

**The Book of Revelation: a Study
by Fred Stokes**

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Note: Scripture references are from the NASV and as noted from the ESV.

Foreword

Although the Book of Revelation is, by its very nature a revealing, it has elicited more views and interpretations than any other book in the Bible. Having read many of these views and being familiar with many more, our focus and interpretation will be from within a conservative position regarding Scripture and from a reformed perspective theologically.

Many early church fathers, and those that followed them down through the centuries, did not delve to deeply into writing commentaries on this mysterious book. They seem to have been content to quote from portions, and produce some thoughts in sermons. Some selections from Revelation were used as challenges and refutations in the church, of which there is ample testimony in their writings. It was not until the eighteenth century that scholarship (within the church) concerned itself with fuller detailed studies and large commentaries. Soon to come were many speculative theories along with serious studies, then with the advent of Dispensationalism (1830's) whole new vistas opened up, which in our guarded opinion left the "Book" for emphasis on "portions" of the book. Our goal is to stay within the confines of the book and see what it has to say about itself by letting it speak from within. I am certainly aware that we need other Scripture to interpret this Scripture, and I have no hesitation in relying on that fact, and to use as much of the data found elsewhere to support our study.

This brief and relatively simple study shall always be under the beacon of light shed by a comment made by Geerhardus Vos, he sees the book (Revelation) as "so enigmatical" (this phrase is taken from a larger comment which we will view later). The key here is "enigmatical" which speaks to and suggests caution when engaging in a study of this kind. In many ways the book is an enigma. Our purpose will be to get to the content of the book quickly. We have divided this study of the book structurally into twelve chapters. As an example, our chapter one covers the book's chapter one, our chapter two covers the books chapters two and three; hence, multiple Revelation chapters are dealt with, within our single chapter.

Our view of the literary construct of the book is that it is highly figurative and symbolic. The portions that we see as literal will be evident, the portions we see as symbolical, figurative, or metaphorical will be detailed. The preface to our study will explain more of our position in that regard. I am certainly aware of the volumes of late that have been written on the book, and the scholarship exhibited in them. Our purpose includes a view that make it essential for every reader of this Revelation to think through the book chapter by chapter, theme by theme and to pay strict attention to the book itself. This idea stresses the book and not portions of it, and it stresses how the book relates to itself. As stated above, we have read

studies that promote certain positions, especially in the area of millenarianism. It is not however, our intention here, to disparage millenarianism. Much excellent work has been done in this area for the purpose of edifying the church. The reader must judge when examining these works, and to be cautious of the extreme measures that are posited by those who elicit too much from this book on subjects, that they see elsewhere, i.e. millennial and kingdom relationships. We must also examine carefully the works of those, whose focus is too narrow, by only seeing apocalyptic features throughout, or those whose focus is too limited, overlooking valuable details. Let the book speak. Our understanding is that God gave the book to the church for the purpose of edification. We have tried to bring many features of the book to the forefront to provoke and challenge thinking so, let the reader be cautious, enjoy and learn from this exceptional revealing.

Preface

Our purpose in this study is to secure the promised blessing (1:3) by reading, hearing and heeding that which is contained in this book. These are active participles (reading, hearing, heeding) strongly suggesting action. In order to accomplish this we must have understanding. And I am confident that if God is exhorting and encouraging this action, He is bound to supply the understanding, as long as we have a mind to do it. I am confident that we can accomplish this by FIRST: recognizing the language as literal in some portions and highly symbolic and figurative in most of the remainder. SECOND: Our method will be to distinguish the literal from the symbolic and figurative by the process of contextual scrutiny. To aid us in this process, we will rely upon data from several Old Testament prophets: Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel and Zechariah. These books are filled with examples of apocalyptic language to which the apostle alludes. THIRD: We will also distinguish between the visionary and non-visionary features that are obvious, examples of which we see at times, when John is speaking or when he is being spoken to by various personages. We will have to scrutinize these features very carefully as well. We will also consider some dominant “names,” “times,” “places” and “numbers,” specifically looking at all those “sevens,” processing them through the method demonstrated above.

These names, times, places, and numbers are in most cases metaphors. Therefore, when we read them as such, we must then ascertain the meanings in order to heed the message that underlies them. A brief example of this idea can be seen in the picture of the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders “having each one a harp and golden bowls of incense, which are the prayers of the saints” (Rev 5:8). Here, it appears that these ministers (around the throne) are holding (metaphorically) the prayers of the people of God, which go up to heaven continually before the throne of God (cf. the picture of the OT burnt offerings).

Also, we will note that our view of the book is eclectic, in that we see events before John’s time in history in the seal and trumpet judgments, present visions of the seven churches of Asia Minor, and future events in the bowl judgments as well as consummate judgments on the beast, harlot, false prophet, and ultimately on Satan. The final events begin at chapter 15 and crescendo to chapter 20, with chapters 21 and 22 giving consummate details for the bride of Christ, the body of believers in the final state.

General Outline of the Entire Study

- Chapter 1 Rev ch 1 outline and summary
Focus on Jesus Christ
Focus on God who gave Him the revelation
- Chapter 2 Rev ch's 2 and 3 outline and summary
Focus on the seven churches of Asia Minor
- Chapter 3 Rev ch's 4 and 5 outline and summary
Focus on the throne in heaven ch 4
Focus on the Lamb emerging from the throne ch 5
Focus on the seven sealed book
- Chapter 4 Rev ch's 6-11 outline and summary
Focus on the seals and trumpet judgments ch's 6-8
 Seals broken (7 sealed book of 5:1)
 Trumpets sound (given from the throne)
Focus on woes (8:13) ch 9
Focus on John's commission to write ch 10
Focus on the gospel message of the church age ch 11
- Chapter 5 Rev ch 12 outline and summary
Focus on Satan's enmity toward Israel and the church
- Chapter 6 Rev ch 13 outline and summary
Focus on Satan's assault on Christ and His church
- Chapter 7 Rev ch 14 outline and summary
Focus on the effective redemption of OT saints (144,000)
Focus on the fallen church
Focus on the perseverance of the true church
- Chapter 8 Rev ch's 15-16 outline and summary
Focus on the bowl judgments
- Chapter 9 Rev ch's 17-18 outline and summary
Focus on the mystery of the harlot (the false church)
- Chapter 10 Rev ch 19 outline and summary

Focus on judgment of the harlot
Focus on the marriage of the Lamb
Focus on judgment of the beast and false prophet

Chapter 11 Rev ch 20 outline and summary
Focus on the final judgment of Satan
Focus on the final judgment at the white throne
Focus on the "millennium" (personal thoughts)

Chapter 12 Rev ch's 21-22 outline and summary
Focus on final conditions
Focus on the Bride and the Lamb
Focus on final confirmation

Outline of the book

Introduction, chapter 1

A. Focus on Christ, 1:1-3 [non-visionary]
(arrived at by John by means of the entire book; what he says here he learned from the entire book)

B. Focus on Christ in relation to the Father, 1:4-8 [non-visionary]

C. Focus on Christ in relation to the churches, 1:9-20 [visionary]
(Note: as he speaks to the churches, he has the entire book in mind)

I. Messages to the seven churches, chapters 2-3 [non-visionary]

(these are messages to seven actual churches existing at the time of John's writing)

II. John's entrance into heaven before the throne: sees and listens, chapter 4 [visionary]

III. The sealed book and who is worthy to open it, chapter 5 [visionary]

Note: the Lamb from this point on becomes a dominant figure in the book (cf. our treatment of the Lamb in this chapter).

Note: in 13.8, we have the book of life of the Lamb that was slain, and the Lamb's book of life in 21:7 (cf. the severity of these two passages).

IV. Visions of Seals, trumpets, and bowls in relation to history, chapters 6-16 [visionary]

A. Vision of seven seals

A written record of judgments on mankind and the earth (emphasis on 6:1-6:17). Then note chapter 7 is an interlude (a stoppage of time for John) that indicates the sealing of the saints of OT and NT.

Note: seals 1-4 are historical as a result of the curse, 6:1-8, seals 5 and 6 progress to the future, 6:9-17, seal 7 introduces the seven trumpets, 8:1.

B. Vision of seven trumpets

An audible record of historical judgments very similar to the written record, 8:2-11:19. Note: trumpets 1-5, historical, are a result of the curse, 8:7-12; 9:1-12, trumpets 6 and 7 progress to the future, 9:13-21; 11:15.

Note: 8:13 is a brief interlude between the 4th and 5th trumpets, which introduces the three **woes**. The 5th trumpet deals with the 1st **woe**, 9:1-12 (at v. 12, the 1st **woe** is past).

Then the 6th trumpet is in 9:13-21

Then a longer interlude comes in chapters 10 and 11.

Chapter 10: John commissioned to write this book's content after message to the churches

Chapter 11: a brief on the church age with emphasis on the 2nd **woe**, vs. 15-17, and a brief on the consummation of history

Next, we have a longer interlude in chapter 12 to chapter 15:4

Chapter 12, pictures Israel, the dragon, and the church (time, times, 1/2 time = the church age; cf. 1260 days, 42 months in OT & NT, which are metaphors)

Chapters 13-14, the rise of the Harlot

Chapter 14:1-7, mission of the true church

Chapter 14:8-20, warnings and judgments on the harlot (false church constituents)

Chapter 15:1-4, prefatory to the vision of the seven bowls

C. Vision of seven bowls (3rd **woe**)

Future final judgment, 15:5-16:21

1. Bowls poured out, 15:5-16:17 ("it is done")

2. In the midst of judgment the harlot is highlighted 16:18-21

V. **Magnification of particular judgment on the harlot, chapters 17:1-18:24**

VI. **Synopsis of consummation, chapters 19-20**

[visionary; ending of history in judgment and blessing]

A. Chapter 19: Beast and false prophet judged, joy in heaven, harlot has been judged, 19:2-3, having been influenced by the beast and dragon; bride is ready, 19:4-8; invitation to the wedding feast, 19:9-10; bridegroom comes on His white horse as KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS, 19:11-16; final judgment, 19:17-21, which is a recap of Armageddon as in earlier texts. 19:17-21: Note the imagery in v. 21: judgment is swift and certain; cf. Ezek. 18:23, 32: “Have I any pleasure in the death of the wicked?”

B. Chapter 20: magnifies the doom of the dragon, v. 10 (the devil who deceived is cast to where the beast and false prophet already are); cf. 19:20 (also recaps Armageddon).

VII. New Beginnings and confirmation, 21:1-22.15 [visionary]

A. Chapter 21:1-22:5

The new heavens, the new earth and the holy city described with pictures of the bride and the eternal state.

B. Chapter 22:6-15

Personal confirmation regarding the heavenly Jerusalem, the river of life, and the tree of life, along with statements of warnings and promises about those who will enjoy and those who will not enjoy these glories.

Epilogue (conclusion) 22.16-21 [visionary]

A. Invitation and warnings 22:16-20

B. Benediction 22:21

Please note: this general outline and the individual chapter outlines are designed to be used in classroom studies and small group studies.

Detailed Outline for Chapter 1

Chapter one begins with important introductory matters:

I. Focus on Christ 1:1-3 [non visionary]

- A. John's focus in v. 1 is based upon his experience gathered in the entire book.
- B. He demonstrates this by saying "He (John) bore witness", v. 2. That is, his witness is all that is contained in the following chapters. That witness is verified by the numerous statements such as "I saw", "I heard", and others that relate his encounter with the exalted Christ. He is spoken about by angels and He also speaks to John (Rev 1:17; 22:16; 1:3 is the exhortation).

II. Focus on Christ in relation to the Father 1:4-8 [non visionary]

- A. John includes all believers in his statement in 1:6 relating Christ to God the Father: "His God and Father" and His people as a "kingdom" "priests."
- B. In verse 8 of chapter one, we see the close relationship between God and His Messiah (the Son, Christ). We literally see God coming in Christ. The following names, titles and appellations are used interchangeably for both God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. These are shown in the chart below to distinguish each, with the Biblical references in both the OT and NT. This further links this unique relationship.

"First and Last" - "Alpha and Omega" - "Beginning and the End" - "Who was and who is and who is to come"

Old Testament		
<u>Reference</u>	<u>Phrase</u>	<u>Speaker Attributed to</u>
Isa. 41:4	First and Last	The LORD (Jehovah)
Isa. 44:6	First and Last	The LORD (Jehovah)
Isa. 48:12	First and Last	The LORD (Jehovah)

New Testament		
<u>Reference</u>	<u>Phrase</u>	<u>Speaker Attributed to</u>
Rev. 1:4	Who is and who was and who is to come	Him, God Almighty
Rev. 1:8	Alpha and omega...who is and who was and who is to come	The Lord God
Rev. 1:11	Alpha and omega the first and the last (variant reading from the AV)	Jesus Christ
Rev. 1:17	First and last	Jesus Christ
Rev. 2:8	The first and the last	Jesus Christ

Rev. 4:8	Who was and who is and who is to come (cf. Isa. 6:3)	Lord God Almighty
Rev. 21:6	Alpha and omega the Beginning and the end	God on the throne
Rev. 22:13	Alpha and omega the First and the last	Jesus

Note: three times the phrase “who was and who is...” attributed to the Father:

Singularly in 1:4

Combined with alpha and omega in 1:8

Singularly in 4:8

Conclusion: these phrases closely identify God the Father with the Son, the Messiah; God is coming in the person of Messiah demonstrating unity in strong language.

III. Focus on Christ in relation to the churches 1:9-20 [Visionary]

A. John’s commission to write is clearly stated in vs. 9-11. A loud voice “like a trumpet” directs him to write to the “seven churches”: “What you see.”

B. John encounters the exalted Christ vs. 12-18. It is in these verses that we get our first experience with the highly figurative and symbolic language, which will continue through the entire book.

1. He turns to “see” the voice mentioned in v. 10 (v. 12a).
2. The picture in view is astounding to John, being described by the brilliance of metals, flames, white wool, and the sun. He sees “one like the Son of Man” (vs. 13-16).
3. The next scene is a most tender moment for John because the exalted Christ, the living one described in verse 18, laid his right hand on him, saying, “fear not” (v. 17).

C. John is given a brief on the symbolic nature of the speech he will encounter throughout the book in verses 19-20: ¹⁹ **“Therefore write the things which you have seen, and the things which are, and the things which will take place after these things. ²⁰ “As for the mystery of the seven stars which you saw in My right hand, and the seven golden lampstands: the seven stars are the angels of the seven churches, and the seven lampstands are the seven churches.”**

Chapter 1 Summary

I. Practical

The opening verses were gathered and placed at the beginning as a result of all that John had experienced throughout the whole book, 1:1-3 (v. 3 is a full repeat of 22:7). Verses 4-8 seem to have the same perspective, with the beginning of the book proper, starting at verse 9.

After stating his commission to write vs. 9-11, he is now in vision condition and having heard a voice behind him with the clarity of a trumpet (4:1 and 8:1, trumpets-spoken word). He turns to see, and what he sees is an image of one “like [the] Son of Man.” As he observes this sight, the scene literally overwhelms him, as he sees the development of an image of astounding beauty and glory in one being, so much so that it causes him to fall at the feet of this one. Then with loving tenderness the “living one” (v. 18) lays his hand on him and dispells his fears. This one is the embodiment of the triune God coming in the Messiah, Jesus the Christ of God. The reinforcement to write (v. 19) is accompanied by the interpretation of the symbols he has witnessed (v. 20). It is important to note that what he just experienced (vs. 19-20) sets the pattern for interpretation of the rest of the book.

II. Theological

We must now grasp the significance of this embodiment referenced above, which in reality is the incarnation, and so much more, it is the exaltation and glorification of the incarnate Son of God. It is a worthy endeavor to now search out that significance at the beginning of this study. Since all things in this book are focused on this unique person, we must at the start have a good understanding of that uniqueness. In vision, John is confronted with the now exalted, glorified Christ, a view he had not experienced during the few years he had walked with Him. John saw Him in His humiliation through His earthly ministry and had glimpses of a different sort after the resurrection and at the ascension, and perhaps at the transfiguration, but nothing compared to what he sees here. We find at the transfiguration many similarities but nothing as profound in scope and extent. The transfiguration was brief, the exaltation forever. Note these pointed statements of Matthew in his Gospel account:

Mat. 17:2, And he was transfigured before them, and his face shone like the sun, and his clothes became white as light (compare and contrast this command with that of Rev. 1:13-15, and in the midst of the lampstands one like a son of man, clothed with a long robe and with a golden sash around his chest. 14 The hairs of his head were white, like white wool, like snow. His eyes were like a flame of fire, 15 his feet were like burnished bronze, refined in a furnace, and his voice was like the roar of many waters).
Mat. 17:7, But Jesus came and touched them, saying, “Rise, and have no fear”

(compare and contrast this command with that of Rev. 1:17, **When I saw him, I fell at his feet as though dead. But he laid his right hand on me, saying, "Fear not, I am the first and the last).**

Mat.17:9, **And as they were coming down the mountain, Jesus commanded them, "Tell no one the vision, until the Son of Man is raised from the dead"** (compare and contrast this command with that of Rev. 1:19, **Write therefore the things that you have seen, those that are and those that are to take place after this**). Note: only Peter, James and our Revelation author John, were present at this event. The contrast John sees in the humiliation and the glorious exaltation is far greater than what he experienced at the transfiguration. The picture we see in the incarnation is quite different, He went from the glorious position with the Father and the Spirit to the humbled place as servant, taking on flesh, the incarnation. Through the incarnation, He became something that He was not before: The God-man.

