead. Jesus tells them to "strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die." Apparently what little good works or faith they had left they were getting ready to give up on. Jesus exhorts them to strengthen those things and in verse 5 to remember what they had been taught and do them. Jesus tells them to "hold fast and repent."

Sardis had been taught right but it seems their conversion had been nominal. They had been hearers of the word and not doers, "deceiving their own selves" (see James 1:21-27). Jesus was telling them to be doers also or he would come on them as a thief. This does not mean that Christ comes sneaking around so he could catch them doing something wrong. But that if they weren't ready he would come at a time when they did not expect him. Even in this dead church which on top of being deceived may have embraced pagan worship also, there were those who had not defiled themselves (vs.4).

These "few" names will walk in white (purity) with Jesus, "for they are worthy." "He that overcometh" in verse 5 shows us our ever merciful Lord. If they would obey and repent as verse 3 tells them, they would not have their names blotted out of the book of life. Blotted out meant erased, which logically implies that they had been in the book of life because of their belief in Christ. But now they had become so defiled that Christ was warning them of the ultimate consequences of disobedience without repentance. They would have their names removed from the book of life. On the judgment day Christ would not "confess his name before my father, and before his angels" (MATTHEW 10:32-33). "He that hath an ear, let him hear" and do and be not deceived (vs. 6). All this to a Christian church, not the unsaved.

REVELATION 3:7-13

"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; 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 work, and hast not denied my name. 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,
Revelation 3

and to know that I have loved thee. Because thou hast kept
the work 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. Behold, I come quickly: hold
that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown. 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 name. He that hath an ear, let
him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches."

Jesus says, he is holy, true, and has the key of David, he opens
doors no one can shut and shuts them so no one can open them. In
other words, Jesus is rightly saying that he controls all things. He has
the key of David, meaning that he has the key or control over the
kingdom that he established while on earth during his ministry. This
kingdom also contains the new Jerusalem in which the saints will
spend eternity with God. All this Jesus says to the humble
Philadelphian church.

The Philadelphian church was not very powerful or influential, but
Jesus is on their side, and what he establishes no one can undo. Just
as in the other churches Jesus knew their works, but this time there is
not one word of reproof here. He tells them he has opened a door
for them and even though they are not strong in size or number, no
one will shut the door on this church or hinder it because they have
kept faithful and not denied the name of Jesus. Because they had only
a "little strength" (vs. 8), they trusted in God for his strength. In 2
COR. 12:9 God says, "My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength
is made perfect in weakness." Paul then says in 2 COR. 12:10; "for
when I am weak, then am I strong." When the Philadelphian church
was weak they acknowledged their need for God's help and God came
through for them, he always does.

In verse 9 Jesus tells this church that he will cause the ungodly
pagans and those who say they are Jews and are not true Jews but
servants of Satan to be humbled. They will come to them and bow
down to worship them and they will know that Jesus loves the church.
Jesus told the Jewish leaders that they were of their father the devil.
"If God were your father, ye would love me ...Why do ye not
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understand my speech? Even because ye cannot hear my word. Ye are of your father, the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do....He speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it" John 8:42-44. The Jews in Philadelphia were probably trying to teach Jewish fables and customs (circumcision and adherence to the law) which kept themselves in bondage. Paul warned against such as these in Galatians 2:14-16, 4:9, 5:1 and Paul says in Titus 1:14 "Not giving heed to Jewish fables, and commandments of men, that turn from the truth."

The church in Smyrna was good and faithful, but would be persecuted. Here, the philadelphian church was promised to be kept from temptation or spared persecution. These were both good churches, but God in His wisdom chose to deal with each differently. "Behold I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown" (vs. 11). Jesus promised them that if they hold on and not lose faith, that no one would lose their crown of life. This crown is symbolic of power, glory, and eternal life in Christ. Paul calls it a crown of righteousness in 2 Tim. 4:8, and an incorruptible (eternal) crown in 1 Cor. 9:25 and the same message that Jesus gives the Philadelphian church is echoed by the Holy Spirit through James in James 1:12; "Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him."

In verses 12 and 13, Jesus tells the church that those who overcome this world and live for him would be made into pillars in the temple, Jesus himself is the chief cornerstone. "They will go no more out," this means they will live in the temple in the new Jerusalem where God is. They will never again be out of the direct literal presence of the Lord. They will live with the prestige of a kingdom of priests, with God's name written on them. Everyone carries a mark. Either the name of God is written on us or, the Beasts, Satan's. In heaven we will have a new name, incorruptible bodies, and be forever with the Lord in paradise, these are some of the mysterious joys of heaven.

REVELATION 3:14-22
"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; I know they works,
Revelation 3

that thou are neither cold nor hot; I would thou wert
cold or hot. So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither
cold not hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth. 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, I council
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. As many
as I love, I rebuke and chasen: be zealous therefore, and
repent. 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. To him that overcometh
will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also
overcome, and am set down with my father in his throne. He
that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto
the churches."

To the Laodicean church, Jesus describes himself as "the Amen,
the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God" in
Colosians 1:15 it says, "who is the image of the invisible God, the first
born of every creature." This statement, "the first born of every
creature can also be translated as "the original bringer forth." In other
words, the one from which all other things were born or brought into
existence. This same thought introduces Jesus to us in the book of
John. John 1:1-2 "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was
with God and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning
with God." "The Amen" refers to the fact that Jesus was the Word of
God. God spoke all things into existence with the Word. Jesus as the
Amen expresses the agreement that God had within Himself to bring
forth all creation.

Laodicea was a lukewarm church, no fire, no zeal. They trusted in
their own selves and their own riches, rather than God. It would
seem by the statement "I would thou wert cold or hot" that Christ
would rather have a cold dead church or outright opposition to
lukewarmness. I believe Christ's opposition to lukewarmness comes
because with an on fire zealous church he makes his kingdom grow.
With opposition, his kingdom is purged and strengthened. But
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lukewarmness is indifference, apathy. It is hard to change people who think their okay and aren't. They have no witness, they stand for nothing and therefore the church stagnates instead of growing.

In verse 16 Jesus has a strong statement to this lukewarm church, "I will spue thee out of my mouth." What made them lukewarm or apathetic was their apparent lack of need for God, they trusted in their riches. In verse 17 Jesus tells them why he dislikes the way they are and will reject them. Because they said "I am rich, and increased with goods and have need of nothing." The story Jesus told in Luke 12:16-21 of the rich man and his farm of prosperity shows how a man can trust in riches rather than God. But God said; "Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee." Jesus said "So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God."

Laodicea was a great banking center, very rich. After the earthquake in 60 A.D. leveled the city it was the banks that financed the rebuilding. Laodicea refused help from the Roman senate, "They had need of nothing." Jesus said they didn't even know they were wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked. The city of Laodicea was famous for its wealth, for glossy black garments made from wool grown in the Lycus valley, and for a medical school which produced a Collyrium which was used as a salve for eye troubles. The wording of verses 17 & 18 are certainly based on these activities.

In verse 18 Jesus counsels Laodicea to buy from Jesus gold tried in the fire that they may be rich. This is in antithesis to trusting in worldly wealth which Jesus said in verse 17 made them poor. And to buy from Jesus white raiment that they may be clothed with holiness and not appear naked, as they would in their worldly black garments. Jesus counsels them to anoint their eyes with eyesalve, "that thou mayest see" spiritual things, and not be blind as in verse 17.

In verse 19 he says he loves them, that is why he is rebuking them. He wants to see them repent and be zealous so that he can bless them and not have to judge them harshly.

We see a curious picture in verse 20. Jesus is standing at the door of his own church knocking to be let in. Jesus was not in this church he was not able to help them the way he would because of their own apathy toward his will. Jesus stood there at the door waiting for someone to answer the door, repent, so that he could enter. The Jesus would come in to them and have a communion with them.

Jesus said that those who repent, who overcome this sinful apathy,
Revelation 3

that he would grant to them to sit with him in his throne. I would like to sit with Jesus in his throne. The Lord tells us to be overcomers as he also overcame sin and death, and sat down with God in his throne. Jesus was tempted but overcame, now all things are made his footstool. If we overcome, we share his glory. Let all those who can hear the words of the Lord, hear and obey.

It may be interesting to note that both of the cities where the good churches existed, Smyrna and Philadelphia, still exist today. Smyrna is known today as Izmir, and Philadelphia as Alesher. Of the five remaining churches, only Pergamos exists today and is known as Bergamum.
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\textit{PART ii}

\textbf{REVELATION 4}

REVELATION 4:1-5
"After this I looked, and, behold, a door was opened in heaven: and the first voice which I heard was as it were a trumpet talking with me: which said, Come up hither, and I will shew thee things which must be hereafter. 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 jasper and a sardine stone: and there was a rainbow round about the throne, in sight like unto an emerald. 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. 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."

Chapter four begins the predictive part of the book. Yet Revelation chapters four and five are really visions, scenes of heaven. Revelation four is a vision of God the creator.

John looks and sees a door open in heaven and a loud voice commands him "Come up hither." God wanted to reveal to John what was going to happen in this world as related to the church "hereafter" which means after the vision in 95 A.D. Immediately, John is in the spirit and sees the vision of heaven, a wondrous vision of God on the throne. God is shown on the throne in all his glory. No matter what happens, God is always ruling and in control. God is seen glowing, radiant. John sees that He is surrounded by a rainbow for God on His throne is glowing yellow, red, and green. The rainbow is significant in that it signifies not only God's glory, but his covenant with man to preserve the world from another great flood.

When reading about the twenty four elders most people hold the classic interpretation of what they are, that is; The twenty four elders it would seem, relay to us the uniting of the old and new covenants of
Revelation 4

God with man by Jesus. They sit upon thrones and represent the church triumphant. The twelve tribes and the twelve apostles are the foundation stock that builds the church and the New Jerusalem. The twenty four elders are numbered with the redeemed and are human beings. In Revelation 21, the twelve tribes are the gates of the city of New Jerusalem and the apostles are the twelve foundations of the city. The crowns on their heads in verse 4 are the crowns of life, righteousness, etc. In Matt 19:28 Jesus said that the disciples would sit on twelve thrones and judge the twelve tribes of Israel. The twenty four courses of priests instituted by David in 1 Chron 24:3-19 may be one of the patterns of heavenly things in the temple. Possibly the reason there are twelve tribes and twelve apostles is to match the heavenly pattern. It is possible that they are a representation of the priesthood of the believer since the priesthood was divided into twenty four courses

In The Peoples New Testament, B.W. Johnson relates a different idea. By examining all the occurrences in scripture of the twenty four elders he shows that the twenty four elders are of “kindred character” to the four living creatures and the angels. The elders and the living creatures are together about the throne, Rev 4:4. When the cherubim give glory to God, the elders also worship, Rev 4:10. Together the cherubim and elders sing the new song Rev 5:9. When the angels honor the Lamb, these unite in saying, Amen Rev 5:14. When the innumerable multitude of redeemed, clothed in white robes, praise God for salvation, the angels and elders, and four beasts are not with these redeemed ones, but about the throne, and join together in a separate ascription of praise from that offered by men Rev 7:9-12. One of the elders informs John concerning those arrayed in white robes, and it is evident that he does not belong to their number Rev 7:13. When the final triumph comes, and the seventh trumpet angel proclaims that "the kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord and his Christ," the four and twenty elders who were sitting on their seats before the throne fell upon their faces and gave thanks to God Rev 11:15-17. The Lamb has one hundred and forty and four thousand saints about him, who sing a new song "before the throne, and before the four beasts, and the elders" Rev 14:3.

These passages show that the twenty four elders are not grouped with the redeemed or saved men but with angels and cherubim about the throne of God. This does not mean that they could not be
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redeemed men such as the disciples as seen in Matt 19:28. It does infer that they have a different role, a position of dignity sitting on thrones.

"Lightnings and thunder" illustrate the majesty and power of God. "Seven burning lamps" are the Holy Spirit in his complete working. They are also represented by the seven branched candlestick in Exodus 25:37. Zachariah 4:2 talks about these seven lamps. And in Zachariah 4:10 the angel tells Zachariah what they are, "they are the eyes of the Lord, which run to and for through the whole earth." Also 2 Chron. 16:9 says, "for the eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth to shew himself strong in behalf of those whose heart is perfect toward him." These seven spirits are representative of God's Spirit. These may be seven separate ministering spirits but they as a whole represent "The Spirit," just as we represent Christ as ambassadors for him to the world.

REVELATION 4:6-9
"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. 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. 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. And when those beasts give glory and honor and thanks to him that sat on the throne, who liveth forever and ever,"

The sea of glass in verse 6 symbolizes the resting place of the saints while awaiting the judgment day. It symbolizes the calm quietness of the heavenly rule of God.

The four creatures are heavenly beings and by appearance seem to be the same as the cherubim in Ezekiel 1:10 and 10:14. Their job is to continually sing praises to God, to give Him glory, honor, and praise. The cherubim guarding the mercy seat in Exodus 25:18 may represent the scene in this verse of the throne of God in which the four cherubim offer praise to God continually.
Revelation 5

REVELATION 4:10-11
"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, 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 see here the twenty four elders fall down and worship god who is sitting on the throne in power and glory. In casting their crowns before the throne they are showing their complete acceptance of God's rule over every thing. The twenty four elders hold God in total awe, for he created all things for his own pleasure. Contrary to the popular humanist belief that man is the center of all things and all things evolved to be abused by man. We see the truth of the matter that God purposed to bring all things into being for his own pleasure, and his own purpose. It is our duty to acknowledge God, like the elders, for He is worthy to receive glory, and honor and praise.

REVELATION 5

REVELATION 5:1-4
"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. And I saw a strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice, Who is worthy to open the book, and to loose the seals thereof? And no man in heaven, nor in earth, neither under the earth, was able to open the book, neither to look thereon. And I wept much, because no man was found worthy to open and to read the book, neither to look thereon."

John sees God sitting on the throne with a book in His right hand. This book has seven seals that keep it closed. It is a book written "within and on the backside." Which makes it sound similar to a book that the prophet Ezekiel saw. "And when I looked, behold, an hand was sent unto me; and, lo, a roll of a book was therein; and he spread it before me; and it was written within and without: and there was written therein lamentations, and mourning, and woe," Ezekiel 2:9-10.
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In Revelation 5:2, A strong angel asks, Who is worthy to open the book and to loose the seals that keep it closed. This almost seems like a rhetorical question to ask. It was more of a statement since no one was worthy. Not one man, not any creature, on or under the earth was worthy to have the right to open the book that will bring judgment to the world. God could not give the power contained in the book (and released by the opening of the seals) to anyone who was not worthy of judging the world, but only to a perfect being. The only one who would be able to open the book was the same one who would be able to take back what Satan had stolen in the garden of Eden. Satan stole man's dominion over the earth and set himself up as god of this world. Satan took possession of God's creation. The only problem is that no one is worthy to open the book and no one could take back from Satan what he stole. This causes John to weep.

REVELATION 5:5-7  
"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 seals thereof. And I beheld, and, lo, 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. And he came and took the book out of the right hand of him that sat upon the throne."

John is told not to weep because the Lion of the tribe of Juda, the Root of David (which refers to Jesus) has prevailed (against Satan's kingdom of evil, Jesus is perfect, incorruptible) to open the book and loose the seven seals. Jesus is referred to as a Lamb, previously he was called a Lion. He was both sacrifice and savior and all power is given to him. Judgment has been given to Christ.

John 5:22,26-27 "For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgement unto the son." "For as the Father hath life in himself; so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself. And hath given him authority to execute judgement also, because he is the Son of Man."

Because no one is found worthy to open the book it suggests that this was a vision of the covenant that predates the death and resurrection of Jesus. Because when Jesus became the Lamb in verse
Revelation 5

6, the Lamb is worthy to open the book. Before Jesus there was no perfect man. God was revealing to us in this small portion of the vision the changing of the covenants with man. What we see up until verse 5 is that no one is found worthy, the old testament covenant or the law did not justify man.

Romans 3:20 "Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin." Hebrews 7:19 "For the law made nothing perfect, but the bringing in of a better hope did. . ."

This better hope was Jesus. In Revelation 5:5 we are treated to a vision of wonders. The covenant changes with Christ who is perfect, and the image of the invisible God. Now that Jesus the Lamb is found worthy, the rest of mankind is able to partake of Jesus' righteousness and become the adopted children of the great God.

Galatians 4:5 "To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons." Romans 8:14,16 "For as many as are led by the spirit of God, they are the sons of God... The spirit beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God."

In verse 6 John sees the Lamb, the symbol of the crucified Jesus. Like a lamb he was sacrificed for sin. The seven horns and seven eyes on the Lamb represent the perfect working of the Spirit of God, sent to do God's will on the earth. Jesus is the one who took the book from the Father's right hand and is worthy to open it and indeed judge the ungodly nations that refused to obey and believe in Christ but instead continued on the road to destruction by following Satan.

REVELATION 5:8-14

"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 odors, which are the prayers of the saints. 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; And hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth. 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; Saying with
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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. 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. And the four beasts said, Amen. And the four and twenty elders fell down and worshipped him that liveth for ever and ever."

This is a scene in heaven where every one, every living creature in heaven and on earth sings praise to Jesus the Lamb. They worship and adore him that was found worthy to open the book because of his perfect nature. In verse 9 they sang "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." It was His death that brought us life. The wording used in the KJV is “redeemed us to God.” This seems to say the elders, the four creatures and the angels have been redeemed. Newer translations more accurately relate what is meant as seen in the ASV “…and didst purchase unto God with thy blood men of every tribe…” which only indicates that the angels, four creatures and elders said this, not that they were included in the redeemed.

"For where a testament is, there must also of necessity be the death of the testator. For a testament is of force after men are dead: otherwise it is of no strength at all while the testator liveth." Hebrews 9:16. Jesus redeemed the world by his blood unto God. Therefore everyone in heaven sings praises to the Lamb and to Him that sits on the throne. All the angels, all the elders, the four creatures all worship the Lord. If the elders, the four creatures and all the millions of the hosts of heaven can speak the truth and praise Jesus saying "Worthy is the Lamb to receive power, and riches, wisdom, strength, honor, glory and blessing, how much more does this witness to mankind that Jesus is our redeemer, that we are saved through him and should acknowledge him as God.

The Hosts of Heaven are numbered ten thousand times ten thousand and thousands of thousands. If this number is literal then the angels number at least one hundred million plus millions more. But the number is given in a rather veiled way. Ten thousand times ten thousand and thousands of thousands can be anything between
Revelation 5

one hundred million and two hundred million. Therefore I believe this number to be symbolic. It is a number symbolic of an innumerable multitude of heavenly hosts or angels.

We know that the angels have immense power. One angel could go through the land of Egypt and kill all the first born and one angel destroyed the Assyrian army in one night. Yet angels are designated in the bible as the eyes of the Lord, ministering spirits which give protection and deliverance to God's children. The angels show God's strength to those whose hearts are perfect toward God. Angels were with the Lord when he visited Abraham. Angels destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah. An angel protected the three Hebrews in the fiery furnace. An angel announced to Mary the Lord's intent. Angels announced and celebrated the birth of Jesus. Angels ministered to Jesus after his forty days in the wilderness. They ministered to Jesus in the garden of Gethsemane. They stood watch over the Lord's ex tomb and released Peter from prison. These are just some of the examples the bible gives of angels serving the Lord, doing his will, protecting and comforting and delivering from danger.

I don't know if every Christian has a personal angel but from the biblical account we can be assured that they are ready and able to defend, protect, comfort and minister to everyone of the Lord's chosen people.

Jesus was the object of worship by this heavenly host of angels, elders and living creatures. In verse 12 where this multitude is proclaiming the Lamb worthy to receive these seven things, they are actually agreeing that the Lamb is worthy since he died and rose again. This verse makes it clear to us that Jesus is completely sufficient for this work of judgment. Jesus was the only one who could approach the throne and take the book from the hand of God. He did not grab it away as if it were not his (Phil 2:6,) God gave Jesus all judgment. Jesus is accepting it because he is worthy to have power, riches, wisdom, strength, honor, glory and blessing. Seven perfect things for Jesus to open seven seals of judgment. These seven things were already his since Jesus is God but this is a symbolic way of showing that Christ has been given judgment over the earth. Seven is God's number for perfection. The book has seven seals symbolizing perfect judgment. The Lamb was perfect and had these seven attributes in order to bring perfect judgment to the earth.
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PART iii

REVELATION 6

The predictive parts of the book of Revelation seem to be broken into six chief parts. First is the glory then the decline and fall of pagan Rome, described in the first six seals. Second is the destruction and break up of the old Roman Empire’s three parts by the first six trumpets. Third is the history of the reformation, introduced about the middle of the sixth trumpet. Fourth is the history of the rise and character of papal Rome or empire. Fifth is the final overthrow of the papacy and papal empire. Sixth is the consummation.

In chapter six God prepares to bring judgment to those that have rejected Jesus as the Lamb of God. God brings judgment to an empire that persecutes his children and follows the kingdom of this world set up by Satan.

The opening of the seals reveals to us the events that were to come in the future. That is from John's perspective in 96 A.D. And the death of Domitian. Chapters 6 through 11 summarize world history, then in chapter 11 "The kingdoms of this world become the kingdoms of Christ." That would be the last judgment.

Before looking into verses one and two I would like to take a moment to examine the four horses mentioned there. The four horses may have a multiple imagery, that is they may be symbolic of two or more meanings. One meaning coincides with the horses in Zechariah and what they represent.

ZECHARIAH 6:2-3 "In the first chariot were red horses; and in the second chariot black horses; and in the third chariot white horses; and in the fourth chariot grisled and bay horses."

When Zechariah asks the angel what these horses were, the angel answers him in verse 5. "These are the four spirits of the heavens, which go forth from standing before the Lord of all the earth."

When an angel was speaking to Zechariah about similar horses in ZECHARIAH 1:10 the angel said: "These are they whom the Lord hath sent forth to walk to and fro through the earth." Then again in ZECHARIAH 6:8 "behold, these that go toward the north country have quieted my spirit in the north country."
Revelation 6

These horses watch over the earth. They are ministers to God's people which were the Israelites in Zechariah's time and Christians in this dispensation. They go forth with the destruction mentioned in Revelation 6 unto the ungodly nations and quiet The spirit of God, or satisfy His judgment by bringing destruction to those who persecuted the church.

Therefore these four horses symbolize general destruction upon the ungodly. Yet they also have a more specific meaning and these we will examine too. The symbolic meanings in no way oppose each other, but are complimentary to each other. One view is of a general destruction, the other view is a more detailed description of the destruction which fell on the Roman empire.

REVELATION 6:1-2
"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. 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."

The Lamb opens the first seal and John hears thunder, a symbol of power. Then a white horse and rider appears. This may symbolize the world government under which Christ started His work. The Roman empire was the most powerful government that the earth had seen so far. It was just entering its golden age. The historian, Gibbon, calls the reigns of the five emperors, Nerva, Trajan, Hadrian, Antonius Pius and Marcus Aurelius (96 to 180 A.D.) "The happiest and most prosperous period in the entire history of the human race."

The white horse symbolizes the conqueror. The Roman generals rode white horses in their Triumphs. The rider has a crown, a symbol of authority, and a bow. The bow was not a Roman symbol, it was a Cretan symbol which was universally known in Roman times. Until Domitian's death all previous emperors were of Roman or Italian heritage. But Nerva's family extraction was Cretan. Trajan, Hadrian, Antonius and Aurelius were adopted into Nerva's family by successive adoptions. By Roman law each of these emperors was part of Nerva's family lineage and therefore could claim the same Cretan heritage.
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REVELATION 6:3-4
"And when he had opened the second seal, I heard the second beast say, Come and see. 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."

The loosing of the second seal caused the appearance of a red horse. The red horse, the black horse and the pale horse represent two things. Together they represent the woes that fall upon the Roman world because of the general rejection of Christ and the persecution of His church. However taken singly, the red horse follows the white horse's golden age and symbolizes the over one hundred years of civil war which occurred between the years 193 A.D. to 284 A.D. And the strife which continued during the Tetrarchy until Constantine became the emperor.

The Civil war began with the weakening of the empire under Commodus' misadministration and occurred because of the over fifty men which claimed to be emperor during this time. What follows here is a list of emperors and usurpers during this period, which shows how much strife existed in the empire at the time. "Peace was taken from the earth that they should kill one another."

Commodus, 180-192: was murdered by 'friend'.

Pertinax, 193: murdered by Praetorian guard.

Didius Julianus, 193: bought the throne from the Praetorian guard, but was assailed by the people of Rome.

Pescennius Niger, Claudius Albinus and Septimus Severus, they were the governor of Syria, commander of the army in Britain and commander of the army in Danube, respectively. All were simultaneously declared emperor by their armies. Septimus Severus was able to seize the throne. He then went to war against his rivals killing Niger in 194 A.D.

Caracella.
Revelation 6

Geta, was killed by Caracella.

Opellius Macrinus, was killed by troops who then proclaimed the next emperor.

Heliogabalus, was killed by praetorian guard, his cousin was raised to the throne.

Alexander Severus, his mother actually had the power. Julia Mamea, was the first empress. Both were killed by troops in mutiny followed by a half century of real civil war.

Maximinus the Thracian, he was the one who killed Septimus Severus.

Antonius Gordianus and his son as co-emperor, the son was killed in battle, the father then committed suicide.

Papienas Maximus and Calvinus Balbinus, they were joint emperors appointed by the senate.

Gordian III, 238-244: was emperor at 13 years old. The army mutinied because of a threatened food shortage.

Philip the Arab, 244-249: during his reign the Danubian legions proclaimed their own commander emperor. Two pretenders also appeared in the east.

Decius, 249-251: killed in battle.

Trebonius Gallus, was proclaimed emperor by the army and then assassinated by soldiers.

Aemilianus, was assassinated by the army.

Valerian I.

Gallienus, was emperor with and after his father (Valerian). During his reign almost every province was invaded. The Franks, Alemanni, Marcomanni, Goths and Persians all invaded with wide spread
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destruction of property, sacking and enslavement of citizens. Earthquakes rocked Italy and Asia Minor. Plague broke out in Egypt and infected the entire empire. For 15 years plague raged through the empire, two thirds of the population of Alexandria died and as many as 5000 a day in Rome itself. Farm and factory labor was short because of all the death and production dropped sharply. All this at the same time broke the unity of the empire. During Gallienus' reign eighteen usurpers tried to seize the throne.

Claudius Gothicus, died of plague.

Aurelian, during his reign Palmyra massacred a Roman garrison. He returned and killed every man, woman and child and tore down the walls of the city and took its treasures. He reduced this once powerful city to a desert village. He repeated this act at Alexandria.

Tacitus, was killed by his soldiers.

Florianus, was killed by his soldiers.

Probus, was killed by soldiers.


Carinus, was killed in battle by one of his own men, a tribune whose wife he had seduced.

Diocletian, was a rival of Carinus, he fought the battle for the throne where Carinus died. The Tetrarchy and the usurpers to the throne were many up to the year 312 A.D. when Constantine became emperor.

The results of this long period of war was famine and pestilence. The Roman empire lost over half of its population in this century.

REVELATION 6:5-6
"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.
Revelation 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."

When the third seal is loosed a black horse appears. This black horse symbolizes famine. The balance itself may have more than one meaning. One meaning is justice, that this famine is just retribution on the Roman world for rejection of God's son and the persecution of his church.

The second meaning is scales to weigh food. In a famine the price of available food goes up. It's supply and demand, which is equivalent to people squeezing every thing they can get out of their fellow men. "A chœnix of wheat for a Denarius." A Denarius was about a day's wages for a common laborer and was a prohibitive price to pay for a chœnix, (pronounced coinix) or about a quart of wheat. A quart of wheat would feed one man but not his family, and three quarts of barley for a Denarius was not much better, it might feed a small family but lead to the starvation of others. "Hurt not the oil and the wine." In 92 A.D. there was a shortage of grains but a surplus of wine. This statement may indicate that the luxuries of the rich continued while the common people suffered.

Inflation and the devaluation of the Denarius added to the miseries of the people. In the first century the Denarius was nearly pure silver and had a corresponding value but in the years that followed the denarius was alloyed with other metals to allow the available silver to spread further. This devalued the Denarius to the point that in the third century at the time of this black horse the Denarius was only one third silver and its intrinsic value one third that of the pure Denarius of the first century. Naturally this allowed less to be bought with the same value coin.

The third meaning of the balance could indicate a further cause of famine. The provincial governors' badge of office was the balance which symbolized the justice they were supposed to execute in the provinces. Aurelian called them "the robbers of the people." They were supposed to tax fairly but oppressed the people with taxes. The provinces were robbed of their harvests, the food going to feed the legions of Rome.
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REVELATION 6:7-8
"And when he had opened the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the fourth beast say, Come and see. 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 the sword, and with hunger, and with death, and with the beasts of the earth."

The fourth seal is loosed and a pale horse appears. Death rode this horse and hell followed him. Through the empire’s years of civil war and the famine and pestilence which was the result, great losses in population occurred. The "fourth part" may refer to one fourth of the whole world, which was about what the Roman empire covered of the then known world. Or it may help us to date this seal. In 284 A.D. the quadrapartition of the empire occurred, breaking the empire into four parts, the Italian, the east, the west, and Illyrium. Jerome's Latin Vulgate translates this passage "four parts of the earth." Death rode over all four parts of the empire.

Wild beasts aided in the loss of population. During the famine there was an enormous increase in the wild animal population which always follows the decline in mankind's population. The animals are hungry too, the people who are famished can no longer care for animals which are released to become wild. The results are a weakening in man's defenses and a strengthening in the animal population which sees the people as a food source. "Where the reign of man fails wild beasts begin."

God did not drive the Hivites, the Canaanites and the Hittites out of the land quickly because the wild animals would increase and pose a threat to the Hebrews. EXODUS 23:29 "I will not drive them out from before thee in one year; lest the land become desolate, and the beast of the field multiply against thee."

REVELATION 6:9-11
"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: 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
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the earth? 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 fellow servants also and their brethren, that they should be killed as they were, should be fulfilled."

The fifth seal is opened and a vision of the souls under the altar is revealed. The souls under the altar seem to cry out in anguish, how long would their blood would go unavenged? This indicates the persecution of the church since the souls died for their testimony and for the word of God. The persecutions of Nero and Domitian had already taken place when Revelation was written. These persecutions had already taken thousands of Christian lives, but there was more to come. With the ten imperial persecutions of the church, from Nero in 64 A.D. to Diocletian in 305 A.D. thousands upon thousands of Christians lost their lives for the testimony of Jesus Christ.

Diocletian was busy restoring the decayed Roman empire and during this time the church enjoyed toleration and rest. But the same year the restoration was complete, 303 A.D. the persecution began. The destruction of Christianity was the subject of councils held by the three Caesars, Diocletian, Galerius and Maximian. The empire could never be truly restored if there were an independent people in it, those who would not worship the emperor. On February 23 an armed force set out to destroy the church of Nicomedia, and burn the sacred books in it, signaling the start of the longest, the harshest and most thorough persecution Christians had ever faced. This era became known as the Era of Martyrs. Christian churches were to be demolished, scriptures burned, church property went to the state, Christians were generally put outside of the protection of the law. Soon after followed imprisonment, torture and death to Christians who remained faithful. Diocletian declared his intention of abolishing the Christian name. The persecution was so fierce and thorough that the three emperors Diocletian, Galerius and Maximian united to raise pillars with inscriptions declaring the name of Christianity extirpated from the empire. For church service the faithful met in caves and catacombs.

But the souls under the altar were given white robes of righteousness and were comforted until the appointed times. "That they should rest yet a little season, until their fellow servants also and
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their brethren, that they should be killed as they were should be fulfilled." Something to observe here is that God does not always grant our requests immediately. The souls under the altar craved justice now, “How long, O Lord” they asked. But God in His wisdom waited even while His people were persecuted and killed. We may feel uncomfortable with this idea but this is why he revealed to John what would come, so that the Christians might know that this was all God’s plan and in His control.

The statement that the times will at some point be fulfilled and the revenge of the martyrs be completed, indicates the eventual downfall of the empire which persecuted the Christians. It indicates a time when the government would be changed. I also believe this is the same event as depicted in Revelation 12:16, where the earth helps the woman and swallows the flood of persecution sent forth from the dragon's mouth.

REVELATION 6:12-17
"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 blood; 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. And the heaven departed as a scroll when it is rolled together; and every mountain and island were moved out of their places. And the kings of the earth, and 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; And said to the mountains and the 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?"

The sixth seal is opened and the answer to the question "how long" in verse 11 is seen. When the sixth seal is opened we see the signs of upheaval and destruction, the overturning of the existing government to a new rule that accepted Christianity.
I believe it is a mistake to use a literal interpretation on these verses. I do not think that anyone will ever see the sun literally become black or the moon as blood or the stars fall to the earth. These are merely signs in the language of the bible that portend the
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downfall or overthrow of a kingdom or people. This same symbolic language can be seen being used many times in the old testament.

JOEL 2:2 "A day of darkness and of gloominess..."

JOEL 2:10 "The earth shall quake before them; the heavens shall tremble: The sun and the moon shall be dark, and the stars shall withdraw their shining."

JOEL 2:31 "The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon blood."

Isaiah prophesies the fall of Babylon with similar imagery.

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

ISAIAH 34:4 "And all the host of heaven shall be dissolved, and the heavens shall be rolled together as a scroll: and their host shall fall down, as the leaf falleth off from the vine, and as a falling fig from the tree."

When Ezekiel was predicting the fall of Egypt, he uses the same imagery drawn from the bibles prophetic language.

EZEKIEL 32:7-8 "And when I shall put thee out, I will cover the heaven, and make the stars thereof dark; I will cover the sun with a cloud and the moon shall not give her light. All the bright lights of heaven will I make dark over thee, and set darkness upon thy land, saith the Lord God."

Jesus also used this imagery to show the judgment of God on the nations in Matthew 24, Luke 21 and Luke 23.

MATTHEW 24:29 "Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon not give her light, and the stars fall from heaven, and the powers of the
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heavens shall be shaken."

When speaking of the destruction of Jerusalem, Jesus said in
LUKE 23:30 "Then shall they begin to say to the mountains.
fall on us; and to the hills, cover us."

On the day of Pentecost, when Peter was preaching to the crowd,
he told them that what they were witnessing was the fulfilling of the
prophecy given to us by Joel. That in the last days God would pour
out his spirit upon all flesh. This meant that now every one could be
saved through Christ and receive the spirit of God in their lives. But
Peter quoted Joel, that in those last days when the spirit of God would
be poured out God would also show wonders in the heavens.

ACTS 2:20 "The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the
moon into blood, before that great and notable day of the Lord
come."

In view of the fact that all the verses using this imagery were
symbolic of the overthrowing, and the loss of power of governments
and kingdoms. Then the verse in Acts 2:20 must be referring to the
fact that when Jesus died and rose again, he overthrew the kingdom of
darkness in this world. He has given those who believe in his name
the authority to do what he did. Then on the day of Pentecost the
Holy Spirit descended on the Christians and gave them the power
necessary to do what he did. In effect, by quoting Joel, Peter was
saying to the people that the sun had gone down on Satan's kingdom.
That the moon would not shine in glory upon it anymore. God's
kingdom has overthrown the kingdom of darkness.

Since this type of imagery is seen all through the bible as evidenced
by the previous verses, I do not think it is necessary to interpret the
similar verses in Revelation literally. I do believe that they indicate
God's judgment on the nations, and in this case refers to the demise
of the Roman world. With the Roman empire persecuting Christians
at the time, this was a timely message from God. God was telling
them that the mighty Roman empire would fall by his hand and great
would be its fall.

The emperor Constantine professed Christianity as his religion in
312 A.D. He then wrote an edict of toleration in the year 313 which
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stopped the persecutions of the Christians and made Christianity the court religion. In 325 A.D. he issued a general exhortation to all to embrace Christianity. He moved his capitol to Constantinople because the Roman people refused to give up their pagan practices. Then the emperor Theodosius (378-395 A.D.) made Christianity the state religion, and church membership compulsory. In 395 A.D. the empire was divided into the eastern and western empires. This was the beginning of the breakup of the Roman empire, which for three hundred years had tried to destroy Christianity.

REVELATION 7

Chapter seven comes between the sixth and seventh seals and seems to be part of the sixth. It is meant to be a vision of comfort and to show the Christians that even though this destruction was to come upon the nations, God did not want this destruction to be indiscriminate. The judgment was to fall upon the world not the Christians. The Christians are viewed as safe, secure and happy after coming out of the tribulation of this life. It seems to tell the Christian that no matter what happens in the world and even though they might be killed in the body, they will live with Christ happy and eternally safe from the destruction visited upon the ungodly. The turnover of the Roman empire, which is mentioned in chapter six may itself be a cutoff point in the Revelation prophecy, marking the first phase of this prophecy. Most historians consider the age of Constantine to be the beginning of the downfall of the Roman empire and the start of the middle ages.

REVELATION 7:1-3

"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 the sea, nor any tree. 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, saying, Hurt not the earth, neither the sea, nor the trees, till we have sealed the servants of God in their foreheads."
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Four angels are seen holding back the four winds of the earth. These four winds are the agencies of the Lambs wrath mentioned in Revelation 6:16. The four winds are symbolically the same as the four trumpets which bring destruction to the empire in chapter eight. These four angels are holding back chapter eight's destruction until the 144,000 are sealed so that they will not be victims of the four winds.

The act of putting the seal on the foreheads of the 144,000 refers to the calling out or election of the true Christians from the vastly greater number of the visible professing church in the Roman world.

Remember that as far as the timing of the vision, that it concerns the time between the sixth and seventh seals. With the first six seals bringing about the judgments which changed the empire from pagan to Christian. Since this vision falls into its place in the fifth century A.D. it is a vision of Roman Christianity. Most professing Christians at this time were Christian in name only. Not by any change of heart and calling to salvation did the majority of Roman Christians join the church, but for political or social advantage. In the fifth century Christianity was the state religion.

Those of pagan beliefs came to join the church as much by compulsion as anything else and joined the church through the elaborate rite of baptism. When baptism became the official way of joining the church it naturally took the place of belief and repentance in the minds of the people. People who were still pagan at heart and action accepted baptism as an easy way to join the church and still be what they had always been. Men by the thousands joined the church by baptism, the favorite days for the ceremony being feast days such as Easter. In this way they thought they could get extra favor from God by sharing the resurrection day with Christ. Baptism became like a magical formula to gain the favor of heaven and was widely taught by church leaders of the time to be the effective means of salvation, washing away all sins and averting all evil. As soon as the baptism candidates were approved by the bishop they were called 'eklectoi', the chosen, as if candidacy for baptism and the bishop's approval was equivalent to being elected in Christ from the foundations of the world. Which is what they believed. After baptism had taken place the new members of the church were known as saints and the faithful. This was a great falling away from the original pure faith of belief in Christ and repentance for sins after which the new Christian would be
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baptized if possible. This was part of the apostasy which eventually led to the man of sin coming to power.

The four winds of judgment were going to blow on the Roman world which was professedly Christian at the time. But the winds were held back until the 144,000 could be sealed so that they could be
Revelation 7

protected from the coming judgments. The 144,000 were sealed out of the Roman world, they were the true believers chosen out of the more visible yet false church.

The seal of God was given to those who being faithful to God were going to be spared death in Ezekiel.

EZEKIEL 9:4,6 "And the Lord said unto him, Go through the midst of the city, through the midst of Jerusalem, and set a mark upon the foreheads of the men that sigh and that cry for all the abominations that be done in the midst thereof...slay utterly old and young, both maids, and little children, and women: but come not near any man upon whom is the mark..."

The seal has the same significance as the Passover lambs blood on the door posts of the Jewish houses in Exodus 12:12-13. It shows those who believe and have been chosen out of the pagan world around them as being faithful and as having the special protection of God for his children. This seal is also the opposite of the mark of the beast. They are not literal marks, but symbolic of the spiritual allegiance of a person to God or Satan. Who you follow is whose mark you wear. Deuteronomy 11:18 declares that those who are true followers of God have the word of God written on their hands and foreheads. The wearer of the mark of God, which includes all true Christians has been given new life and is secure in the knowledge of everlasting life with the father.

REVELATION 7:4-8
"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. 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. 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. 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. Of the tribe of Zabulon were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Joseph were sealed twelve thousand.
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Of the tribe of Benjamin were sealed twelve thousand."

It is interesting to notice in the list of tribes that Dan, recognized as an idolatrous tribe in Judges 18:30 is not mentioned. However both Joseph and Manases are mentioned. The tribe of Joseph was carried on in the name of his son Ephraim (Numbers 1:32), and Manases was counted as a separate tribe in Numbers 1:34. Both the tribes of Ephraim and Manases received an inheritance in the promised land but the Levites received none according to Joshua 14:4. The northern tribes of Israel did not exist after 722 B.C. this included Dan. This is because Sargon the Assyrian king took Israel captive, destroying the capital Samaria where most of the important people had fled for protection. Sargon then scattered the captives, over 27,000, over the Assyrian empire and repopulated Samaria with displaced people from other parts of the empire. These mixed peoples became known as Samaritans.

Many expositors have interpreted the 144,000 to be either literal Jews or symbolic Jews which are Christians. The strength of the argument that the 144,000 are of the literal Jewish race comes from them being sealed from the twelve tribes of Israel. The few true Jews chosen from among the many of Israel, the remnant. However there are a few problems with this view. The tribe of Levi has twelve thousand sealed from it. Levi was the priestly tribe and received no inheritance in the promised land. In this vision they are numbered with the rest of the tribes as having an inheritance or being sealed. In the old testament the tribe of Levi was not to be numbered among Israel, see Numbers 1:47-49 and Numbers 2:33 "But the Levites were not numbered among the children of Israel; as the Lord commanded Moses." Because Levi is counted in with the twelve tribes in Revelation 7 as being sealed it infers the Christian dispensation since there is no priesthood except for Christ's everlasting priesthood in the Christian era. Plus the fact that the northern tribes did not exist and were considered lost tribes after 722 B.C. I conclude that literal Jews are not meant here.

The Idea of Christians being viewed as symbolic Jews gathers strength as we go. We are in the Christian dispensation therefore it only makes sense that Levi is included in the 144,000. Paul exhorted Christians to appropriate to themselves the name and privileges of Israel in Galatians 3:29 "And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's
Revelation 7

seed, and heirs according to the promise," and that now Christians are adopted into the commonwealth of Israel according to Ephesians 2:12,13,19. Christians were grafted into the olive tree while literal Jews who rejected the messiah were branches broken off according to Romans 11:17-19. Add to these arguments the fact that so many Jewish symbols were types of the Christian dispensation gives evidence of the 144,000 Jews representing Christians.

Since the true believing Christians are represented by the 144,000 Jews out of all the tribes of Israel. Then Israel must in turn represent the world where the 144,000 were sealed from. As mentioned before, that means these 144,000 are true Christians being sealed out of the professing church in the Roman world.

The number 144,000 is a very small number when compared to the number of all Israel. At the time of the united kingdom under David and Solomon the Israelites numbered about six million. That means that only a little over two percent were represented by the 144,000 which were sealed and called out of all Israel. I believe that in turn, just a small percentage of all those in the church were true Christians who god would protect before sending the four winds to bring destruction.

REVELATION 7:9-17

"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; And cried with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb. 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, saying, Amen: blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honour, and power, and might, be unto our God for ever and ever. Amen. And one of the elders answered, saying unto me, What are these which are arrayed in white robes? and whence came they? 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. Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple:
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and he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them. They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat. For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living waters: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes."

This is a vision of all the people throughout the ages who were Christians. They are seen in heaven worshipping and praising our God and the Lamb. Even the angels, elders, and the four living creatures are joining in the praises that are being sung to God. Then an elder asks John, Who are these multitudes in white robes?

John seems a little confused. The previous portion of the vision revealed to John that only a small percentage of those professing Christianity would be saved. So where did this vast multitude come from? John's answer to the elder reflects this uncertainty, I don't know, can you tell me? The elder then tells John and us that they have come out of great tribulation in the world and have washed their robes in the blood of the Lamb. Simply said, the elder is telling us that these are the Christians that after getting saved have escaped the pollution of this world and are serving their God in heaven at this very moment. They are the Christians who at death were finally released from the trials and tribulations of this world. They are comforted by God. They are no longer persecuted and put to death. They are no longer hungry or sick and the Lamb himself wipes the tears from their eyes. They are alive forever reigning with Christ. It also shows us the glory of God in his true church, an uncountable number of Christians pulled from the world and Satan's grasp, and reigning with Jesus.

To summarize chapter seven; It shows the relatively few Christians being sealed from the vastly greater number in the world during the time when the four winds were held in check. And to show us that even though at any one time only a small percentage are the remnant of God and are true believers which are washed in the blood of the Lamb. That by no means indicates that there are only a few Christians that will be in heaven, or only 144,000 that will be in heaven. Instead we have the second portion of the vision also which shows us that uncountable number from throughout history and from all nations that will live and reign together with Christ.

This vision is a definite contrast to the destruction on the empire
Revelation 7

seen in Revelation 6 and soon to be continued in chapter 8. Chapter 7 was meant to be a vision of comfort to the Christians who would see this calamity happen all around them and to assure them that God is in control of history and that they are protected. Eternal Rome would topple but the Christian would escape the judgment upon it. The Christian should see that nothing can harm them in heaven. We see the peace that was promised to us by God. Every Christian should see himself or herself in this multitude, and not let the world overwhelm them in any area. God is going to win, and he is showing us a part of his victory plan here.
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PART iv

REVELATION 8: THE FALL OF THE ROMAN EMPIRE

REVELATION 8:1-2
"And when he had opened the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven about the space of half an hour. And I saw the seven angels which stood before God; and to them were given seven trumpets."
Revelation 8

The seventh seal is opened and out of the seventh seal comes seven angels with seven trumpets. The seventh seal has brought forth more judgment and destruction in the form of seven trumpets. We saw in chapter six a turnover of the old ideals of the empire to the acceptance of Christianity. This time however, we see the destruction aimed at the empire's physical states. The removing of Rome from the world political arena.

The half hour of silence has been a puzzle for centuries. Some have claimed that since no reason is given for it and since the scriptures only say that there will be a half hour of silence then this is all we should say about it. Others have thought up elaborate meanings for it. I believe the best explanation takes into account the previous scenes in Revelation and builds upon them. In chapter 7 we read of the four winds being held back until the 144,000 are sealed. When chapter seven ends we still have not seen the four winds which were to be used as the wrath of the Lamb. Now in chapter 8 we have a half hour of silence before the storm of the four winds destruction falls upon the earth. The silence before the storm.

An half hour on the day for a year principle, assuming 24 hour days, is seven and one half days. In January of 395 A.D. The Emperor Theodosius died. A very short time after Theodosius died, within just a couple of weeks, and before the winter was out the Gothic tribes were moving against the Roman empire. Theodosius died and within a very short time, probably within the prophetic half hour the gothic kingdoms were in revolt.

REVELATION 8:3-4
"And another angel came and stood at the alter, having a golden censer; and there was given unto him much incense, that he should offer it with the prayers of all the saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne. And the smoke of the incense, which came with the prayers of the saints, ascended up before God out of the angels hand."

The smoke of the incense is a picture of the old testament temple where incense was burned, representing the prayers of the people rising before God as a sweet smelling savor. It is thrilling to know that God perceives our prayers in such a way. We are not bothering him when we pray. Our prayers are a precious sweet smell before God.
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God uses the prayers of his saints to bring about the things he desires. God used Elijah’s prayer to stop the rain for three and a half years, and then used his prayer again to start the rain. James 5:15-16 tells us that prayer can heal the sick, cause those who have sinned to be forgiven, and that the prayers of the righteous man avails much or causes a lot to happen. The prayers of the saints represented by the rising incense is the catalyst which effects the destruction that comes in the form of the trumpets. God is avenging the saints who cry out to him. Luke 18:7 "And shall not God avenge his own elect, which cry day and night unto him, though he bear long with them?"

REVELATION 8:5-6
"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. And the seven angels which had the seven trumpets prepared to sound."

An angel takes a dipper and dips into the fire on the altar. Then the angel throws the wrath of God to the earth. It is interesting to see that the fire was taken from the altar. God's presence in the Old Testament was visible as fire. This is seen in the burning bush EXODUS 3:2, and God's shekinah glory in EXODUS 40:38, also the pillar of fire in EXODUS 13:21, and the mountain where God spoke to Moses in EXODUS 19:18. God's judgments are seen taking place with fire at the end of the world 2 PETER 3:10. And Christ is coming in fire in 2 THESALONIANS 1:8. God rained fire in GENESIS 19:24. God's word is compared to a fire in JEREMIAH 23:29, and God is a consuming fire in HEBREWS 12:29. These are mentioned here so that we can see the consistent thought that these judgments are not natural happenings but God's wrath, His designed judgments, symbolized by the fire from the altar.

This begins the process of the seven angels sounding the trumpets. The releasing of the "four winds" of the Lambs wrath of chapters 6:16 and 7:1. The trumpets symbolize both a general overthrowing of the empire, and they also have a more specific meaning. These we will now look into.

REVELATION 8:7
"The first angel sounded, and there followed hail and fire
Revelation 8

mingled with blood, and they were cast upon the earth: and third part of the trees was burnt up, and all green grass was burnt up."

The first trumpet sounds and the result is hail, fire, and blood are cast upon the earth. For 800 years no foreign enemy had set foot on Italian soil. But in the fifth century A.D. Barbarians from the north began to pour in. The hail, fire and blood of the first trumpet burned the earth. But only a third part as if the destruction was only partial.

In 409 A.D. Alaric, king of the Visigoths, invaded Italy with what is called a scorched earth policy. He left in his wake burning cities and scorched and bloodied and desolated lands. Upon arriving at Rome Alaric laid siege to it. Twice he lifted the siege to negotiate payments from the emperor and the Romans. Then the emperor condoned an attack on the Visigoth camp. Because of this Alaric again laid siege to Rome in 410. On August 24, 410 A.D. Alaric entered Rome. Although there was widespread plundering of Rome and some massacring of its citizens, the Visigoths were comparatively mild. Perhaps this was because of a religious respect, for Alaric said, "I have come to make war on men, not the apostles." Alaric spared all Christian buildings.

The fall of Rome at this time indicated to many the end of law and order, and the decline of the western Roman empire. After this, Rome's prestige was to be based on the papacy rather than the emperor.

At his death Alaric was buried beneath the Busento river, which was turned aside from its normal course for his burial. Then it was allowed to follow its original course to cover his grave.

REVELATION 8:8-9

"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; 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."

The second angel sounds and a great burning mountain is cast into the sea. Notice again, the "one third," as if the destruction was only partial.

In 411 A.D. Rome lost possession of Britain because they lacked a
fleets, which was used to supply the garrisons with supplies and men. This was only the beginning of Rome's loss of naval power and the destruction which came upon Rome from the sea.

The Vandals had swept across Gaul and Spain. Then in 429 A.D. Gaiseric, king of the Asding Vandals, crossed the straights of Gibraltar and invaded Numidia and Mauritania. In 439 A.D. The Vandals captured Carthage. This gave them the richest parts of north Africa. This was a serious loss for Rome, which was dependent upon the grain grown in Africa. In Rome the general Aetius, could do nothing to prevent the capture of Carthage because he had no fleet. Gaiseric built a navy and from 439 until his death Gaiseric's fleets fought the Roman navy which for 600 years had controlled the Mediterranean and drove them from the sea. In June 455 A.D. Gaiseric sacked Rome. In 468 the Vandal navy completely annihilated the Byzantine navy, which was actually a joint naval expedition sent by the eastern and western emperors against Gaiseric. Never again would Rome be a dominating naval power.

REVELATION 8:10-11
"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; And the name of the star is called wormwood; and many men died of the waters, because they were made bitter."

The third trumpet sounds and a great burning star falls upon the rivers. Attila king of the Huns, was known as "the scourge of God" because of the devastation he worked throughout the Roman empire. Attila led two great invasions across the Danube river into the eastern Roman empire in 441-443 A.D. and in 447 A.D. He caused untold damage and destroyed several famous cities. In fear Constantinople paid him tribute of 700 pounds of gold a year. Later when Attila again threatened Constantinople, the tribute was raised to 2000 pounds of gold a year. He defeated the Roman armies in three successive river valley battles. These battles were on the Marne river, the Rhone river and the Po river. These rivers were said to have actually looked like blood during these battles because of the slaughter. In 451 A.D. he invaded Gaul and was met by the combined armies of the Romans and the Visigoths near Troyes France. Only in their combined armies
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were they able to turn Attila back. It was known as one of the greatest battles of the middle ages and Attila's only defeat. Even then it was more of a truce. Aetius, the Roman general let Attila retreat past the river because Attila promised he would not come back and conquer them.

In 452 A.D. Attila invaded Italy, and sacked some of the most famous cities including Aquila, Padua, Verona and Milan. Pope Leo visited him and convinced him not to take Rome. But what was probably more convincing was the widespread plague and famine in Italy. When Attila died the Danube river was turned aside so that he could be buried beneath the waters.

REVELATION 8:12-13
"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 of them were darkened, and the day shone not for a third part of it, and the night likewise. And I beheld, and heard an angel flying through the midst of heaven, saying with a loud voice, Woe, woe, woe, to the inhabiters of the earth by reason of the other voices of the trumpet of the three angels which are yet to sound!"

The fourth angel sounds and "a third part" of the sun, moon, and stars are darkened. Remember, the sun, moon, and stars are representative of powers of kingdoms in the bible. We saw this in chapter 6. The darkening of these symbolic heavenly bodies represents the downfall of kingdoms. In this picture Rome is being represented.

In 476 A.D. another barbarian horde, led by Odoacer, besieged and took Rome, and ruled Italy. Odoacer removed the emperor from Rome and let the eastern emperor rule the empire. Never again would Rome have an emperor. By 476 A.D. the empire was almost completely taken away by barbarians, only in Italy and then only in theory did the western empire exist. 476 A.D. is generally recognized as the end of the Roman empire. Because of this it is also recognized as the end of the ancient times and the beginning of the middle ages.

Let's look on just a little in the future. In 546 A.D. Totila, king of the Ostrogoths, took Rome and threatened to raze it. He had Rome depopulated. For forty days Rome had no people in it at all. When the
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Lombards conquered Italy they separated it from the rest of the empire. In the sixth century, by the end of the Gothic wars, nine tenths of the population in Italy was gone. Italy was ruined and depopulated, only a few thousand people were left there. After the Gothic wars the Pope replaced the emperor in authority for the purpose of feeding the people.

SUMMARY:
These successive blows; the Goths invade Italy in 409 A.D. The Vandals destroy the navy and limit the food supply and sacked Rome, 439-469 A.D. Attila the Hun's slaughters on the river systems of central Europe, 441-452 A.D. Odoacer seizes Rome and removes the emperor, 476 A.D. The Gothic wars in the sixth century. These disasters caused the mighty Roman empire to fall and the dark ages of the world to begin.

Rome fell in three parts, therefore the "one third part." First was the western part with Rome as its ancient capital, which fell in 476 A.D. Second, was the Asian and African parts, which were overrun by the Mohammedans in the seventh century. Third, was the eastern empire, which split from Rome in 395 A.D. With Constantinople as its capital, which fell to the Islamic, Ottoman Turks in 1453 A.D.

What we have just looked at was the destruction of the first part. When the seventh seal was opened seven trumpets were revealed. Four trumpets have been blown. But in verse 13 the angel cries; Woe, woe, woe to the inhabitants of the earth. Three more trumpets are coming!

REVELATION 9: THE FALL OF THE SECOND AND THIRD PARTS OF THE EMPIRE.

REVELATION 9:1-2
"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. 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."

The fifth angel sounds and a star falls from heaven. The star is
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given the key to the bottomless pit. The task here is to find out what or who fulfills this description. Who is the star fallen from heaven and what is the key? I believe the star fallen from heaven represents Mohammed. We have already seen that in bible symbolism a star fallen from heaven represents a fallen kingdom or ruler, a power that was, that has fallen into decay or been conquered by another power. Mohammed was of the princely Kureish tribe and his grandfather was governor of Mecca. But Mohammed's father died before or shortly after his birth and his grandfather died when he was young. The governorship fell into a different branch of the family. Mohammed’s uncle Abu Taleb became the governor of Mecca and the custodian of the Caaba. Mohammed came under his protection but was out of the line of rulership which would have passed from his grandfather Motalleb to his father Abdallah to him. The boy born into a ruling family, destined under normal circumstances to be ruler one day, his chances in life were great, until his star falls from heaven.

The emblem of the key in verse one may allude to the Mohammed’s assertion that the key to paradise lies in belief in one god. In the Hadith it is written “The key of Paradise is “There is no god, but Allah.”

In Half hours with Mohammed, Walostan writes; “There is no God but God, and Muhammad is His Prophet," had become a factor in the world's history; the key of Paradise was, to use the Prophet's own striking words, "to testify that there is no God but the Lord alone. With him there is no partner." (chapter 2, page 65)

In the Horae, Elliott has a footnote that quotes another source as saying “The Koran continually speaks of the key of God, which opened to them the gates of the world and of religion. So in the Koran; ‘Did not God give to his legate the power of heaven which is above, and fire which is beneath? With the key, did he not give him the title and power of a porter, that he may open to those whom he shall have chosen?’”

I have seen this quote used in other books that always quote it as being from the Horae. I was unable to find this quote in the Koran. It probably originates in other Islamic sources since it seems that many writers of the past lumped all Islamic religious writings together as the Koran.
The key was carried as an emblem by the Saracen moslems who achieved western conquests, just as the cross is carried and displayed by Christians. In the Horae Apocalypticae, Elliott includes an engraving of the arch of the gate of justice of the Alhambra. It was the palace of the Moorish kings in Grenada, Spain and was completed in the 14th century. On the arch a key is engraved.

The pit is symbolic of the pits of Hell. Mohammed received his mission from visions he had in a cave. Does the pit allude also to this cave? I think so. Gibbon writes; “In the cave of Hera, three miles from Mecca, he consulted the spirit of fraud or enthusiasm, whose abode is not in the heavens, but in the mind of the prophet.”

He opens the pit and smoke comes out of the pit and blocks the sun and darkens the air, it covers the light of pure religion and covers those who dwell in it in darkness. Smoke is a noxious fume that smothers those trying to breathe it and the doctrine of the Koran is represented this way.

Since these verses specifically address the Mohammedan movement we need to concentrate on that point. However we need also to understand that the Christian church at this time was steeped in idol and saint adoration. Satan had worked on the church from within and without and the smoke of his corrupted ideas clouded pure doctrine and brought paganism into the church. This idea goes along with what we see in Revelation 2. Satan is pictured as being the
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persecutor (as the Moslems were to the Christians) and corruptor (as the Roman church's doctrines) of the churches in Smyrna in verse 10, in Pergamos in verse 13 and in Thyatira in verse 24. False teachings had permeated the church and the people were literally worshipping idols that were the Roman church's saints. It has been shown by many people how the old pagan idols became the saints of the Catholic Church. This includes the idea of mother and son worship, which was taken from ancient pagan idols such as Isis and Horace, and Semiramis and Tammuz. The worship of God declined and was replaced by the healing saints, which were in reality the gods and heroes of ancient paganism.

Gibbon says; “The Christians of the seventh century had insensibly relapsed into a semblance of Paganism: their public and private vows were addressed to the relics and images that disgraced the temples of the East: the throne of the Almighty was darkened by a cloud of martyrs, and saints, and angels, the objects of popular veneration.”

Against this backdrop of idol adoration, Mohammed's followers were able to move. Conquering thousands of people whose Christianity was nominal at best, and whose religion was subject to the power in authority, first the Catholic church, followed by the Mohammedans. Mohammed had some acquaintance with Christianity. The Nestorians had been active missionaries to Persia and Arabia and there were Christians even in Mecca. The Nestorians were labeled as heretics by the early church because of their belief that Jesus was two persons in one body, a divine person and a natural human person in one human body. When you consider this misunderstanding of scripture and the nature of Jesus with other prevalent heresies in the area with the image adoration taking place it is no wonder that Mohammed misunderstood true Christianity himself. Purity and morals had also declined with the decline of pure religion.

In the Koran chapter 5:116 the Christians of the Roman Empire were charged with worshipping Mary as God; “And behold! Allah will say: "O Jesus the son of Mary! Didst thou say unto men, worship me and my mother as gods in derogation of Allah'..."

Because of the threat that the Mohammedan movement held for
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the empire in the east the emperor Leo III, in 726 A.D. launched a program of iconoclasm (image breaking.) Because the Mohammedans attacked idol worship the emperor made an edict to stop all forms of this saint worship and remove all images from the churches and homes. This was a very unpopular thing to do. The common people would not be moved from their superstitions and the bishop of Rome fought him on this subject and ruled against iconoclasm. The iconoclasts were never victorious for long and worship of images was not removed from the church giving the Moslems their cause. After 843 A.D. iconoclasm was finally overthrown in the Catholic Church’s realm. The Catholic Encyclopedia says "The victory of the orthodox brought with it a revival of sacred art, made icons more popular than ever." article: (iconoclasm). Now I am not saying that art is wrong, this was more than mere art. I am merely pointing out how the images, whose value in the minds of men was more than art, had permeated the church world.

REVELATION 9:3-4
"And there came out of the smoke locusts upon the earth: and unto them was given power, as scorpions of the earth have power. 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."

As a false idea emanating from hell, the smoke coming from the pit represents the new religion of Mohammed. Locusts are seen coming from the smoke. If the smoke was false religion then the locusts coming out of the smoke represents a plague coming from a false religion. These were not just any locusts but power was given to them and a period of time to accomplish conquest.

A comparison of verses 3 and 4 with history reveals how this army of locusts compares with the Mohammedan movement. The idolatry of the corrupted church gave Mohammed his chance to move against Christendom. "The destruction of idols" was Mohammed's slogan. This cause allowed him to establish Islam, which has no images and replace Christianity which had fallen into the worship and adoration of relics and saints. This was accomplished by force, the army of locusts. Anywhere the Mohammedans took over people were allowed
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to choose, death or conversion. Christians were allowed to remain Christians only at the hard price of tribute and servitude. "Ye Christian dogs, ye know your option, the Koran, the tribute, or the sword." Was the speech given by Caled before battle. It should be obvious, especially concerning those who were nominal converts to Christianity, those who worshipped the saints and relics would apostatize, as many did. Between 634 and 644 A.D. the Saracens had reduced to Omar's obedience, 36,000 cities or castles, destroyed 4000 churches, and built 1400 mosques for their religion.

The reference to locusts, may have a double meaning, and yet indicate the same power. One; Mohammedanism originated in Arabia which was predominately the land of locusts. Exodus 10:13 says that an east wind brought the locusts to Egypt, that is out of Arabia. Arabs are compared to locusts in number in Judges 7:12. Two; The idea that they would be a vast army preying on the land is similar to what a plague of locusts would do, prey on the land. But these locusts fight would be against mankind not vegetation. Therefore the qualifying statement in verse 4 "Not to hurt the grass of the earth nor any green thing, nor any tree but only the men who do not have the seal of God in their foreheads." Real locusts eat any green thing or plant available and strip the land barren. But Mohammed had commanded his followers to spare all vegetation, because to those living in a desert waste land such as Arabia, trees and vegetation were blessings. The historian Gibbon sites Abubeker, the successor of Mohammed, as saying; “Destroy no palm-trees, nor burn any fields of corn. Cut down no fruit-trees, nor do any mischief to cattle, only such as you kill to eat.”

The commission of the locusts was against those that do not have the seal of God in their foreheads. The true Christians were miraculously preserved by God. The Saracens were successful in extending their conquests throughout Asia, North Africa, and Spain. In these areas the people were generally guilty of idolatry in the worship of images and saints. Thomas Newton points out, “the parts which remained the freest from the general infection were Savoy, Piedmont and the southern parts of France, which afterward were the nurseries and habitations of the Waldenses and Albingensis; and it is very memorable that when the Saracens approached these parts, they were defeated with great slaughter by the famous Charles Martel in several engagements.” (Dissertations on the Prophecies)
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REVELATION 9:5-11
"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. And in those days shall men seek death, and shall not find it; and shall desire to die, and death shall flee from them. 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. And they had the hair of women, and their teeth were as the teeth of lions. And they had breastplates, as it were breastplates of iron; and the sound of their wings was a sound of chariots of many horses running to battle. And they had tails like unto scorpions, and there were stings in their tails: and their power was to hurt men five months. 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."

This king was known as Abaddon or Apollyon. Both words mean destroyer. Mohammed and the Moslem rulers after him were destroyers. They did not spread their religion by word alone but by the sword. Unlike Jesus who said his kingdom is not of this world and therefore refused to pick up a sword and defend himself or allow his disciples to defend him. Mohammed preached by the sword and made a kingdom in this world. Looking at history we can see profit and politics in what Mohammed and his followers did in fostering their religion by the sword. Mohammed declared that each person taking part in battle was to get a share of the spoil. Gibbon writes, "From all sides the roving Arabs were allured to the standard of religion and plunder: the apostle sanctified the license of embracing the female captives as their wives or concubines, and the enjoyment of wealth and beauty was a feeble type of the joys of paradise prepared for the valiant martyrs of the faith. "The sword," says Mahomet, "is the key of heaven and of hell; a drop of blood shed in the cause of God, a night spent in arms, is of more avail than two months of fasting or prayer: whosoever falls in battle, his sins are forgiven: at the day of judgment his wounds shall be resplendent as vermilion, and
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odoriferous as musk; and the loss of his limbs shall be supplied by the wings of angels and cherubim."

To the locusts was given the power to torment men for five months. This is the normal stay of locusts, from May to September, and is about one hundred fifty days. This would be one hundred fifty years when interpreted on the day for a year principle in Ezekiel 4:6. One hundred and fifty years was the amount of time that Mohammedanism continued its effort at world conquest. It was in his fortieth year, about 612 A.D. when Mohammed declared himself the prophet of God and went public with his teachings. The first decade of his teachings did not see a large increase in disciples. Only after being driven from Mecca did Mohammed receive a new revelation that he was to propagate his religion by the sword. Gibbon writes “The imperfection of human rights was supplied and armed by the plenitude of divine power: the prophet of Medina assumed, in his new revelations, a fiercer and more sanguinary tone, which proves that his former moderation was the effect of weakness: the means of persuasion had been tried, the season of forbearance was elapsed, and he was now commanded to propagate his religion by the sword, to destroy the monuments of idolatry, and, without regarding the sanctity of days or months, to pursue the unbelieving nations of the earth.” It was in essence a declaration of war against anyone he considered to be polytheistic which included Christendom. Gibbon says of Mohammed; “Mahomet, with the sword in one hand and the Koran in the other, erected his throne on the ruins of Christianity and of Rome.”

The Koran speaks frequently of fighting the unbelievers. This can be seen in the following examples;

Koran, Sura 9:29, “Fight those who believe not in Allah nor the Last Day, nor hold that forbidden which hath been forbidden by Allah and His Messenger, nor acknowledge the religion of Truth, (even if they are) of the People of the Book, until they pay the Jizya with willing submission, and feel themselves subdued.”

Sura 9:5 “So when the sacred months have passed away, then slay the idolaters wherever you find them, and take them captives and besiege them and lie in wait for them in every ambush, then if they
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repent and keep up prayer and pay the poor-rate, leave their way free to them; surely Allah is Forgiving, Merciful.”

Sura 8:65, “Prophet! rouse the Believers to the fight. If there are twenty amongst you, patient and persevering, they will vanquish two hundred: if a hundred, they will vanquish a thousand of the Unbelievers: for these are a people without understanding.”

For one hundred fifty years they carried out their conquests. The empire stretched for 200 days journey from east to west, from Tartary and India to the Atlantic Ocean. Then in 755 A.D. the caliphate was divided and no longer one large power. The new Abbassidean caliph moved his capital to the western banks of the Tigris and founded his new capital in 762 A.D. The name of the city was Bagdad, called Medinat Al Salem "city of peace." The historian Gibbon writes of this and says "War was no longer the passion of the Saracens." The Saracens fell back and enjoyed the luxury and riches of their conquests and no longer sought war. From 612 A.D. to 762 A.D. is one hundred fifty years.

It was in 632 A.D. after the death of Mohammed that the Saracen power assailed the world. One hundred years later in 732 A.D. Charles Martel defeated the Moslems in the battle of Tours preventing the Moslem invasion of Europe. After one hundred fifty years in 782 A.D. Haroun Al Rashid was in friendly correspondence with the Christian rulers of Europe. This is another one hundred fifty year period. Either period can be used to see that the one hundred fifty year of the locust horde is fulfilled by the Arab Moslems.

Why do we have two possible time periods to fulfill the prophetic one hundred fifty years? As we will see in other prophetic time periods in Revelation, there is not “one moment” in time when a power suddenly comes on the scene. The rise of Mohammed and his religion did not occur in an instant but evolved over a period of years. The Moslem power continued to evolve after the death of Mohammed in 632 A.D. because of this evolution over the years, we can find a few possible starting points for the prophetic five months that after one hundred fifty years take us to significant events in history.

The shapes of the locusts would be like horses prepared for battle. The Mohammedans, both the Saracens and the Turkmen that
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followed were renowned for their cavalry. While other armies had some cavalry and mostly foot soldiers the Mohammedans had mostly cavalry. A cavalry man received two shares of the spoil instead of one share. This was to encourage the multiplying of the cavalry. On the horses, “the faces of men,” they wore beards. The beard was the venerable sign of a man in the middle east and is a striking contrast to Roman armies that wore no beards.

Seen here is a fanciful illustration of the Apocalyptic Scorpion Locust. This Illustration was copied from Elliott's Horae Apocalypticae.

“With crowns like gold.” These horsemen wore steel or brass helms, some were even gilded. These were wrapped about by a turban giving the appearance of a crown. The bible compares turbans to crowns in Ezekiel 23:42; “Sabeans from the wilderness, which put bracelets upon their hands, and beautiful crowns upon their heads.” The Sabeans were Arabs and wore turbans. The comparison of turbans to crowns is made by Arabs also. It was a saying among the Arabs that God had bestowed four peculiar things on the Arabs; That their turbans should be to them instead of diadems, their tents instead of walls and houses, their swords instead of entrenchments, and their poems instead of written laws.

They had hair like women. This refers to the long hair which the Mohammedan army wore. The teeth of lions, symbolizes the way they
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would prey on the nations, vicious, ruthless, to devour them. Mohammed named Ali the "Lion of God," alluding to the description in Revelation 9.

The breastplates of iron were the iron coats of armor or mail worn by the Mohammedan army. The Koran says; Sura 16:81 “It is Allah Who made out of the things He created, some things to give you shade; of the hills He made some for your shelter; He made you garments to protect you from heat, and coats of mail to protect you from your (mutual) violence. Thus does He complete His favours on you, that ye may bow to His Will (in Islam).” Sura 21:80 “It was We Who taught him the making of coats of mail for your benefit, to guard you from each other's violence: will ye then be grateful?” Sura 34:11 (Commanding), "Make thou coats of mail, balancing well the rings of chain armour, and work ye righteousness; for be sure I see (clearly) all that ye do."

The sound was like horses running to battle, which makes sense since that is how an army of horsemen would sound and it is a further indication that a real army of horsemen is symbolized here. Their leader would be empowered by Satan and would be known, or in different terms infamous as a Destroyer, which the Mohammedan leaders were. For 150 years they destroyed and tried for world conquest.

Many would seek death but death would not find them. Meaning that any not killed with the sword or converted to the Moslem apostasy were literal slaves, having the worst insults and injuries done to them and their women. They were merely left alive for the pleasure of even the lowest Moslem to abuse. This idea is made more clear by the parallel in Jeremiah 8:3, “And death shall be chosen rather than life by all the residue of them that remain of this evil family, which remain in all the places whither I have driven them, saith the LORD of hosts.” Job 3:20 also relates the bitterness of life under hard conditions; “Wherefore is light given to him that is in misery, and life unto the bitter in soul.”