It is important to understand the striking fact that the person we know as Jesus Christ did not exist as such, as Savior-Messiah, until the incarnation. He always existed as the second person of the trinity, but He became Jesus, the Christ, the God-man by means of the incarnation.

This assertion is being made for the purpose of demonstrating the person of Jesus Christ in the revealing of Himself as it relates to the book of Revelation. It is prompted by the assessment of the phrase "the revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave Him" (Rev. 1:1) with emphasis on "God gave Him." What God gave Him is this revelation that we have as the book of Revelation because 1:1-3 connects what God gave Him with what is "written in the words of this prophecy" (1:3). For a picture of God giving Him this, see Rev 5:1-8:

Then I saw in the right hand of him who was seated on the throne a scroll written within and on the back, sealed with seven seals. 2 And I saw a strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice, "Who is worthy to open the scroll and break its seals?" 3 And no one in heaven or on earth or under the earth was able to open the scroll or to look into it, 4 and I began to weep loudly because no one was found worthy to open the scroll or to look into it. 5 And one of the elders said to me, "Weep no more; behold, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has conquered, so that he can open the scroll and its seven seals." 6 And between the throne and the four living creatures and among the elders I saw a Lamb standing, as though it had been slain, with seven horns and with seven eyes, which are the seven spirits of God sent out into all the earth. 7 And he went and took the scroll from the right hand of him who was seated on the throne. 8 And when he had taken the scroll, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb, each holding a harp, and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints.

The opening of the seven sealed book is described in Rev 6:1, "Now I watched when the Lamb opened one of the seven seals" and is followed by His opening of the rest of the seals.

A. God gave Him

This demonstrates the position of God the Father in relation to Jesus Christ the Son. The Son was always engaged in doing the Father's will:

And He went a little beyond *them*, and fell on His face and prayed, saying, "My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; yet not as I will, but as You will" (Mat. 26:39).

Jesus said to them, "My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me and to accomplish His work (Jn. 4:34).

He was always obedient; as a Son He learned obedience:

Although He was a Son, He learned obedience from the things which He suffered (Heb. 5:8).

For as through the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, even so through the obedience of the One the many will be made righteous (Rom. 5:19).

There were things that only the Father knew:

But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but the Father alone (Mat. 24:36)

But of that day or hour no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but the Father *alone* (Mk. 13:32).

It is not for you to know times or epochs which the Father has fixed by His own authority (Acts 1:7).

And there were certain things that God gave Him: authority and revelation

No one has taken it away from Me, but I lay it down on My own initiative. I have authority to lay it down, and I have authority to take it up again. This commandment I received from My Father (Jn. 10:18).

The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave Him to show to His bond-servants, the things which must soon take place; and He sent and communicated *it* by His angel to His bond-servant John (Rev. 1:1).

There was a certain development in Jesus in wisdom and age:

**And Jesus kept increasing in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men.
(Lk 1:52)**

We see all of this in the mysterious beginnings of God's eternal plan in Philippians 2:6-10: "**who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped,⁷ but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men.⁸ And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.⁹ Therefore also God highly exalted Him, and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name,¹⁰ that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those who are in heaven, and on earth, and under the earth."**

B. Terms, names, titles defined

1. Exist, existence: to come into being; to have real being (*Webster's 7th New Collegiate Dictionary*)
2. Jesus, the name given to the infant, born of Mary, Lk. 1:31
3. Messiah, anointed, Christ: the official appellation (title) of "the long promised and expected Savior, denoting His kingly authority and mediatorial position as "Servant of the Lord" (Young's Analytical Concordance). The first use of this title is found in Matthew 1:17. All prior references are prophetic, in Matthew 1:17, we have reference to the reality.
4. Son of God: term applied to the:
 - a. pre-existent Christ; established post- NT (think about this)
 - b. name/title applied to the 2nd person of the trinity; also post-NT
 - c. Logos (wisdom): the name/title used by the apostle John to designate the same

C. Use of the term exist (come into being)

1. Does not apply to the deity (Son of God, pre-existent Logos, Phil.2:6)
2. Does apply to the person of Jesus, the Christ of God or Jesus Christ.
 - a. Because at a point in time in history by the virgin birth (Lk. 1:30-33) this person was born and given a name and title that was not conferred on any other at any other time in past history. Thus, even though prophetically spoken of throughout OT history, the reality did not occur until the birth of Jesus the Christ of God.
 - b. The incarnation was a new, never before event whereby the deity, the Logos took on flesh (carnality) and became the God-man.

D. Confirmation of this perspective from Scott Oliphint of WTS.

In *Reason for Faith*, Oliphint comments on this assertion that Jesus Christ did not exist until the incarnation. He says, “This union (per the incarnation) did not produce a third person, but it produced a change in the Son of God such that He became something that He was not, all the while remaining what He essentially was and is. He became the God-man, Jesus Christ” (Oliphint, 307-315).

Note that Jesus is His name and Christ is His title.

Summary: Jesus Christ (not the Son of God, not the Logos, not the deity of the Scriptures up until the incarnation) did not exist in name or title prior to the virgin birth.

Thus, we conclude that the humanity of Jesus Christ must be defended as well as His deity because He is this one essence with two natures, our only hope of salvation. "...yet He has now reconciled you in His fleshly body through death, in order to present you before Him holy and blameless and beyond reproach..." Col. 1:22.

Conclusion

There is no question that the deity always existed with numerous names and titles. When we speak of God, we speak of the triune God consisting of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. It must be understood that this definition was not finalized until the NT and post-NT era via the early church Fathers. We are content to note God’s self-revealing names in the OT such as Elohim (Almighty God), Jehovah (revealing, redemptive LORD) and derivatives of these for what He is. Also, we see “angel of the Lord” and other appearances of God with various forms (cf. the burning bush). We also see attributive names: El Shadai, El Elyon, Jehovah Jirrah, etc., which are names given for what God demonstrates and does.

For a more concise explanation of this subject, please note the views of the following two exceptional theologians, B.B. Warfield and Francis Turretin.

It is, indeed, obviously not enough to say that it behooved the Divine Person who became incarnate in Jesus Christ, in entering into a new phase of existence, not to seem then first to begin to be; although to that is no doubt to say something to the point. Would we do justice to the case, we must go on and affirm that, when the Life itself (which is also the Truth itself) entered into the conditions of human existence, it could not but come, according to its nature, creatively-bringing its own self-existing Life with it, and not by way of derivation, to exist. When the Word was made flesh and tabernacled among men, it could not be but that men should behold his glory—a glory of an only-begotten of the Father full of grace and truth (B. B.

Warfield, *Biblical and Theological Studies*, “The Supernatural Birth of Jesus,” 164, underlying mine).

...we affirm [that the Son of God, the second person of the holy Trinity did join together with himself in unity of person, not a person, but a human nature; not by conversion and transmutation, but by assumption so that the Son of God was made the Son of man and our Mediator and is truly God-man (theanthropos)]. The reasons are first, “the word was made flesh” (Jn1:14, where distinct mention is made: (a) of two extremes (to wit, the Word, which is shown to be a divine person from what go before, where he is said to be God and with God and to have made all things [vv. 1, 3], and flesh, which denotes synechdochically the human nature); (b) of the union by which they were mutually joined together; not as by conversion and change (of which the immutable God is incapable), but by assumption, by which (remaining the same in himself, to wit, true and eternal God) he was made what he was not before by partaking of flesh and blood, according to that well-known phrase-“I am what I was” (to wit God) “nor was I what I am” (namely man) “now I am called both” (to wit, God and man) (Francis Turretin, *Institutes of Elenctic Theology*, Vol. 2, 313, underlining mine).

Detailed Outline for Chapters 2-3

- I. Ephesus 2:1-7
 - A. Christ feature, cf. 1:12, 13, 16a
 - B. Paul spent much time there
cf. Acts and Ephesians
 - C. John may have lived there
 - D. Nicolaitanes - vs. 6 - practical
All manner of indulgent activities
Cite Irenaeus Vol I p. 349 and 351; he quotes from John's Apocalypse
 - E. Contrast Christ feature with "observation" and "overcomers"
Repent, return to first love, eat of the tree of life

- II. Smyrna 2:8-11 (see adendum on satanic influence)
 - A. Christ feature, cf. 1:18
 - B. Polycarp
Student of John
Bishop there, martyred there
Irenaeus also there
 - C. Contrast Christ feature with "overcomers"
Christ feature - first, last, death, alive
Overcomers - not hurt by second death

- III. Pergamum 2:12-17 (see adendum on satanic influence)
 - A. Christ feature, cf. 2:12 with 1:16b
 - B. Pergamum: seat of Greek power and later Roman
Alexander the Great's successor established the city's prominence
It became Roman about 150 B. C.
 - C. City of emperor worship
"Satan dwells" v. 13, three temples
 - D. Contrast Christ feature with Heb. 4:12
"observation" and "overcomers"

- IV. Thyatira 2:18-29 (see adendum on satanic influence)
 - A. Christ feature, cf. 1:15
 - B. Thyatira was a trade and guild city noted for dyes and brass
The convert Lydia (Acts 16:14) was a seller of purple fabrics in Philippi.
 - C. Contrast Christ feature with "observation" and "exhortation"
Concerning vs. 20-23
Did not succumb! vs. 24-26

V. Sardis 3:1-6

- A. Christ feature, cf. 1:4, 16a
- B. Another capitol city (of Province, kingdom of Lydia)
 - Greek and Roman
 - Destroyed by earthquake A. D. 17 and lost all prominence
- C. Contrast Christ feature with “observation” and “exhortation”
 - Dozing ! Wake up! Rekindle the Spirit within! (indwelling!!)
- D. “Overcomers” contrasted with v. 4
 - Literally “stained”, metaphor for pollution of idolatry, cf. 14:4-9
 - Now clothed in white!

VI. Philadelphia 3:7-13 (see adendum on satanic influence)

- A. Christ feature, cf. 1:18
 - Keys of David, 22:16, and numerous references such as Isa 22:22, Jn 7.42
- B. Large Jewish population and synagogue
- C. Contrast “true” Jews with synagogue of Satan, Jn 9:22, 34; 16:2
- D. Ruined by earthquake (A. D. 17)
 - Rebuilt by Tiberius; named “Neokaisarsia”: “broken pillars”
 - Contrast v. 12; also a new name!!! “Overcomers”

VII. Laodicia 3:14-22

- A. Christ feature, cf. 1:5
- B. Wealthy city with much gold
 - 1. Garment industry: famous for “seemless cloaks”, cf. 2 Tim. 4:13
 - 2. Medical city with a school for physicians
 - Developed an eye remedy called Phrygian powder for Ophthalmia!
 - Rumor has it that Luke studied there, cf. Col. 4:13
- C. Contrast the Christ feature with “overcomers”
 - Christ feature: “faithful and true witness...ruler of the kings of the earth
 - Overcomers: reign with Christ!
- D. Also contrast vs. 17, 18 with the condition of the city
 - 1. Rich, wealthy, “gold, buy from me!”
 - 2. White garments: garment industry
 - 3. Eye salve: Phrygian powder

Descriptive Characterizations of the Seven Churches

The following characterizations are complete with: identity, praise (as observed), rebuke (as observed), exhortation (consistently the same to all...“hear”) and challenge to all to be “overcomers.” These characterizations are being made by the one described in 1:10-20 as Jesus, the Christ of God in complete unity with the Father and Spirit (1:4-8) with distinctive descriptions of him to each church.

<u>Church</u>	<u>Christ Feature</u>	<u>Observation</u>	<u>Exhortation</u>	<u>Overcomers</u>
Ephesus 2:1-7	Stars/lampstands	Left first love	Repent	Eat of tree of life
Smyrna 2:8-11	First and last Dead and alive	Testing and tribulation	Be faithful	Not hurt by the second death
Pergamum 2:12-17	Sharp two-edged sword	Hold fast the name of Christ yet tolerates false teachers	Repent	White stone with new name
Thyatira 2:18-29	Eyes of flame Feet of brass	Good works	Hold fast	Rule nations
Sardis 3:1-6	Seven spirits Seven stars	Dozing	Wake up	Clothed in white garments
Philadelphia 3:7-13	Holy, true, key of David	Kept God’s Word	Hold fast	New name written
Laodicia 3:14-22	Faithful true witness	Luke warm	Repent	Reign with Christ on thrones

In contrast to Christ's activity in the churches we see that there are references to satanic influence in the following: Smyrna, Pergamum, Thyatira, and Philadelphia. Note the mixture of satanic and cultic influence (Greek, Roman, Asian) in these cities and churches. Combinations of idol worship and immorality go hand in hand, and there is pressure to follow them.

Satanic influence

<u>To Smyrna</u>	“ <u>Synagogue of Satan</u> ,” 2:9, “who say they are Jews”
<u>To Pergamum</u>	“ <u>Satan’s throne</u> ,” 2:13, emperor worship
<u>To Thyatira</u>	“ <u>Deep things of Satan</u> ,” 2:24; here note the Jezebel influence; see conclusion; cf. Balak, the king taught by Balaam
<u>To Philadelphia</u>	“Say they are Jews, <u>synagogue of Satan</u> ,” 3:9

Summary conclusion:

The pressure to become involved in cultic, idol, pagan worship was overwhelming. cf. Paul and friends at Ephesus 40 years earlier with the silversmiths (the populus lived and breathed it!). Here, even though Paul found great success through the gospel, the populus was entrenched in idol worship. Paul's efforts were directed at the synagogues but eventually turned to the Gentiles. He was so effective there that even the Jewish priests were trying to emulate him. The fact that both Jews and Greeks were found there demonstrated the success and the ensuing difficulty in dealing with both groups. A review of these striking results can be found in the Book of Acts at 19:8-41. The next 40 years saw a marked development in the activity of Satan in the region.

Since we are looking at the seven churches, it seems a good time to look at the numerous uses of seven in the book.

Seven Churches Rev 1:4, 11,20

Are identified as actual churches in specific geographical settings

Seven Churches in symbolic language

Are seven lampstands in Rev 1:12, 13, 20 (“which are the seven churches”)

Seven Spirits Rev 1:4, 3:1, 4:5, 5:6

Are seven spirits before God’s throne

Notes:

- 1) They are symbolically “lamps” (not lampstands) in 4:5
 - 2) They are also symbolically presented as seven “eyes” in 5:6
- Here, consult Zech 3:9-4:10

Seven Stars Rev 1:16, 20

Seven seals Rev 5:1, 6:1

See detailed outline

Seven Horns and seven eyes (the Lamb) Rev 5:6

Seven trumpets Rev 8:2

See detailed outline

Seven peals of thunder Rev 10:3, 4

Hearlding the messages John will ingest and later express in prophecy

Seven bowls Rev 15:1-8, 16:1, 17:1, 21:9

Last, final “plagues” (15:1)

Final judgment: note 16:7, “It is done”

See detailed outline

Seven beatitudes in Revelation

1:3, 14:13, 16:15, 19:9, 20:6, 22:7, 22:14

See the full text of each on the next page

The full text of the seven beatitudes in Revelation

1:3, Blessed is the one who reads aloud the words of this prophecy, and blessed are those who hear, and who keep what is written in it, for the time is near.

14:13, And I heard a voice from heaven saying, "Write this: Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on." "Blessed indeed," says the Spirit, "that they may rest from their labors, for their deeds follow them!"

16:15, "Behold, I am coming like a thief! Blessed is the one who stays awake, keeping his garments on, that he may not go about naked and be seen exposed!"

19:9, Blessed are those who are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb.

20:6, Blessed and holy is the one who shares in the first resurrection! Over such the second death has no power, but they will be priests of God and of Christ, and they will reign with him for a thousand years.

22:7, And behold, I am coming soon. Blessed is the one who keeps the words of the prophecy of this book.

22:14, Blessed are those who wash their robes, so that they may have the right to the tree of life and that they may enter the city by the gates.