An example of this bitter scorpion sting to the Christians is taken from the capitulation of Jerusalem granted by Omar; The Christians were deprived of the use of arms. Tribute was an annual life – redemption tax. A different form of dress to set them apart from their masters. A more humble way of riding. An obligation to rise up deferentially in the presence of the meanest Moslem. To receive and
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gratuitously entertain for a certain time, any Moslem who on a journey might require it. They could not build new churches, or ring the bells of any church they still had, and they could not refuse admission into them of the scoffing Moslem. If any one converted to the Moslem religion and returned to the Christian faith the penalty was death. The pact of Umar circa 717 A.D reaffirmed these rules and created an official “second class citizen” called a “dhimmis.” They paid a life tax and lived under the strict conditions described above. The pact of Umar has stood for 13 centuries as the basis for treating Christians in Moslem countries.

In this picture we see the second "one third" of the original Roman empire fall. This was when the African and Asiatic parts of the empire are taken over by the Saracens in the seventh century A.D.

REVELATION 9:12
"One woe is past; and, behold, there comes two woes more hereafter."

The first woe is past. We just read of the first woe, which was the first of the three remaining "woes" promised in chapter 8:13. Now two more woes remain to appear on the scene as the sixth angel sounds.

REVELATION 9:13-16
"And the sixth angel sounded, and I heard a voice from the four horns of the golden altar which is before God, saying to the sixth angel which had the trumpet, Loose the four angels which are bound in the great river Euphrates. 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. And the number of the army of horsemen were two hundred thousand thousand: and I heard the number of them."

The sixth angel sounds and a voice from the altar calls out, "Release the four angels..." The four angels are loosed which had prepared for a period of time which was related to us as an hour, a day, a month, and a year. This could just allude to an exact appointed time.

I believe this adds up on the day for a year principle of
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interpretation. However, different expositors have interpreted this period of time with slightly different results. Any of them would suffice to show the meaning here and how this was fulfilled historically. The year equals 365, the month equals 30, the day equals, 1 for a total of 396 years. But what of the hour? One hour is either one twelfth of a biblical day, which would equal 30 days. Or one twenty fourth of a day which would equal 15 days.

B.W. Johnson in The Peoples New Testament writes:
The Greek word [eniautos] used that for the regular solar year of 365-1/4 days, Julius Caesar having reformed the calendar. This would make 365-1/4, plus 30, plus 1, plus 1/12, equal 396-1/3 days. Or, a day being a symbol of a year, three hundred and ninety-six years and four months. For Johnson this time frame is dated from January 28, 1057 which according to Arab historians is the date the Turks marched from Bagdad. After 396 years, 120 days Constantinople fell on May 29, 1453.

In the Horae, Elliott uses this formula;
A year = 365 1/4 days = 365 years + 1/4 of a year.
A month = 30 days = 30 years.
A day = = 1 year.
Total = 396 years

+ 1/4 of a year = 91 days
(Gregorian correction equals 1 day every 130 years)
Deduct Gregorian correction of 3 days = 88 days
An hour = one twelfth of a year or = 30 days
Total = 118 days
Grand Total = 396 years 118 days

This matches very well with the time the Mohammedan Turks took from the time they crossed the Euphrates river on January 18, 1057 A.D. until the fall of Constantinople on May 29, 1453 A.D. 396 years, 130 days later. But that leaves twelve extra days difference from the 396 year 118 days of the prophecy. The prophetic puzzle is completed when we take into account the words of the historian Gibbon, "After a siege of forty days the fate of Constantinople could no longer be averted." The fate of Constantinople was sealed. The date of the
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fortieth day of the siege was May 16, 1453, exactly 396 years, 118 days.

John Gill figures the time at 396 years, 106 days. He figures the hour as the twenty-fourth part of a day or 15, adds the 15 to 91 to get 106 days. He dates the setting forth from January 28, 1057 to the downfall of Constantinople on May 16, 1453. The day Gibbon says the fate of Constantinople could no longer be averted.

Even though I present three possible accountings of the predicted time period, this does not mean that the prophecy is not a surety or that it was not completely fulfilled in this historical event and at this time. I am merely pointing out to the interested reader that different scholars have figured the time period slightly different from each other but they have come to the same conclusion. That the overthrow of Constantinople by the Turks in 1453 A.D. is the event that exactly fulfills this prophecy.

Some interpreters of Revelation have supposed the four angels to be of demonic origin. I would however interpret them as symbols, synonymous with the four horsemen and their destructions. They were four winds, a wind from every direction, meaning destruction and calamity from every direction. It is interesting to note that the Turks crossed the Euphrates under Alp Arslan (valiant lion). His son and heir was Malek Shah and when he died the kingdom was divided into four principalities under his four sons. Gibbon describes these principalities as Persia, India, Syria, and Asia Minor, extending from the shores of the Indian ocean to the Mediterranean. Add to this the vast number of horsemen and the description of dress and it leaves little doubt that the armies of the four angels are the Turks.

The number two hundred thousand thousand or two hundred million is not to be taken literally. But as a symbol of the vastness of this army. The Mohammedan army crossed the Euphrates with vast hordes of soldiers in 1057 A.D. At this verse the people who hold these events to be in the future (futurists) sometimes quote a Time magazine article from May 21, 1965. That China could now field an army of 200,000,000 people. The idea of a modern army having the resources to field 200,000,000 soldiers is almost unfathomable. The Chinese arrived at the figure by including untrained and minimally trained women and children as being able to be armed and fight in a war. But modern warfare tactics and equipment make an army this
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massive a waste of resources, possible only in theory and totally unnecessary. An administrative nightmare, that would be nearly if not completely impossible to supply with even basic necessities such as food.

Taken in a historical perspective and placing this army as the Turks in the middle ages, let us examine the mind of the middle ages and see what a very large army is described like. The crusader army, although only about 30,000 foot soldiers and 4000 knights, was to the medieval minds a huge army. Matthew of Edessa likened them as a "Formidable and immense throng," and to "Locusts who cannot be counted or the sands of the sea which are beyond the minds of calculation." I believe this is the symbolism of the two hundred thousand thousand. The actual wording in the Greek is two myriads of myriads, a myriad equaling ten thousand.

I would also like to point out that similar usages of the words myriads of myriads or myriad thousands, is used other places in the bible, these verses do not mean literally the number they logically equal. For example let us look at the Septuagint version of NUMBERS 10:36 "Return O Lord to the Myriad thousands of Israel." Logically this would equal at least ten million and up to ninety nine million using these terms. Yet NUMBERS 1:45-46 explains that there were only 603,550 men above twenty years old in Israel.

We have seen how the Greek version of NUMBERS 10:36 had the word myriad in it. But if we look at the way the translators translated the Hebrew we see it says "many thousands of Israel." I believe this is what is really meant by the usage in Revelation of the term two myriads of myriads, many ten thousands, maybe equaling millions, but not two hundred million. It is meant to portray a large amount.

The symbolism of large armies was applicable to the Turkmen armies. Especially as it mentions the numerousness of the horsemen. The distinction between the eleventh century European armies and the Turkmen armies was that Knights which constituted the cavalry, were relatively few as mentioned by Matthew of Edessa. While the Turkmen army, as the Saracens before them, had seemingly numberless cavalry. Although not unique among nations the Turkmen and Tartars numbered themselves by Tomans, or Myriads, a Toman being 10,000. The population of Samarcand was rated at seven Tomans, because it could send 70,000 horsemen warriors out. Compare Matthew of Edessa’s description of a vast army to the army
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of Mahmud. According to Gibbon, Mahmud had one hundred thousand foot, fifty-five thousand horse, and thirteen hundred elephants of battle. The Seljuks could respond to a summons of war with two hundred thousand horse.

John Gill writes; “The Turks used to bring, and still do bring vast armies into the field: in the year 1396, Bajazet, with three hundred thousand men, fell upon sixty thousand Christians, killed twenty thousand of them, and lost sixty thousand of his own: against him afterward, in the year 1397, came Tamerlane the Tartar, with four hundred thousand horse, and six hundred thousand foot, and having killed two hundred thousand Turks, took Bajazet prisoner, and carried him about in a cage, in golden chains. In the year 1438, Amurath entered into Pannonia, with three hundred thousand horsemen: and in the year 1453, Mahomet took Constantinople with the like number {h}; yea, it is said, that the army at the siege of that city consisted of forty myriads, or four hundred thousand men {i}. It is reported, that the great Turk contemptuously sent to the emperor of the Romans a camel, or a dromedary, loaden with wheat, with this vow by a message, that he should bring against him as many fighting men as there were grains of wheat therein {k}. And it is related {l}, that when Ladislaus, king of Hungary, went out against Amurath with four and twenty thousand horse, Dracula, governor of Walachia, advised him not to attack the emperor of the Turks with so small an army, since he went out every day a hunting with more men than such a number.” (John Gill’s Expositor, note on Rev 9:16) Gibbon also sites the above numbers and events.

REVELATION 9:17

"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."

The breastplates of fire, (color) jacinth and sulphur. Red, and blue, and yellow. The Turkman cavalry and the Ottomans which followed were well known for the rich and colorful array they wore into battle. Especially noted were the red, blue and yellow colors which they so
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frequently wore. To them they were warlike powerful colors.

Part of their description was that the heads of the horses were like lions heads. A lion like destroying character was meant by heads of lions, as seen in the names of their leaders or heads, Alp Arslan and Kilidge Arslan, "Valiant Lion" and "Noble Lion." The Turks compared the Grand Seignior to the Lion, and other kings to little dogs.

Out of their mouths came fire and smoke and brimstone. Symbolizing the special cannon, so large that they were drawn by 70 yoke of oxen, that were made to batter the walls of Constantinople causing the city's fall after one thousand years of being the bulwark of Europe in the east.

REVELATION 9:18
"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."

The third part of men killed, refers to the fall of the eastern Roman empire in 1453 A.D. With the fall of Constantinople the last remaining "one third" of the original Roman empire fell at the hands of the Turks. Constantinople stood as the fortress which protected Europe from Mohammedanism for centuries. It was the capital of the eastern Roman empire since 395 A.D. In the battle which brought on this defeat the Turks used artillery and gunpowder for the first time against the city. This is what is symbolized by the fire and smoke and brimstone. With the bulwark of Europe in the power of the Turks, the Turks went forward to try to invade Europe. They met their defeat in Vienna, in 1683 A.D. at the hands of the Polish army led by John Sobieski. Almost one thousand years after the battle of Tours, Europe was saved again from the Mohammedans.

REVELATION 9:19
"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."

I believe there is a definite continuity between the first locust horsemen and these horsemen who also had a hurting power in their
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horses tails, in that they both were representatives of Mohammedanism. The description of the locusts was given in verse 5-11. Now in verse 18 we read of how "the tails were like serpents." The stings in the horses tails and the tails like serpents, is given a reasonable explanation by Elliott. And I am repeating a synopsis of his idea here so that the reader might have at least one idea of what the stings in the tails of the horses meant. The Turkman alone among nations used the unlikely symbol of the horse tail to denote rank and dignity. A person could be a one, two, or three horse tail ruler or Pasha. The horse tails were born aloft on a standard to show this rank. The story goes that a general on the field of battle had no way to signal his troops because the standard had been destroyed, so he cut off the tail from his horse and attached it to a spear and used it for a standard to signal his troops. The tide of the battle turned and the general won. Since that time the horse tail was the symbol of a ruler. The sting denotes the cruel treatment that whole villages and cities received at the hands of these rulers.

This same thought is echoed in The Peoples New Testament, Johnson writes; “The emblem of the rule of the Pachas, the most wasteful, oppressive, unjust rule the world has ever seen is the horses tail.”

REVELATION 9:20-21
"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,
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nor hear, nor walk: Neither repented they of their murders, nor of their sorceries, nor of their fornication, nor of their thefts."

The Turks and the Saracens before them were a judgment against the idolatrous church, they fought against the apostate church of those regions. Yet even after the downfall of Constantinople the people in the European / Western churches did not turn from their idols, saints and icons. Or turn from any of their other sins but hardened themselves. In the crusade against the Albigenses conducted by Rome in the thirteenth century, one million martyrs perished. “Sorceries” were the tricks to deceive practiced by the priests. “Fornications” refers to the apostasy of the church. “Their thefts” refers to the extortion of money by the church. The western church grew worse and worse. After all God's judgment the unsaved still rebelled. Men generally follow their leaders, but the Roman church provided no leadership when it came to living godly lives. They themselves were the bad examples to the people, the debauchers, the murderers, the thieves. Jeremiah 5:3 shows God's judgment on the ungodly, yet they repented not of their sins because they did not know him. Those who do not repent but harden their hearts are called foolish for refusing to acknowledge his correction.

In the Old Testament God raised up a heathen nation to punish the idolatry and disobedience of the Jewish people. Babylon destroyed Jerusalem and took captive the people. This was the 70 year captivity. In the book of Zechariah we read how God responds to the question of how long will this punishment will go on, “And I am very sore displeased with the nations that are at ease; for I was but a little displeased, and they helped forward the affliction,” Zech 1:15. The heathen nations had added to the affliction and oppressed them more than they should have. I believe we can see the same thing in the Mohammedan movement. Their efforts at world conquest took them to Spain and France and if not for Charles Martel in the battle of Tours all Europe would be Moslem. But I believe that God had placed boundaries on the powers that they overstepped and added to the affliction. God hampered their efforts by internal strife and the struggle for primacy between the Ommiades and the Abbassideans causing the break up of the empire. The breakup of the empire was the end of Arab effort at world conquest. When the Turks came on
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the scene we see the same thing, they added to the affliction and caused those living under their rule to think that death would be a reprieve to the cruel treatment. After repeated attempts to defeat Constantinople which stood in the way of taking over Europe the Turks finally succeeded in 1453 A.D. But after a while were again prevented from entering Europe from the east by their defeat in battle in 1683 A.D.

SUMMARY:
What we have just seen in chapter nine is the first and second of the three "woes" of Revelation 8:13. These woes were the downfall of the second and third parts of the original Roman empire. Now there is a break in this particular vision, which resumes with the seventh angel sounding and the third woe commencing in Revelation 11:15. John, now receives new strength and a new vision in chapter 10.

REVELATION 10: The little book

In chapter five it was a sealed book. Here the book is open. This open book is itself one of the messages of the sealed book in chapter five because, this open book appears under the sixth trumpet which is part of the seventh seal of the closed book in chapter five.

REVELATION 10:1-6
"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: 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, and he cried with a loud voice, as when a lion roareth: and when he had cried, seven thunders uttered their voices. 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. And the angel which I saw stand upon the sea and upon the earth lifted up his hand to heaven, 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
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describe the "Beast and the Bride" as something that should not last.

An angel comes down from heaven and is described as mighty, and
clothed with a cloud, and having a rainbow about his head. His face
shining like the sun and his feet were like pillars of fire. Interestingly
this is the only angel described this way. All the same features are used
in the description of the Lord in other places in the bible, i.e. the
rainbow in Ezekiel 1:27-28. His shining face in Matthew 17:2. His feet
as pillars of fire in Revelation 1:15. It would seem that this is a mighty
angel indeed. Since the descriptions of the glorified Jesus in Revelation
1 and this angel are so similar, I would say that this angel is certainly
symbolic of the Lord Jesus Christ. The angel carries a little book, which symbolizes the reformation, a time when the word of God was no longer hidden in dead languages but put into the language of the people so that all could read it. This mighty angel places one foot on the sea and one foot on the earth. This is alludes to the angel's authority. The angel cries out with a loud voice so that it sounds like a lion roaring, Jesus is The Lion of Judah, and the seven thunders answered.

John, who was just about to write down what he had heard the seven thunders say, is told by a heavenly voice not to reveal these things. My first inclination was that the seven thunders were the seven angels that were sounding. However these are mentioned as thunders whereas the seven angels are described differently. It may be that the seven thunders represent the bulls and anathemas of Rome the seven hilled city sending forth their protests of the reformation. John is going to write these things down since they seemed powerful but is told to seal them up and not commit them to writing in the word of God, because they are powerless words of men. The thunders issued by the Vatican were regarded by the nations as the voice of God.

It is also possible that these actually refer to angels and that John heard incredible things that day but was forbidden to record them.

Then this mighty angel swears by God (which we should not do letting our yes be yes and no be no, only God swears by God) who created all things that time should be no more. "Time" can be translated as "delay." Either way seems to mean that the final judgment is coming when the seventh angel sounds his trumpet. The gap of time, or delay between the first appearing of Jesus and his final coming in glory is over. Jesus will come again.

REVELATION 10:7
"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."

This is the verse which explains to us when the delay will end. At that moment time will matter no longer, we will no longer be affected by it. At that time we are changed to immortality. Every thing pertaining to this earth will vanish when the seventh angel sounds and
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Christ comes again.

So that there is no confusion over how these verses skip around. I will tell the reader now that the seventh angel sounds in chapter 11:15 and we immediately see that the kingdoms of the world become the kingdoms of our Lord.

REVELATION 10:8-11
"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. 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. 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. And he said unto me, Thou must prophesy again before many peoples, and nations, and tongues, and kings."

The voice from heaven tells John to take the book from the angel's hand. The angel tells John to eat the book, and that it would taste like honey but make his belly bitter. After John eats the book he is told that he must prophesy before many peoples, nations, and kings. Let us examine the symbolism of this little book which was sweet to the taste but made John's belly bitter.

Jeremiah 15:16, "Thy words were found, and I did eat them; and thy words were unto me a joy..."

Ezekiel 2:7-10, "And thou shalt speak my words unto them, whether they will hear, or whether they will forbear: for they are most rebellious. But thou, son of man, hear what I say unto thee; Be not thou rebellious like the rebellious house: open thy mouth, and eat that I give thee. And when I looked, behold, an hand was sent unto me; and, lo, a roll of a book was therein; and he spread it before me; and it was written within and without: and there was written therein lamentations, and mourning, and woe."
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Ezekiel 3:1-4, "Moreover he said unto me, Son of man, eat that thou findest; eat this roll, and go speak unto the house of Israel. So I opened my mouth, and he caused me to eat that roll. And he said unto me, Son of man, cause thy belly to eat, and fill thy bowels with this roll that I give thee. The I did eat it; and it was in my mouth as honey for sweetness. And he said unto me, Son of man, go, get thee unto the house of Israel, and speak with my words unto them."

In each account the book stood for the words of God given for prophecy, which was full of sweet words to those who obey the Lord, and full of bitter destruction for those who disobey. John takes the book from the angel. As the representative of mankind in this vision he accepts the open book which will speak to many peoples, nations, tongues and kings. The open book is the bible in the common language of the people. Many people and tongues received the word of God so they could understand and worship God in truth.

The words given to John were the prophecy about the temple being measured and the two witnesses in chapter 11. It was a prophecy that made John sick at heart. John was to “prophesy” or speak the divine truth.

The "little open book" comes before the seventh trumpet which is prophetically the second coming of the Lord, may be an indication that there would be an era of the "open book" just before the end of the age. If this is true, it certainly fits with history. The Catholic church took the bible from the people in the middle ages, preferring to leave the people in the dark concerning God. Considering the reading of the bible in the vernacular as dangerous, there were penalties such as death or excommunication for owning a bible or reading one in the common language of the people. The protestant reformation, led by such men as Martin Luther, an ex-catholic priest, restored the bible to the people and we have an era of the "open book" in modern history. Today the bible is the best selling book of all time, most of them being sold and owned in the U.S. Missionaries have carried the Word to many lands and it has been translated into hundreds of languages and dialects. We can not over estimate the value of God’s word being easily available to any who wish to read it. This simple privilege has been the catalyst for countless people finding salvation in the life giving words of God.
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I believe that when this angel cries out he is announcing the age of the open book after the bible was taken from the people for so long during the middle ages. The open book is an event which succeeds the 1453 A.D. era of the sixth trumpet. In 1517 A.D. The reformation began in earnest when Martin Luther posted his thesis.

This ties in with the vision in chapter 11, of the temple being measured and the two witnesses and many scholars feel chapter ten and eleven are actually one chapter.

REVELATION 11: The vision of the temple

John having now received new words to prophecy tells the continuing story of the second woe brought by the sounding of the sixth angel. This seems to be a vision given from the view point of the church in world in history.

REVELATION 11:1-2
"And there was given unto 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. 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 they shall tread under foot forty and two months."

John is instructed to measure the temple of God and the altar and those that worship therein. He is told not to measure the outer court, for it is given over to the gentiles to trample under foot for forty two months. This temple is not a physical building somewhere. The temple represents the Christian body of believers, the true church of God. The outer court was part of the temple but it was separate from the main body or building. The inner temple represents the true body of believers, the true church as opposed to the outer court, or the external visible church in power. John was told not to measure this outer court. In effect John was told not to consider the gentiles in the outer court as part of the true church. For they had once been part of the true church. But through false prophets and false teachers and those who were actually wolves sent to deceive the believers, they became the outer court, the court of the gentiles.

The reed is used to measure the temple. The exact dimensions are
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not what is important but the symbolism of being measured against a rule. Psalms 19:4, 110:2, and Galatians 6:16 refer to the Word as a line, a rod and a rule. God uses the Word as the measurement for his church. The church should conform exactly to the dimensions laid out by the Great Architect and Master Builder. There should be nothing added and nothing detracted from its full measurements.

In Ezekiel 40 we see another temple being measured by a man whose appearance was like the appearance of brass with a measuring line in one hand and a measuring reed in the other. The temple had chambers that were cubicle and measured one reed in all directions. These were the chambers of those serving in the temple. Since all the chambers were the same size and shape it tells us that there was no preeminence among the servants of God in the temple. These chambers symbolize the church. There are many chambers in the temple just as there are many bodies of believers that make up the church of God. How does each measure up? Each body has the Word as a measure and sure guide. If any add to the measure they will no longer be a perfect geometric cube. If any take away from the measure the same results can be expected. Only when perfectly in line with the infallible rule of God are we as the body of Christ representative of the temple chambers. There were no larger or smaller chambers and therefore no greater or lesser servants. The individual bodies in the church should be the same. There should be no body of believers with preeminence over the others, no person in the bodies with preeminence either.

The Roman church was the organized visible church represented by the outer court. They seemed to be part of the temple but were in reality separated. They were the outer court, the court given over to the gentiles and a separation was fixed between them and the inner sanctuary where the true believers were. Those in the outer court had the appearance of holiness but in reality they were separated from the truth. That is why they are not included in the measurement of the temple. The Roman church existed as the outer court for forty two months. Forty two months is three and a half years or 1260 days. Which on the day for a year principle is 1260 years. The Roman church fulfills this time period, ruling over of men and demanding preeminence for 1260 years.

I previously explained how major powers did not just instantly appear on the scene but evolved over time. This is true of the Papal
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rule which evolved over a period of time as seen by these significant events; The decree of the emperor Justinian in 533 A.D. he conferred upon the Roman bishop the title ‘Rector Ecclesiae’ which made the bishop of Rome the head of all churches. At this time we can see the Roman bishops claims being sanctioned and enforced by imperial decree. The first real Pope is considered to be Pope Gregory, as he was the first to be called “Pope” in 604 A.D. The title “Universal Bishop” conferred upon Boniface III by Phocas in 606 A.D. The confirmation of the primacy of the Roman Pope over Constantinople and the eastern churches in 607 A.D. by the emperor Phocas. 1260 years from these first four dates takes us to significant points in history where the power of the papacy was crippled, these are covered in chapter 16.

I am aware that some other interpreters of Revelation prefer a later date as the commencement of the 1260 years. They hold to a later date in order to place the end of the 1260 years and the beginning of a literal millennial period in the future. Here are some dates that fit in this scheme. In 754 A.D. and 756 A.D. Pepin donated to the Popes what has become known as the papal states, in essence giving him a kingdom and temporal power. We see 756 A.D. as the full manifestation of the Pope as an ecclesiastic and political power. If the 756 A.D. date has prophetic significance then 1260 years from then, in 2016 A.D. we can expect to see more of the downfall of the papal power. Even though I do not think there will be a literal millennium, I would have to admit that when it comes to speculating on these dates we will never be sure until after the second coming and we see the fulfillment of all that has been prophesied and understand all that was meant for us by the Lord. There seems to be in mankind a desire to see the fulfillment of prophecy in ones own time. We can look back in time and see what might be the fulfillment of the prophetic 1260 years. Or we can look forward and hope we see it and experience it for ourselves, and to actually be part of what is happening.

REVELATION 11:3-4
"And I will give power unto my two witnesses, and they shall prophesy, a thousand two hundred and three score days, clothed in sackcloth. These are two olive trees, and the two candlesticks standing before the God of the earth."
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We see here two witnesses who receive power from God. For 1260 days they will prophesy. During the period of time that papal Rome is in power, these two witnesses would prophesy through all the persecution and suppression to remain the light of the world. The witnesses would be alive and well, fulfilling their mission of being the witness of the truth among a corrupt and visible church. Deut. 17:6 “At the mouth of two witnesses, or three witnesses, shall he that is worthy of death be put to death; but at the mouth of one witness he shall not be put to death.”

The time period in this verse is “a thousand two hundred and three score days.” The 1260 days are again equivalent to 1260 years just as in verse 2. In verse 2 the description of the time period is different being described as forty two months. I am of the opinion that the descriptions are different because even though they are covering the same period of time they are related to different event details. The thousand two hundred and three score days relates to how long the two witnesses are active in their ministry, while the forty two months relates to how long the gentiles trample under foot the temple.

The two olive trees and the two candlesticks are clearly a reference to Zechariah 4:1-14. In Zechariah it explains that the two olive trees are the spirit of God, and the two candlesticks are the house of God. The spirit of God works through the word of God. Therefore the two witnesses may be interpreted as the word of God and the church of God. These work together proclaiming God's true message throughout the 1260 years of the Roman church's rule. Verses such as Rev.1:5, Rev.3:14, Isa.55:4 all allude to the idea of Jesus the Word as the witness. Again verses such as Matt.10:18, Isa.43:10,12, and Acts 1:8 all show the Christian as the witness. The word of God and the church of God, with the true believers are the two witnesses.

I will add that some have felt that the two witnesses are the Old Testament and the New Testament. The bible was suppressed by the Roman church until it was almost eradicated from the world. But just as in Chapter 10 we see an age of the open book, the bible was brought back to life by being published in the common language of the people. The Roman church felt that only in the ignorance of the people lay power and safety for them. This proved true when the bible was freely available for the common man to read he could see the truth and threw off the shackles of the Roman church.
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REVELATION 11:5
"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."

We read that fire comes out of their mouths if any man tries to hurt them. This fire that devours their enemies is the word of God. Can anyone doubt that God's word is a fire? Hosea 6:5 says, "Therefore I have hewed them by the prophets; I have slain them by the words of my mouth..." Hebrews 4:12 says, "For the word of God is quick and powerful, and sharper than any two edged sword..." We can see by these verses that God's word is in our mouth and his word is like a fire. It devours its enemies, its sharper than a sword. But its power is spiritual, its death is spiritual. If any enemies try to harm God's word then God's word prevails and the enemy succumbs to the judgment of God in the end. To die the second death is a promise of God's word to those who do not give heed to the warnings that are contained within.

REVELATION 11:6
"These have power to shut heaven, that it rain not in the days of their prophecy: and have power over the waters to turn them to blood, and to smite the earth with all plagues, as often as they will."

These are not literal, though God does have the power to fulfill these literally just as he did for Moses when he turned the Egyptian waters to blood, and for Elijah when God held back rain for three years because Elijah prayed. However I believe these are symbolic judgments to the world for not accepting the truth of the word of Jesus but turning to believe lies. Because few men are listening to these two witnesses, blessings from heaven are not raining upon the earth, but calamity and destruction come as a judgment from God. Jeremiah 3:2b-3a says, "And thou hast polluted the land with thy whoredoms and they wickedness. Therefore the showers have been withheld, and there hath been no latter rain." God promised us in Deuteronomy 28:15-68 that if we did not follow his rules, then we would be cursed many different ways, i.e. Verse 20 says, "The Lord
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shall send upon thee cursing, vexation, and rebuke." And verses 22-26 says, "The Lord shall smite thee with a consumption...and with sword, and with blasting...The Lord shall make the rain of thy land powder and dust...And thy carcase shall be meat unto all the fowls of the air."

REVELATION 11:7
"And when they shall have finished their testimony, the beast that ascendeth out of the bottomless pit shall make war against them, and shall overcome them and kill them."

It is in this verse that we might find the reason why the period of time is described differently in verses 2 and 3. In verse 3 the gentiles will trample on the temple for forty two months or 1260 years. In Verse 3 we see that the two witnesses will prophesy the truth for 1260 years. Verse seven does not say that after the 1260 years is finished they will be killed, it says when they finished their testimony. In other words these two witnesses will prophesy or preach the truth for 1260 years but they will finish their testimony for the purposes of verse 7, in the midst of the 1260 years. We will see that they are raised from the dead after a time and their testimony will be great and continue as long as the gentiles trample under foot the temple.

I think that many people get confused on the meaning of the statement “When they shall have finished their testimony.” On first reading it seems to say that when the 1260 years is completed the two witnesses finish their testimony. But on closer examination and in context with what is being said it can be seen that this cannot be the meaning. We know that the beast made war with the church and the two witnesses during the 1260 years and not just at the end of it. Therefore it strains the meaning of this verse to place the beast making war against them only after the 1260 years is completed. This would need to be the order of the events if we were to suppose that their testimony is not finished until 1260 years has elapsed.

In the Horae Apocalypticae, Elliott shows that “perfected their testimony” is a better meaning for the Greek phrase that has been translated as “finished their testimony.” The Greek word ‘teleo’ that has been translated as finished has many meanings such as fulfill, pay, accomplish, expire. As an example we can look at Rev 15:1 where “seven angels having the seven last plagues; for in them is filled
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<teleo> up the wrath of God.” In this verse filled conveys the meaning that the complete or perfected wrath of God is in the seven plagues.

In the midst of the 1260 years of papal rule, the two witnesses testimony is finished. Their witness of the truth is perverted and turned, until the people no longer know the truth, but have finally succumb to the beast. This does not mean that true believers won't exist, but it does mean they will have been persecuted to the point where they are powerless against the beast.

The papacy of Rome was responsible for the killing of many protestants such as the Albigensians and Waldensians and others who did not adhere to the doctrines and teachings of the Roman church. Estimates go as high as fifty million people killed for their testimony. Daniel 7:21 says the beast would make war against the saints and prevail against them. When the Roman church had brought war and destruction and the massacring of whole towns because they did not adhere to Roman doctrines, for sufficient time. Then the word of God and the church of God will be symbolically dead. They will seem powerless and prevailed against by their enemy the beast. But the word of God will stand forever and the gates of hell shall not prevail against God's truth. Just as in 1 Kings 19:18, when Elijah thought he was the only one in Israel still faithful to the Lord, God told Elijah, "Yet I have seven thousand in Israel who have not bowed to Baal." God will always have His remnant. The two witnesses being dead simply means that the doctrines of the evil one, who would pervert the truth of the gospel of Christ will prevail over the Christians and go unchallenged for a while. But God will keep His remnant, as we will see shortly.

REVELATION 11:8-14

"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. And they of the people and kindreds and tongues and nations shall see their bodies three days and an half, and shall not suffer their bodies to be put in graves. 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. And after three days and an half
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the Spirit of Life from God entered into them, and they stood upon their feet, and a great fear fell upon them which saw them. 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. and the same hour was there a great earthquake, and a 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. The second woe is past; and, behold, the third woe cometh quickly."

The two witnesses lie in the street of "that great city," which we will see in later chapters is the seat of power for the beast, Babylon or Rome. The reference to the city "where also our Lord was crucified," is not referring to Jerusalem, but to the power behind Jerusalem that commanded Christ to be put to death, Rome.

The amazing fulfillment to the two witnesses death and resurrection can be seen in history. In the period between the 7th and 8th sessions of the Lateran Council. The Pope dispatched into Bohemia the Cardinal Archbishop Thomas of Strigonium to try and make concessions and to effect reconciliation between the heretics and the Roman church. The pope wanted to unify the church by having the heretics submit to the churches authority. At the 8th session of the Lateran council, Dec 16, 1513 the Papal Bull included a citation issued to the dissidents in question (Calixtines and Hussites according to Elliott) to appear and plead before the Cardinal Legate or before the Lateran Council at its next session. On May 5th 1514 the day of the 9th session arrived and the Council met. But there was no report from the Cardinal of anyone pleading or of any further opposition. Neither was there any plea or opposition entered from any state, city or town in Christendom. There was absolutely no support of any of the ancient heresies that had given the Roman church so much trouble.

The two witnesses were as dead. During this session the victory of the papacy was proclaimed with these words; "There is an end of resistance to the Papal rule and religion: opposers there exist no more:" and "The whole body of Christendom is now seen to be subjected to its Head, i.e. to Thee." In the Hand-Book of Prophecy, James Stacy quotes the orator of this council as saying "No one now

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denies, no one opposes…”
That same day was issued a declaration of the Pope and Council that all punishments and penalties in former Bulls and Councils were in effect on all heretics. This included a punishment that followed them after death. They were to be refused burial. This is what is referred to in the prophecy "and shall not suffer their bodies to be put in graves." This was an ancient practice supposedly preventing a bodily resurrection, that hope of glory to the true believer, which was applied by the Roman church to heretics. For example I give the case of Huss whose ashes were collected and cast upon the lake of Constance.
To the statement in verse 10 "And they that dwell upon the earth shall rejoice over them, and make merry," we can easily see in history the fact of this prophecy. On the closing of the Lateran Council in March 1517 a great celebration was held. Banquets were given that rivaled pagan Roman celebrations because the Council had met all its goals, including "the total extirpation of heresies." The two witnesses are dead and all the people of the earth rejoice! Why? Because they were the light in a dark world. John 3:19 says,"...and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil." In convicting men of their sins they tormented the people of the earth, who did not want to give up their unrighteous behavior.
The final piece of this amazing fulfillment comes when we see "the three days and an half" which is three and a half years, is so perfectly fulfilled. For three and a half years the voice of the true believer is silenced. Virtually nowhere is there public opposition to the Roman doctrines. Then on October 31, 1517, exactly three and a half years after the proclamation that all heresy is vanished, Martin Luther posted his 95 Theses to the church at Wittenberg. And in this way a new epoch of reformation begins. After three and a half years the two witnesses are given life again, they are filled with the Spirit of Life from God. Then they ascend to heaven in front of the eyes of all the people of the earth to witness. Remember, the witnesses are not two individuals, but are symbolic of the true church and the word of God.
We should never under estimate the importance of the Lutheran reformation. Here is the crux, the meeting point of so many things that were leading to the age of the open book, the reformation. In 1456 the Gutenberg Bible was printed. Before this time books such as the bible were laboriously copied by hand, they were expensive and
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rare. Now books could be quickly produced. Each copy was exactly the same and they were far less expensive to acquire. Copies of the bible were showing up in towns where the prominent citizens were buying them. The bible in the common language of the people, being produced faster than they could be destroyed. The discovery of the “New World” in 1492, which eventually lead to an exodus of the oppressive ways of Europe and the freedoms of liberty in America. And finally the Lutheran Reformation which we can put a time stamp on of 1517 A.D. These great events within the time of sixty years all lead to liberty of conscious and freedom from oppression and forced religious fealty.

There are expositors of Revelation that place the death of the two witnesses as occurring during the French Revolution. This idea has as its basis the completion of the 1260 years coinciding with the two witnesses finishing their testimony. But as shown previously it is not necessary for the two witnesses to have completed their testimony after 1260 years. Instead during the 1260 years they fulfill their testimony. The French revolution comes into prophecy in Revelation 16 and some make a link between these two events. However if we place the two witnesses in the French revolution we have a 341 year gap between the downfall of Constantinople in 1453 A.D. and the time of the revolution, completely by passing these great events in history that happen around the same time, i.e. downfall of Constantinople in 1453, the Gutenberg Bible in 1456, the discovery of the New World in 1492 and the 95 theses and beginning of the Lutheran reformation in 1517. After careful study and consideration I have come to the opinion that the events surrounding the 95 thesis and the Lutheran reformation are the correct ones to fit these verses in Revelation 11.

The symbolism of the two witnesses being given life again and being exalted to heaven is two-fold.

1) It is a picture of the purified church, for only true believers would come out of the persecutions of those days. And God's word becoming free and prominent in the reformation.

2) The resurrection of the two witnesses and their ascension into heaven show the ultimate victory of the word of God and the Christian, who rules for Christ, over the beast.
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In Revelation 11:13, we read of an earthquake in which a tenth part of the city fell. Revelation 16:18-19 also pictures an earthquake with the fall of "that great city" Babylon. It was meant to symbolize the downfall or loss of power of the beast. Which had begun with the reformation and continued through the protestant states, and finally the complete loss of temporal rule by the papacy affected by the German wars and then by the loss of the papal states to the kingdom of Italy in 1870.

When we read in Daniel chapter 7 about the vision of the ten horns, we see that one little horn came up and uprooted three others. This little horn may be the tenth part which fell. It symbolizes the beast. As we will see in later chapters the little horn was the papacy. The result of the victory of the reformation did take power and prestige away from the papacy.

So far we see the theme in Revelation 11 as being, the persecution of the true Christians, only to rise victorious in the reformation. We see the judgment of the city known as the whore, Babylon and Rome. This judgment is symbolized by the earthquake which made part of the city fall. The symbolism of the earthquake as the downfall of a power is repeated in Revelation. Revelation 16:18-19, a great earthquake divides "that great city" which is Babylon, or Rome, as part of God's judgment. Chapter 18 verse 2 says, "Babylon is fallen is fallen," referring to the fall of the city in Revelation 16:18-19. Was this God's judgment? Yes! Revelation 18:10, "Alas alas that great city Babylon, that mighty city! for in one hour is thy judgment come." The idea of the earthquake not literally being an earthquake, but a symbol of God's judgment can be seen in Revelation 18:2,5,6,10,21 and Revelation 19:2. Rome, mighty Babylon, the city where the beast, who persecuted the saints was. That great whore of Revelation 17:18, is remembered and judged by God.

The overcoming of the beast by God, symbolized by the two witnesses' resurrection and the earthquake, were part of the second woe. The third woe begins in verse 15.

REVELATION 11:15-19
"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
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for ever and ever. And the four and twenty elders, which sat before God on their seats, fell upon their faces, and worshipped God, 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. 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. 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."

We read here about the seventh angel sounding. This is the last trump, the end of all things, the great judgment. The kingdoms of this world become the kingdoms of our Lord. The world is presented to the owner of all things, the kingdom has been won back from the one who stole it.

Verse 18 says this is the time of the judgment to the world and the reward of the saints. How is this the third woe? Well, all seven trumpets or woes are toward the ungodly, not toward the Christian. To the unredeemed the judgment is surely a woeful event, since they will spend eternity in the lake of fire, and the unredeemed make up most of this world. Revelation 19:17-21 is parallel to the third woe. In it we see the symbolic destruction of the ungodly. The men are slain by the sword and eaten by all the fowls of the air. Just as we saw it promised to the ungodly in Deuteronomy 28:22-26.

At the judgment, the temple which is in heaven is opened that the saints might enter into it. In Revelation 15:8 we are told that no man could enter the temple until the seven plagues of the seven angels are fulfilled. This helps us to realize that the story told in the book of Revelation is repeated from different viewpoints. This is known as progressive parallelism. For if the temple is now opened in chapter eleven, and the chapters followed the story sequentially, then what would chapter 15:8 be speaking about when it says no man was able to enter the temple in heaven? The temple of God is opened on the judgment day. Revelation 16:17 has the seventh angel pouring out his vial and a cry from the temple in heaven is heard, "it is done" Babylon
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has been judged, and the beast and the false prophet are judged. Then and only then is the temple of God in heaven opened to the saints.

Since verse 18 speaks of the end of the age, the judgment day, and verse 19 speaks of the reward of the saints entering the temple in heaven. Then the temple seems to me to be synonymous with the New Jerusalem which we enter after the judgment day also.
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PART v

REVELATION 12: The birth and persecution of the church

Chapter twelve begins a different view of history covering the same period of time as chapters six through eleven. This view is from the perspective of the church in history. It portrays more fully the fortunes of the church, its struggle with the antichrist, the final overthrow and the inauguration of universal peace.

As an introductory note let me mention here that chapter 12 seems to be broken up into sections and the verses do not necessarily follow in chronological order. For example; verses 1-5 are of the woman ready to give birth and bringing forth a son. Verse 6 seems to see forward to the events in verse 14 with the events in verses 7-12 in between. I hope that this will become clear as we progress through chapter 12.

REVELATION 12: 1-2
"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: And she being with child cried, travailing in birth, and pained to be delivered."

The image in verse one is a parallel to a dream which Joseph had in Genesis 37:9-10. Joseph told this dream to his father Jacob; "Behold, the sun and the moon and the eleven stars made obeisance to me." Jacob then rebuked him saying, "Shall I and thy mother and thy brethren indeed come to bow down ourselves to thee to the earth?" The sun and the moon symbolized the father and the mother who were the foundation stock of the nation of Israel. God changed Jacob's name to Israel. The eleven stars were Joseph's brothers and along with his twelfth star were the twelve tribes of the nation of Israel. This woman then, is the image of the old covenant nation of Israel, The Lord's old covenant bride.
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In verse two we see the woman with child and going through birth pains, ready to deliver a child. The nation of Israel was coming to the point where the Messiah was expected to come upon the scene, and the people were looking for their new leader. God had promised Abraham that from his seed all nations would be blessed. Jesus was born in this nation, from the seed of Abraham. Israel was giving the world a savior, as promised by God. That is what is meant by "travailing in birth and pained to be delivered." The time was at hand for the birth of the savior.

There is also another interpretation given by some commentators to the woman and child. This interpretation sees in the pregnancy a prophetic period of time. A pregnancy is 40 weeks so this “prophetic pregnancy” would be 280 years on the day for a year principle. From the ascension of Jesus to the end of the persecutions by Rome and the proclamation of liberty and the advancement of Christianity in 313 A.D. was 280 years. It was in 313 A.D. that Constantine issued the edict of toleration which officially ended the persecution of Christians by Rome. Without going in to too much detail on this view, let me point out that it presents as many problems as it tries to answer. For example; In this viewpoint the woman is pregnant with the church. The church was going to be born into liberty. A problem with this interpretation is that the church is always seen as a woman and bride in scripture, but verse 5 says she brought forth a man child, comparing the church to a man. Verses 1-2 do not put any emphasis on the time or duration of the pregnancy. The verses only put the emphasis on the identification of the woman and the fact that she was ready to give birth. These two reasons alone seem to take away any strength to this interpretation.

To summarize the details in the “prophetic pregnancy” interpretation; The woman is the church. The sun is the light she gives off. The moon is Old Testament which shone with reflected light. The 12 stars are the 12 apostles. The woman was in travail, grief, as she labored to bring forth her offspring. The dragon is the symbol of Rome. The one third of the stars refer to “one third part” of the old Roman empire. The third parts were the division of the Roman empire in earlier chapters. There was peace in two thirds of the empire at this time but the Roman one third persecuted the church until Constantine. Many of these details are true but the argument comes down to this; If the woman was Israel, as I have described before than
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the child was Christ. If the woman was the bride of Christ, the church, with the 12 stars as apostles, then the child is the church being born into liberty. I believe the view of the woman as Israel, the Old Testament bride, bringing forth the Christ is the more accurate and this is the interpretation that I will explain in later passages.

REVELATION 12:3-4
"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. 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."

The dragon which classically represents Satan, also represents an earthly kingdom empowered by him. Just as the term “Prince of Persia” in Daniel represented a principality ruling over Persia. A literal Persian prince would not have been able to withstand the angel.

In The Peoples New Testament, B.W. Johnson mentions that the standard of pagan Rome was a dragon. The description of the dragon is the same all through the Revelation except for the number of crowns on his heads. See Rev. 12:3, 13:1, 17:3. In chapter 17:9-18 an interpretation of the meanings of the seven heads, ten horns and seven crowns is given to us so that we can see that this is Rome which is alluded to here.

The dragon cast down one third of the stars of heaven. It is obvious that this is not to be taken literally because the earth would be dwarfed and destroyed by just one literal star. Many people feel the reference to the stars being cast down is a reference to Satan’s angels, one third of them being cast out of heaven. This is based on the belief that stars in the bible refer to angels. Even though it is true that stars can represent angels, it is not the case but in a few verses where stars are mentioned. One has merely to look at stars in the bible to realize this. Out of twenty four passages of scripture speaking of stars we find them broken down like this:


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Satan or his angels; Possibly Dan 10:12-13, Rev 8:10-11, Isa 14:12.

Kings or people; Gen 37:9, Rev 12:1, possibly Judges 5:20, see Judges 4:15, Dan 8:10, Isa 14:13.

The ungodly; Jude 13.

Idols; Amos 5:26, Acts 7:43.

I believe that here the stars can be interpreted as nations, kings and people, cast down and subjugated by Rome. Which did in fact rule about one third of the known world at the time. The reference here may in fact include Satan's angels but in the context seen in Daniel 10:12-13 where a spiritual power withheld the angel and was referred to as the prince of Persia. The spiritual powers which exercise their influence over the nations.

Israel at the time of Christ's birth was a part of the Roman empire and was governed by the evil King Herod. Herod was a friend of Rome. In fact the Herodians were brought to power by Rome.

In verse four we see Satan standing before the woman who was about to give birth to the Christ. "So that when she gave birth he might devour her child as soon as it was born." Satan is not omniscient. He did not know who the savior would be (humanly), but he was looking for the one who would crush his head, foretold by God in Genesis 3:15. He was searching so that somehow he might try and stop him, to devour him as soon as he was born. Remember, Satan does not know everything, even salvation is a mystery to him (1Peter 1:12). So, when the magi came to Herod to enquire about the new born king, Herod was not the only one surprised. Satan thought "This might be the one who will crush my head." He must stop this newborn king! And he tried to kill Jesus as a helpless child. He influenced Herod, a man with a reputation for cruelty, to kill all male children under two years old in Bethlehem, because he didn't know who the new born king was. Jesus, however was protected by angels and his parents escaped with him to Egypt.
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REVELATION 12:5
"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."

This can only mean Jesus. Psalm 2:9, and Revelation 2:27, and Revelation 19:15 all say that Jesus would rule all nations with a rod of iron. And Jesus was the one who was caught up to heaven and sits on God's throne (Mark 16:19).

There is a changing of symbolism in Revelation 12. The woman represents the bride or church of God. At first we see her represent the Old Testament church, the covenant with Israel. She brings forth the promised Christ but a change occurs at this point. The woman now symbolizes the bride of Christ, the new covenant church. Romans 9:25 says, "I will call those who were not my people, 'my people', and her who was not beloved, 'beloved'." The Christian has become the spiritual Israel, unnatural branches grafted into the natural tree, as Paul put it in Romans 11:17-22.

REVELATION 12:6
"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."

We see the woman flee to the wilderness. Representing the Christian church fleeing to a place of safety, out of the limelight, in the shadows as outcasts from society, to escape the dragon. The Roman church’s taunt of “Where was your religion before Luther?” Can be answered by this verse, “In the wilderness protected by God.”

The wilderness was a place set apart where the true Christians would be nurtured by God for 1260 days. The wilderness is not an earthly physical place, but it is a symbolic representation of the bride lacking a place of honor in the world, of living in the world but having communion with God. We have citizenship in heaven but temporarily work for God on earth. The church is truly "A stranger in a strange land." The bride had to actually flee and hide from the dragon, the Roman empire. The witness of the catacombs of Rome, and later the persecution carried out by the papacy scream the evidence of the true
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church having to flee to the wilderness. During this time God strengthens the church within and it grows in numbers and strength to outlast the dragon's seemingly all powerful false church. The Roman church which never knew the wilderness could not be the woman of Revelation 12.

The one thousand two hundred sixty days fit incredibly well to history when applied by the year for a day principle of Daniel 9, Ezekiel 4:6 and Numbers 14:34. It fits the 1260 years of Roman church rule dating from the first real Pope, Gregory I to the 18th century collapse of papal power, through the reformation where the true church overcame the false, all the way to the seizure of the papal states by Victor Immanuel in 1870.

After picturing the birth of Christ, his ascension and rule, and the fact that the church would be in a real way an underground organization in verses one through six. Verse seven returns to the beginning to give a more detailed description of what happened to Satan and why he is persecuting the church and backing his false copy.

REVELATION 12:7-9
"And there was war in heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels, and prevailed not; neither was their place found any more in heaven. 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."

I believe this scene is highly symbolic and not literal. If we consider these verses to refer to the beginning when Satan was cast out by God then the timing and reference to the woman don’t fit in. So I would consider these verses to be symbolic of heavenly events at the resurrection and ascension of Christ. When he was “caught up to God, and to his throne.”

Upon the resurrection of Christ, which I think completely baffled Satan, there was a war in heaven between the angels and Satan and his angels. This should not be thought of as a battle which actually took place in heaven. The angels were not trying to cast Satan out of heaven, God had done that in the beginning with only a word (2Peter 2:4). This battle was fought in the heavenlies or spiritual realm. It was
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a spiritual war between the kingdoms of God and Satan. Satan lost because after trying to crush Jesus by having him put to death, Christ was raised again by his own power, defeating death, which is part of Satan's kingdom (Romans 6:23). By doing this Christ took the kingdom back by force that Satan had stolen in the garden of Eden in the beginning of the world. Christ then gave the kingdom to his church to rule. Satan and his angels are figuratively cast out, that is, they are cast out of the usurpation of the kingdom of this world. Upon Christ's exaltation, he rules in his office as king.

REVELATION 12:10
"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."

This verse helps us to identify the timing of verse nine. The great claim of “Now is come salvation” tells us that this casting out occurred at the resurrection of Christ. This is important so that we don't confuse Satan's original fall with his kingdom rule being taken away and given to the church.

Satan had stolen the kingdom in the beginning and his government was run through three things "The lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life," 1 John 2:16. These are the same temptations he tried Jesus with in Matthew 4. When man lives according to the government of the world that Satan has setup, Satan does his best to condemn us. He is the accuser of the brethren, pointing out flaws to God. He brings our sins before God. 'Look there, he sinned, he's mine now, give him to me.' An interesting example of this is seen in Job 1:9-11 and Zechariah 3:1-2.

During this church age, because of the redeeming power of Christ, we as Christians have a mystical union with Christ. We are one in him, we are heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ. Romans 8:17 says. "And if children, then heirs; heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ;" Again in Galatians 4:7, Paul says, "Wherefore thou art no more a servant, but a son; and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ." We are washed clean, we are the church in all her glory, having no spot or wrinkle or any such thing; we are seen as holy and blameless in
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Ephesians 5:26-27. There is nothing left for Satan to accuse, and if he tries, God refuses to see us except through his son. "There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, for the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and death" Romans 8:1-2. If Satan tries to accuse us, Jesus just claims the Christian for himself and Satan is thwarted. Jesus pulls the sinner right out of Satan's hands when the sinner confesses Christ as savior and redeemer.

Remember also, that Jesus referred to the casting out of Satan as happening at the time of his death and resurrection. This refers to the end of Satan's kingdom rule. In John 12:31-32, Jesus said, "Now judgment is upon this world; now the ruler of this world shall be cast out. And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men to myself." Matthew 22:44 says, "...sit thou on my right hand, until I put thine enemies beneath thy feet." Because of what Jesus did Satan is a beaten foe, his power over Christians is cast down, Satan is the footstool of Christ and we reign for him. Colossians 2:15 tells us that Jesus defeated Satan, “And having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in it.”

REVELATION 12:11
"And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony, and they loved not their lives to the death."

"They" seems to be referring to the angels which fought the battle. If this is referring to literal angels then we see that angels have something lose in disobedience, for they “loved not their lives to the death.” We would also have to recognize that the angels derive their power to overcome Satan by the blood of the Lamb. However, since this battle is symbolic it may be that the angels are symbolic of the Christians who are to rule and reign for Christ until he comes again. The brethren did not have power over Satan until Christ established his kingdom and gave them the power through his blood. It was the brethren that Satan accused. Now the brethren are granted power to overcome him by the blood of the Lamb.
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REVELATION 12:12
"Therefore rejoice, ye heavens, and ye that dwell in them. Woe to the inhabiters 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."

Because the devil has been cast down and has lost his dominion over the kingdom of this world, he comes before the earth, and especially the true church in fury. This is because the Christians or bride of Christ now have the authority to rule for Christ. Satan hates the church for this reason. He knows he has only a little time so he tries vainly to destroy the church which is protected by God. This we can see in verse 13.

REVELATION 12:13
"And when the dragon saw that he was cast unto the earth, he persecuted the woman which brought forth the man child."

In Satan's wrath he will persecute the church, he tries all sorts of evil. There was serious, deadly persecution of the church from the very beginning. First by the Jewish leaders, then by the Roman empire, then by papal Rome. But the Lord said that the gates of hell would not be able to stand against the truth carried by the Christian. The word of God in the true Christians would prevail and God would remain king.

REVELATION 12:14
"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."

Beginning with verse 14 it seems that the text refers back again to the imagery of verse 6. Verse 14-17 give more detail and strengthen the statement in verse 6. A simple comparison of verses 6 and 14 will reveal that they are parallel; In both the woman flees to the wilderness to a special place. In both the woman is fed or nourished. The time is the same, 1260 days, or a time equaling one, a times equaling 2, and half a time equaling 1/2, this totals 3 1/2 years or 1260 days. This
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1260 days when interpreted on the day for a year principle equals 1260 years. We see the number 1260 twice in chapter 12, then again in chapter 11:2,3, and chapter 13:5.

The flight into the wilderness of the woman seems to indicate that the persecutions of the devil will drive the true church underground to a place God nourishes her and makes her grow. Verse 14 brings in the 1260 year period that we saw previously in chapter 11 If both chapters have the same period of time in them, then they must of necessity be in some respects parallel. We saw in chapter 11 how the beginning of this 1260 year period was progressive and not marked by one single event but many significant events that ushered in this period of time. The vision in chapter 12 as in chapter 11 may begin as early as 533 A.D. and continue for 1260 years to 1793 A.D. and the French Revolution or depending on the start date continue to the 1870 A.D. decree of papal infallibility. I would like to point out again what was revealed in chapter 11, that there is a visible outside church and a true hidden church. This woman represents the true hidden church, the church in the wilderness being protected by God. The Roman church could not be this church since it never knew the wilderness and was always in the forefront of power.

REVELATION 12:15-17

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

The serpent casts forth a flood of water that he might carry the woman away. This is symbolic of the persecutions from the Roman empire. This flood of persecution from Rome consisted of the ten imperial persecutions of Christians which covered three hundred years. The earth helping the woman by swallowing the flood fits historically with the conversion of Constantine and his edict of toleration, which caused the imperial persecutions to cease and eventually made Christianity the state religion.
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Constantine's supposed conversion was 312 A.D. when he decided to fight under the banner of Christ. Constantine won the battle and gained entrance to Rome as victor. He believed that God had given him the victory. In 313 A.D. Constantine issued an Edict of Toleration for the Christians and caused Christianity to be the imperial court religion. He helped build churches and made Christians key figures in the administration of his empire. Part of the reason for him building Constantinople was that the ancient Roman aristocracy persisted in the continuance of the pagan religions, so he moved the center of the empire. In 325 A.D. He issued a general exhortation to all the empire to embrace Christianity. However, Constantine was also the cause of the beginning of the pagan-Christian mixture in the church. He never stopped worshipping the sun god which he related to the one true God. He committed several murders after his supposed conversion. He even got involved in theological disputes between bishops over who was teaching heresy, such as at the council of Nicea, and he used his power to make people conform to the verdict of the council.

Constantine's conversion and the Christianization of the empire was symbolized by the earth swallowing the flood of the ten imperial persecutions cast forth from the mouth of the dragon. Now that Satan had lost with his main assault, his overt thrust at destroying the church, as verse 17 says he would still be 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." This is referring to the true Christians.

The 1260 years is the amount of time that Satan will have to use Rome the beast for the persecution war against the true church. This is the same amount of time that the papacy was a world power. The 1260 year period is parallel to the view of the temple's outer court being given over to the gentiles for 42 months in Revelation 11.

A second interpretation of verses 15-17 which leads to the same concluding events but which excludes the Roman persecutions before Constantine, and pertains wholly to the Roman church proceeds like this. The church will be in the wilderness of persecution and false doctrine for 1260 years, and be protected by God. During this time the dragon will cast forth a flood out of his mouth, this flood being the persecutions and false doctrines of the Roman church. That when
Revelation 13

the fall of the papacy occurs at the end of the 1260 years and the three unclean spirits as frogs (Revelation 16) come out of the fallen papal power they go forth to continue the battle against the remnant. The picture both in here and chapter 16 is of Satan continuing to make war with the saints, he just does not use the papacy the way he did at one time.

I prefer the first view, feeling it is more accurate since it brings in significant historical events such as the conversion of the empire to accept Christianity.

REVELATION 13: The Lamb Like Beast

Since there is a large amount of symbolism in chapter 13 of Revelation. I think it is beneficial to understand the images of Daniel 7:7-25 to get the full idea of the message being given here. Daniel 7:7-25 and Revelation 13 and 17 have parallel imagery of earthly kingdoms or world powers. Gaining a basic understanding of Daniel 7 will help us to understand these parallel images in Revelation.

In Daniel chapter seven, Daniel has a dream of four great beasts. Verse 17 explains that these are four kingdoms or empires. Looking forward from the time of Daniel's vision the four empires were Babylonian, Medo-Persian, Greek, and Roman. Daniel 7:7 says, the fourth beast is "dreadful and terrible, and strong exceedingly; and it had great iron teeth: It devoured and brake in pieces, and it was divers from all the beasts that were before it; and it had ten horns." These ten horns will give us a clue to the ten horns in Revelation 13.

At the time that Daniel had this dream he was confused as to the meaning. In verse 15 he says, "I Daniel was grieved in my spirit in the midst of my body, and the visions of my head troubled me." In verse 16 Daniel asks to know what the four beasts are and is told in verse 17. "These great beasts, which are four, are four kings, which shall arise out of the earth. But the saints of the most high shall take the kingdom and possess the kingdom forever, even forever and ever."

The bible tells us that after the four kingdoms appear the saints will rule the kingdom. Therefore prophetically we should look for the rule of the kingdom by the saints to begin after the fourth kingdom has risen to power. The book of Daniel speaks of an event that would not happen for 500 years. The event was the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ which occurred during the reign of the fourth kingdom,
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Rome. The saints have been given the job of ruling the kingdom for the master until he returns.

Then Daniel wants to know more detail about this terrible fourth beast and of the little horn that destroyed three of the original ten horns. In verse 21 it says, "I beheld, and the same horn made war with the saints, and prevailed against them." Verse 22 says, "Until the ancient of days came..." This would be the judgment day, the second coming of Christ.

The interpretation of all these things is given in the following verses. Verse 23, the fourth beast is the fourth kingdom upon the earth. It will be different than the other kingdoms before it. It will rule all the world. Verse 24, the ten horns symbolize the kingdoms that shall rise from the fourth kingdom. This means that from the fall of the fourth kingdom ten other kingdoms would rise up. Then another kingdom would rise up that will be different and rule differently than the others. This new kingdom would cause the fall of three of the ten kingdoms. Verse 25 says the ruler of this kingdom will speak great words against the most high (he will be blasphemous) and try to usurp God's power on the earth by claiming it for his own. He will war against the saints. He will try to change times and laws. And this power will be his for a time which equals one, and times which equal two, and the dividing of time which equals one half. For a total of three and one half years or forty two months or twelve hundred sixty days.

History tells us that the ten horns were kingdoms that emerged from the fall of Rome. The little horn before whom the three other horns fell is the papacy. We will look at this idea in more detail later.

Now that we have a basic idea of the imagery in Daniel 7:7-25, we can go on to examine Revelation 13 to see the parallel.

**REVELATION 13:1**
"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."

The first thing to notice is the phrase "And I stood upon the sand of the sea." Some of the more modern translations of the bible replace "And I" with "And he". The word "he" is probably the more accurate of the two since it is the reading of the best manuscripts. The New
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American Standard Version and the Latin Vulgate support it as do the Ethiopian, Syriac, Armenian and Arabic versions. It also seems to be the reading with the most internal evidence for it. It would be natural for the dragon to be standing on the edge of the flood that had previously issued from him. The description of the beast enables us to place the date of this vision to the time after the fall of Rome, since the ten horns represent ten kingdoms which rose from where Rome had ruled. The flood would be receding since the earth had swallowed it. John would not have to be standing on the edge of the flood to witness the beast coming out of the waters. Therefore I believe "he" to be the better translation and to represent the dragon.

It is almost as though the dragon was bringing forth the beast out of the water. The sea suggests two closely related things. 1; the nations and people of the earth. 2; The same people and nations which had previously persecuted the Christians would now bring forth the beast. The sea is used in the bible to symbolize nations or people. So we can say that the sea represents the nations of the world or specifically the Roman world. The dragon stands on the edge of the flood watching the beast come out of the water. This goes along with the dragons continuing to make war with the remnants of the woman's seed.

It is notable that the persecution cast out of the dragon's mouth and the beast coming forth are both depicted as being associated with water. First; flood waters then a sea or lake in which the waters are gathered after their failure to wash away the faith of Christians. With the two events being associated with waters it would seem to tie these events together so that we would recognize them as a singular representation. I think it is safe to say that the sea is alluding to the now receding flood that was cast forth from the dragon.

The Greek word 'thalassa' is used here in chapter 13 for sea but can represent any body of water such as a lake. For an example we have only to look at the Sea of Galilee, (Thalassas tes Galilaias) which is a lake not an ocean or real sea. The sea is used chapter 13 in its symbolic rendering of representing the people of the world.
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Verse one describes this beast as having seven heads and ten horns and ten crowns on his horns. As in Daniel 7:7,20,24 the ten horns are the Gothic tribes or kingdoms which established themselves in the place of the old Roman empire. These were the Heruli, Bergundians, Suevi, Huns, Anglo-Saxons, Ostrogoths, Visigoths, Vandals, Lombards, and Franks. In Revelation 17:12 it says, "And the ten horns which thou sawest are ten kings." Upon the beasts heads was written the name of blasphemy. This indicates the beast would be against the true church of God.

REVELATION 13:2
"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."

This verse further describes the beast. He has the appearance of a leopard, the feet of a bear, and the mouth of a lion. These attributes are symbolic of world governments as seen in Daniel 7:4-6. In Daniel the empires were all described in the form of animals which the government had attributes. This leopard beast is the image of world power. Satan gave him his power, and his seat or position, and great authority.

It is noteworthy that in chapter 12 the power that persecuted the true church was the dragon. History shows us that at first it was the Roman government then the Roman papacy that persecuted the true church. Now in chapter 13 we again see the dragon as empowering the beast which we will see is centered at the city of Rome. First the Roman government then the papacy which inherits the empire’s power.

REVELATION 13:3
"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."

As we examine verse 3 we see that one of the heads is mortally wounded. But this wound is healed by the dragon. To understand this we must understand the symbol of the head. What is the significance
of the head symbol and where does it leads us? The seven heads seem to have a double fulfillment in history and we will look at both.

The seven heads as revealed in Revelation 17:10-11 are seven kings or kingdoms. Since the description in Revelation 17 also speaks of seven hills, which is without doubt the city of Rome it seems necessary to keep the interpretation focused on Rome. The generally received protestant interpretation of the past was that the seven kings refer to the seven types of rulers the Roman empire had. These were kings, consuls, dictators, decemvirs, military tribunes, and emperors for six heads. The seventh head is not so easily agreed upon by the earlier protestant commentators. By some the seventh is the western emperors after the east west split in government. By others the Dukedom of Rome.

The problem with this view is that there were other types of Roman rulers such as the triumvirate, and co-emperors. The argument of the past was that these were not recognized forms of government by Roman law.

The second view and what I consider the stronger of the two interpretations is as follows. The seven kings refer to the seven world empires that the bible recognizes. "Five are fallen" or past, these are the Egyptian, Assyrian, Babylonian, Medo-Persian, and Greek empires. "One is," this was the Roman empire in power at the time. "And one is yet to come," which is Rome brought back to life in the form of the papacy. The deadly wound and the wound being healed was the overthrow of the Roman empire in 476 A.D. and the subsequent carrying over of power and authority by the papacy which emulated imperial Rome and brought Rome back to life. In this way the spirit of Rome was carried on.

One of the reasons that I prefer this view is that it reflects God's oversight of history. Instead of seeing only Roman rulers we are treated to a fuller view of the kingdoms of this world in history from God's perspective. Still the prophecy directs us to look to Rome as the center of the beast. The description in Revelation 17 reminds us that the seat of power of the beast is a city set upon seven hills. Rome was the power in existence at the time of this prophecy and the beast rose up from the ashes of the downfall of the Roman world. The very symbol of the beast rising out of the sea gives us the idea of a rising power.
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History shows us that the empire was destroyed in appearance only, its secrets were kept alive by the higher Roman church officials. It was said that "The Roman church crept insidiously into the place of the Roman empire. Indeed, the latter was continued in the former. The Pope, the Pontifex Maximus, succeeded Caesar. The Pope is the emperor."

"The Prefect of the city continued, but he fell under the authority of the Pope, who replaced the emperor for the purpose of maintaining and feeding the people." (The End Of The Ancient World And The Beginning Of The Middle Ages, page 269).

"By subjugating and dominating over the bishop of Rome, he gradually suggested to him the idea of detaching himself from Constantinople which oppressed him and of seeking for support elsewhere. The Pontifical Theocracy of the middle ages and of modern times germinated amongst the ruins of ancient Rome." (ibid, page 269)

"In the collapse of the Roman empire, the catholic church alone remained standing. It was towards her that the peoples directed their hopes." (ibid, page 385)

"But in this decadence which he describes in a striking fashion Lot discerns the instrument of a future recovery. Catholicism preserved and fostered two precious elements, a principle of administration represented by the secular clergy and especially the bishop, and a preoccupation with morality concentrated in the monasteries - the spirit of Rome and the spirit of Christ." (ibid, preface xlv)

"The caesars were no more, and Rome was an actual desolation. Then slowly on the ruins of old imperial Rome rose another power and another monarchy - a monarchy of loftier aspirations and more resistless might, claiming dominion, not alone over the bodies, but over the consciences and souls of men; dominion, not only within the limits of the fallen empire, but throughout the entire world. Higher and higher rose the papacy till in the dark ages all Christendom was subjected to its sway." (Romanism and The Reformation, Guiness, page 61)
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As we can see by the preceding quotations Caesar-Papism was the uniting of church and state functions under the Roman church. This is what verse 3 is referring to. When the Roman empire falls it is replaced by the new empire. The beast rises out of the sea, from among the people who were part of the flood of persecution of Christians, and Rome was reborn. Incorporating both spiritual and temporal rule under one man, and by incorporating pagan religious beliefs into Christianity under one head - the Papacy. The world wondered at the beast. Even though Rome had lost power and influence she gained it back in a different form. Even when political boundaries changed, the boundaries of the episcopate remained the same.

REVELATION 13:4-6
"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? 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. And he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme his name, and his tabernacle, and them that dwell in heaven."

The world worshipped the beast, or the world power which was in the form of the papacy, which claimed to be in Christ's place on the earth and in heaven. The title "Vicar of Christ" means in Christ's stead. The Papacy claims to be the holy see and to rule over the whole church worldwide. People are worshipping false gods in their worship and adoration of the Pope. The words "Who is able to make war with him" indicate his great power. The Pope is thought by those under his sway to represent God, and who can fight God?

The prophecy of the man of sin in 2 Thessalonians 2:3-9 is a parallel scripture to this prophecy in Revelation 13. We need to look at the prophecy of the man of sin and recognize that it fits in its place here. We previously saw how Daniel 7 parallels the imagery of Revelation 13. Now I want to show that the descriptions in Daniel 7 and Revelation 13 are repeated for the man of sin.
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2 THESALONIANS 2:3-9
"Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition; Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God. Remember ye not, that, when I was yet with you, I told you these things? And now ye knowwhat withholdeth that he might be revealed in his time. For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he whoknow letteth will let, until he be taken out of the way. And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming. Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs, and lying wonders."

Paul is telling the Thessalonians that Jesus was not coming back again until after there has been a great falling away. A falling away from the pure faith, a faith not mixed with paganism. The appearance of the man of sin will coincide with this great falling away.

In 2 Thess. 2:3 says this man of sin will exalt himself above everything that is called God. And that he will say he is God as he sits in the temple or church. Daniel 7:25 says, "He shall speak great words against the most high." Revelation 13:5 says, "And there was given him a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies;" Revelation 13:6 says, "And he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme his name, and his tabernacle, and them that dwell in heaven."

In 2 Thess. 2:5 Paul is reminding them that he told them all about this mystery when he was with them before. For in verse 7 he says, "And now ye know what withholdeth that he might be revealed in his time." Yet Paul never names for us the withholding power. Because in writing a letter that could be apprehended and used against him or other Christians he did not want to tell the authorities that Christians believed the treasonous idea that Rome was going to fall.

The modern futurist idea is that this withholding power is the Holy
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Spirit which will be taken out of the world probably at the rapture. With the Holy Spirit gone the man of sin can rise up. Paul and the early Christians believed that Rome was the withholding power which was holding back the coming of the man of sin. With Rome taken out of the way the papacy filled the vacancy and the man of sin was born.

The early Christians understood this and prayed for the continuance of Rome so that the man of sin would not be revealed in their time.

Lactantius said, "Beseech the God of heaven that the Roman state might be preserved, lest, more speedily than we suppose, that hateful tyrant should come." (The AntiChrist, Porcelli, page 49)

Justin Martyr, in his "Apologies" to the pagan Roman rulers stated that the Christians understanding of the time caused them to pray for the continuance of the restraining Roman empire. Lest the dreaded times of anti Christ, expected to follow upon its fall, should overtake them in their day. (The Prophetic Faith Of Our Fathers, Froom, page 19)

Woodrow, in his Great Prophecies of the Bible, observes that such noted men as Wycliffe, Huss, Luther, Calvin, Knox, Zwingli, Tyndale, Foxe, Newton, and Wesley all believed that the prophecies of the man of sin had found fulfillment in the Roman papacy. (Great Prophecies Of The Bible, Woodrow, page 149)

Even the Encyclopedia Britannica says that the power which was universally believed by the Christians to be that which was retarding the revelation of the Anti Christ was the Roman empire. (Article on Anti Christ)

I believe we have seen that the man of sin is revealed when the Roman empire falls, and that the papacy fits this historically. We have also seen that the imagery of the little horn in Daniel 7, the man of sin in 2 Thess 2, and the beast in Revelation 13 are synonymous. Now we will look further into the "mouth that speaks great things and blasphemies."

At the coronation of Pope Innocent X, These words were spoken about him at his command. "Most holy and blessed father! Head of
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the church, ruler of the world, to whom the keys of the kingdom of heaven are committed, whom the angels in heaven revere, and the gates of hell fear, and all the world adores, we specially venerate, worship, and adore thee."

This mouth speaking great things said other things through the Popes. On April 30 1922 Pope Pius XI said "You know that I am the Holy father, the representative of God on earth, the vicar of Christ, which means I am God on earth."

On the arches built in honor of Pope Alexander VI were these words: "Rome was great under Caesar; now she is greater: Alexander VI reigns. The former was a man: This is a God."

Pope Pius X said, "The Pope is not only the representative of Christ, but he is Jesus Christ himself under the veil of flesh." (Great Prophecies Of The Bible, Woodrow, page 169)

In the Horae Apocalypticae, Elliott had reproduced a drawing and 4 medals which were issued by the Popes glorifying certain of their actions. The drawing's inscription says "The vice Christ receives adoration sitting on the high altar at St. Peter's." It shows the Pope on the altar while church officials are lined up to worship and adore him.

The four medals issued by the Popes show some of the great 'miracles' the Pope lays claim to while blaspheming against God and heaven as he does so. The first medal shows his judicial inquiry on the dead and was issued by Alexander VII in 1655. The second medal shows the Pope awarding heaven to five of the dead and was issued by Gregory XV in 1622. The third medal claims that the dead's admission to heaven is his act and glory and was issued by Clement X in 1670. The fourth medal shows the Pope creating God from bread with transubstantiation and was issued by Alexander VII in 1655.
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In Theses that were publicly discussed in the time of Leo X, the papal power claimed that the power of their indulgences evoked suffering souls from purgatory; therein surpassing Christ himself in his range of mercy.