Summary

Seven seems to represent completeness in scripture, based upon the first use of the term applied to God's work in creation "seven days". The seventh day seems to represent that completeness. Many derivatives of seven are found throughout Scripture. In most of the places that "seven" is used, we can readily see the completeness concept, but caution must be exercised so that we do not find things associated that may not be evident, or factual. In our study here, we have listed the dominant use of seven. Clarification and scrutiny is demanded so that we understand each use. It is a good study to analyse these uses and look for the completeness and make proper application of our findings. An additional challenge will be in analysing the number seven as it relates to the dragon and the beast in the following passages: Rev 12:3; 13:1; 17:3, 9-11 (see our note at paragraph 2 of the summary for chapter 12).

Our purpose here in this study is to relate these uses to our major premise to "read," "hear," and "heed" so that we may have a full understanding of the book of Revelation.

Chapter 2-3 Summary

I. Practical

An overview of the messages to the seven churches can be summed up as follows.

1) We have characterizations as shown in the “descriptive characterizations of the seven churches” above these tell us about the condition of each church as we have observed from John’s non-visionary descriptions. Of course, these descriptions are the words of Jesus the Christ.

2) It is important to learn some of the history and mixture of pagan and religious practices current at the time of the address.

3) The contemporary practices affected true believers by putting overwhelming pressures on them.

The churches were being characterized by how they reacted to these pressures. The application to us in the twenty-first century church should be obvious, even though the conditions may not be as extreme.

4) We, the twenty-first century believers can be “overcomers” as well and expect the same rewards, complete with the same blessed joy and expectations.

II. Theological

We have observed that the fact that Jesus Christ has described Himself in distinctive symbolic pictures (Christ features) which is similar to the vision John sees in 1:12-16. The purpose is to demonstrate the glory, beauty, and power of the exalted Christ of God, and further to reinforce and strengthen the believers at those locations. Since this book is the revelation of Him and by Him, He should always be the focal point. The Gospels speak to His humiliation the Revelation to His exaltation.

These churches were experiencing a first hand, if you will, exhortation from the very source and fountain of their faith in the Christ now exalted and seated at the right hand of the Father. Each church has an individual, personal word from their redeemer distinct from the others. (cf. the Christ features above). He was addressing them in a way far different than any other church or churches in the New Testament. It is He that is personally observing and exhorting these believers. It is He that is encouraging them to be overcomers. It is He that stands ready with the eternal rewards. If we take just the phrases after “He that overcomes” or “overcomers,” we would see a crescendo of thought from our initial redemptive call to the glory that will be ours when we “reign with Christ” (cf. Rev 22:5). It should be noted, as we stated above, that these believers were under a constant assault by satanic forces. To hold a credible conviction or faith was not an easy experience. These forces were in many cases severe, even to the point of death to

believers, and martyrdom became the symbol of these churches through the next several centuries. We will deal with this assault later as we advance in the book.

Detailed Outline for Chapters 4-5 Visionary

- I. Chapter 4, The vision as John sees it
- A. Door open in heaven -viewed 4:1a
 - B. Voice like a trumpet -heard 4:1b
 - C. A throne “standing” and one sitting -viewed 4:2
 - D. Glowing, beautiful description -viewed 4:3
 - E. Fuller description of the throne scene -viewed, heard 4:4-7
 - 1. Twenty four elders 4:4
 - 2. Bursts of light and power
Visage of the Spirit of God 4:5 (cf. Zech 4:2, 6, 10)
 - 3. Four living creatures 4:6-7 (cf. Ezk 1:5, 10, 28 for fuller details)
 - F. Business, duty, function of the living creatures and elders 4:8-11
 - 1. Creatures exclaim the holiness of the Lord God, the Almighty 4:8-9 (cf. Isa 6:2)
 - 2. Elders exclaim the worthiness of “our” Lord and “our” God 4:10-11 (Personal)
- II. Chapter 5, The vision as John experiences it
- A. The seven sealed book 5:1-3
 - B. Emotional experience and conversation regarding worthiness of someone to open the book 5:4-5
 - C. The worthy one revealed now as a Lamb 5:6-7
 - D. Action: once again the living creatures and elders sing 5:8-10
 - E. The living creatures and elders joined by “myriads and thousands” echo the song filling the heavens with their anthem! 5:11-13
 - F. Amen and worship 5:14

Conclusion

Chapter 4

We have a view of the throne of God. There the activity of the living creatures and the twenty four elders form just a part of the entourage whose purpose is to proclaim the holiness and worthiness of God.

Chapter 5

The new description of Jesus the Christ of God as “Lamb” and his activity form the essence of this chapter. The entourage is now fuller and the message heightened.

The Distinctions of the Names: Jesus, Jesus Christ, and Lord Jesus In the Apocalypse

That there is a distinction in the usage of the name, name and title of the incarnate Son of God is obvious in that there is nothing arbitrary in Scripture. We will see these "names and titles" diminish in their use as we move through the book, giving way to the "Lamb" as the descriptive term for our Lord Jesus Christ. Words and combinations of words including names have distinct meaning. Upon investigating and scrutinizing the words/names, we can glean valuable insight into the person we are studying. The following list with references helps to demonstrate this. Along with the listing, we have the usage as it relates to what I have titled the relational, personal, human aspects of "Jesus" and the Messianic aspects of "Jesus Christ." We will also look at the twice used title/name "Lord Jesus" in the last two verses of this book. [When I speak of "relational, personal and human aspects," I am directing our attention to the perspective of John himself, the other saints he references and their relationship (personal) to Jesus their Savior. Compare the Gospel use "Jesus" and the epistle use "Jesus Christ," the one pertains to His personal identity the other to His titled designation "Messiah": hence His messianic aspects.]

Note that the name/title Jesus Christ is used three times in the first chapter and is not used again. Also noteworthy is the fact that the name Jesus is used once in the first chapter and is not used again until the twelfth chapter. Other than the symbolic features and figurative descriptions in 1:10 through 3:22, we have no definitive name or name/title recorded. In chapter four we have descriptions of the Lord God Almighty (4:8), and it is not until chapter five that we have a name/description that will be used extensively from that chapter through chapter twenty-two. That name designation is "The Lamb." We will follow the usage of that name designation from chapter five to the end and note the significance throughout.

Name and title: Jesus Christ (in context)

<u>Reference</u>	<u>Usage</u>
Rev 1:1	Messianic, revealing, of the Father
Rev 1:2	Messianic, witness and testimony of the Father
Rev 1:5	Messianic, His attributes describe

Name: Jesus (in context)ReferenceUsage

Rev 1:9 (2)

Relational, personal, human
John's own testimony and identity with

Rev 12:17

Relational, personal, human
Those who hold His testimony

Rev 14:12

Relational, personal, human
Faith and perseverance of the saints

Rev 17:6

Relational, personal, human
Martyred saints and witnesses

Rev 19:10 (2)

Relational, personal, human
John and brethren hold testimony

Rev 20:4

Relational, personal, human
Martyred, faithful overcomers

Rev 22:16

Relational, personal, human
Jesus speaking in the first person
References His own name
His personal testimony

Title and name: Lord Jesus (in context)ReferenceUsage

Rev 22:20

Relational, personal, human
John personally addresses Him and recognizes
Him as Lord (Master) Jesus, as in the Gospels

Rev 22:21

Relational, personal, human
John invokes the personal grace of the Lord (Master)
Jesus by his (John's) experience to the readers

Note: the title Christ is used four times and in each case it is related to God (the subject in each) as His Christ, emphasis on His, that is, God. Rev 11:5, 12:10, 20:4, 20:6.

The Lamb in the Book of Revelation

ESV Revelation 5:6 And between the throne and the four living creatures and among the elders I saw a Lamb standing, as though it had been slain, with seven horns and with seven eyes, which are the seven spirits of God sent out into all the earth.

⁸ And when he had taken the scroll, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb, each holding a harp, and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints.

¹² saying with a loud voice, "Worthy is the Lamb who was slain, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and might and honor and glory and blessing!"

¹³ And I heard every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth and in the sea, and all that is in them, saying, "To him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb be blessing and honor and glory and might forever and ever!"

ESV Revelation 6:1 Now I watched when the Lamb opened one of the seven seals, and I heard one of the four living creatures say with a voice like thunder, "Come!"

¹⁶ calling to the mountains and rocks, "Fall on us and hide us from the face of him who is seated on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb,

ESV Revelation 7:9 After this I looked, and behold, a great multitude that no one could number, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, with palm branches in their hands,

¹⁰ and crying out with a loud voice, "Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!"

¹⁴ I said to him, "Sir, you know." And he said to me, "These are the ones coming out of the great tribulation. They have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.

¹⁷ For the Lamb in the midst of the throne will be their shepherd, and he will guide them to springs of living water, and God will wipe away every tear from their eyes."

ESV **Revelation 8:1** When the Lamb opened the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven for about half an hour.

ESV **Revelation 12:11** And they have conquered him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, for they loved not their lives even unto death.

ESV **Revelation 13:8** and all who dwell on earth will worship it, everyone whose name has not been written before the foundation of the world in the book of life of the Lamb that was slain.

¹¹ Then I saw another beast rising out of the earth. It had two horns like a lamb and it spoke like a dragon (the only reference not describing Christ, but here a counterfeit, the beast).

ESV **Revelation 14:1** Then I looked, and behold, on Mount Zion stood the Lamb, and with him 144,000 who had his name and his Father's name written on their foreheads.

⁴ It is these who have not defiled themselves with women, for they are virgins. It is these who follow the Lamb wherever he goes. These have been redeemed from mankind as firstfruits for God and the Lamb,

¹⁰ he also will drink the wine of God's wrath, poured full strength into the cup of his anger, and he will be tormented with fire and sulfur in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb.

ESV **Revelation 15:3** And they sing the song of Moses, the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, "Great and amazing are your deeds, O Lord God the Almighty! Just and true are your ways, O King of the nations!

ESV **Revelation 17:14** They will make war on the Lamb, and the Lamb will conquer them, for he is Lord of lords and King of kings, and those with him are called and chosen and faithful."

ESV **Revelation 19:7** Let us rejoice and exult and give him the glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and his Bride has made herself ready;

⁹ And the angel said to me, "Write this: Blessed are those who are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb." And he said to me, "These are the true words of God."

ESV **Revelation 21:9** Then came one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls full of the seven last plagues and spoke to me, saying, "Come, I will show you the Bride, the wife of the Lamb."

¹⁴ And the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and on them were the twelve names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb.

²² And I saw no temple in the city, for its temple is the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb.

²³ And the city has no need of sun or moon to shine on it, for the glory of God gives it light, and its lamp is the Lamb.

²⁷ But nothing unclean will ever enter it, nor anyone who does what is detestable or false, but only those who are written in the Lamb's book of life.

ESV **Revelation 22:1** Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, bright as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb

³ No longer will there be anything accursed, but the throne of God and of the Lamb will be in it, and his servants will worship him.

Chapters 4-5 Summary

Chapter 4

I. Practical

These are visionary chapters in highly symbolic language. The vision begins with John seeing a door “open in heaven” and hearing a voice like a trumpet speaking to him, saying “come up here.” He is immediately viewing a throne “standing in heaven” and one sitting on the throne. John describes what he sees in terms of beauty, as precious stones, but no physical characteristics. He also sees certain personages. First, twenty-four elders clothed in white garments and golden crowns on their heads. Second, he sees four creatures with certain characteristics peculiar in his visage. Both these groups of personages then begin to exclaim tributes in profound terms concerning the one sitting on the throne. There is a notable difference in their exclamations. The “creatures” speak of the holiness of the Lord God, the Almighty, whereas the elders seem to speak to the worthiness of the Creator God, from personal perspective.

II. Theological

The vision of the one sitting on the throne in chapter 4 stands in contrast to the description of “the Son of Man” in chapter 1. In the first chapter, the “the Son of Man” (1:13) is pictured in glowing terms with details about his clothing, hair, eyes, voice, hands, mouth, and face (1:13-16). But in chapter 4, the vision of the one sitting on the throne is not described in these anthropomorphic features, but is attested to as the thrice holy and Almighty God. The creatures, who are similarly described in Ezekiel 1:4-28, have the sole duty or function to exclaim the holiness of God “day and night” (4:8) and literally “they have no rest day and night saying, ‘Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God Almighty.’” The description of the creatures comes from Ezekiel 1:4-28, whereas, the quote comes from Isaiah 6:3. This shows both the unity of the OT itself and its verification in this NT vision. It would then appear that they (the creatures) are a part of the heavenly entourage continually surrounding the throne. The elders, however, seem to speak in a personal tone “our Lord and our God” and thus seem to represent all believers of all ages as it is the consensus of most commentators and students of the book. The most popular suggestion is that they (the twenty-four) are twelve representatives of the twelve tribes of Israel and the twelve apostles of the church. This concept is further seen in the unfolding of the rest of the book.

Chapter 5

Practical and Theological

Because the scenario in the vision is most practical by the event oriented flow, and yet deeply theological by the implications of both Father and Son involved in this transitory picture, we found it difficult to separate the two.

In the continuing vision, the picture seems to focus on both the person of Chapter one, Jesus the Christ of God, and the person of chapter four, God the Father Almighty in a unique and transitory way. The one sitting on the throne has a book, sealed with seven seals, and the question is asked “who is worthy to open the book and break its seals?” And in true visionary form as rapid as the question comes, the answer comes: “no one” in heaven or earth. And also typical of vision, dream, or trance John “weeps greatly.” One of the elders (perhaps an OT tribe representative) speaks of one with Judaic and Davidic background that is able. The next visage is of a “Lamb standing as if slain.” [please also compare the description here (Revelation 5:6 in terms of the “seven eyes and seven spirits, sent out into all the earth”) with the description of Jehovah God in Zechariah 3:6-4:10] This is a new picture description (Lamb) of the Messiah of God which will continue to the end of the book. (cf. The Lamb in the Book of Revelation, our pgs. 29-31)

Upon taking the book, all attention by the entourage of creatures and elders is focused on the Lamb. Verses 8, 9, and 10 are highly symbolical in that each (creatures and elders) “fell down” at the same time with harps and golden bowls full of incense which are the prayers of the saints, “singing a new song saying,” wherein the worthiness of the “Lamb” is described. We must stress the symbolism of these verses thus: creatures with no hands, only wings, holding harps and bowls of incense clearly states the case regarding symbolism. Consistent with all OT “new song” references, they demonstrate celebration of victory or victories (Ex. 15:21, Miriam; Jud. 5:1, Deborah; Psa. 40:3, Psa. 144:9, Isa. 42:10 as a sampling) and in this case the victory of the redeemed purchased by His blood! And then a larger heavenly host, “myriads of myriads” and “thousands of thousands” exclaiming His worthiness (vs. 11, 12). And in conclusion (v. 13) “every created thing” saying about both Him who sits on the throne and the Lamb: “Blessing, honor, glory, and dominion,” which confirms their unity in Deity.

Conclusion

The transition of identity of Jesus the Messiah of God to the “Lamb” (as noted above in the list of references on the Lamb) will be seen as an irresistible picture of the one who was typified in the paschal Lamb of the OT, and is the “Lamb of God” (John 1:29) who takes away the sin of the world!

Detailed Outline for Chapters 6-11

Prefatory note: because the effects of the seals and trumpets span from 6:1 to 11:19, we will outline this as a section and not as individual chapters. This approach follows the general outline with enhanced details on selected portions.

Chapter 6 - the seals and scroll speak of the written record of history from creation to consummation

I. Seals one through four

A. The Lamb breaks the seals while the four living creatures say, “Come and see” visual images coming from the writings.

B. The first four seals deal with God’s benevolent activity and judgments as a result of the fall and the calamities and natural occurrences which affect mankind (Gen. 3:1-23).

First seal (6:2)

White horse demonstrating forces for good that exist (God’s benevolent activity even in the midst of chaos. Cf. 19:11-16; we believe the white horse and rider identified in 19:16 to be one and the same as our unnamed rider depicted in 6:2, namely, Christ in His exalted, consummate conqueror state: “King of kings and Lord of lords.” God was at work through the activity of the logos, the second person of the trinity, the Spirit, the third person of the trinity, and God, the Father, the first person of the trinity throughout the OT history, even after the darkest hours of the fall (cf. the numerous theophanies of the OT).

Second seal (6:3-4)

Red horse: forces that take peace away and men begin to kill one another (Gen 4:8). These killings have never ceased.

Third seal (6:5-6)

Black horse: forces in place to demonstrate the need for a bartering system as a direct result of sin and man’s distrust of man. Note: before the fall, God provided everything for everyone with no need to trade goods or commodities.

Fourth seal (6:7-8)

Ashen (pale) horse: forces in place to inflict death by all the means possible by man, animals, and the elements. Note: the percentage (25%) seems to indicate that a certain number of deaths occur continually without affecting the entire population. This passage describes many, if not all the ways men die.