The following is the wording used by the Popes in making their claims: "The Roman Pontiff judges all men, but is judged by no one...we declare...to be subject to the Roman Pontiff is to every one altogether necessary for salvation...that which was spoken of Christ, 'Thou has subdued all things under his feet' may seem well verified in me...I have the authority of the king of kings. I am all in all and above all...I am able to do almost all that God can do...Wherefore if those things that I do be said not to be done of men but of God: What can you make me but God?...Wherefore no marvel if it be in my power to change time and times to alter and abrogate laws, to dispense with all things yea, with the precepts of Christ; For where Christ biddeth Peter
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to put up his sword and admonishes his disciples not to use any outward force in revenging themselves, so do not I, Pope Nicholas writing to the bishops of France, exhort them to draw out their material sword...wherefore, as I began, so I conclude, commanding, declaring, and pronouncing, to stand upon necessity of salvation, for every creature to be subject to me." (Great Prophecies Of The Bible, Woodrow, page 169)

What a mouthful! The Pope clearly identified himself here as being the man of sin, and the little horn of Daniel 7:25. As for his claim that every creature is to be subject to him as a requirement to salvation, I stand with the Smalcald Articles in saying, "he hath opposed himself against Christ because he will not permit Christians to be saved without his power, which, nevertheless, is nothing, and is neither ordained nor commanded by God." (Article IV: Of the Papacy)

REVELATION 13:7
"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."

History shows us that the papacy fulfilled this in every detail. The Pope as we have seen claims to have power over the world church, and in reality in claiming to be the "Vicar of Christ" which means in Christ's place, he is claiming to be the most powerful man on earth. Even after the papal downfalls of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries his power still exists today in a subtle way. Every Roman Catholic in the world in following the Roman system is giving his allegiance to the Pope. Because of free thought in modern religious beliefs, people think they can disagree with the Pope and still follow his system. Even Jesus said that you can't be for something and against it at the same time. Roman Catholics are allied with the Pope and under his influence and power. Making him in some sense one of the most powerful individuals on earth. Right now his power is no longer military might but the power to influence the minds of millions of the Roman churches followers. Yet the papacy made war on the saints in the past.

It has been estimated that there has been fifty million or more Christians killed during the Roman church's years of power. During
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those years of power there was a persecution machine that was ordered to run by the papacy. It was by order of the Pope that anyone disagreeing with the church that the Pope was God on earth or that was caught reading the bible was considered a heretic and was to be "crushed like a venomous snake." Men such as William Tyndale were burned at the stake for translating the bible into the English so that the common English man could read the word of God. Heretics were turned over to courts of inquisition policed by the Jesuit priesthood.

The Jesuits were a priestly order with absolute and unquestioned obedience to the Pope. A real horror story comes from the inquisitions where the Jesuits used every imaginable torture that demonic minds could contrive to break the spirit of the true bride. I will not take the time to describe the inhuman tortures committed by the Jesuits, by order of the Pope, "for the greater glory of God" which was the Jesuit motto. The Jesuits believed “A good motive makes any action right.” “No Action wicked in itself is really wicked unless the intention is evil.” “In taking oaths, the members of the society may make mental reservations to break them, if they can benefit the Church by so doing.” “If called upon to justify their actions, they may give a false motive instead of the real one. They may equivocate, may justify fraud and deceit, without any scruples of conscience.” The Jesuits would do anything to benefit the Roman Church.

It should not surprise us that Satan would use the church against her sisters. No matter how holy something claims to be, it is judged by its works. 2 Cor. 11:14-15 says "Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works."

REVELATION 13:8
"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."

All the people of the earth who are not true Christians will follow this beast. Remember that this prophecy is centered on the Roman earth not the modern view of the world as we know it. People were deceived into a belief that the beasts power was a representation of Christ's very own. If they knew or understood the truth, that he is
empowered by Satan, many people would not have followed him. People in modern times have forgotten the evil that was done by the Roman church or excuse it as "the spirit of the times." They point to the modern Popes and feel that a particular Pope is a good man even a good religious leader. But the Popes have never changed any of the things they have proclaimed. They have never apologized for the persecution of Christians, and they still believe that they are God on earth. Let us not forget what was done in history by this force which was controlled by Satan. The martyrs are not forgotten by the Lord for the next verse tells of the righteous judgment to come on this beast as vengeance for the martyrs.

REVELATION 13:9-10
"If any man have an ear, let him hear. 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."

Here we read a promise that even though this beast will persecute the Christians he will receive the same as judgment from God. He will be thrown down and judged and his downfall will be the Christian's vengeance on him. This beast empowered by Satan may look strong as if he is in control of events but God foretold the Christian's persecution here. God also promised the just retribution of the martyr's deaths. The patience of the saints is to hold fast to Jesus' words, to remain faithful through these persecutions or whatever the world may throw at us. For the Lord is the one in control of all events from beginning to end. As Paul wrote in Titus 2:13 "Looking for that blessed hope the glorious appearing of the great God and our savior Jesus Christ." Where we will witness the renewing of the heavens and earth without the corruption of Satan.

REVELATION 13:11-12
"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. 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."
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This new beast which appears on the scene is the Roman clergy. The two horns represent both secular and religious. The Lamb-beast was a wolf in sheep's clothing. It had the appearance of holiness, of representing Christ but Jesus was the real Lamb. It was the clergy of the church who were the day to day teachers and guides to the people not the papacy. The clergy taught and enforced what the papacy declared. This Lamb-beast would speak like a dragon. Under the pretense of holiness and preaching the gospel of Christ the clergy actually taught through its superstitions and rites a denial of the true faith, a denial of Christ. The Lamb-beast taught of the preeminence of the first beast or the Pope. It taught the people to look to the Roman church and the Pope for salvation, for forgiveness, for entrance to heaven, and for escape from hell. It did not teach the people of the freedom in Christ, that our salvation is all due to him and to nothing else. It did not teach that our love, our allegiance, and our loyalty are all due Christ and not to a Pope. It did not teach that the only mediator between God and man was Jesus Christ but that the Pope and the saints had this power.

The clergy taught the people superstitious ideas that brought the church full course back to paganism. Prayer was directed to Mary the mother of Jesus. The idea was that praying to Mary would get Mary on your side and she would intercede for the prayer to Jesus. After all Jesus wouldn't deny his mother would he? And since most people were really in an unredeemed state they couldn't or wouldn't pray directly to Jesus. The God that the Roman clergy taught about was taking orders from the Pope. He had to be bribed with indulgences. He was not a caring shepherd, but a God who could not be reached by men, a God still behind the veil and only the priest could find him or intercede for men to him.

In teaching men to rely upon Mary for intercession in their behalf the clergy allowed paganism to enter the church. There were still pagans in the world who worshipped Isis and Horace or some other mother son combination. This was a perfect way to get the pagans to accept Christianity. "Just mix a little mother and son worship into Christianity and it won't offend anyone even the pagan's will be happy."

It only started with Mary but soon men had a whole plethora of benign saints to pray to in the hopes that these saints who had gone before them into glory would intercede for them. Because men's
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hearts were darkened they did not want to know God. Like the
Israelites in the wilderness wanting Moses to intercede for them
because they did not want to know personally this awesome God.
Men chose to believe they could let someone else approach God for
them. "Men loved the darkness rather than the light because their
deeds were evil."

"Gradually differentiations between saints were set up which
specialized the effects of their intervention, so that healing saints
replaced the gods and heroes of antiquity...But mankind, unable to be
satisfied with a good and righteous god, since it is itself neither good
nor righteous, turned to more easily accessible powers which it
considered more favourable to its needs, that is, to its vices. Left to
itself the human mind fell back wholly into paganism." (The End Of
The Ancient World And The Beginning Of The Middle Ages, Page
392)

The title "Pontifex Maximus" which was a kind of head priest, or
the chief priest of the pagan mystery religions, was historically adopted
by the caesars. It was the title which indicated that the caesar was not
only the temporal head of the country but its head religious leader
also. It united all pagan religions under one great head. In 376 A.D.
Gratian, who was a Christian, refused the pagan title. But in 378 A.D.
Demasus, bishop of Rome was elected "Pontifex Maximus". By
accepting the title, the Pope brought together the Christians and
pagans under one banner and was therefore responsible for the
Christian-pagan mixture which plagued the church.

One important thing to clear up about this verse is the term
"before him." The word which is translated as "before" in the KJV is
the Greek word 'enopion'. It literally means in the presence of. The
word enopion denotes before relative to space or place and not before
in time. The more modern translations such as the NASV reflect this
by translating enopion as "in his presence" and not "before him."

The Lamb-beast is in the presence of the first beast and has the
first beasts full power and authority, in essence governing or running
day to day matters for the first beast. The clergy ran the day to day
matters for the Pope in whose presence they derived their power over
the masses. It was by the power and authority of the Pope that the
clergy could ostracize and excommunicate, to teach, tax, and abuse the
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people.

Because of the compulsory conversion to Christianity, the people had never really let go of their pagan rites and beliefs. This paganism was introduced into the church and was fostered by the Roman clergy. In this way the clergy was responsible for the continued worship of the first beast which was before him. The false church never won a complete victory over the pagan rites and ceremonies. The church actually led people astray into worshipping and idolizing icons.

REVELATION 13:13-15
"And he doeth great wonders, so that he maketh fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men, And deceiveth them that dwell on the earth, by 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. 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."

As Satan changes strategy and tries to destroy the church from within by empowering the Lamb-beast, he also provides some means of deceiving the masses. The images that talk could be referring to the many supposed sightings of the catholic icons speaking, weeping tears, appearing as if human etc. Or the images that talk could be the clergy as the image of the Pope, the representative of the papacy in government councils.

At Constantinople the crusaders believed they had heard the voice of God or of angels in the church. What they actually heard can still be duplicated today. The priests or acolytes standing in specially placed alcoves, speaking in eerie tones which the acoustics of the church would make sound as if the voice was coming from a place where no human was seen. The supposed great miracle of transubstantiation, where the Roman clergy turned ordinary bread into god was another of the devices used to deceive the people.

The fire from heaven in the bible is a sign of displeasure from God. Here it symbolizes the judicial fire hurled at "heretics," the vain threatening of the corrupt clergy, excommunication. The Roman Church’s own language can be our guide, for they claimed the
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anathemas and excommunications against enemies were the "judicial fire" from heaven. And they designated these as lightenings and thunderbolts. For example I give the case of the excommunication of the Emperor Frederick by Pope Innocent, copied from Elliott's Horae. "These words (of excommunication) uttered in the midst of the Council, struck the hearts with terror, as might the flashing thunderbolts. When, with candles lighted and flung down, the Lord Pope and his assistant prelates flashed their lightening-fire terribly against the Emperor Frederick, now no longer to be called Emperor, his procurators and friends burst into bitter wailing, and struck the thigh or breast. "That day,' said one of them, 'that day of wrath, of calamity, and of woe!'" (Horae Apocalypticae, Elliott, vol iii, page 196)

An excommunicated heretic was out of the protection of the law and as such was liable to be put to death by anyone. His life was offered to the assassin, and he was shunned. The real fear did not arise from the excommunication from the Roman church but from the cutting off of any social identity. The excommunicated person was outcast, and could lawfully neither buy or sell or seek help from anyone.

REVELATION 13:16-18
"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: 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. 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."

All manner of interpretations have been proposed for this mark. Some people who hold the futurist interpretation believe this to be an identification in a cash less society, i.e. a credit card number in your hand. This futuristic society will be controlled by "The image of the beast," which is believed to be a fantastic supercomputer. In the early days of the computer, powerful computers were very large. Some even believed in the computer that is so big it fills six floors of a building that was built to house it, probably some where in Europe. I don't think the Christian needs to fear this type of sensational story. It
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seems that every time someone new comes to power someone else is claiming that this person is the beast. This mark was identified with The Social Security number, and individuals such as Mussolini, Kissinger, President Carter, President Reagan, the social security system, and the trilateral commission and all kinds of other leaders and organizations. It looks as though the only criteria for being identified as the beast is that someone does not like you. But no matter how well deserved the title of the "beast" may be to some of the men or organizations that are thought to represent the 666, they are just pawns.

The mark on the hand or forehead was well known to the ancients and not such a mysterious symbol to them as it seems to be to us. The ancients knew the mark as stigmata. Stigmata is where our English word stigma comes from, and it refers to leaving a mark by cutting or burning the skin as in a brand. In the first century when the Revelation was written slaves, soldiers, and devotees to pagan gods all wore stigmata. It was worn in the forehead or hand and was usually the name or emblem of the master. In the case of religious devotees the mark was sometimes the pagan god's particular number. Slaves had the masters name or mark and soldiers bore the emperor's name or mark in the hand.

This mark of the beast signifies spiritual allegiance and is not meant to be understood as a literal mark. Look at Revelation 14:1, 7:3 and 3:12. The Christians in all three verses are spoken of as receiving the mark or seal of God written in their foreheads. Yet there is no physical mark on a Christian's forehead today or at any time. The seal of God is a symbol of our adoption by God, it signifies our spiritual allegiance. Paul when writing to the Ephesians said that when we believe we are sealed with the holy Spirit of promise. Ephesians 1:13b-14, "In whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory." The mark of the beast and the seal of God should be interpreted in the same manner since they are in the same book and the context is the same. Since the seal of God is a spiritual mark it then follows that the mark of the beast is also.

In verse 17 we read that no one could buy or sell without the mark of the beast. This causes many people to believe this passage to be literally translated and future. However history proves this to be
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untrue and I believe this just symbolizes that anyone whose allegiance was not on the side of the lamb-beast would be outcasts of society. Those people who were not in allegiance with the Roman church were hunted, killed, and were outcasts from the mainstream of society, having to live in small communities where people of similar "protestant" ideas gathered.

We saw before that the excommunicated were without the benefit of protection under the law and were to be cast aside and left to die. But to further justify the idea that the mark of the beast symbolizes spiritual allegiance to the Roman Pope I have given examples of how the Christian outcasts of society were not able to live normal lives. Buying and selling was prohibited to them because they refused to have this spiritual mark by being in allegiance with the Roman church.

A cannon of the 3rd Lateran Council under Pope Alexander III commanded that no man should entertain or cherish them in his house or land or exercise traffic with them. The Synod of Tours passed a law that no man should presume to receive or assist the heretics, no not so much as to exercise commerce with them in selling or buying.

In 1209 A.D. the city of Beziers was taken by men who were given special indulgences by the papacy if they would engage in this crusade, where the crusaders killed 7000 women and children. At Lavaur in 1211 A.D. the governor was hanged on a gibbet, and four hundred people in this town were burned alive. The crusaders attended high mass in the morning, then proceeded to take other towns in the area. In this siege it is estimated that 100,000 Albingenses (protestants) fell in one day, their bodies were heaped together to be burned. Ten thousand Huguenots (Protestants) were killed in the bloody massacre in Paris on St. Barthalomew’s day in 1572. Pope Gregory XIII had coins minted in celebration to commemorate this deed. The coins had the words "Ugonottorum Stranges 1572" which means "The slaughter of the Huguenots 1572."
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The Number of the Beast:
In reference to the number of the beast's name, it was a very common practice to have the god's name a numerical equality. Egyptian mystics spoke of Mercury or Thouth by the number 1218 in Greek letters. Jupiter was 717, Apollo was 608, Mithras 365. Irenaeus noted that Jesus equaled 888 in Greek, 1=10, E=8, S=200, O=70, U=400, S=200. It was also common for a god's name to be placed in verse with mysterious numbers representing the name. The following example is on the word Jesus (Iesous), taken from the First Book of Sybilline Oracles. "He will come upon earth, clothed with flesh like mortal men. His name contains four vowels and two consonants: two of the former being sounded together. And I will declare the entire number. For the name will exhibit to incredulous men eight units, eight tens, and eight hundreds."

In verse 18 we read the number of the name of the beast, it is six hundred sixty six, not six six six. The interpretations to this number are many, but I would like to share some of the historical interpretations. Irenaeus 130-200 A.D. was bishop of Lyons in Gaul (France), he was a pupil of Polycarp (bishop of Smyrna) and Papias (bishop of Hieropolis). Both of these men were disciples of John who wrote the Revelation, and both of these men were martyrs not heretics. Irenaeus understood the 666 to be the Greek "Lateinos." The Greek alphabet had these numeric values, L=30, A=1, T=300, E=5, I=10, O=70, S=200. These numbers added together have a total of 666. Lateinos means "Latin Kingdom" or Latin man.

Nero Caesar written in Hebrew equals 666. Nero was known by the early Christians as "the beast," he began an insane persecution of
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Christianity. He also had both Paul and Peter killed after rejecting the message of salvation that must have been brought to him by Paul when he appealed to Caesar and was brought to Rome. Many people believe that when Paul was first brought to Rome he must have told Nero about the Lord. Nero released Paul the first time, but soon his personality changed and he had Paul brought back to Rome and killed.

Andreas Helwig pointed out in his book "The Roman AntiChrist" in 1612 A.D. that the title "Vicar of Christ" written in Latin as "Vicarius Filii Dei" equal 666, using the letters that have a Roman numeric value.

Alexander Hyslop in his book "The Two Babylons" says the original name of Rome was Saturnia. Saturn was a secret name revealed only to initiates of the Chaldean mysteries. In Chaldee it was spelled STUR, in this language S=60, T=400, U=6, R=200 for a total of 666.

The Hebrew word for Romulus, which Rome was named after is Romiith and equals 666. Interestingly, all the letters in Greek and Hebrew have numeric values, but the Romans used only six letters as numbers; D=500, C=100, L=50, X=10, V=5, I=1, these numbers totaled equal 666. It has been pointed out that M was not used by the Romans originally, it is a contraction of CIC with the last C backwards with the open side facing the I.

In the Old Testament, 1 Kings 10:14 and 2 Chronicles 9:13 says; "Now the weight of gold that came to Solomon in one year was six hundred and three score and six talents of gold." According to Fausset’s Bible Dictionary (antichrist) the New Testament contains only two Greek words which have the numeric value of 666. The word "euporia" from which wealth is translated and the word "paradosis" from which tradition is translated. Wealth and tradition were the two great corrupters of the Roman church. I think that these examples should be enough to show that Rome was the key to the 666.

REVELATION 14

REVELATION 14:1-5
"And I looked, and, lo, a Lamb stood on the mount Sion, and with him an hundred and forty and four thousand, having his father's name written in their foreheads. And I heard a voice from heaven as the voice of many waters, and as the
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voice of a great thunder: and I heard the voice of harpers harping with their harps: 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. 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. And in their mouth was found no guile: for they are without fault before the throne of God."

This is a vision in contrast to what John had previously seen in chapter 13. This is a vision of the true Lamb as opposed to the Lamb-Beast. It is meant to be a comforting and informing vision to the redeemed of their welfare, and the destruction of those who follow the beast. The 144,000 represent the true believers, a small percentage of people called out to follow the Lord in truth, they are the sealed of God and are contrasted to those who have the mark of the beast in the previous chapter. The true believers are seen as spiritual virgins, pure, a church or bride without spot or wrinkle, for Jesus has washed them with the water of his word (Ephesians 5:26-27), as opposed to the harlotry of the false church. They had no lies or falsehoods as opposed to the lying wonders and false doctrines of the beast's church. The description of these saints makes them perfect, no lies or falsehoods, pure and undefiled before God, yet all men have sinned. We see here how God imputes righteousness to sinners, Jesus takes our sin and gives us his righteousness. The 144,000 know a new song which only those truly redeemed from the earth could know. The Revelation does not say what the song is so we can only guess. Could it just be the grateful praises of a redeemed people such as is sent up to God as an offering of praise in our church worship services?

REVELATION 14:6-7
"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, 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 the heaven and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters."
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The spreading of the gospel to the world is pictured in these two verses and may be symbolic of the era of the open book. It speaks of the reformation of the church where the word of God is made free and accessible to all, and the truth is brought once more to the light.

REVELATION 14:8-11
"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. 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, 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. 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."

The angel is announcing the fall of Babylon the harlot and foretelling the doom that awaits the worshippers of the beast. They will spend eternity in hell with the devil and his angels and the false church which led them astray. We see these events unfolded in more detail and fully described in chapter 17.

REVELATION 14:12-13
"Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus. 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 contrast to the torment of the wicked in the previous verses, this tells of the joy of heaven and rest from our labors on earth. This is the patience of the saints. While those in verse 11 are eternally damned as recompense for their wicked ways the saints are reigning with Christ as partakers of his glory. The waiting of the martyrs in
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Revelation 6:9-11 is now over because God is bringing vengeance to the spiritual Babylon. Those who die in the Lord from then on are blessed because they do not have to wait and have patience as the martyrs in chapter 6. For the downfall of Babylon has come already. And these now rest from their labors with their works of faith counted as works of righteousness.

REVELATION 14:14-16
"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. 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. And he that sat on the cloud thrust in his sickle on the earth; and the earth was reaped."

This is a vision of Jesus on a white cloud, coming in glory. He is shown coming as Jesus himself said he would; "And they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory." Matthew 24:3; "Hereafter shall ye see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven," Matthew 26:64. Jesus is carrying a sickle to reap the godly harvest of the earth. Verse 16 shows Jesus taking the Christians to meet him in the air, just as in 1 Thess. 4:17. And so shall we ever be with the Lord.

REVELATION 14:17-20
"And another angel came out of the temple which is in heaven, he also having a sharp sickle. 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. 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. 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."
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Now another angel comes forth with a sickle and reaps the ungodly vintage. The lost are cast into the winepress of the wrath of God. The 1600 furlongs is equivalent to about 200 miles. However the meaning is not in the distance but in the number itself. 1600 or 4×4×100 is thought to represent complete destruction. The winepress was trodden outside the city. The true church was not included in the wrath of God and the winepress was trodden outside the city. The city was the New Jerusalem and according to chapter 21:27 nothing unclean can enter the city. Outside the city is where the unsaved are and where the winepress of the wrath of God is. See Rev 19:14-21. The horses mentioned in verse 20 are the horses that the armies of heaven rode to earth on this last day. They are described in more detail in Revelation 19:14-21. They are symbolic of a conquering army.

The visions in chapter 14 reveal to the reader a general overall view of events concerning the true church. These events start where chapter 13 left off, with people worshipping the beast and receiving his mark. The events mentioned follow the chronological order of events in history or to come. They are; The true church remaining faithful. The age of the open book, or the reformation. The fall of the power symbolized by Babylon, which was the Roman church or the Papacy. The rejoicing of the saints that Babylon had fallen. The harvest of the believers to everlasting peace. Then the harvest and judgment of the vintage of the earth, or the unredeemed.
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PART vi

REVELATION 15

REVELATION 15:1-4
"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. 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. 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."

Since chapter 15 is an introduction to chapter 16 and the seven plagues of the seven angels are dealt with there I would like to look into only a couple of details here. In the previous verses John sees a sea of glass. This sea of glass represents people from all nations (Christians) who have had victory over the beast and now live and reign with Christ in a place of perfect peace. The sea of glass does not represent the nations of the earth as in other references to seas in the bible. The sea of glass is different in the picture it gives us. It represent people from all nations of the earth, but only the Christians, and the glass refers to the both the calmness of the sea and clarity of glass which represents purity. A pure church washed in the blood. It was mingled with fire, which represents the judgments of God.

In Revelation 20 we read of the last judgment. Verse 12 has all the dead both small and great standing before God. The book of life is opened and all are judged out of those things written in the books. Verse 13 says, "And the sea gave up the dead which were in it." On first appearances one might think this is the seas of the earth, but notice that the word sea is singular not plural and refers to only one thing not the many bodies of water on the earth. Also notice that in the same verse in the same context that death and hell delivered up
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the dead which were in them. Death and hell are the place where the unsaved await the judgment. After the judgment death and hell are cast into the lake of fire, which is the second death. After the judgment there is no more need for a place of torment for those awaiting judgment. There is also no need for a place of blessed peace and rest like the sea of glass. What becomes of it then? Revelation 21:1 says, "And I a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth are passed away; and there was no more sea."

All these saints who are on the sea of glass are singing great praises to the Lord, saying, "great and marvellous are thy works... just and true are thy ways, thou king of saints." Because the seven last great plagues about to be released on the earth are righteous judgments from God, The saints sing praises to a righteous God whose judgments are being made manifest.

REVELATION 15:5-8
"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, having the seven plagues, clothed in pure and white linen, and having their breasts girded with golden girdles. 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. 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."

What I find interesting about the temple in heaven seen here is that it was opened for the angels to come out of it but no man could enter it. In chapter 11 the temple was opened and no restriction was placed on man entering it because it was after the judgment. It follows then that this is further proof of the parallelism of Revelation. It repeats the same story in different ways to put emphasis on different things. The temple itself is just a symbol, for in heaven there will be no temple. Revelation 21:22 says, "And I saw no temple therein: for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it." This means there is no physical temple but we enter the joy of the Lord after the judgment.
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Seven seals, seven trumpets and seven vials. Each of these sevens had a definite objective that lead us to the accomplishment of their purposes. In the seven seals we see the triumph of Christianity over Roman paganism. With the seven trumpets we see the overthrow of Roman empire, the end of the age and the closing of secular history. Now the seven vials accomplish the utter overthrow of the blasphemous power that is called “The Great Babylon.” The seven vials are contained between the sixth and seventh trumpets or perhaps just part of the seventh trumpet. If the Seventh trumpet culminates in the end of age and the time of the judgment then the seven vials must occur before the end described in chapter 11:15-19. The seven vials must be simultaneous to the seventh trumpet which seems to have brought them forth. The seven vials must be simultaneously occurring with the seventh trumpet but show details and a slightly different view point. I believe they show us the weakening and overthrow of those anti-Christian powers that arrayed themselves against the true church, both the Papal powers and the Muslim powers that persecuted Christians.

**REVELATION 16**

**REVELATION 16:1**
"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."

John hears a voice cry out. This voice was God's for he dwells in the holy of holies. The number seven represents a perfect number or in this case perfect judgment upon the ungodly nations and the power which had persecuted the Christians for so long. The seven vials parallel the seven trumpets, especially remarkable are the first four vials. Since the first four vials are almost exactly the same as the first four trumpets they certainly pertain to the Roman earth, the sea, rivers and fountains of waters and the sun. The first five vials are directed specifically toward the seat of the Roman church's power. The sixth vial seems to have a dualism referring to both the Turkish (Islamic) empire and the papacy. It has been pointed out by many that the papacy and Islam came to power during the same period of time. Martin Luther believed that the papacy and the Turk rose together and
Revelation 16

both represented aspects of the Anti-Christ. Which is why the sixth
vial includes judgment on the Turkish empire. The seventh vial takes
us to the end and Armageddon and the judgment.

REVELATION 16:2-9
"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."

The vial, is a container similar in meaning to a cup which is used to
symbolize the outpouring of God's judgment. This can be seen in
verses such as Psalm 75:8 "For in the hand of the Lord there is a cup,
and the wine is red; it is full of mixture; and he poureth out of the
same: but the dregs thereof, all the wicked of the earth shall wring
them out, and drink them." Jeremiah 25:15-16 "For thus saith the
Lord God of Israel unto me; Take the wine cup of this fury at my
hand, and cause all the nations to whom I send thee, to drink it. And
they shall drink, and be moved, and be mad, because of the sword
that I will send among them." And Isaiah 51:22 "Thus saith thy Lord
the Lord, and thy God that pleadeth the cause of his people, Behold, I
have taken out of thine hand the cup of trembling, even the dregs of
the cup of my fury; thou shalt no more drink it again." Chapter 14 of
Revelation mentions the cup of wrath which would be poured out on
those who had the mark of the beast now we see the details of the
downfall of the beasts power which were only just touched on in
chapter 14.

As the first angel pours out his cup of wrath, loathsome sores
break out upon men. We are looking for a momentous event which
follows the sixth trumpet’s Turkish woe, which was the overthrow of
the eastern Roman empire in 1453 A.D. What I believe fulfills this
perfectly is the French revolution and the events which followed as a
result of it. Since the time of Charlemagne France was the supporter
of the Papacy. The Roman church had leaned on and depended upon
French support and because of this The Pope had called the king of
France “The eldest son of the church.” Now comes the upheaval of
the Revolution in France.

The noisome and grievous sores are an indication of social and
moral evil as can be seen in Isaiah 1:5-6 "...The whole head is sick, the
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whole heart faint, from the sole of the foot to the head there is no soundness in it, but wounds, and bruises, and putrefying sores: they have not been closed, neither bound up, neither mollified with ointment." This was speaking of the moral corruption, and factions in Israel.

Among the atrocities committed during the French revolution was the publicly expressed determination to dethrone the King of Heaven as well as the monarchs of the earth. The public renunciation of Christianity and of God. The claim that no other religion was needed but that of liberty, equality and morality. Then followed the worship of a prostitute as the goddess of reason with orgies following. The problem is that there is no morality, justice or liberty without God. God is good and without him there is no goodness. When God is rejected only sin and deception remain. During this time a comedian speaking in the church of St. Rogue cried, "God, if you exist, avenge your injured name. I bid you defiance. You remain silent. You dare not launch your thunders. Who after this will believe in your existence?" Yet God was launching his thunders in the form of the vials. At the execution of Robespierre, on July 29, 1794, a poor man approached the lifeless body, and exclaimed, "Yes, Robespierre! there is a God!"

Many people were put to death during the French Revolution. Altogether the massacres of the reign of terror are figured at over a million by the historian Alison. These atrocities were the same as those used by the papal clergy, papal kings, and papal nobles of France against their unoffending protestant population.

REVELATION 16:3
"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."

The second vial like the second trumpet was poured out on the sea to destroy maritime commerce and power. Beginning with the revolution of Santo Domingo which continued from 1792 to 1804 A.D. A war in which 60,000 black people lost their lives fighting for independence. It resulted in the utter defeat of the French armies and expulsion and extermination of the white colonists and the establishment of the independent republic of Haiti.
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Additionally the naval war between France and England was in progress from 1793 and lasted about twenty years. Britain destroyed the maritime commerce and small colonies of France and its allies Holland and Spain which were also Roman Catholic. In 1793 A.D. The greater part of the French fleet was destroyed at Toulon by Lord Hood. In 1794 the British defeated the French off Ushant. Then after the taking of Corsica and nearly all the smaller Spanish and French West Indies islands Britain went on to capture the Cape of Good Hope and defeat the French and Dutch fleet sent to recapture it. Then, Lord Nelson's three great naval victories in 1798, 1801 and 1805 A.D. According to James' Naval History there were 200 ships of the line, between 300 and 400 frigates and a very large number (almost infinite according to James) of smaller vessels of war and ships of commerce destroyed. History had never seen such a period of naval warfare, destruction and bloodshed. Figuratively "The sea became as the blood of a dead man."

Further, during the twelve years of Spanish subjection to France 1796 to 1808 A.D. the Spanish colonies in South America learned the revolutionary doctrines of France. Revolution broke out in Mexico, Venezuela, Buenos Aries, Chili and Peru which eventually lead to their independence. Brazil also became independent from Portugal. This was the judgment, the vial being poured out on the seas of the papal allies. "And every living soul died in the sea."

REVELATION 16:4-7
"And the third angel poured out his vial upon the rivers and fountains of waters; and they became blood. 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. For they have shed the blood of saints and prophets, and thou hast given them blood to drink; for they are worthy. And I heard another out of the altar say, Even so, Lord God Almighty, true and righteous are thy judgments."

The third trumpet saw judgment being executed on the river valleys of Europe such as the Rhine, the Danube, and the Po. The trumpet judgment destroyed the "one third" of the old Roman empire. As the vial is poured out the same river valleys are brought into
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conflict to destroy the papal allies and those countries which had shed the blood of the Waldensians, Albingenses, Hussites, Huegonots, Calvinists and Lutherans.

In 1792 A.D. the French declared war on the German emperor known as the first son of the Roman church. He was the emperor of the so called Holy Roman Empire. Later the same year war was declared on the king of Sardinia. This brought the Rhine and the alpine streams that fed the Po into the judgment of the vial which was to turn the rivers and fountains into blood. Later the Danube was subjected to this vial until all the power of the papal kingdoms and allies were broken. The rivers and fountains were again turned to blood by war.

REVELATION 16:8-9
"And the fourth angel poured out his vial upon the sun; and power was given unto him to scorch men with fire. 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."

We have already seen in earlier chapters that the sun being darkened is symbolic of the loss of power and the downfall of a kingdom. In 1806 A.D. Napoleon forced the German emperor to solemnly renounce the title "Emperor of the Holy Roman Empire and of Germany." This was not just a renouncing of a title but the complete loss of power. The sun was darkened on this empire which had lasted one thousand years from the time of Charlemagne. Between 1806 and 1808 A.D. Napoleon replaced old dynasties with vassal kings. The kings of Saxony, Westphalia, Holland, Spain and Portugal were replaced by friends and family of Napoleon. Napoleon’s general Murat became the king of Naples. This constitutes the sun darkening on the old kingdoms as the papal allies were overthrown and replaced.

"To scorch men with fire" may refer to Napoleon's use of artillery which he used beyond any previous comparison in war. He also used the policy of supplying his armies off the vanquished enemies land. Napoleon had his armies take all food and supplies and left the land barren, the inhabitants had nothing and starved. As an example of this scorched earth policy I quote just one little section from a letter which
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was originally sent from the city of Leipsic to the British nation dated Nov 1813 and copied from the Horae Apocalipticae vol 3, p363. "For a month after the retreat no human being, no domestic animal, no poultry, nay, not even a sparrow was to be met with: only ravens in abundance were to be seen, feeding on corpses."

"They blasphemed the name of God." These judgments did not cause the nations to repent of the evil they had done. Instead the French tired of its national atheism and returned to the Roman church.

REVELATION 16:10-11

"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, And blasphemed the God of heaven because of their pains and their sores, and repented not of their deeds."

The papacy had dominated European governments from the 6th to the 18th centuries, the 1260 years. Many beginning dates bring us to the era of history we now are covering. We will look at a few that fit particularly well with the vials judgment on papal Rome and its allies. From the decree of Emperor Justinian in 533 A.D. which made the bishop of Rome the head of all churches, to 1793 A.D. When France outlawed God was 1260 solar years. From emperor Phocas's confirmation of the primacy of the see of Rome over Constantinople and all the eastern churches in 607 A.D. to the great modern overthrow of papal power was 1260 calendar and solar years. The 1260 biblical calendar years of 360 days comes to 1848-1849 when there was another revolution in France and the Pope had to flee Rome. The 1260 solar years comes to the 1866-1870 years beginning with the Spanish Revolution where the Jesuits were banished, and where monasteries and churches were confiscated and sold or pulled down. Followed by the annexing of the papal states to the kingdom of Italy by Victor Emmanuel king of Italy in 1870. 1260 calendar years is measured from the date of the accession of Pope Gregory the Great on September 3 590 A.D. to 1849 A.D. Gregory is recognized as the first real Pope.

The fifth vial is poured out on the seat of the beasts power, the papacy, whose realm had already suffered terribly in the previous four
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vials. This concerns the overthrow of the papal kingdom, as the old
allies of the Pope now annexed to France turned against the papacy.
Between 1789 and 1793 France began to throw off papal rule in
France, seizing church lands and property and declaring the Pope to
have no power in France. The French killed an estimated 24,000
clergy in France.

After French dominion was established in northern Italy in 1796-
1797 A.D. Napoleon moved on Rome. The Pope saved himself and
Rome by formal cession of the legates of Ferrara, Bologna, and
Romagna, and the city of Anconia; the payment of 5,000,000 Roman
crowns, the surrender of all military stores and one hundred of the
finest paintings and statues in the Vatican.

But old habits die hard and the Pope had been used to his word
being law and his commands obeyed. When the Pope insulted the
French ambassador, The French had had enough and decided to
humble this proud pope. The French army entered Rome in 1798,
declared the Popes temporal rule at an end and the Roman republic
proclaimed in alliance with France. Then as the Pope was sitting on
his throne in the Cistine chapel in the Vatican, celebrating the
anniversary of being elected Pope, he was arrested. The papal ring was
taken from his finger and his palace rifled, his jewels taken, and he was
carried away prisoner to France. Pius IX died in 1799 in exile in
France.

Eventually Napoleon reestablished the Roman church in France
for political reasons, but he only recognized it on equal terms to the
protestant sects.

In 1804 Napoleon summoned the Pope to France to give his
sanction to the crowning of Napoleon as emperor. The Pope obeyed
but this time it was different. For one thousand years the Pope had
crowned the Emperor. This time Napoleon took the crown and
placed it on his own head, declaring that by no higher power could
this be done. This was a terrible blow to the prestige of the papacy.
Some of the leaders in France wanted to totally annihilate the power
of the Pope. Bonaparte's idea was to retain the Pope, but in a state of
absolute subjection to himself.

In 1809, because of the Popes resistance to French views,
Napoleon issued decrees to humble the Roman church. He claimed
the right to revoke Charlemagne's donations to the Holy see, as
himself the successor and representative of Charlemagne. Therefore
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Napoleon annexed the duchies of Urbino, Ancona, Macrata, and Camarino to the kingdom of Italy, and incorporated Rome as the second city of the French empire. A salary was given to the Pope as a pension from the state, making the Pope a servant of the state. In 1811, just before the fall of Napoleon, he forced the Pope to sign an agreement which the first condition was the removal of the Pope from Rome forever. It was his intent to keep the Popes in Paris where he could keep an eye on them, impose his will on them and restrict their free reign. With this blow the Popes power was completely crippled. But it was the purpose of God to judge this anti-Christian power for eternity on the judgment day and until then it will continue in its existence in and out of the favor of governments, but always in existence until that great day.

Upon the overthrow of Napoleon, Europe quickly reverted to its old dynasties and reestablished the Pope as supreme head of the church. The papacy immediately began to reassert its false doctrines and to turn men away from true religion again. It had never turned from its evil ways while God was chastising it and it continued to "blaspheme the God of heaven because of their paines and their sores, and repented not of their deeds." The papacy reasserted their false miracles, ceremonials, indulgences etc. The kingdoms repented of their insubordination to Rome. In Spain the Inquisition was reestablished. Protestants were persecuted again in the catholic countries. The Roman church reestablished the Jesuits, even though Pope Clement XIV's bull dissolving them had declared that Jesuitism was a public nuisance; and that "He who endeavored to let it loose on society would be chargeable with high treason against the common interests and happiness of his species." The Jesuits were as active in propagating the papacy as ever before.

The following is from Elliott's Horae, originally taken from the Christian Observer for 1828 page 467. A regular form of recantation for converts from Protestantism, drawn up under 20 heads by the Jesuit missionaries in Hungary, made them say, "that the Pope cannot err; that he has full power to forgive or retain sins, and to cast men into hell; that all that he has established, whether out of the bible or not, is true; that he ought to be honored with similar reverence to that paid to Christ himself; that those who oppose his authority ought to be burned at the stake, and to perish body and soul in hell; that the reading of the scriptures is the origin of all faction and blasphemy;
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that each priest is greater than the Virgin Mary, because she was the parent of Christ but once, but the priest creates him anew again and again."

As mentioned before the power of the papacy was never to be the same again and it was troubled repeatedly. In 1848 the Pope had to flee Rome as a result of another revolution in France. In 1868 Spain banished the Jesuits and confiscated churches. In 1870 Victor Emmanuel II took possession of Rome and annexed the papal states to the kingdom of Italy. The people had grown tired of the abuses of the Pope and voted for a united Italy. The vote of the people transferring Rome from the Pope to the government of Italy was 133,648 to 1,507. The Pope not only lost his kingdom again but became subject again to another king. Of course the Pope does not think he is subject to anyone and in 1870 issued his edict of papal infallibility, "And they blasphemed God...and repented not of their deeds." After the annexing of the "Papal states" to Italy the Pope and his successors withdrew to the Vatican and refused to deal with the Italian government until the Lateran treaty in 1929. In the treaty the Pope gave up all claims to the ex-papal states and the Italian government recognized the independent state of the Vatican. The Vatican, officially called The State of Vatican City, comprise 109 acres on Vatican hill in Rome.

REVELATION 16:12
"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."

In relating this vial to the destruction of the Roman church's power we can make some comparisons. We can see in the bible that Babylon is set in contrast to the New Jerusalem or true church, notice that Babylon is called the great whore while the church is called a faithful bride. The Euphrates flowed through Babylon, the river of life flows in the city of New Jerusalem. The river symbolizes the spiritual corruption which emanated from the papacy and papal clergy. The river of life symbolizes the truth of the life giving word of God. John 7:38 tells us that out of the Christians belly flows rivers of living waters.

This vial presents us with a double meaning. For although it is
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seems to be giving a symbolic image of Rome as Babylon and the Euphrates as the fountain of corruption which spewed forth from the papacy. It also seems as if God thought it expedient to include the downfall of the Mohammedan Turkish empire since they had persecuted Christians for centuries. The Mohammedan power rose in the east at the same period of time as the Roman Bishops came to power. Luther used to say “The Pope and the Turk came up together.” Both Calvin and Luther considered the Mohammedan Turks to be the great eastern antichrist. The sixth trumpet turned loose the horsemen from the Euphrates river. The sixth vial shows us the drying up of that power. The time frame is the same as the other vials. The crumbling of the Turkish empire can be traced from certain events beginning about 1768 A.D. when war broke out between Russia and the Turks. The Turks were badly beaten and disgraced.

The events continued nearly without relent. In 1770 a Russian admiral annihilated the Turkish fleet in the Aegean Sea. In 1774 a large Turkish army was again disgracefully beaten. In 1777 War broke out again, The Russians obtained the cession of important towns and districts before concluding peace. In 1806 Russia occupied Moldavia and Wallachia and hostilities broke out again. The new Turkish fleet was destroyed by the Russians at Lemnos. Mahmoud II bought peace by giving up territory north of Pruth, a number of fortresses on the Danube and a major mouth of the Danube itself. The 1820 Greek rebellion. In 1820 the Porte surrendered to the Russians all fortresses it retained in Asia. In 1827 Turkey acknowledges the independence of Greece. In 1829 Serbia was freed from the Turks. The Turks were forbidden to reside north of the Danube. In 1844 the Porte was compelled, under threat of European interference, to issue an edict of religious toleration, abolishing the persecuting sword against Christians. The 1897 defeat of Turkey by a united Greece and Crete. This was 1260 years after Omar seized Jerusalem. In 1917 the Turks surrender Jerusalem 2520 years from the vision in Daniel in 603 B.C. And in 1918 The Ottoman empire ended, 1260 years after the Omayyad dynasty was founded in Damascus.

A question that comes up in interpreting this verse is what are the kings of the east referring to? It has been thought by futurists that they represent the modern eastern rulers of countries such as Iran, Iraq, Turkey, China or Russia. They interpret the Euphrates drying up to be literal so that the armies of these eastern kings can cross it.
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However crossing it isn't a problem even without it drying up. A modern army can cross it by bridge, boat, and airplane. The Euphrates is now damned and the flow can be severely restricted or temporarily stopped but ancient armies had no problems with it. The Persians turned it aside to enter Babylon in the time of Daniel. Ancient armies crossed the Euphrates also. Remember Revelation 9:13-16, the Turks crossed the Euphrates. In modern times there are bridges spanning the Euphrates and people can walk or drive across it. Some historical interpreters have reasoned that the Jewish people are indicated here. That once the Muslim persecutors of Christianity were taken out of the way (the drying up of the Euphrates) then the Jewish people could come back and restore Jerusalem. This drying up took place in 1844 when the edict of religious toleration was issued by the Turks and then even more in 1917 when the Turks gave up possession of Jerusalem. The problem here is that I don't think there is sufficient evidence for calling the Jewish people kings of the east. When speaking of restoring his people in the old testament prophecies the Lord says he would call them from every direction as in Isaiah 43:5-6.

It has been proposed that what might be meant here is the making way for the kings of the east to come to Christ after the bulwark of Mohammedanism is taken out of the way. This bulwark was for centuries the Turkish empire. It is against Islamic law for a Muslim to convert to Christianity and was punishable by death. Only with toleration of other religions and the vast Mohammedan empires out of the way would this happen. In modern times we still see slow progress being made in Islamic lands, but progress is being made that couldn't be made before. We might also consider that with the fall of the papacy the Jewish people who have long ago given up idolatry, and the pagan people who can see the shameful traffic in idolatry and vice will now consider coming to Christ. The bible refers to the return of Christ happening after the evangelizing of the world. With the way being made for the kings of the east to come to Christ the evangelizing of the world can be completed, since the major powers hindering the spread of the Gospel have been crippled.

REVELATION 16:13-14
"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. For they are the
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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."

The result of the previous vials was the subsequent humbling of the papacy and loss of its temporal power. Later it regains of some of its former power since it is not completely overthrown until the judgment. Then the sixth vial is poured out and the judgment of the Mohammedan nations begins. Then we see three unclean spirits proceeding out of the mouth of the dragon, the beast, and the false prophet. The spirits purpose is to remove the power of God from people's lives by making the knowledge of the true God obsolete. The spirits represent the teachings or principles which came out of their mouths. Out of the dragon's mouth came a spirit of lying, murder and rebellion. Satan was a liar, a murderer, and a rebel from the beginning. Out of the mouth of the beast came a spirit of Popery, and anti-Christ, the pretentious claim of headship over all churches. The further declarations of its own deity as the vice regent of Christ, as can be seen by the 1870 A.D. edict of infallibility. Out of the mouth of the false prophet came more of the propagation of the false wonders and doctrines of the Roman church.

These three spirits are a perfect combination for Satan, and for the dragon which represents Satan. He doesn't really care if a person is deceived by the Roman church dogmas or by being an atheist who claims no belief in God. Neither does the dragon care if someone is deceived by being a secular humanist who makes man the highest type of being with no accountability to God. Nor does he care if any believe in any other false religion, as long as the person is deceived. After all Satan's ultimate goal is the destruction of the soul. The spirits out of the beast's and false prophet's mouths are able to deceive others into a false hope of salvation, in the presumptuous claim that to be saved man needs to be obedient to and subject to the Pope.

Notice that the three unclean spirits went forth into the whole world. The previous events depicted the downfall of the Roman Church power at the end of the nineteenth century. The twentieth century ushers in two “world wars.” Wars in which the “world” was in strife, with all major powers brought in. Three unclean spirits going forth to bring deception and death and confusion. Yet God is merciful because it is not the end yet.
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REVELATION 16:15
"Behold, I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame."

I believe the Lord is giving another timely warning here. He tells us to be prepared, to be ready when he comes back. The Lord tells us that we are to watch and keep our garments, those white robes of righteousness. In other words we have a responsibility to keep if we are to be counted as ready when he comes again.

A note to all believing parents here. The spiritual forces in this world are trying to corrupt the minds of all men. Children are not exempted from this rule. Children are inundated day after day in the schools and in the media with bad morals, ethics, and false religious ideas and philosophies such as secular humanism. They are taught that there is no God, that there is no higher power than man himself, that there are no absolutes. Our Christian children are ridiculed and scorned if they express any kind of faith in God. In other words they are taught to worship the creature more than the creator (Romans 1:25). Our children are taught to be part of the crowd, one of the many, not one of the few. Their thoughts are twisted by the system until wrong is right and right is wrong in their minds, and they can no longer believe in their parents' God.

Does the Christian parent really think that one hour of Sunday school once a week is going to overcome all of the waking hours of the day, six days a week that their children are influenced by the world system? Christian parents especially the fathers need to teach their children in the home about Jesus. To make it a priority to read the life giving words of God to them from the bible. Timothy was who he was because of his godly mother and grandmother in the home teaching him daily God's word. 2 Timothy 3:15, says, "And that from childhood you have known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus."

REVELATION 16:16
"And he gathered them together into a place called in the
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Hebrew tongue Armageddon."

Much has been written about Armageddon, but most of the futurists I have read claim it is a physical place. They point to the hill of Megiddo as the place of the last great battle between the forces of good and evil. They feel this will be a literal battle between the devil and his forces and the few Christians, which is only won by the direct intervention of God.

Megiddo was a real place, where real battles took place. But Armageddon is typical of the battle between good and evil. It is not going to be a literal, physical place where battle is joined by literal armies. The city of Babylon was real also but in Revelation it has a spiritual symbolism to it and does not refer to the literal city of Babylon.

Searching for the meaning of the word Armageddon reveals no secrets. It was a Hebrew word written in a Greek text. The original readers of Revelation probably wouldn't know Hebrew and so it wouldn't mean anything specific to them. The word Armageddon comes from two Hebrew words, (Har) which means hill or mount, and (Megiddon) which is a place in Palestine. Two kings died there, Ahaziah and Josiah. One was good for the church, one was bad. One point of interest is that Megiddo and the towns thereof were part of the promised land, which the Jews were supposed to drive the inhabitants out of. Manasseh did not succeed in driving out the inhabitants of this area and they had to coexist with the ungodly pagan people which God told them would corrupt them. We as Christians have to coexist with the world and all its evil ways while remaining faithful to God. This might be one thing that Armageddon refers to; the three unclean spirits would gather together all those that they can deceive with their ungodly teachings in a spiritual rendezvous to attack Christianity on every front and from every angle.

Armageddon is a spiritual battlefield in which the Christian fights every day. It is spiritual warfare. Ephesians 6:12 says, "For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities (demons), against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places." Should Christians fear Armageddon? The answer is no. This is the daily battle where we possess the land through the power of Christ. It is not a place where Christians are brought to be wiped out by the devil.
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REVELATION 16:17-19
"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. 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. 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."

The first thing we notice after the angel pours out the seventh and last vial is the great voice from the throne, saying, It is done. The seventh vial completes the judgment that was poured out on the papacy and the world powers that support it.

The first six vials have been fulfilled in the great loss of temporal power suffered by the papacy. With the seventh vial being poured out we see it declared “It is done.” This seems to indicate a final and complete overthrow and judgment. With this in mind the seventh vial may be synchronized in time with the seventh trumpet, since the seventh trumpet of Rev 11:15 brings about the consummation of the age and final judgment. Or it may have been poured out and we are waiting for its complete fulfillment when Jesus returns.

Now "It is done" and time is short. We are at the end of the age. How long we have to wait I don't know. One year or one thousand years, it really doesn't matter. History and the future are managed by God and in his time, we will hear the end of the seventh trumpet blast.

All the signs in verse 18 are symbols of destruction, and of the downfall of kingdoms. God is removing the world system on the day when Jesus returns in power. The city which fell is divided into three parts. Those three parts consist of the dragon, the beast, and the false prophet. The world's system is defined by three things; Satan as deceiver and source of power, temporal governments, and false churches and religions. Later in Revelation 19, we will witness these three powers cast into the lake of fire.
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REVELATION 16:20-21
"And every island fled away, and the mountains were not found. 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."

A similarity exists between these verses and Revelation 6:15-17, which is also speaking of God's judgment upon the world system in place at the time. These are signs of the fierceness of God's wrath on the ungodly. Notice that three times in chapter 16 it is said that men "blasphemed God". Unrighteous men do not repent at the chastisement of the Lord but only seek to blame God for the hardships that they have brought upon them selves by their ungodly acts. Pr 14:16 says, “A wise man feareth, and departeth from evil: but the fool rageth, and is confident.” And in Jeremiah 5:3, "O Lord, are not thine eyes upon the truth? thou hast stricken them, but they have not grieved; thou hast consumed them, but they have refused to receive correction: they have made their faces harder than rock; they have refused to return. Therefore I said, surely these are poor; they are foolish: for they know not the way of the Lord, nor the judgment of their God."

They never repented, never turned away from the evil which they were being chastised for. Men have always hardened their hearts. They will be without excuse on the judgment day. The book of Romans expresses the mercy and greatness of God in this way; Romans 9:22-23, "What if God, willing to shew his wrath, and to make his power known, endured with much longsuffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction: And that he might make known the riches of his glory on the vessels of mercy, which he had afore prepared unto glory."
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PART vii

REVELATION 17

As we read chapter 17 the reader will notice a similarity with Revelation 13. Chapter 17 fills in some unanswered questions that chapter 13 poses.
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Babylon the great harlot is a representation of an unfaithful and corrupted church. A church with illegitimate relations with the nations, who used the state’s power to enforce their doctrines, and to bring about forced and shallow conversions of men.

The bible presents the true church as a bride in Ephesians 5:25,32. Jesus said his return would be like a marriage feast in Matthew 25:10. Christians are the Lamb's bride in Revelation 19:7. But here in chapter 17 the false church is seen as a harlot. The bible then, presents us with representations of two women, A faithful bride and a harlot. It also represents them as two cities, Babylon, and the New Jerusalem. The harlot church and the true church. One is seated in power on a throne of worldly splendor, driving the other underground by persecution. All this identifies Babylon the harlot with the lamb-beast of chapter 13.

REVELATION 17:1-2
"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: 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."

An angel tells John that he will show him the judgment of the whore. We have previously witnessed the vial judgments on the papacy and its allies. The vial judgments were poured out on the powers that had persecuted the Christians. Chapter 17 specifically identifies the dragon and the whore and, chapter 18 describes the actual fall of this power.

This church is said to be in illegitimate relations with the kings of the earth. Deceiving the nations by her riches and tradition. It was spiritual adultery, as described by God in the old testament when the jews would begin to have relations with other nations and accept their idolatrous beliefs.

REVELATION 17:3
"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."
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John is carried away in spirit to the wilderness. In the wilderness vision he sees what is now described to us, yet he does not understand what he sees because in verse 7, the angel says, "Wherefore didst thou marvel? I will tell thee the mystery of the woman."

What John sees is a woman (which symbolizes the church). This woman was seated on a scarlet (red) colored beast and the beast was full of blasphemous claims. The beast had seven heads and ten horns. We saw in chapter 13 how the heads and horns of this beast typed governments and later in this chapter we will examine this again. It is interesting that the Roman church used red so much, the papal throne is red, it is carried by cardinals dressed in red, and red is the devil's color in chapter 12:3. I am not implying that everything red is evil. I am merely pointing out one more connecting thread in the tapestry, one more connection between the Roman church and the Beast.

REVELATION 17:4
"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 fornications:"

The woman is dressed in purple which was the color of royalty and wealth, and scarlet reveling in her luxury and filth. She carries "A gold cup in her hand full of abominations and filthiness of her fornication." In Jeremiah 51:7, Babylon was seen as a golden cup that made all the earth drunken that had partaken in her sins. All these things, red, purple and gold were symbols of wealth and power.

In a perfect fulfillment to prophecy, the papacy had a medal struck in celebration of the jubilee in 1825. One side of which was a depiction of Pope Leo XII. On the other side is a depiction of a woman representing the Roman church holding out a cup. Papal Rome, mother and mistress, holding out her intoxicating cup of anti-Christian apostasy. The illustration of the medal below is copied from the Horae Apocalypticae Vol 4, page 35 by E.B. Elliott. And below that the actual picture of the medal.
The inscription says SEDET SUPER UNIVERSUM, the whole world is her seat.

Elliott also compares this medal with an ancient Roman coin to show the similarity between the old Roman coin and the Papal coin. The old Roman coin from the British museum depicts Rome as a woman sitting on seven hills with a sword in one hand and a spear in the other. The medal below is copied from Elliott’s Horae.
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REVELATION 17:5
"And upon her forehead was a name written, MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH."

In His book The Reformed Doctrine of Predestination, Boettner describes the papacy in such a way that makes clear what this verse is telling us: "The papacy came to exert great power, political as well as ecclesiastical, and throughout catholic Europe the state of morals came to be almost intolerable. Even the priesthood became desperately corrupt and in the whole catalog of human vices none are more corrupt or more offensive than those which soiled the lives of such Popes as John XXIII and Alexander VI." (page 367, par 1)

Boettner also wrote, "The debauchery of kings had descended through the aristocracy to the common people; religion had become a mass of corruption, consistent only with its cruelty; The monasteries had become the breeding places of iniquity, celibacy had proved to be a foul fountain of unchastity and uncleanness; immorality, licentiousness, despotism and extortion in state and church were indescribable; The forgiveness of sins could be purchased for money, and a shameful traffic in indulgences was carried on under the Popes sanction, some of the Popes were monsters of iniquity." (ibid, page 377 par 2).

There is even a period in Rome's ecclesiastical history known as "The rule of harlots," 904-963 A.D. Morozia and her mother Theodora, brought their lovers to the papal throne, committed murder to replace old lovers with the new ones, and bought the papal
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thron for Morozia's son.

REVELATION 17:6
"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."

The woman was drunk with the blood of the martyrs. this can be seen in Revelation 12:17 and 16:6. We also see this in history, the horrors of the inquisition, ordered by the Popes, to many historians constitute the most brutal and devilish portion of all history. The papacy seemed mad in its blood lust, it was truly drunk with the blood of the martyrs.

This verse says that John wondered with great admiration. This does not mean that John admired the woman in that he looked up to her as in the modern sense of admire. It meant that John wondered about her intently as he studied her appearance.

REVELATION 17:7
"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."

John couldn't quite figure out this woman and this beast she rode upon. So the angel is going to describe accurately who this woman is. This is important to us because the angel clarifies the vision and makes known the identity of the woman. In doing so the angel helps to clarify other scriptures that reference the woman, the beast, the dragon etc.

REVELATION 17:8
"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."

John's vision concerns the time period of the Roman church's power after the fall of Rome. We can come to this conclusion because
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of verse 8. The beast that was, is the old Roman empire. And is not because that old Roman empire fell in 476 A.D. At this time the devil, who had given power to the old Roman empire, now gives power to papal Rome. That is what is meant by this verse when it says and yet is. The unsaved, the followers of the beast will wonder when they see the beast "that was, and is not, and yet is." Everyone thought that Rome had fallen yet it continued in a different form. The beast exists again because he was brought back in the form of papal Rome, the lamb-beast of Revelation 13. We can also compare Revelation 13:3-4 to this verse for they are similar to each other and describe the same power; One of the heads (which was) received a deadly wound unto death (and is not), and his deadly wound was healed (and yet is). He is not, and yet is because he was changed and is no longer the same. Remember Daniel 7:24 where the bible says the little horn would be diverse from all the rest? He is different because he has been changed and is no longer just a temporal ruler but a spiritual ruler also.

REVELATION 17:9
"And here is the mind which hath wisdom. The seven heads are seven mountains, on which the woman sitteth."

The seven heads of the beast represent seven mountains. Rome was built on seven hills and has always been known as "the seven hilled city." The imagery shows the woman (church) sitting on seven hills (Rome). This helps us to center the vision on Rome. When chapter 18 tells us of the downfall of the woman and calls her Babylon, we need to remember that the symbolic Babylon is actually Rome.

REVELATION 17:10
"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."

Once again the identification of the whore is revealed. This is surely no coincidence but the providence of God in revealing beyond doubt who the woman was. The picture of the seven headed dragon is indeed interesting, for here we have dual imagery. The seven heads represent more than just seven hills, they are seven kings also. The
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seven kings are symbolic for seven kingdoms or empires. This symbolism further indicates Rome, which at the time Revelation was written was the sixth world empire. Five previous empires had held power and fallen. These empires were the Egyptian, Assyrian, Babylonian, Medo-Persian, and Greek. These are the five kings which are fallen. Then we see the statement "and one is" this refers to the Roman empire that was in existence at the time. "And the other is not yet come" refers to the power that will be BABYLON THE GREAT. Compare the phrases “five are fallen, and one is, the other is not yet come” with “that was, and is not, and yet is” and we see the same idea conveyed. In Revelation 13 we saw the heads (which was), one of the heads is wounded (and is not), and was healed (and yet is).

REVELATION 17:11
"And the beast that was, and is not, even he is the eighth, and is of the seven, and goeth into perdition."

This is the only verse in the bible which speaks of an eighth kingdom. All other references speak of a succession of only seven empires with the seventh being different than any other. As we examine the succession of empires we can see that there are only seven empires referred to. Hopefully the reader will come to understand that the eighth is an alliance of two types of power under the seventh empire.

In Revelation 13:11 we saw another beast come up. This new beast replaced the sixth empire which was Rome. This new lamb-beast represents the uniting of corrupt spiritual rule and temporal rule. The spiritual rule is what is referred to by the eighth kingdom in chapter 17:11. The NASV at this verse says "The eighth is one of the seven." The first six empires are gone, the seventh is in existence and the eighth empire is part of the seventh.

The bible tells us in Daniel 2 of the succession of kingdoms; The gold head was the Babylonian empire. The breast and arms of silver was the Medo-Persian empire, with the two arms symbolizing the Mede-Persian unification. The belly and thighs of this image are brass, representing the Greek empire. The fourth kingdom was represented by iron legs and iron and clay feet symbolizing the Roman empire. Since the iron and clay feet are made from two elements (iron and clay) instead of just one, they seem to infer a fifth kingdom in which
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the iron and clay mixture would actually represent temporal and ecclesiastical power under one head. The seventh kingdom of Revelation 17:11. This mixture or uniting of two powers is repeated in other verses; Revelation 13:11 says, "And he had two horns like a lamb, and he spake as a dragon."

There were also two empires that existed and fell prior to the time of the vision in Daniel. These were the Egyptian and the Assyrian empires which along with the five already mentioned equals seven empires.

There are some who would argue about the Medo-Persian empire being one empire as symbolized by the breast and arms of brass in Daniel 2. However, in Daniel 8:20 the ram with two horns represents one empire made from two united kingdoms. This shows us that the bible represents the Medo-Persian empire as one empire, the Persian.

In Daniel 7 the bible presents us with four empires as seen from the time of Daniel's vision looking forward. A lion represents the Babylonian empire. A bear, the Medo-Persian; a leopard, the Greek; and a terrible beast which represents Rome. This beast had ten horns, then one little horn came up and displaces three of the original horns. This little horn would claim rule over both body and spirit.

The ten horns are generally accepted as the ten gothic kingdoms into which the Roman empire was dissolved on its fall. The other horn, the little horn of Daniel 7:8,20,24,25 which would arise among the ten horns is a combination rule, the lamb-beast of Revelation 13.

Machiavelli, a Roman historian, described the empire as divided among various gothic tribes: Heruli, Seuvi, Bergundians, Huns, Ostrogoths, Visigoths, Vandals, Lombards, Franks and Anglo Saxons.

The three kings which the little horn displaced are thought by some to refer to the Lombards, Ravenna and Rome, which were handed over to the Popes as the beginning of their temporal kingdom in 754 A.D. These became known as the papal states.

Elliot in his Horae Apocalipticae , vol.3 pg 139, says, "I might cite three that were eradicated from before the Pope out of the list first given, viz, the Heruli under Odacer, the Vandals, and the Ostrogoths." The Heruli were overthrown in 493, the Vandals in 534 and the Ostrogoths in 553 A.D. Either view recognizes the papacy as fulfilling the little horn of Daniel 7.
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REVELATION 17:12
"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."

In the previous verse we saw what the ten kings represented, they are the same as the ten horns in Daniel 7. They are the kingdoms into which the Roman empire was dissolved upon its fall. They have received no kingdom yet because when John received the vision these kingdoms were not in power yet, but under the dominion of Rome. The one hour is just a small amount of time with an end for their kingdoms will be temporary. These were the papal allies which were judged with the seven vials.

REVELATION 17:13-14
"These have one mind, and shall give their power and strength unto the beast. 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."

These kingdoms are allies of the papacy and lend their strength to further the aims of the Popes. In turn the Popes harnessed the power of the states to carry out their bidding. Countries that were allied with the papacy persecuted the Christians and hunted them down to destroy them, all on the order of the Popes. Spain, France, Portugal, Germany and the Holy Roman Empire were all used by the papacy to further its cause which was to destroy all true Christians and anyone who did not rely on the papacy for salvation, and to further their own grasping for supreme power on earth.

"These shall make war with the Lamb" refers to the papal allies being used by the papacy to wage bloody war on the saints. The papacy used the states power to maintain the Inquisition, and persecution of the protestant sects. So called crusades were carried out by the Popes' allies against Christians who were not in agreement with papal doctrines. People were threatened with purgatory or torture if they didn't join the crusade.
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"Pope Innocent was the first to harness the crusaders for a war against heretics in Europe to further his own plans for an imperial type papal reign. The Cathars in southern France fell before the crusaders. At Beziers the town was stormed and in the church of Madeleine, where women and children had taken refuge, seven thousand were slain...the path of the army became marked by pyres of human bodies, smoking and blackened heaps, and wells were choked by corpses." (The Crusades, by Harold Lamb; page 470-471).

From the years 1206 to 1213 A.D. Innocent availed himself of the crusader power to further his own policy from Constantinople to Granada. For more than five centuries other Popes and monarchs would follow this bloodstained example.

Even though Christians would be persecuted like this verse 14 goes on to say that Jesus the true Lamb shall overcome them "For he is Lord of Lords and King of Kings." and all Christians will reign victorious with him.

REVELATION 17:15-16
"And he saith unto me, The waters which thou sawest, where the whore sitteth, are peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues. 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."

These verses tell us that every one of these kingdoms or nations will hate the whore (the false church), and they will be instrumental in her desolation and downfall. This fits history which shows us that the very kingdoms which the Popes had used to carry out their bidding will turn on them repeatedly. The German emperors of the Holy Roman Empire were constantly in conflict with the Popes. The German emperor Frederick, who was at war with the Pope, said of the Popes "All the waters of the Jordan will not wash away their thirst for power." To raise money for the war against Frederick, Pope Innocent IV declared a new crusade against Frederick. Ordering tithes to be gathered and indulgences offered. The church required money from the people and seized their goods, menaced them with purgatory and torture if they did not enlist in this war between the Pope and the emperor. Priests in Rome sold indulgences to crusaders who passed
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through the city, relieving them of their vows to go on crusade. When a crusade was announced anyone who went on crusade had all sins forgiven, they bypassed purgatory and went straight to heaven upon their deaths.

Frederick had tried for peace but Innocent wouldn't have it because he was determined to crush Frederick and raise the papacy over the ruins of the empire. Frederick was content in letting the Popes rule the spiritual lives of men but the Popes wanted more than that. The Popes felt that since they were the literal representatives of God on earth and held God's power, and since God owned everything and His power was above all others, then the Popes should also rule over the material man. Wanting command not just over the spirit but the body, life and possessions of man. In 1250 A.D. Frederick died. In the years that followed the Pope hunted down Frederick's son Conrad until by fire, sword and anathema every vestige of the Hohenstaufen was obliterated. The Pope had used crusade for personal gain and vendetta.

Because of all the tithes, benevolences and property seized for the last crusade were said to have been pocketed by the priests. Men pointed in wonder and scorn at the luxury of the papal court. Matthew of Paris wrote, "By divers wiles the Roman curia strove to take their property from the simple people of God, seeking nothing but their gold and silver." (The Crusades, Harold Lamb)

Italian cities weary of war formed separate communes and would no longer obey Roman rule. Florence shut its gates on the papal legates. French and English kings drew away from Rome. People no longer wanted to hear of crusades. When Innocent IV finally got around to preaching a crusade for Jerusalem no one would listen. He had to offer a forty day indulgence to people who would listen to a sermon on the holy war, and still men turned away. German Burghers who were exhausted by war, announced that they would put to death anyone found wearing the crusaders cross upon his garments.

Because of papal corruption and instances like the massacre of the Albingenses, the French began to develop a spirit of independence from Rome. Philip the fair, king of France, began to take up the struggle with the papacy. He removed the papal palace to Avignon France and for seventy years, 1305 to 1377 A.D. the papacy was just a name, doing the bidding of the king of France. This was considered the Roman Pontiff's “Babylonian Captivity.” Then Napoleon defeated
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the papal allies and turned them against the papacy. He humiliated the Pope and took his power from him. Napoleon also brought an end to the Holy Roman Empire which had stood for a thousand years as a ally of the papacy. There are many other instances where the kings which supported the Pope turned against the Pope to fulfill verse 16 “to make her desolate, and naked, and shall eat her flesh, and burn her with fire.”

REVELATION 17:17
"For God hath put in their hearts to fulfill his will, and to agree, and give their kingdom unto the beast, until the words of God shall be fulfilled."

This verse explains that all these will occur to fulfill the word of God, to fulfill His will, and to bring judgment on the whore. Until then these kingdoms will allow the papacy to have power.

REVELATION 17:18
"And the woman which thou sawest is that great city, which reigneth over the kings of the earth."

The angel is still explaining to John who this woman is and how she relates to these visions. The woman which is the whore, or false church, is that great city Babylon. The church is an integral part of the Babylonian system which seeks to corrupt. We need to see that the church is a part of Babylon because in chapter 18 the fall of Babylon is described. In chapter 17 the whore is identified as the church and is co-located with the beast. Then in verse 18 the bible links the whore with the beast as being one, "And the women which thou sawest is that great city."

REVELATION 18

In chapter 17 verse 1, the angel said..."Come hither; I will shew unto thee the judgment of the great whore that sitteth upon many waters." Then all of chapter 17 dealt with the symbolic imagery of the woman, where she dwells, and the angels explanation of the imagery. In chapter 18 we see the actual fall spoken of in chapter 17, the fall of Babylon, the judgment of the great whore.
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REVELATION 18:1-3
"And after these things I saw another angel come down from heaven, having great power; and the earth was lightened with his glory. 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. 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."

The angel has just declared the fall of Babylon and has emphasized his wording by declaring twice "is fallen is fallen" as if the fall is total and complete. Even though the destruction of the papacy has not been completed yet, it will be final, complete and terrible on the judgment day.

Parts of chapter 18 we will recognize as already fulfilled. Still for other parts we are waiting for the fulfillment on the judgment day. Believing that some parts are fulfilled and other parts waiting fulfillment does not strain the scriptures in any way. The same principle can be seen in other prophecies in the bible.

This whole chapter is very similar to Jeremiah's dirge over Babylon in Jeremiah 51. In Jeremiah 51 the same symbolic language is used as in Revelation 18. In Jeremiah 51 the language used was symbolic of the fall of Babylon and was not always literally fulfilled at once, but eventually the complete fulfillment of the prophecy came true. As an example, Jeremiah 51:3 "...destroy ye utterly all her host." The facts of history tells us that Darius just walked into Babylon with hardly any resistance and took over. Her host was not utterly destroyed. This was only symbolic for the loss of empire. Jeremiah 51:6 "Flee out of the midst of Babylon and deliver every man his soul." Revelation 18:4 says, "Come out of her my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins." The Jews in Babylon were prisoners of the captivity and could not flee. This is symbolic of not becoming like them, a warning to be spiritually separate and not accept the easy evil ways of the world's system in Babylon or the false church. In Jeremiah 51:8 "Babylon is suddenly fallen and destroyed." The fact is that Babylon was not suddenly destroyed at this time but taken over by the Medo-Persians.
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Jeremiah 51:11 even names the Medes as the destroyers, so we know that we have the correct time for this prophecy’s interpretation. Darius the Mede took over Babylon for Cyrus in 539 B.C.

However the fall of the ancient city of Babylon did find completion and today it stands completely desolate. In the same way The spiritual Babylon's judgment has already been partially fulfilled by the vials. The angel is referring to the ultimate overthrow and complete fulfillment on the second coming of Christ when all things will be handed over to Christ and the wicked destroyed.

REVELATION 18:4-6
"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. For her sins have reached unto heaven, and God hath remembered her iniquities. 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."

The warning is given to come out of this corrupt city and not be caught unaware by the sudden coming of the Lord in judgment. This might be referring to the protestant reformation which spread quickly over Germany, Scandinavia, England, Scotland and the North American continent. God always has his remnant even in the papal domain. But he calls his people to be spiritually separate, to be clean and not to be polluted by the sins of the harlot church.

Babylon the great whore's sins have reached into heaven and God is bringing judgment. Babylon will be rewarded double for her evil works. The lives of the saints that were martyred, the blood that is in her cup which has made her drunk, will be required of her in a double measure. It may be that the reason for not instantly destroying Babylon is to prolong her agonies and make her pay double.

REVELATION 18:7-8
"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. Therefore shall her plagues come in one day, death, and mourning, and famine; and she shall be utterly burned with
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fire: for strong is the Lord God who judgeth her."

This is a perfect description of the whore and thus the Roman church. The false church as we have seen, lived in richness and glorified itself. The Popes sat as rulers over men and lorded their power over them. Therefore as much as she was living in luxury and lordship, require it in torment and sorrow from her. She will be utterly destroyed in one day for God is strong and bringing the judgment.