[Thought to consider: think forces not horses]

II. Seals five and six

The fifth seal (6:9-11)

This seal gives an accumulative view of the redeemed (seal one) which is a direct result of the benevolent God redeeming the elect from the OT period (6:9-11a) and the NT period (6:11b). This brief picture will be displayed many more times throughout the book. Please note also that the presence of satanic activity is evident through the picture of suffering described here.

The sixth seal (6:12-17)

This is a picture of final judgments on man and the planet. The future timeframe is seen in the emphasis of verses 16-17. Now, unlike the judgments on the physical, human populace, we see spiritual, eternal judgments briefed here. Note vs. 16 and 17, “From the face of Him who sits on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb; for the great day of their wrath has come; and who is able to stand?” It is their wrath! Father and Son! God and the Lamb.

Chapter 7: here, an interlude expands the redemptive view of 6:9-11

I. The visionary scene 7:1-3

A. The figurative and symbolic language of 7:1 seems to indicate a stop in time (figurative); the four angels hold back the four winds (symbolic).

B. The next scene shows the stopping of the activity of the angels (forces) as well (proleptically). Their work stops until they seal the bondservants of our God on their foreheads.

II. The visionary activity 7:4-17

A. The Old Testament saints are sealed: the 144,000, tribes, symbolic of all OT saints (7:4-9). This also demonstrates God’s elective process.

B. The New Testament saints are identified (7:10-17). Note: these may be NT saints up to the time of the writing or an accumulative reference including Jewish and Gentile saints at least through the “great tribulation” (7:14) of A.D. 70. Accordingly, John speaks: “My Lord, you know”, indicating that he lived through and knew these things regarding the great tribulation of A.D. 70. Also, note the telescoping view of this scene in relation to 6:9-11.

Chapters 8 & 9: the trumpets introduced by the seventh seal - 8:1

These trumpets are an audible, historical message in contrast to the written historical message of the seals. Compare 1:9 “voice like a trumpet” and 4:1 “the first voice like a trumpet speaking to me.”

I. The visionary scene 8:1-6

- A. The silence in heaven (8:1-2) seems to indicate a preparatory attitude of quiet so that the messages of the trumpets can be heard.
- B. The somber yet reverent scene described in 8:3-6 indicates the attitude of God in speaking and meteing out His judgments in a serious manner. Compare the imagery here with that of Leviticus 16:12 and the context. Also compare Ezekiel 10:2ff. Here, in the scene in Revelation 8, notice the phrase “like the voice of God Almighty when He speaks.” We see here that God, presented by the angels and trumpets, is about to speak!

II. The visionary sequence 8:7-9:21

A. First trumpet sounds, 8:7

The effects of the calamity sounded in figurative language here speaks of the parched portion of the earth, one third, in an existing condition that is far from the view of Genesis 1 and 2 where everything was “good.” Here is evidence of the “cursed ground.”

B. Second trumpet sounds, 8:8-9

The effects of the next calamity are on the seas and creatures who dwell there; this is a further evidence of the curse.

C. Third trumpet sounds, 8:10-11

Here the calamity of the curse strikes the inland waters, much of which are still and remain undrinkable and dangerous.

D. Fourth trumpet sounds, 8:12

Here is perhaps the most revealing picture of the effects of the curse. The beautiful picture of the “lights” that God created (Gen 1:14-18) are distorted by all manner of weather conditions. Again, “one third” speaks to the portion of time and condition when these lights are not serving their intended purpose. Note: only two humans saw them in their glorious perfection.

Note here the brief yet important interlude between the fourth and fifth trumpets: **And I looked, and I heard an eagle flying in midheaven, saying with a loud voice, "Woe, woe, woe, to those who dwell on the earth, because of the remaining blasts of the trumpet of the three angels who are about to sound!" (8:13).**

The three woes, “woe, woe, woe” (ὠὠα) are interjections, but as we shall see, “woe” with the definite article becomes a substanttive, hence, giving it more

definite force, cf. Ἡ οὐαὶ ἡ μία [the first woe] in 9:12 and Ἡ οὐαὶ ἡ δευτέρα ἀπῆλθεν [the second woe is past] ἰδοὺ ἡ οὐαὶ ἡ τρίτη ἔρχεται [behold, the third woe is coming] in 11:14.

1. The first woe is clearly Satan's entrance into the world and his influence upon mankind, Rev 9:1-12. See below for details at II. F.
2. The second woe is the departure of the Holy Spirit and the Logos, the Word, from the world of mankind, and the result will be a hopelessness for man. The good news, the gospel witness is gone! Truly woe! This happens at the end of the church age, Rev 11:7-12. See below for details at chapter 11.
3. The third woe is assumed by many to be the final and complete judgment (7 bowls) of God and His Christ. No specific text or passage speaks to this but there are nuances to this effect especially 11:14 where the third woe is said to be coming quickly. The following passage leads in that direction: 11:18-19. It must be noted that these woes are directed specifically toward "those who dwell on the earth" 8:13. Man was subject to the first woe throughout history and many will be subject to the second woe and will also be judged with equal calamity at the consumation, certain woe! (the third).

E. The fifth trumpet sounds, 9:1

Here is calamity of a different nature, whereas trumpets one through four are a curse on the earth (that man inhabits), this is spiritual calamity (woe one). Satan is now active in a very pronounced way upon the lives and actions of men. The description that follows (9:2-10) is truly frightening. Satan and his minions are unleashed upon man. Then, we have the declaration that the first woe is past. Satan is that first woe (9:12), active from the past, cf. Gen 3.4.

F. The sixth trumpet sounds, 9:13

The result of the sixth trumpet can be viewed thus:

1. God's emissaries carrying out judgment upon those who fall prey to the devious actions prompted by Satan and his minions, 9:14-17.
2. The result of this action is severe, but not total, as we see once again only a percentage (33 percent, v. 18) are killed; the rest continue their heinous atrocities, 9:20-21.
3. It seems that there is a resultant conclusion that can be drawn by the fact that a higher percentage are killed here as compared to the percentages of the devastation that results from the fourth seal - death, which was limited to 25%, but here 33%. Perhaps, the larger

number is a direct result of the more serious flagrant crimes.

4. Certainly a woe to those who dwell on the earth (8:13) and those who do not repent of there actions (9:21).

Note: the seventh trumpet will not sound until we reach chapter 11, verse 15. There is an interlude beginning at 10:1 though 11:14 climaxing with the second woe.

The interlude 10:1-11:14

Chapter 10: the commision to write, 10:1-11

A. Heavenly declarations, 10:1-7

Note here the parallel picture of this personage described in verses 1-3 with the person speaking to Daniel (Dan 12:5-7) and the actions and speech of both: before John, Rev 10:4-7; before Daniel, Dan 12:7-9.

B. Heavenly directives, 10:8-11

Note here that John ingests the book and it is all that the angel said it would be. This is the gospel! Compare the effects that Paul places on the gospel in 2 Cor 2:15-16: death to death (bitter) and life to life (sweet). Aroma is compared to taste. The gospel is certainly that, bitter and sweet. The book of Revelation is suggested by v. 11, “you must prophesy again...”

Chapter 11:

I. The commencement of the church age, 11:1-6

A. The condition of Israel at Christ’s advent, 11:1-2.

Note: forty two months in which the holy city is given to the nations

B. The gospel in all of its power briefed, 11:3-6

II. The conclusion of the church age, 11:7-13

A. The restraint taken away (second woe), 11:7-10

B. The catching away of the church, 11:11-13

III. The consummation of the ages briefed, 11:14-19

A. “The second woe is past,” 11:14a

B. Warning: “Behold the third woe is coming quickly,” 11:14b

C. The seventh angels sounds, 11:15-19

1. Christ and His kingdom briefed, 11:15-17

2. Christ’s judgments briefed, 11:18-19

Chapters 6-11 Summary

Seals broken - written record

Trumpets sound - audible record

In this summary, we will try to reinforce the view we have taken on the seals and trumpets; that they are written and oral records. The record is history for the most part, briefing to a degree the activity of God in relation to man, beginning at the fall. There, certain announcements were made relative to the advent of sin in the world and its consequences, both for man and the earth. We have made a point to identify the rider of the white horse of 6:2 as being the benevolent God acting in a redeeming way right from the start (cf. the account with Cain in Gen 4:7). This vision of the rider is no more mysterious than the silent actions of Jehovah God in the earliest of man's days upon the earth as recorded in the Genesis beginnings. This sets a pattern for the following unfolding, as history, giving us an account of the main elements of the progressing civilization under the curse. The following word pictures give us a view of the conditions under which that civilization moved.

I. THE SEALS BROKEN REVEAL THE WRITTEN RECORD:

- A. As stated above and in the outline, we see God's benevolent activity described as the rider of a white horse. All the descriptions speak to something good: a white horse, a bow, a crown and conquering,
Seal One: And I looked, and behold, a white horse, and he who sat on it had a bow; and a crown was given to him; and he went out conquering, and to conquer (Rev 6:2).
- B. As a result of the curse, peace is taken away, men begin to kill one another (cf. Gen 4:8), Seal Two: And when He broke the second seal, I heard the second living creature saying, "Come." 4 And another, a red horse, went out; and to him who sat on it, it was granted to take peace from the earth, and that men should slay one another; and a great sword was given to him (Rev 6:3-4).
- C. As a result of the curse, man distrusts man; hence, a bartering system was required. Before this God gave man all he needed (cf. Gen 2:16),
Seal Three: And when He broke the third seal, I heard the third living creature saying, "Come." And I looked, and behold, a black horse; and he who sat on it had a pair of scales in his hand. 6 And I heard as it were a voice in the center of the four living creatures saying, "A quart of wheat for a denarius, and three quarts of barley for a denarius; and do not harm the oil and the wine" (Rev 6:5-6).

- D. As a result of the curse, death will come from many sources beside old age, from man killing man, animals killing man (and each other), famine (hunger) and pestilence (disease), Seal Four: **And when He broke the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the fourth living creature saying, "Come." 8 And I looked, and behold, an ashen horse; and he who sat on it had the name Death; and Hades was following with him. And authority was given to them over a fourth of the earth, to kill with sword and with famine and with pestilence and by the wild beasts of the earth (Rev 6:7-8)**
- E. Redemptive history, and a look forward are seen in seal five, which is a brief on this subject. The entities involved seem to be both OT and NT saints. We are almost instantly brought forward to a view of martyred saints contrasted with other earth dwellers of whom vengeance is sought. Then another forward look at those yet to be martyred, Seal Five: **And when He broke the fifth seal, I saw underneath the altar the souls of those who had been slain because of the word of God, and because of the testimony which they had maintained; 10 and they cried out with a loud voice, saying, "How long, O Lord, holy and true, wilt Thou refrain from judging and avenging our blood on those who dwell on the earth?" 11 And there was given to each of them a white robe; and they were told that they should rest for a little while longer, until the number of their fellow servants and their brethren who were to be killed even as they had been, should be completed also (Rev 6:9-11).**
- F. The previous scene quickly closes and we are advanced to a new vision of consummate judgment. All walks of life of the ungodly are seen in utter horror and chaos waiting for the wrath of the Lamb. Seal Six: **And I looked when He broke the sixth seal, and there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth made of hair, and the whole moon became like blood; 13 and the stars of the sky fell to the earth, as a fig tree casts its unripe figs when shaken by a great wind. 14 And the sky was split apart like a scroll when it is rolled up; and every mountain and island were moved out of their places. 15 And the kings of the earth and the great men and the commanders and the rich and the strong and every slave and free man, hid themselves in the caves and among the rocks of the mountains; 16 and they said to the mountains and to the rocks, "Fall on us and hide us from the presence of Him who sits on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb; 17 for the great day of their wrath has come; and who is able to stand?" (Rev 6:12-17).**

II. THE TRUMPETS SOUNDING REVEAL AN AUDIBLE RECORD:

This audible record compliments the written record and at the same time contrasts some of the details to give us a fuller look at this history and its future consequences. We must keep in mind that both records deal with the same time frames, from the curse down through millennia to the judgment consummation. The trumpets sounding speak to the condition of the earth that man inhabits. This condition is of a chaotic nature due to the curse upon the earth. This chaos affects man, animals and all of nature including the

climate. These conditions brought by the curse are clearly seen in the biblical descriptions:

A. The climate extremely changed the conditions for man and animals which caused further distress and disorder. Extreme heat in some areas, extreme cold in other areas. We note that the effects were to one-third (33%) of the earth, whereas a larger portion was left habitable and to a certain degree still pleasant. We must here note that even the pleasant areas are subject to violence through weather conditions.

Rev 8:7, Trumpet One:

And the first sounded, and there came hail and fire, mixed with blood, and they were thrown to the earth; and a third of the earth was burned up, and a third of the trees were burned up, and all the green grass was burned up.

B. The seas were changed as well as the affects on its inhabitants. A portion of these are described as dying, one-third (33%), but not all. These percentages may apply to ships and seafarers proleptically.

Rev 8:8-9, Trumpet Two:

⁸ The second angel sounded, and *something* like a great mountain burning with fire was thrown into the sea; and a third of the sea became blood, ⁹ and a third of the creatures which were in the sea and had life, died; and a third of the ships were destroyed.

C. Next, it appears that the inland waters were affected by the curse to the degree that one-third (33%) were made non-drinkable, and as noted, men died from them.

Rev 8:10-11, Trumpet Three:

And the third angel sounded, and a great star fell from heaven, burning like a torch, and it fell on a third of the rivers and on the springs of waters; ¹¹ and the name of the star is called Wormwood; and a third of the waters became wormwood; and many men died from the waters, because they were made bitter.

D. And last in the order of the curse, the sun, moon and stars did not perform their original created function due to that curse. Climate and weather having its affects on them (clouds, rain and all manner of chaotic conditions) for a percentage “a third” (33%) of their allotted shining.

Rev 8:12, Trumpet Four

And the fourth angel sounded, and a third of the sun and a third of the moon and a third of the stars were smitten, so that a third of them might be darkened and the day might not shine for a third of it, and the night in the same way.

Note: we will deal with the interlude at 8:13 and trumpets five and six below.

Seals one through four parallel trumpets one through four in the following manner: the seals direct our attention to God's actions and judgments on mankind (6:1-8) and the trumpets announce judgments on the earth that mankind inhabits (8:7-12). Please consult the outline for chapters 6-11 for fuller details to aid this summary.

Seals five and six are somewhat similar to trumpets five and six in that they deal with spiritual matters affecting mankind vividly displayed in highly figurative and symbolic language. The fifth seal addresses redemption of Old Testament and New Testament time frames as stated above. The fifth trumpet (9:1-12) clearly identifies Satan and his followers and the awful administration of their evil. We saw also the results of satanic activity in the message of 6:9-11 (fifth seal). The sixth seal deals in brief with final judgment at the consummation (6:12-17). The sixth trumpet (9:13-21) demonstrates the judgment of God on those who did not repent of their deeds which were influenced by the satanic forces (9:20-21 specifically). The message of 9:21 seems to indicate that this is an open view of the fact that they "did not" nor have, nor will repent and turn. It is an ongoing evil still prevalent to this day. The judgments described therefore are harsher, which indicates the more heinous crimes and atrocities are met with equal consequences. This may be the reason that the one third percentage (33%) stated in verses 15 and 18 are more than the percentages (25%) described in the first four seals. When we compare the sixth seal judgment with the sixth trumpet judgment, we see a distinction in that the sixth seal demonstrates final judgment, as we stated above, especially as we view 6:17. We also see the distinction when we view the temporal nature of the sixth trumpet, by the percentage concept of 9:15. Compare this evidence below.

And I looked when He broke the sixth seal, and there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth made of hair, and the whole moon became like blood; 13 and the stars of the sky fell to the earth, as a fig tree casts its unripe figs when shaken by a great wind. 14 And the sky was split apart like a scroll when it is rolled up; and every mountain and island were moved out of their places. 15 And the kings of the earth and the great men and the commanders and the rich and the strong and every slave and free man, hid themselves in the caves and among the rocks of the mountains; 16 and they said to the mountains and to the rocks, "Fall on us and hide us from the presence of Him who sits on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb; 17 for the great day of their wrath has come; and who is able to stand?" (Revelation 6:12-17)

And the sixth angel sounded, and I heard a voice from the four horns of the golden altar which is before God, 14 one saying to the sixth angel who had the trumpet, "Release the four angels who are bound at the great river Euphrates." 15 And the four angels, who had been prepared for the hour and day and month and year, were released, so that they might kill a third of mankind. 16 And the number of the armies of the horsemen was two hundred million; I heard the number of them. 17 And this is how I saw in the vision the horses and those who sat on them: the riders had breastplates the color of fire and of hyacinth and of brimstone; and the heads of the horses are like the heads of lions; and out of their mouths proceed fire and smoke and brimstone. 18 A third of mankind was killed by these three plagues, by the fire and the smoke and the brimstone, which proceeded out of their mouths. 19 For the power of the horses is in their mouths and in their tails; for their tails are like serpents and have heads; and with them they do harm.

20 And the rest of mankind, who were not killed by these plagues, did not repent of the works of their hands, so as not to worship demons, and the idols of gold and of silver and of brass and of stone and of wood, which can neither see nor hear nor walk; 21 and they did not repent of their murders nor of their sorceries nor of their immorality nor of their thefts. (Revelation 9:13-21)

The former (6:12-17) is a direct result of the fall and curse, the latter (9:13-21) is a direct result of the fall because it shows men who have completely fallen prey to the vicious enemy who would destroy all of God's creation and try to discredit the Almighty God.

Now, as stated above, we need to backtrack to 8:13, which lies between trumpets four and five and see how this interlude develops in the context. In 8:13, we must consider the emphasis of the three woes (**And I looked, and I heard an eagle flying in midheaven, saying with a loud voice, "Woe, woe, woe, to those who dwell on the earth, because of the remaining blasts of the trumpet of the three angels who are about to sound!"**). These are an amplification of the more serious infliction of judgments, forces of wickedness on the one hand (9:1-12) and the results (9:13-21), which is woe # 1 and the withdrawal of spiritual forces of good on the other hand, which is woe # 2 (11:14, **The second woe is past; behold, the third woe is coming quickly**). The statement "the second woe is past" must be viewed proleptically, that is, it must be viewed as anticipation because it occurs in the distant future at the end of the church age. Whereas, the statement "the first woe is past" in 9:12 (**The first woe is past; behold, two woes are still coming after these things**) must be viewed historically since the woe deals with the fall of Satan and his minions (9:1-11) who have been actively influencing and tormenting mankind from the beginning. The result of that influence is described in 9:12-21 in strong symbolic and figurative language. We must note, as was suggested above, that the inflicted judgment is harsher yet only partial (one-third, 33%). All wicked men and actions were never completely destroyed, only a portion, still the judgment is more severe. Nonetheless, the day is coming when all wickedness will be judged and destroyed.

Now, back to woe # 2, which speaks about the removal of the restraint or restrainer described by the apostle Paul in 2 Thess 2:1-12 (note specifically "what restrains," v. 6 and "he who now restrains," v. 7).

Now we request you, brethren, with regard to the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and our gathering together to Him, 2 that you may not be quickly shaken from your composure or be disturbed either by a spirit or a message or a letter as if from us, to the effect that the day of the Lord has come. 3 Let no one in any way deceive you, for it will not come unless the apostasy comes first, and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the son of destruction, 4 who opposes and exalts himself above every so-called god or object of worship, so that he takes his seat in the temple of God, displaying himself as being God. 5 Do you not remember that while I was still with you, I was telling you these things? 6 And you know what restrains him now, so that in his time he may be revealed. 7 For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work; only he who now restrains will do so until he is taken out of the way. 8 And then that lawless one will be revealed whom the

Lord will slay with the breath of His mouth and bring to an end by the appearance of His coming; 9 that is, the one whose coming is in accord with the activity of Satan, with all power and signs and false wonders, 10 and with all the deception of wickedness for those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth so as to be saved. 11 And for this reason God will send upon them a deluding influence so that they might believe what is false, 12 in order that they all may be judged who did not believe the truth, but took pleasure in wickedness.

The picture is thus:

1. The Holy Spirit and the Logos (the Word and wisdom of God) are active in the present time of the church calling the elect to Christ (Rev 11:3-7).
2. The same element, or elements (Satan and his followers, woe # 1) are actively trying to thwart the spread of the gospel (Rev 11:7, 12:17 [retrospect]).
3. At a point in time, he (they) will be revealed as Paul describes the picture in 2 Thessalonians noted above.
4. When that happens, the Holy Spirit and the Logos will be taken up or out (Rev 11:12), which is the second woe, for now mankind is left to itself with no gospel, no good news, no hope...truly woe (Rev 11:14) !),
5. When the seventh angel sounds his trumpet we see that: **"The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ, and He shall reign forever and ever"** (Rev 11:15b). Compare this with 1 Thessalonians 4:15-17 and the mention of the trumpet: **15 For this we declare to you by a word from the Lord, that we who are alive, who are left until the coming of the Lord, will not precede those who have fallen asleep. 16 For the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a cry of command, with the voice of an archangel, and with the sound of the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. 17 Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we will always be with the Lord.**
6. At this point, future, as the event is displayed before us (Rev 11:17-19), it would logically follow that the saints would be gathered to reign with Christ, as the following texts show:

Rev 5:9-10: "And they sang a new song, saying, "Worthy are you to take the scroll and to open its seals, for you were slain, and by your blood you ransomed people for God from every tribe and language and people and nation, and you have made them a kingdom and priests to our God, and they shall reign on the earth.""

Rev 20:4-6: Then I saw thrones, and seated on them were those to whom the authority to judge was committed. Also I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded for the testimony of Jesus and for the word of God, and those who had not worshiped the beast or its image and had not received its mark on their foreheads or their hands. They came to life and reigned with Christ for a thousand years. 5The rest of the dead did not come to life until the thousand years were ended. This is the first resurrection. 6Blessed and holy is the one who shares in the first resurrection! Over such the second death has no power, but they will be priests of God and of Christ, and they will reign with him for a thousand years.

Rev 22:5: And night will be no more. They will need no light of lamp or sun, for the Lord God will be their light, and they will reign forever and ever.

2 Tim 2:12: if we endure, we will also reign with him; if we deny him, he also will deny us.

The third woe refers to final and complete judgment in the pouring out of the seven bowls (Rev 16:1-17, which closes with the words, "It is done"). Note: we will look at this event in our study of chapter 16.

Now we must consider the interlude of chapter 10. This is a vision wherein John receives instructions to write this revelation and possibly his Gospel. The Gospel of John is suggested by 10:9-10 in the references to "bitter" and "sweet," by the imperative given to John in 10:11, "you must prophesy," and by the parallel ideas in 2 Corinthians 2:14-16 regarding the fragrance of Christ to God: "**But thanks be to God, who in Christ always leads us in triumphal procession, and through us spreads the fragrance of the knowledge of him everywhere. For we are the aroma of Christ to God among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing, to one a fragrance from death to death, to the other a fragrance from life to life. Who is sufficient for these things?**" The words, "**You must prophesy**" (Rev 10.11) unquestionably refer to the book of Revelation.

The directive in chapter 10 to write, logically precedes the theme of chapter 11, which seems to be the demise of the Jewish temple influence and the rise of the church, that is the church age or the "forty-two months" stated in 11:2, and the parallel metaphor in 11:3 "twelve hundred and sixty days" Support for this interpretation comes from the interconnectedness of the timeframe symbols in Revelation and Daniel (cf. Warfield, in his work "The Millennium and the Apocalypse", fn.604-605):

"Time, times, and half a time"	Dan 7:25
"Time, times, and half a time"	Dan 12:7
"Time, times, and half a time"	Rev 12:14
"Forty-two months"	Rev 11:2
"Forty-two months"	Rev 13:5
"One thousand two hundred and sixty days"	Rev 11:3
"One thousand two hundred and sixty days"	Rev 12:6

Further evidence that these timeframe symbols refer to the same time, the church age, comes from the fact that according to Revelation 12:6 the woman (referring to Israel) fled to the wilderness for 1260 days "**the woman fled into the wilderness, where she has a place prepared by God, in which she is to be nourished for 1,260 days**" and according to 12:14, the same woman receives nourishment in the wilderness "**for a time, and times, and half a time**". Therefore, we conclude that the time designations refer to the same time-frame, using different forms of figurative language and metaphors.

We conclude further that the timeframe illustrated above is the church age or the age of the gospel. This is further supported by the nuances given by both John and Daniel

regarding the “angel of the waters” " **And I heard the angel in charge of the waters say, “Just are you, O Holy One, who is and who was, for you brought these judgments”** Rev. 16:5 and by the fact that at the conclusion of this age the mystery of God would be finished " **And the angel whom I saw standing on the sea and on the land raised his right hand to heaven and swore by him who lives forever and ever, who created heaven and what is in it, the earth and what is in it, and the sea and what is in it, that there would be no more delay, but that in the days of the trumpet call to be sounded by the seventh angel, the mystery of God would be fulfilled, just as he announced to his servants the prophets**" Rev 10:5-7. The prophets the angel speaks of here, would of course include Daniel. These words were spoken to John just prior to his reception of the commission to write stated in Rev 10:8-11. This same picture and language is spoken by Daniel in his prophecy (Dan 12:5-9). The end would come after the “time, times, and half a time,” which is at the end of the church and gospel age! The comparison of the language is striking and compelling.

Dan 12:5-9:5: Then I, Daniel, looked, and behold, two others stood, one on this bank of the stream and one on that bank of the stream. 6 And someone said to the man clothed in linen, who was above the waters of the stream, “How long shall it be till the end of these wonders?” 7 And I heard the man clothed in linen, who was above the waters of the stream; he raised his right hand and his left hand toward heaven and swore by him who lives forever that it would be for a time, times, and half a time, and that when the shattering of the power of the holy people comes to an end all these things would be finished. 8 I heard, but I did not understand. Then I said, “O my lord, what shall be the outcome of these things?” 9He said, “Go your way, Daniel, for the words are shut up and sealed until the time of the end.

Moreover, when we consider the symbolic language of 11:3-7 and compare the picture that Zechariah gives us regarding the “olive trees” and “lampstands” (Zech 4:1-14) with the timeframe of 1260 days in Revelation 11:3b, we conclude that the "olive trees" and "lampstands" are the Holy Spirit and the Logos (the Word) active and flourishing during the church age and the time of gospel proclamation to the nations:

Rev 11:3-7: 3 And I will grant authority to my two witnesses, and they will prophesy for 1,260 days, clothed in sackcloth.” 4 These are the two olive trees and the two lampstands that stand before the Lord of the earth. 5 And if anyone would harm them, fire pours from their mouth and consumes their foes. If anyone would harm them, this is how he is doomed to be killed. 6 They have the power to shut the sky, that no rain may fall during the days of their prophesying, and they have power over the waters to turn them into blood and to strike the earth with every kind of plague, as often as they desire. 7And when they have finished their testimony, the beast that rises from the bottomless pit will make war on them and conquer them and kill them.

Zech 4.1-14: 1And the angel who talked with me came again and woke me, like a man who is awakened out of his sleep. 2 And he said to me, “What do you see?” I said, “I see, and behold, a lampstand all of gold, with a bowl on the top of it, and seven lamps on it, with seven lips on each of the lamps that are on the top of it. 3 And there are two olive trees by it, one on the right of the bowl and the other on its left.” 4 And I said to the angel who talked with me, “What are these, my lord?” 5 Then the angel who talked with me

answered and said to me, "Do you not know what these are?" I said, "No, my lord." 6 Then he said to me, "This is the word of the LORD to Zerubbabel: Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, says the LORD of hosts. 7 Who are you, O great mountain? Before Zerubbabel you shall become a plain. And he shall bring forward the top stone amid shouts of 'Grace, grace to it!'" 8 Then the word of the LORD came to me, saying, 9 "The hands of Zerubbabel have laid the foundation of this house; his hands shall also complete it. Then you will know that the LORD of hosts has sent me to you. 10 For whoever has despised the day of small things shall rejoice, and shall see the plumb line in the hand of Zerubbabel. "These seven are the eyes of the LORD, which range through the whole earth." 11 Then I said to him, "What are these two olive trees on the right and the left of the lampstand?" 12 And a second time I answered and said to him, "What are these two branches of the olive trees, which are beside the two golden pipes from which the golden oil is poured out?" 13 He said to me, "Do you not know what these are?" I said, "No, my lord." 14 Then he said, "These are the two anointed ones who stand by the Lord of the whole earth."

Finally, the reference to the removal of the restrainer of woe # 2 in Revelation 11:7-13 (cf. 2 Thess 2) confirms this church age interpretation because the next scene in 11:15 shows Christ in His kingdom and reigning: "Then the seventh angel blew his trumpet, and there were loud voices in heaven, saying, "The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ, and he shall reign forever and ever." Judgment quickly follows, which concludes the church age:

"The nations raged, but your wrath came, and the time for the dead to be judged, and for rewarding your servants, the prophets and saints, and those who fear your name, both small and great, and for destroying the destroyers of the earth." Then God's temple in heaven was opened, and the ark of his covenant was seen within his temple. There were flashes of lightning, rumblings, peals of thunder, an earthquake, and heavy hail." 11: 18-19.

This presence of the kingdom and judgment demonstrates that "the mystery of God is finished" (proleptic) as anticipated by the comment of the "angel" speaking in Rev 10:5-7 and the "man clothed in linen" speaking in Dan 12:7 referenced above. We must note carefully that this view of the church age to the consummation is in this place (ch 11) compressed into a brief scenario, comprising the main features of that period.

Detailed Outline for Chapter 12

Note: our interpretive premise in this outline is our view of the time frames stated in verses 6 and 14 as the church age. This is presented in our “summary” of chapters 6-11, and our outline of chapter 11.

- I. “A great sign” 12:1-2
 - A. A woman (Israel)
 - B. Her condition - about to give birth
 - 1. With child - Christ
 - 2. In pain - condition of Israel

- II. “Another sign” 12:3-6
 - A. A great red dragon - Satan v. 3a
 - 1. Described by horns, heads, crowns v. 3b
Indicative of forces at his disposal
Cf. Dan 2 and 7 for prophecy of end time forces
 - 2. His minions and his purpose v. 4
 - B. The woman gives birth v. 5
 - 1. Birth of Christ 5a
 - 2. Ascension of Christ 5b
 - C. The woman flees v. 6
 - 1. Israel set aside 6a cf. Rom 11:25-28
 - 2. Church pictured 6b “1260” days

- III. Mysteries in the heavenly scene 12:7-12
 - A. War in heaven vs. 7-9
Cf. the events here with Daniel 10:10-21, 12:1 (heavenly forces continued)
 - B. Rejoicing in heaven vs. 10-12
Cf. the resultant end as shown darkly to Daniel, Dan 12:2-10

- IV. Focus of the Dragon (Satan) 12:13-17
 - A. Persecution of the woman (Israel) v. 13
 - 1. At the hands of Rome
 - 2. By way of God’s judgment
 - B. Preservation of the woman (Israel) vs. 14-16
Again cf. Rom 11:25-28
 - C. Beginnings of the persecution of the church v. 17
 - 1. The rest of her offspring - conversion of Jews
 - 2. The gospel to the Gentiles

Chapters 12 Summary

In keeping with the vision atmosphere, John sees a “Great sign” appearing in heaven, which indicates another telescoping view of events that enhance the consummation seen in chapter 11. Whereas the focus of chapter 11 comes after the commission to John to write in chapter 10, regarding the church age (Gospel period), now the view is from behind the scene in heaven, “And a great sign appeared in heaven” (12: 1a). This view from the perspective of heaven speaks to the subject more pointedly to show Satan’s activity both in heaven and on earth. In chapters 9 and 11, the “woes” (8:13) are demonstrably Satanic (Note what Jesus says to the disciples regarding their view of Satan and the demons and what He encouraged them rather pointedly to rejoice in: **The seventy-two returned with joy, saying, “Lord, even the demons are subject to us in your name!” And he said to them, “I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven. Behold, I have given you authority to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing shall hurt you. Nevertheless, do not rejoice in this, that the spirits are subject to you, but rejoice that your names are written in heaven”**). Note: [At this point, the beginning of chapter 12, specifically verse 3, we have “another sign” which will describe Satan’s activity via human forces. The mention of “seven heads” and “ten horns,” and “seven diadems” will be repeated in 13:1 and 17:3, 9, 11. These sevens are not to be viewed as perfect numbers here. They are descriptive of real human forces and a real place, i.e. the Roman Empire. Our analysis of chapter 13 and 17 will demonstrate this. We take the position akin to the reformers that the “seven mountains” and “seven kings” are speaking of Rome and the emperors who ruled there. The topography speaks to the “seven mountains” (the seven hills of Rome), the forces in power at the time of this writing to the emperors. The metaphors we see here in the “signs” will become more vivid and meaningful as the progression of that scene reveals itself, but here in chapter 12 the scene is in heaven.]