The life and death of Jezebel are reflected again to us in this scripture. Jezebel lived deliciously and glorified herself, and corrupted the people by introducing idol worship into Israel. When Jehu came to Jezreel, Jezebel did not seem to be worried. Perhaps she said "I sit a queen, and am no widow, and shall see no sorrow" as she painted her face and fixed her hair. But her judgment was swift and sure. The harlot church is similar to Jezebel and will be judged in a similar manner.

REVELATION 18:9-19

"And the kings of the earth, who have committed fornication and lived deliciously with her, shall bewail her, and lament for her, when they shall see the smoke of her burning, Standing afar off for the fear of her torment, saying, Alas, alas, that great city Babylon, that mighty city! for in one hour is thy judgment come. And the merchants of the earth shall weep and mourn over her; for no man buyeth their merchandise any more: The merchandise of gold, and silver, and precious stones, and of pearls, and fine linen, and purple, and silk, and scarlet, and all thine wood, and all manner vessels of ivory, and all manner vessels of most precious wood, and of brass, and iron, and marble, And cinnamon, and odours, and ointments, and frankincense, and wine, and oil, and fine flour, and wheat, and beasts, and sheep, and horses, and chariots, and slaves, and souls of men. And the fruits that thy soul lusted after are departed from thee, and all things which were dainty and goodly are departed from thee, and thou shalt find them no more at all. The merchants of these things, which were made rich by her, shall stand afar off for the fear of her torment, weeping and wailing, And saying, Alas, alas, that great city, that was clothed in fine linen, and
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purple, and scarlet, and decked with gold, and precious stones, and pearls! For in one hour so great riches is come to nought. And every shipmaster, and all the company in ships, and sailors, and as many as trade by sea, stood afar off, And cried when they saw the smoke of her burning, saying, What city is like unto this great city! And they cast dust on their heads, and cried, weeping and wailing, saying, Alas, alas, that great city, wherein were made rich all that had ships in the sea by reason of her costliness! for in one hour is she made desolate."

These verses speak not only of the downfall of papal Rome but also the downfall of the world system represented by Rome. These verses show the whore having made people rich by commerce, they were made rich providing for her lusts. All of the merchandise spoken of in these verses were consumed by the Roman church. When the Roman church falls the merchants that are supplying her lusts weep over the loss of the great city. Also traded was the souls of men, because the Roman church consumed the souls of men by deceiving them into having relations with her. The kings and nations and merchants that were made rich by the papacy's lust for luxury and power were seen as men who had relations with a harlot. Even though the papacy no longer has the temporal rule that it had during its 1260 years reign, they still exist as one of the most powerful and wealthy organizations in the world. When the papacy lost its temporal power those in relations with her wept and felt the loss as pictured in these verses. However her destruction is not an utter and complete destruction "in one hour" until Christ comes again. As we saw in Jeremiah 51, Babylon fell according to the prophecy but it was not fulfilled completely for years. I believe this is the case with Revelation 18. The papacy has fallen and lost much of its power but much also remains in some form, as a shadow of its former self, for the final destruction when Christ comes again.

REVELATION 18:20
"Rejoice over her, thou heaven, and ye holy apostles and prophets; for God hath avenged you on her."

The heavens are commanded to rejoice because God has brought destruction and judgment to avenge the saints. This city was set up by
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Satan and has always opposed the truly righteous. The world system has sought to corrupt and turn, now God has judged her and all the saints in heaven rejoice.

REVELATION 18:21
"And a mighty angel took up a stone like a great millstone, and cast it into the sea, saying, Thus with violence shall that great city Babylon be thrown down, and shall be found no more at all."

As in Jeremiah 51:63-64, the angel shows how the millstone sinks to rise no more and says, "Thus with great violence shall that great city Babylon be thrown down." One aspect of the world system was cast down in the form of the great city's fall, but its final complete and violent downfall will be at the return of Christ. 2 Peter 3:10 says, "The day of the Lord shall come as a thief in the night, in which the heavens shall pass away with great noise, and the elements will melt with fervent heat and the earth and the works therein shall be burned up." This is the utterly and in one hour that is referred to.

REVELATION 18:22
"And the voice of harpers, and musicians, and of pipers, and trumpeters, shall be heard no more at all in thee; and no craftsman, of whatsoever craft he be, shall be found any more in thee; and the sound of a millstone shall be heard no more at all in thee;"

No more music, no more rejoicing, no more works of art or craft, nothing will be left to glorify her in anyway. Only God will be glorified. All the old earth will pass away. In the new city of New Jerusalem nothing that is defiled or unclean will enter it.

REVELATION 18:23
"And the light of a candle shall shine no more at all in thee; and the voice of the bridegroom and of the bride shall be heard no more at all in thee: for thy merchants were the great men of the earth; for by thy sorceries were all nations deceived."
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The candles in chapter 1:20 stood for the churches. Here we see the candle being removed from this church power forever. The voice of the bridegroom (Jesus) and of the bride (true church) shall be heard in her no more at all, because she deceived the nations and would not repent and stop glorifying herself and glorify God instead.

God always has a remnant, and there have always been those in the Roman church who have been truly saved and going to heaven. The voice of the bridegroom has always been heard by the remnant in the church. But because of her sins this harlot is totally cut off and judged by God.

REVELATION 18:24
"And in her was found the blood of prophets, and of saints, and of all that were slain upon the earth."

In chapters 13:6, 16:6, 17:6 we see references made to the blood of the saints spilled by order of the Pope. One more time God is showing us here in verse 24 who Babylon is and his just act of revenge for the blood of his children.

Chapters 17 and 18 revealed to us the identity of the harlot and the beast, and the ultimate overthrow of the harlot. Chapter 18 describes the complete destruction of the harlot and the beast which can only be completely fulfilled on the day the Lord returns. Since Jesus has not returned yet the destruction of the harlot is still future. On the judgment day all these things will be fulfilled and then we will join the Lord for the wedding feast. The wedding feast for the true Christians, and the destruction of all the unsaved is the subject of chapter 19.

REVELATION 19

This chapter concerns the wedding of the Lamb, the wedding feast, and the Lamb's judgment on all those who followed the beast. In effect we witness the second coming of the Lord and the judgment of the world at the end of time.

REVELATION 19:1-5
"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: For true and righteous are
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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. And again they said, Alleluia. And her smoke rose up for ever and ever. And the four and twenty elders and the four beasts fell down and worshipped God that sat on the throne, saying, Amen; Alleluia. 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."

A song is sung in heaven, a Hallelujah song, with the voice of many people, the twenty four elders, and the four living creatures. All are singing and praising God for his judgments because "he hath judged the great whore...and hath avenged the blood of his servants at her hand." They are rejoicing over the destruction of Babylon the harlot church. The timing of this song is after the complete destruction of Babylon on the judgment day as intimated by the phrase "And her smoke rose up for ever and ever."

REVELATION 19:6-8
"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 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. 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."

Then these voices regroup in a chorus announcing the marriage of the Lamb and his bride. After the fall of Babylon heaven will be in preparation for the coming marriage feast. In verse 8 the bride is described as "arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints." The world should see our holy apparel. They should see the church as holy, pure and white since we have been washed in the blood of Jesus to make us that way.

In the time when Jesus was on earth and the New Testament written, the Jewish marriage was conducted quite different than the modern marriage ceremony most of us are familiar with. As I describe
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the way a Jewish marriage took place in the time of Jesus, let the reader make the comparison between the marriage of the Lamb to his church, and the Jewish style marriage of the times of Jesus.

The bride was brought to the groom’s house in the morning with her friends, the bridesmaids, to prepare herself for the wedding celebration when the bridegroom returned. The parallel is seen in the church as Jesus brought us into his house (the true church), we as the bride are supposed to be preparing ourselves for the wedding celebration. The bridegroom has even provided our apparel for us, we only need to put it on. Back again to Jesus' time: The groom after celebrating with friends during the day, returns to the house where his bride awaits him. Along with him comes all his friends in a great procession through the streets. Passerby join in the celebration until finally the groom arrives at the house and his bride joins him. They are married, then enter the house with a few chosen friends to have a celebration, the wedding feast. (Understanding The Times of Christ, by Menzies).

It is too obvious to doubt the parallel between the wedding of Jesus' day, and the marriage of the Lamb. We the bride are preparing ourselves now. Then the Lord will return with many of his saints to be united to his bride (the church), and the chosen few (the Christians) will proceed with him to the wedding feast in heaven. Since we are to be ready for the Lamb when he returns, let the Christian strive to present himself clean and be wearing the wedding garment provided by the Lord, by his blood, fine linen clean and white.

REVELATION 19:9-10
"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. And I fell at his feet to worship him. And he said unto me, See thou do it not: I am thy fellow servant, and of thy brethren that have the testimony of Jesus: worship God: for the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy."

In verse 9 all of the people at the marriage feast are the chosen guests. They are collectively the bride of Christ. They are the Christians who have remained true to Jesus, and were not corrupted
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or deceived by Babylon. Then in verse 10, we see John fall on his face to worship the angel. The angel had said, "These are the sayings of God." John may have thought the angel was referring to himself as God, so tried to worship him. Any thing we might guess about why John did this is only conjecture, and we can't be sure. John was so overwhelmed by the scene of rejoicing, that he must have felt that the angel who was revealing these things to him was so great that John should worship him.

What we do know is that John was immediately rebuked by the angel. The angel said, "See thou do it not: I am thy fellowservant, and of they brethren that have the testimony of Jesus: worship God." It is thought provoking that the angel referred to himself as a fellowservant of John. The angels are our fellowservants also, yet they are so much more powerful than us. However 1 Corinthians 6:3 says, "...we shall judge angels," and we know that we shall partake of the glory of the Lord. Perhaps the purpose here was to include a warning. We should not worship a man or an image like the papacy caused men to do. If we shouldn't worship angels then we shouldn't bow to the Pope or any man, or worship or venerate images and icons for that matter.

REVELATION 19:11-16

"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. 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. And he was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and his name is called The Word of God. And the armies which were in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean. 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. And he hath on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS."

The second coming of Christ is pictured here. The description can be none other than Jesus coming out of heaven on a white horse. The white horse is the symbol of the conqueror.
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Jesus conquered Babylon in chapter 18. Here he conquers the beast, and the false prophet, and those who followed them. In chapter 20 he conquers the dragon. The three persecutors of the church and the spiritual city that represented them are judged by the Lord in these three chapters.

All three chapters are similar in some ways. They all show the overthrow of some great symbolic power. First, Babylon, then the false prophet and the beast, and finally the dragon which gave the beast and the false prophet their power.

All three chapters display the second coming of Christ. Chapter 18 expresses the second coming of Christ by the prophecy of the destruction of Babylon in terms that can only be fulfilled on the final day. Chapter 19 and 20 speak directly of the return of the Lord. In chapter 19 we observe the return of the Lord in details such as the marriage feast, the judgment on the ungodly, and the casting of the beast and false prophet into the lake of fire. In chapter 20 we discern the return of the Lord after the thousand years is over; when the Lord casts Satan (the dragon) into the lake of fire, where the beast and false prophet already are, and in the great white throne judgment.

This vision was given to John long before these things actually come to pass. So why do they show Jesus conquering the enemy when in reality the first century believers would not live to see the fulfillment? What would the vision mean to them? The vision is given to show the people who read it that through all the trials and persecutions they would suffer they should not give up. Because it is Christ who is KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS. He will conquer all His enemies, even the corrupt apostate church and judge it unworthy.

Many people think the armies of heaven are the angels that come with the Lord. These verses also say that the army is "clothed in fine linen white and clean." Verse 8 explains to us that the bride is clothed in this fine linen. Therefore I believe the armies of heaven are not just angels but the saints of God. The marriage feast has taken place in heaven already and the saints come with the Lord to judge and make war on the ungodly.

In some aspects this scene is only symbolic. I believe the saints will be the army arrayed in white linen, but do we actually fight this battle? I think we are there as witnesses against the ungodly. The Lord is called the Word of God in these verses. Verse 15 says, "And out of his
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mouth goeth a sharp sword that it should smite all nations." Hebrews 4:12 says, "The word of God is quick and powerful and sharper than any two edged sword." Ephesians 6:17 says, "And take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the spirit, which is the word of God." We must realize that God conquers by his word alone, not by physical armies. God would not need physical armies to defeat anyone. If he could create the whole universe with the power of his word then he could also bring all things to a halt or defeat any power with his word alone. It is the Lord which overcomes the enemy. The Christian saints are included in the armies of heaven and come along to fight in this spiritual battle. I believe that the saints are really along for the ride, as partakers of His victory, we share His victory, but the victory will be the Lord's.

REVELATION 19:17-18
"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; 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."

Verses 17-18 are symbolic for the destruction of men who have followed the beast and the false prophet. An angel calls the birds together to feast on the flesh of these men. Again, this is symbolic of a great overthrow and complete destruction of the world's system. Every type of person is included on the judgment day. Wealth or power won't excuse anyone. Kings, captains, mighty men, all men, both free and bond, both small and great are included in this destruction. There will be justice done on this day. If anyone is not made righteous by the blood of Jesus then they will be guilty and are included in this scene of carnage.

REVELATION 19:19
"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."
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We need to understand that just because we read the verses in order that it does not mean that the events happened in that specific order. Chapter 11 tells us of the last trumpet and the end of the world. Chapter 12 starts over with a new view of the church in history. Chapter 18, 19, and 20 all express the end of the world and final judgment from different view points, and with different emphasis. Although we read verse 19 after verse 18, it does not mean that when the beast saw the rider on the white horse and the armies of heaven coming that then he decided to gather the kings of the earth together. Verse 19 is a parenthetical statement. It is inserted to verbalize why the armies of heaven are coming.

We saw that the beast was symbolic for the earthly power of the papacy in earlier chapters. We read in verse 19 that the beast and the kings of the earth gathered themselves together to fight God. They made war on the true church of God. We have seen in previous chapters how the papacy used the power of the state for their persecution of Christians. This view is preferred to the idea that a physical army would be gathered to literally fight an army of angels and God. How that could be true is unfathomable to me.

One angel can go forth by himself and kill 185,000 men in one night. This is what happened to Sennacherib's Assyrian army in 2 Kings 19:35. No one doubts that God could have destroyed them with a word. Men go to war for two reasons, because they think they can win, or to protect themselves from those who think they can win and take what does not belong to them. The beast and his armies are seen as the aggressor in this verse. In other words they think they can win for themselves what does not belong to them. Would anyone literally think they could fight and beat an army lead by God which they see descending from heaven in such power and glory? I doubt it.

To think that this deceived army would actually fight physically against God does not take into account Romans 14:11 or Philippians 2:10, "That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth." When the Lord returns every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord.

Titus 2:13 says, "Looking forward to that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our saviour Jesus Christ." These verses do not seem to leave any room for anyone to fight God literally and physically when he comes again in power.

Satan, the great deceiver has himself always been deceived, but he
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knows his fate. The ungodly people who follow him could be deceived into believing they could win against God but the battle would be over the moment the Lord appears.

REVELATION 19:20
"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."

We know the time for this vision is the last judgment because we see the beast and the false prophet being thrown into the lake of fire. The lake of fire is not hell or some holding place while waiting for the judgment day. The lake of fire is used only when referring to the judgment day (the last day). Revelation 20:14-15 shows even death and hell cast into the lake of fire. It is important to understand that only on the judgment day are people cast into the lake of fire. It is by understanding this point that we can be aware of the fact that chapter 19 refers to the second coming of Christ in glory to judge the beast, and the false prophet, and those who followed them. Then go on to chapter 20 where we again see the last judgment occur but from a different perspective. That is, the judgment of the dragon who gave power to the beast and the false prophet.

REVELATION 19:21
"And the remnant were slain with the sword of him that sat upon the horse, which sword proceeded out of his mouth: and all the fowls were filled with their flesh."

Those who followed the beast and the false prophet are slain by the word of God. Which means they were judged according to God's word. This is not a vast scene of carnage on the earth, despite the depiction of the fowls being filled with their flesh. These men were not slain physically on a battle field. They were killed by the sword of the word of God. In other words, they were judged and not found in the book of life and they were cast into the lake of fire.

"All the imagery of the dreaded battle and its hideous details are but to give us the impression of the completeness of the victory.
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Christ's gospel is to conquer the earth; he is to overcome all his enemies." (Biblical Doctrines, page 647, by Wayne Grudem)

REVELATION 20: The millennium and the Great White Throne Judgment

This chapter is admittedly the most difficult chapter in a very symbolic book to interpret. It is also one of the keys in how a person interprets the rest of the book of Revelation, and in building an eschatological view. This is true because if a person interprets the millennium as a future event then all other references about end times need to fit the view of a future kingdom. The millennium is one of the keys to any interpretation.

There are three main views of the millennium. They are called the Premillennial, Postmillennial, and Amillennial views. One of the most popular views in recent years has been the futurist Premillennial interpretation of Revelation. The Premillennial view seeks to establish the Revelation at the end of history, and the millennium as a future earthly event. Premillennialism was the dominant but not universal view of the church until the 4th century. Then Amillennialism won out under the influence of St. Augustine. The Catholic Encyclopedia says of Augustine, that he believed in a millennium “until he accepted the doctrine of only one universal resurrection and a final judgment immediately following, he could no longer cling to the principal tenet of early chiliast. St. Augustine finally held to the conviction that there will be no millennium.” Theologians who came later followed Augustine’s lead and millennialism did not trouble the church during the middle ages.

Opponents condemned belief in millennialism (a literal millennial reign) as superstition. The doctrine was discarded by the church because they claimed that those who held such views did so because of sensual appetites, wanting to live physically where all their desires are met. Premillennialism was not revived until the 16th century when a Jesuit priest named Francisco Ribera published a work on the man of sin. Millennialism was disavowed by both the Augsburg and the Helvetian confessions so that it found no admission into the Lutheran and Reformed theologies.
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Premillennialism has not always had the same form. In the early church it was known as Chiliasm, from the Greek word 'chilia' meaning thousand. A general outline of the view of Iraunaeus is a good example of the early Christian thought in this area. Iraunaeus believed that the world will endure for six thousand years. Near the end of this time trials and persecutions shall increase greatly and the antichrist appears and does his evil work. Christ appears in glory, the saints are physically resurrected, and Christ's kingdom on earth is established. This period will last a thousand years. This seventh set of 1000 years corresponds to the seventh day of the week and is equivalent to a sabbath rest. Jerusalem is rebuilt, the earth yields its fruit in abundance, and peace and righteousness prevail. After one thousand years the final judgment takes place and a new creation is established, where the redeemed will always be in the presence of the Lord.

In the nineteenth century a new form of Premillennialism was introduced. This commonly known Premillennialism of recent times has been wedded to dispensationalism. This form of Premillennialism has some strange eschatological views. There will be two second comings, two or three resurrections, and up to three judgments. Although there are many variations on which Premillennialists cannot agree, a general outline of their views follows.

They teach that Christ came to set up his kingdom but the Jews did not accept it so he went away and postponed the establishment of his kingdom until he returns. Before he left he established the church which is separate from the kingdom. In this dispensation the church is evangelizing the world but is only partially successful. After his return there will be a more universal conversion. When the Lord returns we will meet him in the air and be taken to celebrate the marriage feast, and we will be forever with the Lord, this is known as "the rapture". There is a seven year period of tribulation following the second coming, but there is dissent in the ranks of Premillennialists as to when the rapture is going to take place in relation to the tribulation. Some believe in a Pre-tribulation rapture, others a Post-Tribulation rapture, still others are Mid-trib. After "the rapture" conversions on a large scale will take place. This will be preached by the believing Jews. Others teach that the two witnesses will convert the Jewish nation. Either way these mass conversions take place without the indwelling Holy Spirit which was taken out of the world with the church at the rapture. After seven years the Lord will return again. Any saints that
died during the tribulation are resurrected, and the anti-Christ is
destroyed, and Satan is bound for a thousand years. The millennial
kingdom is now established.

The millennial kingdom in this view is a recreation of the Jewish
kingdom, complete with temple worship and sacrifices. The throne of
Christ will be established at Jerusalem, and Jerusalem is seen as the
world capital. Those who hold this interpretation believe that this will
fulfill Old Testament prophecies of Christ reestablishing a kingdom
and ruling on David’s throne. After the millennium Satan will be
turned loose again and will gather Gog and Magog against Jerusalem.
Christ defeats the enemy and Satan is cast into the lake of fire. The
wicked are resurrected and judged, and the new heaven and new earth
created.

Postmillennialism is an optimistic view that the world is getting
better. Postmillennialists interpret the millennium as a growing
kingdom age in which world events since the time of Christ improve
to where everyone on earth will live in a golden age. It is brought
about by the efforts of Christians in education, government, and social
reform, whose efforts will usher in the millennium. It is seen as the
work of man, who is given the authority to rule this world for Christ.
Dominion Theology falls easily under this type of Postmillennialism.

The third view is Amillennialism. Amillennial means -no
millennium- but this is not an accurate term for the view because the
Amillennialist does in fact see a millennial reign. It would be hard to
ignore this one thousand year reign when it is mentioned six times in
one chapter. However the Amillennial view does not seek an earthly
materialistic one thousand year period of Christ reigning on earth.
Perhaps a better term for this view is "realized millennium" mentioned
Hoekema attributes the term realized millennium to Jay E. Adams book
The Time Is At Hand. The Amillennialist views the thousand years in an
historical light, that is; we as Christians have been reigning and ruling
with Christ since his ascension. This reign has been in a spiritual and
symbolic way. In other words the millennium is the church age.

Amillennialism is not a new view and had at least as many
advocates among the early church fathers in the 2nd and 3rd centuries
as chiliasm. Since that time it has always been the most widely
accepted view. In Louis Berkhof’s Systematic Theology he says it is
the only view that is either expressed or implied in the great historical
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confessions of the church, and has always been the prevalent view in reformed circles, (Systematic Theology, Louis Berkhof page 708).

I believe that the Amillennial interpretation is the most accurate and does not strain the clear and plain teachings in the New Testament on the second coming of Christ and the age to come.

Objections to the popular Premillennial view are many. In order for a millennial kingdom to be set up on earth with Christ reigning at the head of this kingdom; the futurist must interpret Revelation 20 as events which immediately follow Christ's second coming. Christ must first come again if he is going to literally rule on earth. He will bind Satan and set up his earthly kingdom. However, instead of setting up a kingdom, Revelation 20:11-15 describes the white throne judgment following Christ's return, which occurs after the thousand years is over. Jesus always speaks of the harvest and the judgment as one event for example; in Matthew 13:24-30, Jesus gives us the parable of the wheat and the tares. Then in Matthew 13:37-43, Jesus explains the parable and tells the disciples that the end of the world is the harvest where both the good and the bad are gathered and the bad will be burned with fire.

In Matthew 13:47-50, Jesus explains that heaven is like a net that is cast into the sea, and gathers both the good and the bad. "So shall it be at the end of the world: the angels shall come forth, and sever the wicked from among the just, and shall cast them into the furnace of fire:"

The Premillennialists who seek to establish an earthly kingdom in their interpretation might say that these verses are referring to what happens after the thousand years, but before that Jesus will come again to set up his kingdom. The Premillennialist therefore creates two second comings of Christ. Once to set up His kingdom and a second time for The Day of Judgment.

In Luke there is a passage of scripture similar to the one just referred to in Matthew. Luke 17 tells us that on the same day that Jesus is revealed (his second coming), that there will be judgment. Until then the earth will go on as normal. In Luke 17:24, when speaking of his second coming, Jesus said it will be sudden like lightening, people will be unprepared. Then Jesus continuing to speak said "Likewise also as it was in the days of Lot; they did eat, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they builded; But the same day that Lot went out of Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from
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heaven, and destroyed them all. Even thus shall it be in the day when

If a millennial kingdom with Christ at its head was on the earth,
then His return would not bring about the fulfillment of this passage
because he would establish an earthly kingdom instead of destroying
all the wicked in judgment as it says in verse 29.

There are some Premillennialists who interpret the events in Luke
17 as events that take place before the thousand years. In this way they
can maintain their eschatological views by saying; Jesus will return
suddenly in judgment, then establish his millennial kingdom.
However, if this is true there can be no earthly millennium, because
the judgment day is after the thousand year period according to
Revelation 20. Therefore Jesus will not come in judgment to reap the
harvest of the earth and then set up the millennial kingdom, and then
have another judgment.

In Matthew 25:35-51, Jesus is relating his second coming. In verses
50-51 Jesus says, "The Lord of that servant shall come in a day when
he looketh not for him, and in an hour that he is not aware of, and
shall cut him asunder, and appoint him his portion with the
hypocrites: There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth." If Jesus
was ruling on the earth he could not come to the earth when someone
wasn't aware, he would always be visible in rulership. His sudden
second coming must then come at a time when life is going on as
usual, and the masses are not aware of the presence of the Lord. The
second coming is the judgment day for "There shall be weeping and
gnashing of teeth," relating to the lake of fire.

The bible always speaks of Christ's second coming as a sudden
glorious event which brings an end to earthly existence. "For the Lord
shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the
archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise
first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together
with them in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord."

The word 'coming' in the above verse is translated from the Greek
word parousia. Parousia refers to the actual physical appearing and
presence of the Lord. The Premillennialist interprets this to mean that
the Lord will come back and set up his kingdom, he will be here
physically. But in the context of 1 Thessalonians 4, Jesus is not
coming to stay on the earth and set up a kingdom here, but to take the
Christians from the earth. We see this by the phrase, "Then we which
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are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord." Also of note is 2 Peter 3:10. In this verse the earth is destroyed on the return of Christ. Christ is coming back to gather the Christians, we will rise to meet him in the air so that he can take us home to heaven. 1 Thessalonians 4:14 ". . . even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him," to heaven.


The literalism of the Premillennialist causes him some problems. To interpret the Old Testament prophecies literally would require the reestablishment of ancient empires and kingdoms such as the Egyptians, Assyrians, Babylonians, Moabites, Ammonites, Edomites, and Philistines, Isa 11:14; Amos 9:12; Joel 3:19; Micah 5:5-6. The temple would have to be rebuilt, Isa 2:2-3; Micah 4:1-2; Ezek 40-48. The sin and the trespass offering would have to be reestablished, Ezek 42:13; 43:18-27. The very mention of the idea that we would need to build a new temple or reestablish the sin and trespass offerings should be an immediate affront to believers. Hebrews 9 and 10 are very clear when telling us that Jesus was the one sacrifice for all time. The blood of bulls and goats can not atone for sin. Would not reestablishing a sacrifice that Jesus took away be a shame to Him? Claiming as it would that his sacrifice was not enough. God Forbid. Hebrews 6:6 “If they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame.”

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Paul warns us against these things in Galatians 4:9 “But now, after that ye have known God, or rather are known of God, how turn ye again to the weak and beggarly elements, whereunto ye desire again to be in bondage?”

Zechariah 14 is used by Premillennialists to prove that Christ will stand on the Mount of Olives and rule his kingdom. But Zechariah 14 is full of evidence contrary to this view. If Zechariah 14 were literal, the nations would have to revert back to primitive forms of transportation such as horses, mules, camels, and asses, seen in verse 15. What is now a universal worship would revert back to a localized worship at Jerusalem. Contrary to what Jesus said in John 4:21-24, men will again have to make animal sacrifices (verse 21). These sacrifices will not be just symbolic or commemorative of Christ’s sacrifice as the futurist would like us to believe, but the literal sin and trespass offerings. This goes against New Testament teachings in Hebrews 10:4,10,12,18. Men will return to Jewish type rituals and feast days as in verse 18,21. But Colossians 2:16-17 says these are a shadow of what we now have in Christ.

Because of their literal interpretation the modern dispensational Premillennialist says that Jesus came to earth the first time to set up his kingdom but was rejected by the Jews. So in order to fulfill what Jesus said, there must be a kingdom set up. Yet, John the Baptist said: "Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand," Matt 3:1,2. "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye and believe the gospel," Mark 1:15.

If the kingdom is not going to be set up until the second coming of Christ, what sense can be made from what he said two thousand years ago. Jesus said the time was at hand back then. Those who hold this postponed kingdom theory believe that when Christ preached that the kingdom was at hand he intended to set up his earthly kingdom but the Jews rejected him. This caused the postponement of the kingdom until a future time.

This is walking on very precarious ground. In the dispensational view Christ came to set up a kingdom but the Jewish people rejected him as the messiah. If Jesus did come to set up an earthly material kingdom and restore David’s throne but did not accomplish this mission because of the rejection of the Jewish people, we are presented with a very uncomfortable idea. This would mean that Jesus was under a mistaken idea when he said “The time is fulfilled, and the
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kingdom of God is at hand.” It would mean he was wrong when he thought he had come to establish an earthly kingdom. It would mean that Jesus did not understand why he had come and that a great cosmic mistake was taking place. But if Jesus was wrong then He was not God incarnate. If he was wrong about this, what else could he be wrong about? But scripture assures us that Jesus is the incarnation of the Father, the image of the invisible God, and a perfect and spotless savior.

Jesus did not go to the cross as a last minute change of plans because the Jews rejected him. By the way all the Jews did not reject him, all the first believers were Jews. According to Peter, Christ was "Delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God," Acts 2:23. "Those things which God before had showed by the mouth of all his prophets, that Christ should suffer, he has so fulfilled," Acts 4:28.

In support of the fact that the ministry, life, and death of Jesus was exactly what God had planned from the beginning, I mention this interesting and little known information.

H. Grattan Guinness describes how all great prophetic events have been foretold in the heavens in some way. That the stars, moon and sun were put in the heavens as a sign to us of the times. The ministry of Christ began and ended according to God's preset plan, and was witnessed by events in the heavens. Most people recognize and accept the idea that the ministry of Jesus was about three and a half years. And that Jesus began his ministry at 30 years of age according to Levitical law. This makes Jesus's life on earth about thirty three and a half years long, plus forty days on earth after his resurrection.

Guinness describes clearly how Jesus's life on earth fits a soli-lunar cycle of 33 years, 7 months, and 7 days. The soli-lunar cycle is itself a division of the great heavenly cycles God uses. "In every solar year there is an excess of ten days and twenty one hours, or nearly eleven days, over the lunar year, i.e., over the year as measured by twelve revolutions of the moon, so that when the sun commences his second round, the moon is between ten and eleven days behind hand. In three solar years, the moon has fallen back rather more than a month, in nineteen years it has retrograded seven months, and in 33 years, 7 months, and 7 days it has fallen back one solar year. This period is therefore a soli-lunar cycle of a certain order, and seven such periods,
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or 235 solar years, is a cycle of the same kind, and at the same time a number of complete solar years." (The Approaching End of The Age, page 450).

I am not providing the above information as solid biblical evidence. It is only an interesting phenomena that has been noticed by past prophetic scholars.

Those who try to make the kingdom a literal material kingdom do not take into account what Jesus said in John 18:36, "My kingdom is not of this world: If my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence."

The Pharisees were looking for a material kingdom, one that would come in glory and power and deliver them from Rome. When the Pharisees demanded of Jesus when the kingdom of God should come, he answered them by saying; "The kingdom of God cometh not with observation: (outward show) Neither shall they say, lo here! or lo there! for behold, the kingdom of God is within you," (Or in your midst), Luke 17:20-21. The kingdom was in their midst in the person of the king and his followers.

Paul used the present tense when speaking of the kingdom of God as a reality. "The kingdom of God is," Romans 14:17 and 1 Cor 4:20. Paul also wrote in Colossians 1:13, "Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear son." As Christians, we are his kingdom now! It is a present reality. Jesus is king right now. Paul spoke of him as "King of kings, and Lord of Lords, who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto," 1 Timothy 6:15-16.

When speaking of the Christian, Revelation 1:6 says, "and hath made us kings and priests." Exodus 19:6 says, "And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation." Revelation 5:10 says we have been made kings and priests and we shall reign on the earth. But nothing refers to a literal earthly reign during the thousand years. In Mark 9:1 Jesus said, "Verily I say unto you, that there be some of them that stand here, which shall not taste death, till they have seen the kingdom of God come with power." I really doubt if these people were supposed to live to see a future material kingdom! The kingdom of God came in power on the day of Pentecost when the disciples
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were filled with the Holy Spirit.

Based on these arguments, the reader can see that the Premillennial interpretation is full of doubtful holes. This book adheres to an Amillennial view, and interprets the thousand year reign as the spiritual reign that the Christian has with Christ. Now that we have laid some foundation for the meaning of the millennium, we can proceed to examine Revelation 20 and come up with a reasonable interpretation of what is being shown to us. As mentioned before, no view of the millennium is without its difficulties and Amillennialism is not either. It seems to me that careful examination proves the Amillennial view to be the one with the least difficulties.

REVELATION 20:1
"And I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand."

Some people have interpreted this angel as being Michael, who in Revelation 12 defeated Satan and cast him out of heaven, in effect binding him. I prefer the idea of this being symbolic of Christ and His power. In Revelation 1:18 Jesus claims to have the keys of death and hell. Jesus alone has the power to bind the strong man and take all his goods and divide his spoils. Therefore Jesus is stronger than the strong man. It was Christ himself in obedience to his father that defeated Satan and took back the kingdom for God, as seen in Luke 21:21-22.

REVELATION 20:2-3
"And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years, 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."

This angel binds Satan with a chain. The chain should be see in a symbolic way as something binding or holding back Satan. The devil is then sealed in the bottomless pit "that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled."

Premillennialists might argue that Satan has never been bound or
lost his influence and therefore this must be a future event. But Peter says, "For God spared not the angels that sinned but cast them down to hell and delivered them into chains of darkness reserved unto

judgement," 2 Peter 2:4. Again the bible says, "And the angels that kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, he hath reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgement of the great day," Jude 6. The chains of darkness cloud the eyes and minds of the evil angels, and prevent them from comprehending or thwarting the work of God.
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Yet the bible speaks of demonic influence in the world now. "For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places," in Ephesians 6:12.

Calvin wrote that "these fallen angels are bound with chains in hell but drag their chains through this world." The chains limit their power, their ability to do what they want. Satan has always had an influence in society and in this world. Remember, this world runs according to Satan's government of "the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes and the pride of life." We can't point to any place or time in history that his influence has not been felt. Satan being bound is only symbolic of a lessening of Satan's power not the complete elimination of it.

Verse 3 says, "that he should deceive the nations no more." Before Christ, whole nations were under the deception of Satan. All the gentile nations were under the deception of Satan. Now Satan's power is limited and even though large numbers of people may be deceived not everyone is, and the gentile nations have been opened to the gospel. In Revelation 12:7-9 we saw Satan cast down and his power taken away, his kingdom was taken back by Christ, and his power limited because Christ gave power to the Christians to rule his kingdom. At other points in history we can see Satan's power further limited, such as the conversion of the empire to tolerate Christianity, and the fall of the papacy's temporal rule.

The millennium begins at the death and resurrection of Christ. Christ himself has won the victory and taken back the world. We as Christians hinder Satan's power further when we use the power and authority given to us by Christ.

The one thousand years is mentioned six times in this chapter and can not be found anywhere else in the bible. The number one thousand represents completeness. 1000 is 10 cubed, 10 x 10 x 10, the ancients believed that a cube was a perfect shape. In Isaiah 6:3 God is "Holy Holy Holy," representing perfect holiness. When related to time it represents the unlimited fullness of time. Psalm 20:10, "For every beast of the forest is mine, and the cattle upon a thousand hills," which means God owns all the cattle on earth. This can also be seen in Chronicles 16:13-18 and Psalm 105:8, where a thousand generations means everlasting. The use of the symbol of a thousand

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years time does not in any way tell us when it will end.

The thousand years should not be taken literally as some have done in the past. As the year 1000 A.D. approached, Viking raids, and other calamities brought to men's minds this prophecy. People began looking anxiously forward to the coming of the Lord. Many people all of a sudden got religious who had never been interested before. Many gave up working their farms, or sold businesses, believing the work to be in vain since Christ would be coming back. God however, chose not to listen to their council and did not appear. To try and figure out when Christ is coming back by using some formula of the thousand years is not why the thousand years is there. We can't know when the millennium will end, that is not God's intention. The Lord said we cannot know when he is returning, only that he is. We are exhorted to always be ready and watching.