Our view in chapter 12 shows us the mysterious conflict in heaven and the resultant activity compressed in these brief passages. We vividly see Satan’s focus. The vision gives us a condensed version of the forces shown in vs. 3-9, ³ **Then another sign appeared in heaven: and behold, a great red dragon having seven heads and ten horns, and on his heads were seven diadems.** ⁴ **And his tail swept away a third of the stars of heaven and threw them to the earth. And the dragon stood before the woman who was about to give birth, so that when she gave birth he might devour her child.** ⁵ **And she gave birth to a son, a male *child*, who is to rule all the nations with a rod of iron; and her child was caught up to God and to His throne.** ⁶ **Then the woman fled into the wilderness where she had a place prepared by God, so that there she would be nourished for one thousand two hundred and sixty days.** ⁷ **And there was war in heaven, Michael and his angels waging war with the dragon. The dragon and his angels waged war,** ⁸ **and they were not strong enough, and there was no longer a place found for them in heaven.** ⁹ **And the great dragon was thrown down, the serpent of old who is called the devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world; he was thrown down to the earth, and his angels were thrown down with him.**

The vision also gives us a brief parenthetical picture of rejoicing as a result of the victory of the godly described in vs. 10-12, ¹⁰ **Then I heard a loud voice in heaven, saying, "Now the salvation, and the power, and the kingdom of our God and the authority of His Christ have come, for the accuser of our brethren has been thrown down, he who accuses them before our God day and night. ¹¹ "And they overcame him because of the blood of the Lamb and because of the word of their testimony, and they did not love their life even when faced with death. ¹² "For this reason, rejoice, O heavens and you who dwell in them. Woe to the earth and the sea, because the devil has come down to you, having great wrath, knowing that he has *only* a short time."** (This passage also confirms that the first woe refers to Satan and his wrath upon mankind described in the summary for chapters 6-11).

Then, within the historical perspective of the vision, Satan's focus is further demonstrated. Seemingly frustrated by the situation "And when the dragon saw that he was thrown down to the earth, he persecuted the woman who gave birth to the male child" 12:13. This, the woman, we understand to be Israel. This persecution, by the instigation of the dragon was carried out by the hand of the Roman leadership. This same leadership will be the strong and violent hand against Christ and the church as it develops. The woman (Israel) is then by God's grace sent off into the wilderness: "and the two wings of the great eagle were given to the woman in order that she might fly into the wilderness to her place, where she was nourished for a time, times, and half a time from the presence of the serpent". (literally from the face of the serpent) 12:14. Paul speaks to this subject in Romans 11:25-28: **Lest you be wise in your own sight, I want you to understand this mystery, brothers: a partial hardening has come upon Israel, until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in. And in this way all Israel will be saved, as it is written, "The Deliverer will come from Zion, he will banish ungodliness from Jacob"; "and this will be my covenant with them when I take away their sins." As regards the gospel, they are enemies of God for your sake. But as regards election, they are beloved for the sake of their forefathers.** Once again, we see the time frame here repeating the time frame of Revelation 12:6 (1,260 days) in a different form but certainly a reference to the same period of time. In 12:6, the vision is briefed; in 12:14-16, the vision of the same event is broadened, heightened for clarity. We have concluded in our summary of chapter 11 that the time frames repeated in the various forms refer to the church age, or the gospel period. The periods described as: "time, times, half a time," "forty two months," and "twelve hundred and sixty days" found both in Daniel and Revelation agree and stand for the same period of time.

The last verse (17) of this chapter demonstrates how the dragon (the serpent, Satan) will continue his efforts to thwart God's eternal plan. This effort will be to "make war with the rest of her offspring." This phrase "make war with the rest of her offspring" is in keeping with the phrase in Daniel's prophecy: **as I looked this horn made war with the saints and prevailed over them** (Dan.7:21). This thought is further expanded and explained four verses later in these words: **He shall speak words against the Most High, and shall wear out the saints of the Most High, and shall think to change the law, and they shall be given into his hand for a time, times and half a time** (Dan.7:25). We

note two corresponding phrases within these texts that confirm each other, which seem to indicate the "war" of Revelation 12:17 prophetically; they are "prevail over" and "wear out" (Dan 7:21, 25). This we consider to be the first woe of Revelation 8:13, as we stated above. We must here clarify the extent of woe one. We see this first woe in all of its extended activity. We see the unleashing of satan and his minions upon mankind in general, which compounded the sinful conditions at the fall and beyond. It is evidently clear that this force was active throughout the OT period even though the record is limited, it is not without ample documentation. That evidence carries through the period between the testaments, and into the first advental period where we see the effects of that activity on many occasions in the ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ. Logic would make it clear that that activity would accelerate through the period of the life of Christ and into the church age which we see here in Revelation 12:17. We conclude therefore that the forces of the evil one, the dragon, will continue to accelerate, albeit behind the scenes. His goal has been to be like the Most High, and as stated above to thwart the church of Christ. The NT writers give us ample evidence of the diabolical activity such as Peter's warning: **Be of sober spirit, be on the alert. Your adversary, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour** (1 Pet 5:8; cf. James 4:7, 2 Tim 4:17, 18). This activity is by spiritual forces, as the Apostle Paul confirms to the Ephesians " ¹⁰ **Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of His might. ¹¹ Put on the full armor of God, so that you will be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil. ¹² For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places. ¹³ Therefore, take up the full armor of God, so that you will be able to resist in the evil day, and having done everything, to stand firm**" (Eph 6:10-13). We further conclude that we have no evidence that those forces will abate until the righteous judge shall consume him with the power of His might. The war spoken of in Revelation 12:17 is confirmed in 13:7a, "And it was given to him to make war with the saints..." We see this as the spiritual warfare that the church will encounter, as Daniel also saw in his visions referenced above. Now, onto that encounter, chapter 13.

Detailed Outline for Chapter 13

I. The Beast out of the sea 13:1-7

- A. Physical description - Identity, vs. 1 & 2a
 - 1. Horns and heads - plural
 - 2. Crowns and blasphemous names - plural
 - 3. Animal features - plural (power)
 Conclusion: this beast is a plurality
- B. His power - bestowed, vs. 2b-5
 - 1. Threefold - power, throne, authority, vs. 2b-4
 - 2. Time frame of His power: forty-two months, v. 5
 - 3. The dragon, the source
- C. His conduct - 6-7
 - 1. Blasphemes God and followers, v. 6
 - 2. Make war with the saints, v. 7
- D. Who is the “he” (better understood as “it”)?
 - 1. Not an individual emperor or king
 - 2. It is a plurality by description
 - 3. Therefore, it is many kings, forces, or powers

II. Caution to the saints (of all ages) 13:8-10

- A. Caution: whose name has not been written in the lamb’s book of life 13:8
cf. 5:6
- B. Caution: hear what is next 13:9
- C. Caution: perseverance required in a world filled with calamity 13:10

III. The beast out of the earth 13:11-17

- A. Physical description - identity 13:11
 - 1. Two horns like a lamb (Christ imitator)
 - 2. Speaks as a dragon (Satanic force)
- B. Its power 13:12-13
 - 1. Exercises same authority (by Satan)
 - Bringing attention to the first beast (whose wound was healed)
 - a. First beast: Imperial Rome - wound
 - b. Second beast: Holy Roman Empire - healed
 Note: the power and persuasion continues from one beast to another, the one by brutal force, the other by subversion.
- C. Its conduct 13:14-17
 - 1. Deception 13:14
 - 2. Results of deception 13:15-17

Note: the forces that rule (religious or secular) and oppress, set the rules for the oppressed, who buys, who sells, etc (13:17). In essence, we are dealing with one beast, in plural form, both religious and secular that have dominated mankind down through the centuries.

D. Therefore, who is “it”?¹

1. It is human² based with all the evil empowered by the dragon, from brutal kings to soft spoken counterfeit religious leaders.

2. 666 - “it” doesn’t measure up

It is not equal to God. It is inferior, even though empowered by the dragon (Satan) to work mischief, it shall not prevail against God or His church (Matt 16:18).

¹ We have chosen “it” in translating the reflexive pronoun αὐτοῦ / (as neuter) as does the AV and the ESV in the descriptions of the beast in 13:11-18. The KJV, NASV and the NIV translate “he” (masculine) in these verses.

² We have chosen to translate ἀνθρώπου as “human” in 13:18 rather than “a man” (AV, ESV, KJV, and the NASV). It is of interest to note that the ESV and the NASV translate the same noun in 21:17 “human.” The AV and KJV translate 21:17 “a man” (with the indefinite article) whereas the NIV simply has “man’s” which is closer to “human” in our understanding.

Chapters 13 Summary

Preface

Our premise for the summary to chapter 13 is “certain things had not happened yet.” What we mean by this is that we see the development of the church under persecution and conflict, persecution from without and conflict from within, over an extended period of time, in this chapter. What we see looking back through history, the things that developed in the church are things that were not envisioned by John. And because our position on chapter 13 is time line future, we will also state that “certain things have not happened yet” (the conclusion of the ages and consummate judgments). In brief we see the development of the church from its beginning and down through the centuries, in our analysis of this chapter. Chapter 13 is a pivotal, transitional view of the main theme of the book of Revelation - Jesus Christ and His church or the Bride and Bridegroom. Warnings, appeals, judgments and encouragements seem to crescendo from chapter 1 through chapter 11, chapter 12 makes the transition from Israel to the church. Chapter 13 is that specific development of the church. From chapter 14 through chapter 20, the theme of final judgment seems to intensify and this is in keeping with our time line future view. We see the beast of chapter 13 working in and through the church to destroy Her, first from without (Imperial Rome) then from within (the Harlot, the false church that emerged to its peak via the Holy Roman Empire) and as well, world powers, sometimes in concert, sometimes in conflict with the Harlot. These both culminate in their final judgment along with the evil force behind them - the dragon -Satan.

Summary

The events and mysterious details of chapter 13 follow chapter 12 logically in that the focus of the dragon in chapter 12 comes with calculated force and evil (12:17) upon the beginnings of the church briefed there. In chapter 13, we see the force and evil of the dragon in the beast he has empowered (13:1-2) with all of its grotesqueness described vividly. We must at this point not fail to recall the figurative and symbolic nature of this revelation to John, as well as the fact that he is in a vision or trance state clearly seen in 13:1a, “and I (he) stood on the sand of the seashore. and I saw a beast...” (ASV). We must also consider, even though vividly seen by John, the details remain nebulus. And even though nebulus, we have recourse to consult other biblical data relative to end time prophecy. Our primary source again would be Daniel, as we stated in the previous chapter. In the visions Daniel records (those of his own and those of Nebuchadnezzar), he offers much help because in most instances they speak to the same time frame and

subject matter: the demise of Israel, the kingdom established (the church age) and final consummation. Historically, the scene (Rev 12-13) is set in the dynamic of the following:

1. The demise of the Jewish temple worship, ending by A.D. 70
2. The establishing of the New Testament church through Christ and His apostles.
3. These historical events coming under the rule of the powerful Roman Empire.

As stated above, in his prophecy Daniel has described certain dreams and interpretations of dreams of the Babylonian king Nebuchadnezzar and dreams of his own concerning secular world powers (Dan 2, 7, 8, 11, 12). These come in succession and end with a theocratic power, that is God's final power, which shall never be succeeded. In each of the pictures Daniel displays, there are four world powers. The first one Daniel is a keen witness to, the Babylonian, and the second would be the Medo-Persian, the third is the Alexander-Greco, followed by the fourth, the Roman Empire. Daniel does not name these empires, but history has borne out the undisputed sequence demonstrated here, and biblical and secular scholars have not disagreed.

It is within the realm of this Roman domination that Jesus Christ comes, and establishes His kingdom. It is also within and with this Roman domination that the dragon (Satan) employs His evil and 'war' upon the 'offspring' of Israel (12:2). This point in history is what Daniel could not see nor understand, and which caused him anxiety and alarm, notice His comments concerning these future events:

Dan 7:15: As for me, Daniel, my spirit within me was anxious, and the visions of my head alarmed me.

Dan 7:28: Here is the end of the matter. As for me, Daniel, my thoughts greatly alarmed me, and my color changed, but I kept the matter in my heart.

Dan 8:27: And I, Daniel, was overcome and lay sick for some days. Then I rose and went about the king's business, but I was appalled by the vision and did not understand it.

Dan 12:8-9: I heard, but I did not understand. Then I said, "O my lord, what shall be the outcome of these things?" 9 He said, "Go your way, Daniel, for the words are shut up and sealed until the time of the end.

In Nebuchadnezzar's dream, Daniel saw this picture: "a stone was cut out by no human hand"(Dan 2:34a) which broke in pieces all previous kingdoms, "And in the days of those kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom that shall never be destroyed..." Dan 2:44a (In the phrase "the days of those kings" Daniel is

speaking of the latter kings, the Roman Emperors the fourth kingdom of Dan 2:40). In his own dream/vision, he is alarmed by the fourth kingdom, (the Roman) and its effects on the saints **As I looked, this horn made war with the saints and prevailed over them... "He shall speak words against the Most High, and shall wear out the saints of the Most High, and shall: think to change the times and the law; and they shall be given into his hand for a time, times, and half a time"** (Dan 7:21, 25). This then is the scene in the first century and current with the founding of the church of Jesus Christ. The dragon (Satan) employs the power and wickedness of Rome to thwart the advance of the church. The vision we are witness to in Revelation 13 is just that. We shall make no attempt here to identify the "horns" and "heads" (13:1; 17:1-12). As many scholars have presented varying views to their identity, I am content with the statement of John: "these have one purpose and they give their power and authority to the beast. These will wage war against the Lamb, and the Lamb will overcome them, because He is Lord of lords and King of kings" (17:13-14). The reason we take this position is as follows:

1. The menacing, crushing power of imperial Rome fails to a large degree in the next 250-300 years.
2. Apostolic fathers were reluctant to speak at length about the conditions they were living in nor to offer much in the way of fixing the identity of the "horns" and "heads" of Revelation 13:17. Irenaeus - 'Against Heresies' has this to say, "It is therefore more certain and less hazardous, to await the fulfillment of the prophecy, than to be making surmises, and casting about for any names that may present themselves, in as much as many names can be found possessing the number mentioned" (Vol. 1 Book 5 chapter 30.3 pg. 559, *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, Hendrickson Publishers). Here of course he is speaking directly of the beast's number (Rev 13:18), but certainly the same as the beast of Revelation 13:1 described with "horns" and "heads", which he does identify with Rome, but not with individual specificity (Book 5, chapter 26 through chapter 29 pgs. 554 through 557) Here he is confirming the identity of John's data with that of Daniel regarding the "ten" kings etc. from Daniel 2:44 and 7:24. Irenaeus seems to concur with our view that "certain things had not happened yet" in order to make a valid assessment of the leaders of that time specifically. Other men of the period, living within the sphere of Roman domination concur that Rome is in view with varying concepts. See Hyppolytus, "Treatise on Christ and Anti-Christ" (Vol. 5, Part II, paragraphs 49-50, pgs. 214-215, *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, Hendrickson Publishers) . Although Eusebius, in his church history (late 3rd or early 4th century) has some interesting comments on the subject regarding Valerian and his persecutions "The persecutions of Valerian" (Vol.1 Book 7, chapter 10, pgs. 298-299 *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, Hendrickson Publishers).

3. From the time of Constantine, c. 315 to Charlemane (approximately 500 years), the Roman Empire would undergo further decline, but at the same time, we see the ascendancy of the “Holy Roman Empire.”

During this time, we see a somewhat different understanding of the prophecy described in Revelation 13. We find that the view is different because certain things have developed to shape that view generally:

a. For example, we read Augustine and discover that his view is somewhat general in that he contrasts the beast as the “ungodly city itself” (Rome) full of unbelievers, as he says, “in opposition to the faithful people and the city of God.” He further says that many “profess to believe, but live as unbelievers. For they pretend to be what they are not, and are called Christians” (The City of God, book 20, ch. 10).

b. Another example: we find in Ambrose (St. Ambrose of Milan, late 4th century) that he quotes John’s Apocalypse (13:6) and describes the ‘beast’ as antichrist and labels the followers of Arius as such "Of Christian Faith" (Vol. 10 book 2, ch. 15:135 pg. 241, Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Hendrickson Publishers).

To sum up this position, it seems clear that because “certain things had not happened yet” that we have an ever evolving picture of the ‘beast’ of Revelation 13:1 and 13:11. The initial beast as seen as imperial Rome with all of its vicious brutality of the church has evolved to be a subtle scourge on (in) the church. The first eight centuries seem to demonstrate this, since imperial Rome declined, yet the church is still under seige of the dragon (12:17), but now by the beast of 13:11 with his visage as a lamb yet speaking as a dragon. This then helps us understand Daniel’s anxiety because he could not see past the fourth world power or that which preceeds the final power, that dilemma of the “horn” which “made war with the saints and prevailed over them” (Dan 7:21), and “they shall be given into his hand for a time, times, and half a time (church age in our view, Dan 7:25b). This dilemma for him and for the apostolic fathers and the patristic generations to follow was because “certain things had not happened yet.”

Another example of the subtly of the latter beast may be seen in the views and teachings of Arius (320 A.D) and Pelagius (400 A.D) and many more. These views (in the church) were direct attacks on Jesus Christ and God the Father, “and the dragon...went off to make war with the rest of her offspring, who keep the commandments of God and hold testimony of Jesus” (Rev 12:17; see Ambrose, above). These attacks in the church can be multiplied many times over. We have the advantage now to be able to see this development and assess it accordingly. The attitude within the church of these times may be summed up by this quote from Jerome (400 A.D.) to Pope Theophilus: “The voice of your Holiness has rung throughout the world, and to the joy of all Christ’s churches the poisonous

suggestions of the devil have been silenced. The old serpent hisses no longer” (Vol. 6, Letters, chapter 88, pg. 183, Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Hendrickson Publishers). For some of those who lived through this period (as Jerome states above) there is no apparent awareness of the dragon’s activity, but as we view this history of the two horned lamb, speaking as a dragon , shows him unmistakably active, for certain things during this time had happened. A study of church history of this time period (100 A.D to 800 A. D.) will show as much in the carnal expediencies and lack of care for the church. This activity would continue until reforms were initiated. Amazingly, by the grace of God these time frames produced our most treasured theological definitions, systems, and scholar/theologians. Consult the following "points to consider" to help see how the subtlety of the dragon (satan) empowered the beasts and even transitioned them from fierce to docile, once firmly entrenched in the church. It is our position therefor as well, that once entrenched they produced the Harlot, which is the false church and will be in conflict with the true, the pure Bride of the Lamb, the Christ Of God. This conflict, undenied by history, will continue until the consumation. Therefore, we, in this twenty first century, are undeniable witnesses to compromise, deviation, denial and false teaching comming from many corners of the Church. Truly, many things "have happened" to advance our understanding of this blessed book.

Chapters 13 Points to Consider

- I. First Beast - Imperial Rome (13:1-2)
- II. Second Beast - Extension/transition of Imperial Rome to the Holy Roman Empire exercising all authority of the first beast (13:11-17)
- III. Description of the first beast - 13:1-2 Fierce
- IV. Description of the second beast - 13:11 Docile
- V. Results of fierceness - (first beast) brutality and persecution on the church, by Imperial Rome
- VI. Results of docile nature - (second beast) subversion in the church and alliances with world powers, furthering that subversion by the cunning of its leaders
- VII. Significance of “fatal wound healed” - 13:3, 12, 14
 - A. The first beast, Imperial Rome

“As if slain” (decline of Imperial Rome)13:3

B. The first beast becomes the second "docile" beast as the

“First beast whose fatal wound was healed” 13:12

C. Makes an image to the beast who had the wound of the sword (shows unity of beasts, plurality) and “has come to life” (13:14) contrasted with “as if it had been slain” (13:3). The first beast has come to life in the form of the second beast. Notice the progression of thought specifically on this subject from verse 3 directly through verse 14.

Note:

1. He exercises authority of the first beast 13:12a
2. Makes the earth etc. worship him 13:12b (as world powers)
3. He performs great signs 13:13
4. He deceives those who dwell on earth 13:14
(Imperial Rome, the first beast, did not have to rely on this measure, brute force was its answer to any conflict)
5. Gives breath, enables it to speak (subversive voice of the failing church) 13:15
6. Establishes the identifying principle of reliance. Power rules, religious or secular 13:16 (cf. Rome wed to the church via Constantine, early fourth century)
7. First beast out of the sea (of humanity) 13:1
Cf. 17:15 “waters” (sea) of humanity, perhaps unregenerate humanity with a will to dominate, rule and exercise power - Rome as further described, fits that description with all its power demonstrated with brute force.
8. Second beast of the earth (earthly, human) 13:11, denoting perhaps a humbler existence, docile as seen by “two horns like a lamb”, yet speaking as a dragon, deceiving. This activity has been seen throughout the centuries of dominance of the Holy Roman Empire.

Note: more on this subject and its relationship to the “harlot” will be discussed in chapter 17, but herein is where the harlot had her beginnings. She devolpped through the subtly of the second beast, to a point that we see today, the innocent and lamb-like features comming down to us through the Holy Roman Empire. This Empire has also disappeared but not the monstrous harlot it created that continues to exist today, and we continue to witness today, as we also stated above.

Detailed Outline for Chapter 14

Note: this is an interlude panorama of church age to consummation vision.

- I. Redeemed Israel waiting 14:1-5
 - A. Location - Mt. Zion 14:1a
 - B. Participants:
 - 1. The lamb 14:1a
 - 2. Redeemed Israel 14:1 (cf. Rev 7:4-8)
 - C. Activity of the redeemed 14:2-3
 - D. Description of the redeemed 14:4-5
 - 1. undefiled
 - 2. Follow the Lamb
 - 3. First fruits
 - 4. Blameless

- II. Mission of the true church 14:6-7
 - A. Preach the eternal gospel 14:6
 - B. Worship the eternal God 14:7

- III. Mission warning to the false church 14:8
 - A. She (Babylon = Harlot Rev 17:1, 4-5) is fallen 14:8a (cf. 18:1-2)
 - B. Her affects on nations 14:8b (cf. 18:3)

- IV. Mission warning 14:9-11
 - A. Recipient of false worship: the beast (Babylon, harlot, false church, 13:1) 14:9
 - B. Results of false worship: the wrath of God 14:10-11

- V. Mission rewards 14:12-13
 - A. Perseverance - its own reward 14:12
 - B. Blessed, rest - 14:13

- VI. A vision of consumation and final judgment 14:14-20
 - A. The Son of Man - Jesus Christ reaps the harvest of redeemed believers 14:14-16
 - 1. The identity - "Golden crown"
 - 2. The time - "Hour to reap"
 - 3. The condition - "Ripe" (dry) cf. Matt 3:12; 13:30, Luke 3:17
 - B. The angels gather the unbelievers 14:17-20

1. Another angel with a sharp sickle directed to reap 14:17-18
2. The angel reaps 14:19
3. The terrible results 14:20 cf. matt 13:41

Note: The thoughts on this subject (VI A. and VI B. Above) are expanded in the following: " Chapter 14 Summary" and the " Summary aspects of Jugdment"

Chapter 14 Summary

Introduction

Chapter 14 through chapter 19 continue the theme of chapter 13, which is the assault on the church by the dragon (Satan of chapter 12) by all the means he has put forth both secular and religious. Chapter 14 is a good reminder of that. All the players are demonstrated in these chapters as: the beast, dragon, harlot, false prophet, nations, kings and armies. It should also be noted that those who fall prey to these entities are likewise condemned with them. And each chapter speaks of their final demise. In one place, it is brief (14:9-11) and other places lengthy (16:1-21). In one place, it speaks of those who follow (14:9b) and in other places the leaders of evil are described (16:10-14; 17:1-6, 13-18; 18:1-5; 19:19-21).

Summary

Chapter 14, as stated in the outline, is an interlude (14:1-5) and a panorama (14:1-20). The interlude consists in the picture of the redeemed of Israel (144,000) as pure, clean celibates as they relate to the Lamb (bridegroom) and clean and blameless as the "firstfruits to God." Simply put, these are all the old testament believers, made that way by the death of Christ the Messiah of Israel. This picture demonstrates that in all of its beauty (14.2-3).

It should be noted here the contrast between chapters 7 and 14 regarding the 144,000. In chapter 7, the representative numbers (144,000) are seen as being set aside and sealed, within the historical judgment picture (seals and trumpet judgments) upon people and the planet after the fall. The contrast noted above is in the timeframe after creation and the fall (Gen 1-3), and before the first advent of Christ. The contrast, in chapter 14, is a consummate view of their effective redemption which was completed after His first advent and before His second advent. The effective date, if you will, is the death, burial and resurrection of Christ. Perhaps many of these saints can be seen in the picture described by Matthew in his Gospel following the resurrection "and the tombs were opened; and many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised; and coming out of the tombs after his resurrection they entered the holy city and appeared to many" (Matt. 27:52-53). I use "perhaps" guardedly for they could be Old Testament saints, or followers of Jesus during his brief earthly ministry. The allusion may also be seen in the letter to the Ephesians by the Apostle Paul (cf. Eph. 4:8-10). Chapter 14 expands this view of the 144,000 purchased, redeemed, rejoicing in song (14:3), having been made pure and blameless (14:5) in the presence of the lamb. It is interesting to note that "no one could learn the song except the 144,000 who had been purchased from the earth" (14:3b). The reason for this lies in the fact that they are the "first fruits" (14:4) and the early people who make up the bride and at that time the voice of the redeemed. Note the parallel

of the “great multitude” (7:9) following the view of the sealing of Israel (7:3-8) and the final reaping of the rest of the redeemed (14:13-16). After the rejoicing of Israel (14:3), the panorama is also a vivid picture of Israel the first fruits to God and the continued gospel being proclaimed to all the earth (14:6-7). The view continues almost simultaneous with the advent of the church that just began with its fall or deviation from the truth right from the start. The dragon was not sitting idle, he was active as stated in 12:17, and began his assault early, which is attested to in the early history of the church recorded in the book of Acts. This assault is seen also in the epistles written for the most part to correct error and to give encouragement to the church. This error is pictured at its height in 14:8-11, “Fallen is Babylon the great,” the picture of the harlot (cf. 17:5-6), the false church (aligned with Rome), which is here contrasted with the true church (14:7, 12, 13), and is given serious warnings to deviants (14:9-11).

The balance of the chapter (14:14-20) is another brief of final consummation and judgment. A clear distinction is made here in the final reaping. Christ, pictured in 14:14, holding a “sharp sickle,” will reap His own, “And He who sat on the cloud swung His sickle over the earth; and the earth was reaped. Note Mat. 3:12, **“His winnowing fork is in His hand, and He will thoroughly clear His threshing floor; and He will gather His wheat into the barn, but He will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire”**. Angels, pictured in 14:17-19, will reap the unbelieving mass of humanity. Note Mat. 13:41-42, **“The Son of Man will send forth His angels, and they will gather out of His kingdom all stumbling blocks, and those who commit lawlessness, ⁴² and will throw them into the furnace of fire; in that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth”** These gospel accounts give us a vivid picture of His reaping, as further exemplified in Matthew 13:30: **“Allow both to grow together until the harvest; and in the time of the harvest I will say to the reapers, “First gather up the tares and bind them in bundles to burn them up; but gather the wheat into my barn.”**

A Summary of Aspects of Judgment

It is worth noting here that different aspects of consummation and final judgment keep appearing and reappearing throughout the book. The first appears at the end of the seals judgments (seal six, 6:12-17). The aspect here is connected with the picture of final judgment where the earth is convulsing against humanity, which comes directly after the view of redemption (6:9-11); this we stated in some detail in our chapters 6-11 summary above. The next aspect is seen in brief at 11:18-19 where the mission of the church is shown as being championed by the two witnesses (11:3) who represent the word of God and the Holy Spirit of God. These are described prophetically in Zech. 4:1-14 The unchampioned are seen in the nations of 11:18 **“The nations raged, but your wrath came, and the time for the dead to be**

judged, and for rewarding your servants, the prophets and saints, and those who fear your name, both small and great, and for destroying the destroyers of the earth". The next aspect is the one we have just looked at, the picture of the reapers (chapter 14:14-20) where Christ garners to life (14:16) and the angels reaped to death (14:19-20). Next we have the horrific details of chapter 16:1-18. Then a particular aspect is seen in the wrath of God upon Babylon (16:19 "the harlot) that is fully detailed in chapter 17, and specifically directed toward the harlot, the false church. This carries over into chapter 18 where she is further singled out. The next aspect begins with and continues through the cohort who infected her, the beast, and the end time cohort, the false prophet, which represents Islam " **20 And the beast was captured, and with it the false prophet who in its presence had done the signs by which he deceived those who had received the mark of the beast and those who worshiped its image. These two were thrown alive into the lake of fire that burns with sulfur. 21 And the rest were slain by the sword that came from the mouth of him who was sitting on the horse, and all the birds were gorged with their flesh**" 19:20-21. The final aspect is seen in chapter 20:10-15 where the devil (the dragon) is dealt with and all unbelievers who have been deceived by the beast and the false prophet. We will have more comments on these things in the summaries of the final chapters.

Detailed Outline for Chapters 15-16

These chapters are linked by way of the seven last plagues, which are the **seven golden bowls full of the wrath of God** (15:17). This is the beginning of the last aspect of final and complete judgment upon the earth and its inhabitants. Chapter 15 is therefore a preface to chapter 16, which details the cataclysmic events.

- I. Great and marvelous signs 15:1-4
 - A. Seven angels and seven plagues 15:1
A view of the wrath of God: **which are the last, for with them the wrath of God is finished.**
 - B. Contrast: the victorious redeemed 15:2-4
 1. Victory from the beast, his image, and his name (13:15,18; 14:12) 15:2a
 2. Holding harps of God (cf. 5:8) 15:2b
 3. Singing and rejoicing (cf. 5:9) 15:3-4
 - a. Song of Moses
 - b. Song of the Lamb

Demonstrates the unity of all the saints of the Old Testament and New
- II. The edict to send forth 15:5-8; 16:1
 - A. The place - the sanctuary in heaven 15:5
 - B. The participants - angels (Matt 13:41) 15:6-7
 - C. The voice of the edict - God 15:8; 16:1
- III. The bowls poured out 16:2-21
 - A. The bowls upon the natural elements 16:2-9
 1. The earth and results 16:2
 2. The sea and results 16:3
 3. The rivers and results 16:4
(The affirmation 16:5-7)
 4. The sun and results 16:8-9
 - B. The bowls upon the enemies 16:10-16
 1. The throne of the beast 16:10-11
 2. The cohorts and followers of the dragon, beast, and false prophet 16:12-16
 - C. The bowl of consummation 16:17-21
 1. Upon the air, all encompassing: "it is done" 16:17
 2. Devastating results 16:18-21

Note: the particular entities (the beast and the false prophet, 16:13, and the harlot, 16:19) will be dealt with in expanded view in the succeeding chapters, as we alluded to in the previous "Summary of aspects of judgments."

Chapters 15-16 Summary

As we stated in the outline, chapter 15 is a preface to chapter 16. The view in chapter 15 is heavenly and glorious in all its appearances. The attention-focus initially is on the seven angels who will perform their duty. The scene quickly shifts to the myriad of saints who have **conquered the beast and its image and the number of its name** (15:2). [This is reflective of and in contrast to 14:8-9 and the warning of 13:8 and 18.] The next scene shows the unity and security of all the redeemed in glorious rapture singing the praises of God in heaven. In that heavenly scene next we see the preparation for the final and complete judgment upon the forces of evil and the followers of the same. We notice here (15:6-8) the brilliant picture of this preparation of the angels described in terms such as “clean,” “bright,” “golden,” and the “glory of God,” which will execute the devastation to come.

Chapter 16 begins with John hearing “a loud voice from the sanctuary” giving the command to pour out the wrath of God into the whole earth. What we see next is the wrath of God upon the natural elements (bowls 1-4) and being used to execute his judgment upon men (16:2) via the earth, sea, rivers and sun. This is the picture that Peter gives us in his epistle: ⁷ **But by His word the present heavens and earth are being reserved for fire, kept for the day of judgment and destruction of ungodly men.** ⁸ **But do not let this one fact escape your notice, beloved, that with the Lord one day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years like one day.** ⁹ **The Lord is not slow about His promise, as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance.** ¹⁰ **But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, in which the heavens will pass away with a roar and the elements will be destroyed with intense heat, and the earth and its works will be burned up.** ¹¹ **Since all these things are to be destroyed in this way, what sort of people ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness** (II Pet 3:7-11), which is vividly shown in the view of bowl 4 (16:8-9). We notice the reaction of ungodly men: **“they cursed the name of God who had power over these plagues. They did not repent and give him glory”** (16:9). Bowls 5 and 6 are directed toward the enemies of God in the higher places: **the throne of the beast and his kingdom** (16:10), **the dragon...the beast...the false prophet** (16:13). The dragon and the beast pictured here with the false prophet have been well stated in numerous places along with the harlot (Babylon) of 16:19, and have been identified and discussed much in chapters 12-14, without discussion, however, of the false prophet. Our view of the false prophet is that this entity represents Islam, and that for the following reasons in brief:

1. Very little is known of this figure (only two references: 16:13 and 19:20)
2. Islam would not come on the religious scene for six centuries in the future, unknown to John.
3. It is clear from our twenty-first century data and experience that Islam

will be an end time factor.