REVELATION 20:4a
"And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them:"

These thrones are those where the saints are seated, probably the elders mentioned in Revelation 19:4. The elders are the leaders of the Old Testament covenant or twelve tribes, and the leaders of the New Testament, the twelve apostles. Jesus, when speaking to his twelve apostles told them, "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. In one verse Jesus explains that some of the saints (the disciples) would sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes.

REVELATION 20:4b
"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."

These are the same souls from Revelation 6:9 who cried out to God for revenge on those who shed their blood. They were under the
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alter, a place of protection with God. Here in verse 4 it says, "and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years."

This is not the bodily resurrection that takes place at the return of the Lord, but the spiritual resurrection which takes place at the time of the new birth. "Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;) And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus:" Ephesians 2:5-6.

These souls who were made alive, were made alive at the time of their salvation. "And you he hath quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins," Ephesians 2:1. Before being "born again" we are dead in our sins. Our spiritual new birth is a bringing to life of the spiritual man in us. Thus regenerating us and resurrecting the dead spirit to life. ( also see Col 2:13). These souls have been alive since their new birth. In John 11:26 Jesus said, "And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. Believest thou this?" The souls will live and reign with Christ from the time of Christ's resurrection when the thousand years begins. And when the thousand years end they will continue to live. "Because he's alive, we live."

REVELATION 20:5
"But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection."

The first resurrection is the new birth as a Christian as explained in verse 4. All Christians partake of the first resurrection. But the unsaved person's spirit never comes to life, having inherited from Adam a sinful nature and death that goes with it. On the judgment day the unsaved are included in the resurrection of the dead and are cast into the lake of fire and are completely cut off from God. Being separated from God for eternity when you have a spirit that was originally created for fellowship with God and now will never die is torment to the spirit which will never be quenched. "Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power," 2 Thessalonians 1:9.

The unsaved have immortal spirits also, and these spirits will never die or leave existence or be annihilated. But the unsaved are seen as spiritually dead because they have never entered into life in Christ Jesus, and are automatically condemned to die. John 3:18 says, "He
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that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God." "He who believes in the Son has eternal life: and he that believeth not shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him," John 3:36. See also; John 6:53; Romans 6:13; 8:6; 1 Timothy 5:6; and 1 John 3:14 for further examples.

It is important not to confuse the spiritual and the bodily resurrections. The spiritual resurrection as we have seen is the new birth and is considered the first resurrection. A second resurrection is not mentioned in the bible, but is implied in the fact of the bodily resurrection. The bodily resurrection, or second resurrection is a fact taught by Jesus in Matthew 22:31; Luke 14:14; John 5:28; 11:23; and by the apostles, Acts 4:2; 17:18; 24:15; 26:8; Romans 6:5; 8:11; 1 Corinthians 15; 2 Corinthians 4:14; Philippians 3:21; Colossians 3:3-4; Hebrews 6:2; and 1 John 3:2. The body will be resurrected or new heavenly bodies created. But these verses 4-6 are speaking specifically of the spiritual being.

It is exciting to know that right now we sit in heavenly places in Christ Jesus (Ephesians 2:6), and therefore we are now, and will continue to reign with him even after physical death.

REVELATION 20:6
"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."

This verse is really a continuation of verse 5. As Christians we are called out of this world and blessed by God and made holy. "Blessed be the God and father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ: According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love," Ephesians 1:3-4. Holiness is not just for a few special Christians who will reign with Christ. All Christians are called to holiness, (1 Thessalonians 4:7). Without holiness no man can see God, (Hebrews 12:14).

Since the Christian has a spirit that has been resurrected from the dead, the second death has no power over him. The second death is the lake of fire. We saw before that the Christian is reigning as kings
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and priests with Christ now. The only difference between the Christian who is alive now and reigns with Christ spiritually, and the one that is in heaven ruling with Christ, is residence, and the transformation to an incorruptible body.

REVELATION 20:7-8
"And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison, 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."

In Luke 12:21-22, Jesus explains the binding of Satan. Satan is the strongman who arms himself and guards his possessions. Jesus is the one who was stronger than the strongman, and overcame him and bound him, and takes whatever he wants. At some time Satan will be loosed. He will not escape by himself, he is powerless against God. But he will be allowed more freedom to once again deceive the nations at the end of the thousand years. Why would God allow the loosing of Satan? Paul provides us with a possible answer in Romans; "What if God, willing to shew his wrath and to make his power known, endured with much long suffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction: And that he might make known the riches of his glory on the vessels of mercy, which he had afore prepared unto glory."

Jesus has freed from the grasp of Satan all who have called upon his name. Because he is stronger than the strongman and takes away any possession he wants. We were Satan's possession while we were in our sin state. And now as Satan is loosed, God is actually making known to the Christian how great and glorious His mercy is to those who have been chosen, and torn from Satan's grasp. And to those vessels fit for destruction, the ones who have refused the salvation of Jesus Christ, God is making His power known. They will know that God was long suffering and patient, but they will also know that their punishment is just for following Satan.

It is hard to conceive of the fact that Satan will be loosed. How could Satan be loosed to deceive the nations any more than he already deceives them. Today people are influenced by more false religions, that with modern communications can spread faster than any other time in history. People have forgotten God, and bowed to the world's
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system, making money, possessions, prestige, and themselves more important than God.

That is what is spoken of by the spirit of God through Paul about the latter days in 2 Timothy 3:1-5 “This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy. Without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, Traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away.”

Even the church world is deceived by Satan. When the churches deny God's power and accept humanism and the ways of the world, they have a form of godliness but deny the power thereof. Rom 8:6-8, tells us that the carnal mind is at enmity with God and therefore it can not please God.

These verses tell us that Satan will gather all those who are not Christians to his side, not to a physical battlefield, but to a spiritual one. We can see this happening even now, with pressure on the Christian to conform to this world, to compromise oneself. This is the way Satan uses the world as his army. Satan seeks to deceive the heart. At some time Satan may bring renewed persecution to the church through governments and military power, just as he has done before. If this happens it is because he can again deceive the nations on a wholesale basis.

Gog and Magog are symbolic. Just as Babylon was symbolic for Rome, Gog and Magog are symbolic of the evil forces from the nations. Satan will again deceive whole nations. In Ezekiel 38, Gog was a nation and Magog the chief prince of that nation. Magog was the chief prince, (Satan is known as the prince of the power of the air), but probably in a symbolic or spiritual way as in Daniel 10. Where the prince of Persia withheld the angel for twenty one days until Michael helped him free. Magog is symbolic of the demonic forces at work behind the scenes of what is going on in the world. Gog and Magog seem to represent all people from every nation who are not Christians. Look at their number; "The number of whom is as the sand of the sea." This reflects how common the enemy forces are. Surely the unsaved outnumber the Christians many times over.

The effort of the Premillennialist to interpret Gog and Magog as
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earthly forces such as Russia, remove the emphasis on the fact that this is a spiritual battle. These forces are gathered together by spiritual bonding into one mind. This mind is Satan's and is ruled by Satan, and is vehement in its effort to crush and discredit Christianity. This is why we see the attack come from so many different angles at once, "and compassed the camp of the saints." Humanism, evolution, Marxism, Islam and other false religions are brought together with societal pressures and government control in this fight by one mind, Satan's.

REVELATION 20:9
"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."

They come from all over the world to attack the camp of the saints. The camp is the non compromising stand of the Christian church. The beloved city is a symbol of Jerusalem, not the physical city but the spiritual city (the church). Similar representations of the church are seen in Revelation 11. In chapter 11 the temple was the church, in chapter 20:9 the beloved city is the church. In chapter 11:2 the gentiles were in the outer court and trampled it and the holy city under foot; In chapter 20 they compass the camp of the saints and the beloved city. In chapter 11 the two witnesses brought fire and plagues; In chapter 20 fire comes from God out of heaven and devours the unsaved. The fire in chapter 20 and the fire and plagues in chapter 11 are symbols of God's judgment, the destruction which falls on the ungodly. God will not give back ground that has been won. We do not have a weak god that Satan can fight against and win. God has already won and set Satan aside for judgment, Satan is in his death throws as prince of this world.

REVELATION 20:10
"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."

The judgment day is upon us. Satan who deceived the nations is cast into the lake of fire. This lake of fire was "Prepared for the devil
and his angels," Matthew 25:41. Satan is reserved for judgment according to 2 Peter 2:4. And Satan is the first one cast into the fire on the judgment day. The beast and the false prophet are also going to be there as we have already seen, and all three "shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever."

Two things to take notice of at this point are:

One; The lake of fire was created for the devil. Man was not intended to be there. But because man is desperately wicked, and has no good in him without God. Man can only do evil in the sight of God when he is not regenerated by the power of Jesus. All those who have not accepted the Lord as savior will therefore be cast into the lake of fire to be with the one they did follow.

Two; Satan has been reserved for judgment. He does not have the power to gather a literal army of all nations to fight God. If as the futurist interpretation dictates; Jesus ruled on earth for one thousand years and then Satan is loosed to gather a literal army of sinners to fight the church of God. Then where do all the sinful people come from? Jesus would have been ruling on earth as a theocratic ruler. His word would be well known by every one. So how could these people who can literally see Jesus, and talk to him, and know the Word of God better than we do, and already live in an earthly paradise, be so deceived as to literally fight God when according to the Word they know so well, they can't win? The futurists position on this point makes no sense at all.

It has been suggested by some Premillennialists, that all the millions of vile people from throughout the ages will be coming back to life at the end of the thousand years and provide the devil with a fertile field for his plan. Here again the futurist misses the point to the resurrection. It is not to allow these vile sinners a chance to harm God's church. The resurrection is Jesus coming back in glory, (Titus 2:13).

Paul wrote, "Seeing it is a righteous thing with God to recompense tribulation to them that trouble you; and to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not
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God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ," 1 Thess 1:6-8; also 1 Thess 4:16-17.

REVELATION 20:11-15
"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. 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. 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. And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire."

The great white throne judgment: The picture here is of God sitting on his throne in heaven, in resplendent glory. The earth and heaven (stars) flee from before his face "And there was found no place for them." This represents the people of the earth and the rulers or principalities behind the nations. 1 Thess 1:8 pictures the second coming of Christ as the Lord coming in flaming fire. In 2 Peter 3:10, "The elements will melt with fervent heat and the earth and the works therein shall be burned up." On the judgment day the earth is destroyed along with all its wickedness. That is why "there was found no place for them."

Everyone from all the ages stand before God who judges them on one thing, that is, whether or not their names are written in the book of life. Verse 12 mentions books being opened and another book, the book of life also. If a person is not in the book of life then they will be judged out of the other books, which are a record of the sinful life of the unsaved. These are things that God did not forget because the sinful person was never washed clean by the sacrificial blood of Jesus.

God does not actually forget the sins of the Christian, but in forgiving the repentant person, God chooses not to bring up the sin anymore. Therefore even though the sinful deeds of the Christian may be written in the other books he is judged only from the book of life.
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Verses 12-13 say that every man will be judged according to his works. When using works to judge the Christian, the bible refers to only one thing. That is whether the person has accepted Christ as savior. Within the saved persons life their needs to be the fruit of repentance, the necessary good works of a changed life. We as Christians are not judged by works of the flesh, because works cannot save us, (2 Timothy 1:9; Titus 3:5). But as Christians, good works should be made manifest by our changed lives (Acts 26:20; James 2:17-20).

"The sea gave up the dead which was in it." The sea is contrasted against death and hell. All three gave up their dead; Death as the last enemy (1 Cor 15:26), and hell as the place of the unsaved dead to await the judgment. The sea as the place of the saved dead that are reigning with Christ, and awaiting the judgment and entrance into the New Jerusalem.

Death and hell are cast into the lake of fire. The destruction of these two enemies is seen and all those who were delivered up for judgment by death and hell are cast into the lake of fire with them. Those who are delivered up by death and hell are those not found in the book of life. According to Revelation 14:11 and 20:10, the lake of fire burns forever and ever with no relief for those so condemned. This is the second death, from which there is no resurrection. The first death was physical, the second eternal and spiritual.
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PART viii

REVELATION 21: The New Jerusalem, vision of the great city coming down from heaven

REVELATION 21:1
"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."

All the old things are passed away. The old earth is burned up, and the elements have melted with fervent heat, 2 Peter 3:10. Obviously this includes the old system of things which were under Satan's domination. God created the world and said “it is good.” The world was not the problem but the system that men allowed to run things was. Now John tells us of a new heaven and a new earth.

REVELATION 21:2
"And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband."

John sees the holy city, the New Jerusalem coming down from heaven to be presented as a bride adorned for her husband. The vision John sees of the city coming down does not mean that the city is literally coming down to earth. It symbolizes the fact that we could not ascend to it, and could not attain it by ourselves, it was provided as a gift of God. The New Jerusalem is symbolic of the church. The vision in verse 2 represents God as giving the kingdom of heaven to his bride the church. Further evidence of this is given in verse 3.

REVELATION 21:3-4
"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. 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."
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When we dwell in heaven in this holy city of God, when we are literally in God's presence, there will be no more tears or crying or death or sorrow. The former things of which these were a part have passed away with the old earth. Heaven has come and the Christian can have eternal life free from the things that cursed this life on earth. We have no more death because Jesus defeated death, then in verse 6 we have access to the fountain of the water of life, then in chapter 22:2, we can eat from the tree of life. These things were taken from us when Adam sinned. Now we gain them back.

REVELATION 21:5-7

"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. 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. He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son."

John is commanded to write "for these words are true and faithful." God says, "It is done," all things have been established. We have seen in Revelation how the course of history will be managed. God is declaring his greatness and immortality when he says "I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end." The fact that God has decided how history is established is a witness to his omnipotence and omniscience. If any one is thirsty for the truth, God will give to him the fountain of the water of life, which is the spirit of truth from God. God has given man the opportunity to have eternal life. He freely gives it, we need to accept it through Jesus Christ.

Then, "He that overcometh..."(the world)"...shall inherit all things"(heaven and rulership with Christ). God says that those who overcome will be his sons and daughters. To inherit all things is not just a continued existence on a perfected earth. The first heaven and the first earth have passed away and verse 5 says “I make all things new.”

REVELATION 21:8

"But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and
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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."

In Antithesis to the overcoming Christian mentioned in the previous verses, we are shown that those who are not overcomers would be thrown into the lake of fire. Who will not be overcomers? The fearful or cowardly, who for fear of the repercussions worshipped the beast. The unbelieving or faithless, who turned away from the truth. The abominable or polluted, who through their association with the world's system have become so. The sexually unclean. Sorcerers or those involved with witchcraft and Satanism. Idolaters, which are those who put anything before God; money, possessions, jobs, or false religions. Colossians 3:5 says "Immorality, impurity, passion, evil desires and greed amount to idolatry." They will be cast into the lake of fire which is the second death. This is not a complete list of types of sins, just examples of those who will not make it.

REVELATION 21:9-10
"And there came unto me one of the seven angels which had the seven vials full of the seven last plagues, and talked with me, saying, Come hither, I will shew thee the bride, the Lamb's wife. 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,"

And angel takes John away in the spirit to show him the bride. We saw before that the bride was also represented by the New Jerusalem. So it is not a surprise when John is taken to a great high mountain to see the holy city descending upon it. The mountain itself is the kingdom of God. In Daniel 2:35 the kingdom of God is shown growing from a stone into a large mountain. The New Jerusalem is on the great mountain. This illustrates how the true church rests secure on the mountain foundation of God's kingdom, and is actually part of the mountain. Both the kingdom and the church are made up of Christians.

REVELATION 21:11-21
"Having the glory of God: and her light was like unto a stone
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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: On the east three gates; on the north three gates; on the south three gates; and on the west three gates. And the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and in them the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb. And he that talked with me had a golden reed to measure the city, and the gates thereof, and the wall thereof. 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. 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. And the building of the wall of it was of jasper: and the city was pure gold, like unto clear glass. 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; 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. 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.

We now get what is a detailed look at the New Jerusalem in full glory. The light radiated from the city just as a jewel sparkles in the light (verse 11). A great high wall with twelve gates surrounds the city, but guarding the gates are twelve angels which keep anyone from coming in except through the proper channels (Jesus). Also seen are the names of the twelve tribes of Israel written on the gates. The gates symbolize the Old Testament covenant with Israel. Israel was the gate through which Jesus was brought into the world, the law fulfilled, and the New Testament covenant established. the walls of the city had twelve foundations, each representing one of the apostles. The apostles were foundation stones, sitting on the solid rock of Jesus, and upon the apostles foundation the church was built.
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The angel takes a golden reed and measures the holy city. It turns out to be 12,000 furlongs square and 12,000 furlong high. The New Jerusalem is a cube of 1500 miles on all sides. A cube was considered a perfect shape by the ancients. Therefore what we see is the church represented as perfect, sitting in glory as it reigns with Christ forever. The Holy of Holies in the tabernacle and in Solomon's temple were cubes, 1 Kings 6:19-20. If this is literal its size is enormous. 1500 miles on each side cubed, for a total volume of 3,375,000,000 cubic miles! Or; imagine 1500 one mile high floors, each as large as half the United states. If literal, it would have plenty of room for everyone. Jesus said "In my fathers house are many mansions," John 14:2.

If these one mile high stories were laid out you have an area of 1000 times the size of the United States. This gets even more interesting when you realize that there is 197,000,000 square miles of surface area on the earth, oceans included. But the New Jerusalem, if literal is 17 times the total area of the earth. There is only 57,000,000 square miles of land surface on earth compared to a potential of 59 times that amount of surface area in the New Jerusalem. If this cube was sitting on earth it would reach 1400 miles into space! I do not think of this vision as literal but symbolic of God's Holy of Holies, and the fact that the church will dwell that close to Him. It will be living in God's literal presence. However, heaven could easily be this size. I just don't think it's going to be a cube, but who knows for sure.

The wall was measured as being 144 cubits, or approximately 260 feet. It doesn't say whether this is high or thick. More likely it is symbolic of the 12 tribes times 12 apostles, 12 x 12 =144, the foundations the church is built upon.

The wall was jasper, or more likely it shone like a jasper stone. The city was pure gold, so smooth and pure it was like clear glass. The foundations of the wall of the city was made of precious stones. These stones were the same precious stones for the most part as was in the high priests breast plate. This represents how precious the foundation is that was laid down by the apostles is in the eyes of God. The gates, which are symbols of the twelve tribes of Israel, are also shown as precious pearls.

The pearls and the jewels show us the preciousness of God's children. Old Testament Israel and New Testament Christians are seen together in the New Jerusalem's walls. They represent the uniting of the two covenants. Jesus said he came to fulfill or complete the law,
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(Matthew 5:17).

REVELATION 21:22
"And I saw no temple therein: for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it."

We won't need a temple any longer, we won't need to go to church or pray or worship God from far off or in faith. we will literally be in God's presence, worshipping directly, speaking directly to God.

REVELATION 21:23-27
"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. 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. And the gates of it shall not be shut at all by day: for there shall be no night there. And they shall bring the glory and honour of the nations into it. 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."

These verses parallel the picture of the church in Isaiah 60. We won't need the sun, it will always be light. God's glory will shine through all and light the whole place (verse 23 and Isaiah 60:19-20). The glory of the nations will be brought into the city (verse 24 and Isa 60:3,11,13). The glory of the nations is what our earthly minds relate to. God does not mean that American glory or the glory and power of any nation will be there. But that men from every nation will be saved and enter the city, which gives glory to God. There will be more honor and glory in heaven for the church than there ever could be in all nations together on earth.

The gates of the city will always be open, there is no night time, so there is no reason to protect the city at night by closing the gates. This symbolizes God's protection (verse 25 and Isa 60:11).

No sin will be allowed, no violence, only peace. Only the righteous will be allowed in, those with their names written in the Lamb's book of life (verse 27 and Isa 60:12,21). Verse 27 is a warning to remind us
Revelation 22

after seeing such a great eternal city that only the righteous will enter in. Any sinner without being forgiven by Jesus will never see the inside of that place. Outside the city is where they will stay. "For without are dogs, and sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters, and whatsoever loveth and maketh a lie," Rev. 22:15.

REVELATION 22: Paradise restored

Paradise is restored to man in chapter 22. All of the bible seems to lead up to chapter 22, it is a fit ending for the book of books. Here we can see a contrast to the opening book of the bible: In Genesis 3:22 the tree of life is withheld from man. In Revelation 22:2 it is given back for the healing of the nations, and, so that we can live forever. In Genesis 3:17 the ground is cursed that men must toil to bring forth food, we have sickness, grow old. In Revelation 22:3 the curse is removed, no more toil or sickness or growing old. In Genesis 3:8 Adam saw God face to face, in Revelation 22:4 we are again in the face to face presence of God. In Genesis 1:16 God created the sun, and moon, in Revelation 22 there is no night and no sun for God gives them light. In Genesis death enters the world, in chapter 22 there is no more death.

REVELATION 22:1-5
"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. 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. 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: And they shall see his face; and his name shall be in their foreheads. 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."

The river of water of life is seen. This river is pictured as a pure river, crystal clear. The river of life symbolizes God's spirit of truth which gives life to the spirit of man. This river proceeds out of God's
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throne, it comes directly from our father. Now in our earthly existence we struggle to gain more of the spirit of God in our lives by prayer, sacrifice, and constantly guarding our flesh from the world. But imagine free access to God's spirit. We have free access now but for most Christians it is a struggle to stay close to God. In chapter 22 the struggle is over. Jesus said "He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water," John 7:38. This was fulfilled by the baptism of the Holy Spirit, John 7:39.

But imagine a more complete fulfillment. Being in the presence of God, and having his spirit poured out to you like a river. This would be life to the spirit of man that was created with an innate need for fellowship with God. We would feel the reality of what Peter said, "Lord not my feet only but all of me."

The river of life goes right down the middle of the street and feeds the tree of life. In Ezekiel 47 living waters flowed from under the door of the tabernacle (holy of holies). They flowed out and became a river which became deeper and deeper, (spiritual progress) until it became "A river that could not be passed over," (the greatness of God's grace). The river made everything that it touched more alive, symbolizing spiritual life. The river fed trees on the banks. These trees bore fruit every month of the year. The fruit is used for food and the leaves for medicine. The vision seen in Ezekiel 47 is parallel to the river and tree of life in chapter 22.

In chapter 22 the tree of life has roots on both sides of the river of life and the river flows underneath to feed the tree. The tree of life bears fruit year round so all men can partake all the time. There are twelve manner of fruit, one for each month, and the leaves heal the nations. This is not the nations as we know them, but nations of people. All people are healed by the leaves and given life by the fruit. Whether the tree is literal or just symbolic of God's great provision, and the fact that life in God's presence will be without need really does not matter. The point to the vision is to inform us that there will not be any need of any kind, and that spiritual healing and renewal is always available. We are no more affected by the curse that was placed on the old earth. In that place there will be no more hunger, death, sickness, or pain. We shall see God face to face.

REVELATION 22:6-9
"And he said unto me, These sayings are faithful and true: and
Revelation 22

the Lord God of the holy prophets sent his angel to shew unto his servants the things which must shortly be done. Behold, I come quickly: blessed is he that keepeth the sayings of the prophecy of this book. 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. 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."

In verse 6 we are assured by God that this is the true word of God. That he sent his angles to show Christians what will come to pass in the future. Not our future, but the future seen from John's perspective and the early churches. This is seen by the statement "which must be shortly done." Of course this could be referenced to God's time and be thousands of years, but I don't think so. We are then given blessings for keeping the sayings of this book. What sayings are these? Not to worship the beast or his image, chapters 13:8-9, and 20:4. To overcome, chapters 2:7,11,26, 3:5,12,21 etc. This blessing is meant specifically for the Revelation, but also pertains to the whole bible. We are blessed if we obey God's word and walk as Christians should, (Ephesians 1:3, James 1:25, Rev 1:25).

John was so awed by what was being shown him by the angel that he bowed down before the angel to worship him. The angel rebukes John, saying "For I am thy fellowservant, and of thy brethren the prophets, and of them which keep the sayings of this book: worship God." When the angel explains this he is saying two things. First, not to worship anything or any one including angels, but to worship only God. Second, he is explaining that the book says to worship only God. Therefore, people who worship a man or statue of a saint or anything except God are in error.

REVELATION 22:10
"And he saith unto me, Seal not the sayings of the prophecy of this book: for the time is at hand."

John is told not to hide the things he has been shown in this prophecy and vision because the time is at hand. These things were starting to happen and God wanted the Christians fully aware of what
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was about to transpire, and that he was in full control.

REVELATION 22:11
"He that is unjust, let him be unjust still: and he which is
filthy, let him be filthy still: and he that is righteous,
et him be righteous still: and he that is holy, let him be
holy still."

This verse shows that at the time Jesus comes again, which is
mentioned in verse 12, that it is too late for decision making: "He that
is unjust," it's too late to change now, "let him remain unjust." If you
are righteous, then you will reign with Christ forever in righteousness.
The time comes when the character of a person is fixed for eternity.

REVELATION 22:12-13
"And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to
give every man according as his work shall be. I am Alpha and
Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last."

The Lord Jesus is returning, this is the assurance he is giving us.
Everyone shall reap a reward given them by the Lord Jesus, whether
good or bad according to his works. Jesus is further identified as the
Alpha and Omega, the first and the last, he knows all things and will
not be fooled by people's claims of knowing God. These verses show
the deity of Christ, he is God. All things began with him and here he
is bringing all things to an end.

REVELATION 22:14-15
"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. For without are dogs, and sorcerers, and
whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters, and whosoever
loveth and maketh a lie."

These verses are an antithesis to each other, a contrast of the saved
and the lost which is shown many times in Revelation, is presented
one more time. "Blessed are they that do his commandments," the
Christians are the ones who are blessed and have a right to enter the
city and to have access to the tree of life. But on the outside of the city
Revelation 22

and not able to enter it, (remember the twelve angels who guard the gates in Rev 21:12), they are those who are not saved. They are likened to dogs, sorcerers, and whoremongers, murderers, idolaters, and liars.

REVELATION 22:16-17
"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. 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."

This is the final invitation in the bible. It is given by Jesus who shows himself as the one in whom all prophecy is fulfilled. He alone is savior. I love verse 17. What an invitation to eternal life. How can anyone refuse? His spirit says, Come, His church says, Come. Let all that hear say, Come. Let him that is thirsty come and take of the water of life freely. This is a beautiful invitation to a heavenly city. God has personally asked you to join him in this city that has been prepared for you. Will you?

REVELATION 22:18-19
"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: 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."

This is a warning to any one tampering with the word of God that all the plagues in this book will be added to them if they insist on trying to change or remove God's word. The warning which is meant specifically for Revelation, also pertains to the entire book of the bible. Anyone who changes or removes this book from the people loses his name from the book of life, and his place in the holy city. It makes me wonder about the fate of nations that insist on trying to persecute the gospel and make the bible a forbidden book. The answer may be seen in the fall of Rome and later the papacy. Both
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persecuted the Christians and tried to exterminate the book from the hands of the common people. No ungodly nation will ever remain standing.

REVELATION 22:20-21
"He which testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly. Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen."

Jesus says, "Surely I come quickly." Let us be ready when he comes for us. John gives his farewell, wishing "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all." The disciple who Jesus loved says goodbye to the reader, wishing his goodwill and the grace of God upon him.

Amen

We have viewed Revelation in two directions. We have seen Revelation in the light of history. This is in effect looking back through time with history as a reference to see events that fulfill the prophetic visions of Revelation. It is easier to recognize an event that has met the requirements of fulfilling prophecy after it has happened than looking into the future and guessing at uncertain events. When John wrote the Revelation he wrote of future events. These events would soon start to unfold but some of them were nearly two thousand years away. This is the second way we have seen Revelation. We have looked forward with John and have seen the future before us in prophetic perspective.

The prophetic perspective can be compared to viewing a distant mountain. From a great distance the mountain is merely a dark smudge on the horizon, something that sticks up a little higher than the surrounding land. The closer we get to the mountain the larger and more detailed it becomes until we are standing on it and can see the very rocks and trees that make up the mountain. When we are finally standing on the mountain we are aware of the valleys, hills and detours that we had to pass over that we were not aware of when first viewing this distant mountain. In this same way distant prophecies sometimes seem less detailed until we are standing at the time of the fulfillment and can see all that had to transpire to fulfill the distant vision. Another aspect of prophetic perspective is that objects that are
viewed together at a great distance may seem to be close to each other but as we approach we see that great distances can be between them. This principle applies to the vision John saw also. Events which he foresaw in the distance may seem close together but are sometimes successive events separated by many years.

So where do we go from here? Although we can see that much of Revelation is fulfilled in history, it is obvious that certain visions in Revelation have yet to take place. These visions include the final overthrow of Babylon and the second coming of Christ. This makes Revelation both historical to us, and yet future in certain aspects. However we still refer to this as the Historical view since it sees most of Revelation as fulfilled in historical events. All of the prophetic visions that are yet to be fulfilled center around the return of Christ. For instance the final overthrow and destruction of the symbolic city Babylon is seen as events concurrent with Christ returning in glory and judgment. Since any events in Revelation that are still not completely fulfilled reach their fulfillment at Christ’s return, we do not see any significant events that need to take place before His second coming. We need to be ready and waiting for His return in glory and majesty, which could appear at any moment. But keep in mind the prophetic perspective already explained. It is possible that there are many years yet to pass before Christ’s return.

With the great passing of time we could easily fall into the same thoughts as those that the Apostle Peter was addressing in 2 Peter 3:4, whose concern was “where is the promise of his coming?” Peter told them that to the Lord, time was irrelevant, but he was not slack concerning his promise but patient toward us, wanting all to be saved. I am very encouraged by the Historical interpretation of Revelation. For in seeing the fulfillment of so many prophecies in history you gain a certain and unmoving belief in the providence of God. It is God that foretold what would happen and it is God that manages history to bring these things to pass just as He revealed to us. God is the author and the finisher of our faith. He designs it and He surely brings it to pass.
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Glossary of terms grouped by category, simply explained

Dispensational: The term used to describe the idea of a great gap of time, or dispensation, between Christ’s first advent when he was supposed to set up His kingdom and the time when the physical millennial kingdom is actually set up on earth. The Dispensational doctrine is much bigger than this but we only need to cover the part that deals with the Premillennial ideas.

Eschatology: The study of end times; eschatos = last, + logy = word

Rapture: the word is usually used by Premillennialists to mean a secret catching up of the saints. The Amillennialists generally don’t use the term to differentiate their view from the “secret rapture” idea. They see the catching up at Christ’s return as removing the saints before the world is destroyed on the Last Day.

Interpretations:
Futurist: Those who interpret Revelation as events yet to happen. Futurists in general are Premillennial and usually dispensational in their ideas.

Preterists: Those who interpret Revelation as events depicting the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D. They are typically Postmillennial.

Historist: Those who interpret Revelation as largely fulfilled in history. Yet it is necessary to put some events into the future.

Millennial views
Premillennial: The belief that there will be a literal 1000 year reign of Christ’s kingdom on earth before the Christ’s final return. Premillennialism is further divided into Historic Premillennialism, and Futurist or dispensational Premillennialism.

Postmillennial: The belief that there will be a 1000 years period which is established after the coming of Christ in judgment. Many Postmillennialists are Preterists and see the 70 A.D. destruction of Jerusalem as Christ coming in judgment and some his actual second coming. Other Postmillennialists hold an historic interpretation of
Glossary

Revelation. There are different ideas as to whether the millennial period has already started or will start in the future.

**Amillennial:** The view that the millennial period is the church age. The church age was established when Christ came and established his kingdom at His first advent. Historically considered a variation of Postmillennialism, the term Amillennial is unknown in older writings. The term Amillennial may have come into being around the beginning of the twentieth century.

**Tribulation**

**Pre-trib** or Pre-Tribulation: Term used for the belief that the rapture will take place before the tribulation period.

**Mid-trib** or Mid-Tribulation: Term used for the belief that the rapture will take place in the middle of the tribulation period probably after three and a half years.

**Post-trib** or Post-Tribulation: Term used for the belief that the rapture will take place after the seven year tribulation period.
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This list of books below constitutes the works that I have found to be the most valuable in the study of the Historical interpretation of Revelation. These are recommended books for the Historical and Amillennial interpretation of Revelation

A Case for Amillennialism, by Kim Riddlebarger.
This is the best modern defense of Amillennialism I have read.

Great Prophecies Of The Bible, by Ralph Woodrow.
This book is not an interpretation of Revelation but covers the subjects of; The second coming of Christ, Matthew twenty four, The Seventy Weeks Prophecy, The Antichrist. This is a great book.

Halley’s Bible Handbook, by H. H. Halley
This book lots of useful historical information on Revelation. Lots of facts about the first four chapters of Revelation were gleaned from this book.

His Truth Is Marching On, by Ralph Woodrow
Advanced studies on prophecy in the light of history.

Horae Apocalypticae, by E. B. Elliott
I used the 1851, fourth edition of this massive, two thousand page, four volume, commentary on the predictive chapters of Revelation. This book is the acknowledged masterpiece on the historical interpretation of Revelation and is the result of a lifetime of study. Elliott holds an historical, Premillennial viewpoint.

The Approaching End Of The Age, by H. Grattan Guiness

The Meaning Of The Millennium, edited by Robert G. Clouse
This book covers the four views on the millennium. Viewpoints are presented by major teachers of each view. This is an excellent resource on the millennium.

The Millennium-The Big Question, by Evangelist John L. Bray
Booklet discussing the weaknesses of the Premillennial and dispensational doctrines. This booklet is Amillennial in viewpoint.
Bibliography

Additional bibliographical books that were used, but not all are recommended.

**Babylon Mystery Religion**, by Ralph Woodrow
Covers the Christian – pagan mixture


**The Road To Holocaust**, by Hal Lindsey 1989.
Arguments against Dominion Theology from the futurist, premill, pro-Israel point of view.

**The Five Points Of Christian Reconstruction From The Lips Of Our Lord**, by Mark Duncan, 1990 pamphlet on reconstructionism.

**The Gospel of the Kingdom**, by George Eldon Ladd

Premillennial, Seventh Day Adventist viewpoint, historical parts are interesting.

**What’s This World Coming To?**, by Ray C. Stedman, 1970.
Matthew 24 expository study, dispensational, Premillennial.


**Dispensationalism versus The Bible**, By Evangelist John L. Bray.
Booklet covering dispensational errors. John Bray publishes dozens of “little books”. He was originally Premillennial but through his studies has since become a major proponent or pretemic. His booklets on this subject include a series on Matthew 24.

Second edition 1891.
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Covers Daniel and Revelation, Postmillennial view, argues against Premillennialism.

Decline And Fall Of The Roman Empire, by Edward Gibbon, 1782. Gibbon was an historian. This volume is valuable for the many historical insights it gives into prophecy even though Gibbon was not a religious man.

History Of The Roman People, by Fritz Heichelheim and Cedric Yeo, 1962. History

The Story Of Civilization, by Will and Ariel Durant
Multi volume history of civilization.

The End Of The Ancient World and the Beginnings of the Middle Ages, by Ferdinand Lot, 1953. History.

The Reformed Doctrine Of Predestination, by Loraine Boettner
Apologetic book on Reformed Theology

Understanding The Times Of Christ, by William Menzies

The Catholic Encyclopedia 1917.
Good source for historic information on the church, Roman Catholic slant.

The Two Babylons, by Alexander Hislop

The Bad Popes, by Russell Chamberlin and E.R. Chamberlin
Seven Bad Popes during pivotal points in history.

Bible Doctrine, by Wayne Grudem

Systematic Theology, by Louis Berkhof
Bibliography

Matthew Henry Commentary On The Whole Bible
One of the best commentaries on the whole bible

John Gill’s Commentary On The Bible
Known as the ten million word commentary

The People’s New Testament Commentary, by B.W. Johnson

Scofield Reference Bible

Adam Clarke’s Commentary

Fausset’s Bible dictionary

Half hours with Mohammed, by Andrew N. Wollaston

The AntiChrist, by Baron Porcelli

Foxe’s Christian Martyrs of the World, by John Foxe

The Story of Liberty, by Charles C. Coffin

The Pilgrim Church, by E. H. Broadbent

The Crusades: Iron Men & Saints, by Harold Lamb
Revelation Time Line
How to view the timing of each chapter
And how some of them overlap each other