4. Islam being a religious factor because of its claim to Abrahamic beginnings, it therefore identifies with Judaism and Christianity.
5. God has historically been severe in His reaction to religious entities that claim allegiance to Him while at the same time denying His verity and distorting His person. Islam is guilty of this as is the false church.
6. Currently, secular and religious entities support Islam as a good, moral, decent religious movement.
7. There is a hint of the dominant Islamic geography in 16:12 **"The sixth angel poured out his bowl on the great river Euphrates, and its water was dried up, to prepare the way for the kings from the east"** with no other seeming connection in preparation for the last conflict briefed in 16:14-16.

Whether or not our assumption regarding the false prophet is true makes little difference to the issues of final condemnation of these entities that are definitely distinct from the general mass of humanity. It is clear here that by the influence of the dragon, they are the forces that try to usurp God's authority in the guise of benevolent religious bodies. Their true identity is revealed in their actions against God 16:14-16. We must note here that v 15 is a picture of God's continual mercy and grace in the midst of the actions of the wicked described in verses 14 and 16 "Behold, I am coming like a thief. Blessed is the one who stays awake and keeps his garments, lest he walk about naked and men see his shame." 16:15. Notice how quickly and decisively they are brought to naught: "it is done" 16:17. We also see the results of that action described in 16:18-24, with Babylon, the harlot a seeming focal point perhaps because of her many constituents. It should be noted here, as we stated above, that bowls 5 and 6 are directed at "spiritual forces," enemies of God in high places. This is interesting because seal 5 and trumpet 5 also deal with spiritual forces, but in a view within the scope of past judgment upon the planet and the people of the planet. The point here is that even though the past judgments on people and planet were to demonstrate the fall, the curse and its consequences, a fixed historical reality, it should also be noted that evil forces were a major factor in that calamity. These evil spiritual forces also corrupted the very soul of man, demonstrated so vividly in Gen. chapters 3-4.

To demonstrate the differences between the seal and trumpet judgments (historical past) and the bowl judgments (future) we look at the facts of the percentages of destruction in the seals and trumpets: the seals one-fourth (25%), regarding death in all of its different facets Revelation 6:8. These illustrations show all the ways men die, but not all men. We next contrast the effects on the planet which will ultimately affect the people of the planet: the trumpets one-third (33%) of earth, trees, and grass unsuitable for habitation one-third (33%) of seas,

creatures, and ships one-third (33%) of rivers and springs made unfit and if used causes death. Finally, one-third (33%) of the sun, moon, stars are darkened Revelation 8:7-12. Here I repeat the statement I made above “Here is perhaps the most revealing picture of the effects of the curse. The beautiful picture of the “lights” that God created (Gen 1.14-18) are distorted by all manner of weather conditions. Again, ‘one-third’ (33%) speaks to the portion of time and condition when these lights are not serving their intended purpose. Note: only two humans saw them in their glorious perfection.” Now the differences are made clear when we observe the bowls and the descriptions of finality "Every living thing died" Rev. 16:3 and enhanced by the language of the last bowl being poured out and its climax, "**It is done**" Rev. 16:17. It should also be noted that this theme of final judgment is framed in figurative and symbolic language while suggesting the reality and surety of the events. We here, want to reinforce our position that the seals judgments and trumpet judgments were historical and partial, as seen in these percentages. These judgments, also known as the curse upon man and the planet began at the fall and will continue until the consummation. The bowl Judgments however, are future and will be a grave part of that consummation.

Detailed Outline for Chapters 17-18

Note: Chapters 17 and 18 are a telescoping (Google, for our twenty-first century readers) view of the particular entity, the harlot (Babylon) of Revelation 16:19 (cf. 17:5, 18). Chapter 17 deals with her beginnings and relationships in the early centuries (cf. ch 13 summary and outline). Chapter 18 is a further telescoping of her conditions as she affected forces and powers in the later centuries until her demise (future) described in 19:1-3. The entities of the other three forces of evil, the dragon, the beast and false prophet will be telescoped in particular in chapters 19-20, focusing on their demise (cf. summary to ch 15 and 16 for some speculation regarding the false prophet).

- I. Brief of the great harlot 17:1-6
 - A. Her judgment is the theme 17:1-2
 - B. Her identity 17:3-5
 1. Sitting on the scarlet beast 17:3
 2. Wed to the beast 17:4
 3. Full title- “mother of harlots” 17:5
 - C. Her wicked deeds 17:6

- II. Her mystery revealed 17:7-12
 - A. Connection with the beast 17:7-8
 1. The beast carries her 17:7
 2. The beast transitional 17:8a
 - a. Was and is not (Imperial Rome)
 - b. Will come (Holy Roman Empire)
 - c. Wonder (by earth dwellers)
 3. The beast in full view 17b
 - B. The call to wisdom 17:9
 1. The obvious stated 17:9a
(seven mountains - Rome)
 2. The woman sits 17:9b
(Rome - her beginnings)
 3. Wisdom - Rome is the beast
 - C. Rome (Imperial, described) 17:10-12
 1. Kings come and go 17:10
 2. Identity - kings and beast 17:11
 3. More to come 17:12

- III. Beast and harlot, power and purpose 17:13-18

- A. To wage war 17:13-14
(the view is proleptic, the Lamb will prevail, cf. Rev 12:17)
 - B. Confusion within evil 17:15-17
 - 1. Harlot's expanded domain 17:15
 - 2. Conflict with kings throughout church history 17:16-17
 - C. She has a kingdom...reigns! 17:18
- IV. Focus on the great harlot's actions 18:1-24
- A. Her rise in vain luxury 18:1-2
 - 1. Her fall from grace 18:1-3
 - 2. The call to separate from her 18:4-5
 - 3. Her vanity is her own reward 18:6-7
 - B. Proleptic view of her demise because of her harlotry 18:8-10
 - C. The lament of her paramours 18:11-19
 - D. Interlude: rejoice! 18:20
 - E. View of the fallen church: the reality of who she was 18:21-24

Chapters 17-18 Summary

Chapters 17 and 18 follow the theme of judgment evidenced in chapter 16, but with a particular view of the harlot (“the great harlot,” “the mother of harlots,” “the abominations of the earth,” 17:1, 5). She is first shown “sitting on a scarlet beast, full of blasphemous names...” (17:3). It is evident that her beginning had a rapid start via her relationship with Imperial Rome, even though this happened several centuries into her development. It is also evident that her fall (14:8; 18:2) was the work of the dragon (12:17) and his waging of war. The effects of that war came on two fronts, Imperial Rome (first beast) and its crushing forces externally, and soon afterward the development of the Holy Roman Empire (second beast) working internally by subversion (cf. chapter 13 summary). The picture we see in these chapters is a fully confident and mature entity, which we have described as the false church (17:4-6). The further description of her is detailed in 17:7-18. This passage not only describes her development by the change in the first beast (Imperial Rome) to the second beast (the Holy Roman Empire), but also their interaction with her (cf. the Edict of Toleration, 313 A.D. to Charlemagne, 800 A.D.).

Chapter 18 shows us her fall again (18:2, cf. 14:8) and the warning to God’s people (“my people”) to flee from her (18:4). This seems to illustrate the struggle within the church during these eight centuries between orthodoxy and heresy. This then is a seeming paradox because many, if not all, of the theological standards were defined in this time. From this point it seems that the wayward, wanton desires of the church changed and the view of the harlot imagery becomes pronounced (800 A.D. to approximately 1600 A.D.). A vast accumulation of data from this period of church history can be readily obtained. All the descriptions of these Scriptures (18:2-3) are easily verified. We must then concentrate on her judgment for that is the focus of these chapters. To have a proper understanding of this fact, it may be well to recognize one of our premises in earlier summaries that certain things “have not happened yet.” In these judgments, we are seeing her end, realizing that this is the emphasis, we must be cautious in viewing how she approaches that end: **As she glorified herself and lived in luxury, so give her a like measure of torment and mourning, since in her heart she says, ‘I sit as a queen, I am no widow, and mourning I shall never see.’ For this reason her plagues will come in a single day, death and mourning and famine, and she will be burned up with fire; for mighty is the Lord God who has judged her** (18:7-8).

From this point on, we see two distinct pictures. First, we have the view on the outside of her paramours lamenting (18:11-19), interrupted by an interlude to rejoice (18:20). Second, we have a view of her internally, of what was, and how it faded, the timeframe of which we cannot speak with any precision (18:21-24). I am

aware that the descriptions of “harpists,” “craftsmen,” “light of a lamp,” and “bridegroom and bride” are historically speaking of Israel and Jerusalem (cf. Isa. 24:8; Ezek. 26:13; Jer.7:34; Isa. 23:8). However, the application can be made here to the false church where the lamp should be shining, and speech regarding the bridegroom (Christ), and the bride (the true church) should be echoing loudly. Instead, we find in her “the blood of prophets and saints” (18:24). This picture is similar to that of Jesus’ words to the “false” leaders of Israel “woe to you” (cf. Matt 23:29-37). Certainly Israel is not in view to John, but the false church is. We must at this point give a fuller description of the false church. We need to be careful not to identify the false church with any single entity of today. That fact has changed since early Reformation days, at which time there was only one recognized church. Today, however we see falsehood in many denominational churches. It is the false doctrines being heralded by these churches that we see as the "collective" false church. Having viewed the church down through the centuries, and because things historically "have happened," we can make these assertions and draw their relative conclusions.

In this study we are identifying the Harlot metaphorically as the false and or failing church, contrasted with, and in opposition to the true. The true church being the bride of the Lamb. We are also identifying "Babylon" and "BABYLON THE GREAT", in figure, as the "seat" of the Harlot. It should be noted here that the descriptive pictures of Babylon are all in the context of falling and final destruction (cf. Rev. 14:8; 16:19; 17:5; 18:2,10,21), the same as that of the Harlot. We see in 16:19 that Babylon, is being described as a city, a "fallen" (14:8) and a city being judged (14:9-11). We observe also the close identity of the "woman" in 17:4, who we perceive to be the Harlot, and Babylon as the city (seat), by nuance meshed together in 17:18. As the seat of The Harlot via its relationship to her, Babylon became the focal point of the Harlot in the early centuries of the church. Consequently, the name "Rome" became synonymous with the church. It is in this sense, then, that Rome, acquiesced to the church and visa versa, hence the seat of the Harlot was established. We also see in the passages previous to 14:8 the proclamation of "an eternal gospel" to be preached, and warnings to "Fear God, and give him glory" 14:6-7. We see as well, subsequent to 14:8 the warnings of terrible consequences for the constituents, followers of the Harlot, here seen in her benefactor, the "beast" 14:9-11. Here it seems clear that these warnings refer back to the beast (beasts) of chapter 13. In chapter 13, we see its (their) initial beginnings and development. It is here that we see them empower the Harlot (which became the false church) and turn Rome (Babylon), into the "seat". It is only in this connection that Rome is Babylon, as an accomplice to the Harlot. It would be well to note here that this process spanned several centuries.

The following are our reasons and support for this position that the Harlot is in figure the false and failing church: (I.) The picture of the contrasted Harlot and bride in Revelation, is very similar to the picture of the adultress wife of the God of Israel in the Old Testament. In this Old Testament picture the figure or metaphor shows a husband-wife relationship, with the wife turning to adultress relationships with other gods and other nations (cf. Jer. 3:1,8,9; Ezek. 16:32; 23:37; Hos. 5:7). In the New Testament picture of the Harlot, we see the potential bride to be, committing her acts of fornication with the secular, godless world around her.³ The Harlots activities are seen and expressed in the sometimes shameless conduct of her ministerial body. This conduct reached its apex in the 9th through 11th centuries.⁴ It must be understood that the debauchery of her ministers (priests and popes) is only a reflection of her spiritual debauchery, a microcosm as it seems, of her activity. Historically, she has had periods of moderation, but her avarice seemed insatiable, following after, and contending with monarchs and heads of state. That being said, her bigger failings are to be found in the doctrines, and misdirected icons of worship and the veneration they produced. (II.) In both of the situations cited above, we see similarities and differences. A.) That which is similar is the fact that both the adulteress of the Old Testament and the Harlot of the Revelation have spiritual ties to God. B.) That which is different is that the O.T. figure shows an adultress "wife", whereas the N.T. figure shows a "harlot" This harlot would be the betrothed of the Lamb (the Christ of God). But here, her actions deviating from her betrothal, in contrast to the faithful bride. Both of these are seen in the latter chapters of Revelation (ch's 13-18). Both had their beginnings as the church (12:17). We have demonstrated that a division began early in the church, prompted by the activity of Satan, the dragon of chapter 12, empowering the "beasts" of chapter 13. We, therefore see the Harlot emerging from this situation as a force (ch.13), and if we fast forward we will see her at her elevated position prior to her destruction (17:1-6). We see, in further contrast the true, faithful bride of Christ emerging gloriously in the marriage of the Lamb scene (19:7-14). (III.) As suggested above, we reject the idea, posited by many, that secular Rome is here in figure "babylon" in her own right, that is, by way of her own pomp and grandeur socially, and by her political skills and military power demonstrated worldwide. We do, however, accept the premise that Imperial Rome, transitioned to the Holy Roman Empire via Charlemagne, at 800 a.d., this transition took nearly 500 years. The failing church therefore emerged, as stated above, as the Harlot, and Babylon, (Rome), the "seat" as her accomplice. It is only

³ See Schaff's *History of the Christian Church*, Vol 3, Ch. III: 14, pgs 95-100, Hendrickson Publishers.

⁴ See Schaff's *History of the Christian Church*, Vol 4, Ch IV: 63, pgs 279-286; 65, pgs 293-298, Hendrickson Publishers.

in this sense, the merging of state and church concluded by Constantine in 311 a.d. (i.e. The Edict of Toleration), after several centuries of conflict, that Rome can in figure be Babylon. This merging, as stated above was accomplished by the power of the dragon (Satan) of 12:17 and 13:1-18. For a fuller view of this picture of the Harlot and Babylon, compare the parallel description of them in 17:1-18 with our "Chapter 13 Points to Consider". In our "Points" we see the beasts as dominant figures leading up to the development of the Harlot. In 17:1-18 we see the fully developed Harlot and her "seat" Babylon in vivid description, the parallel is undeniable.

Babylon, therefore, as we view her in 14:8 as "fallen" demonstrates that she has fallen in judgment and condemnation. Her description makes that clear "She who has made all the nations drink of the wine of the passion of her immorality" 14:8b. This view is enhanced by the following grave warnings demonstrated in 14:9-11, **And another angel, a third, followed them, saying with a loud voice, "If anyone worships the beast and its image and receives a mark on his forehead or on his hand,¹⁰ he also will drink the wine of God's wrath, poured full strength into the cup of his anger, and he will be tormented with fire and sulfur in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb.¹¹ And the smoke of their torment goes up forever and ever, and they have no rest, day or night, these worshipers of the beast and its image, and whoever receives the mark of its name" (ESV).**

Detailed Outline for Chapter 19

Outline note: what John “saw” in chapters 17 and 18, he now hears; there is confirmation of the demise of the harlot by a great multitude in heaven (19.1-6).

- I. Sounds of the judgment of the harlot 19:1-6
 - A. Hallelujah, His judgments on her are true 19:1-2
 - B. Hallelujah, her smoke rises up forever and ever (cf. 14:11) 19:3
 - C. Hallelujah’s by the throne’s heavenly entourage 19:4
 - D. Hallelujah’s by the throngs in heaven and on earth 19:5-6

- II. View of the marriage of the Lamb 19:7-10
 - A. The bride is ready 19:7
 - B. She is clothed in fine linen 19:8
 - C. Preparations for the marriage supper 19:9-10

- III. View of the bridegroom 19:11-16
 - A. His description 19:11-13
 - B. The bride follows 19:14 (cf. her description in 19:8 with this text)
 - C. His power, authority, and name 19:15-16

- IV. The marriage supper 19:17-18
 - A. Those invited 19:17
 - B. Their purpose 19:18

- V. The end of the beast and false prophet 19:19-21
 - A. The confrontation 19:19
 - B. The disposal 19:20
 - C. Their followers devoured 19:21

Chapters 19 Summary

Preface

In this summary of chapter 19, we will look at another facet of the final judgment landscape. We will see here another view of consummation with the feature of bride and bridegroom, marriage supper, the bridegroom in all of his glorious appearance on a white horse ready to conquer His foes. The other facets presented Christ reaping His own seen in 14:14-16 followed by judgment (reaping by angels) and the results described in 14:19-20. Another is seen in the bowls poured out and the ensuing battle pictured there in 16:10-17. Another is seen in the particular judgment upon the harlot demonstrated in 17:14 and 18:20, with her end, as John "hears" it here in 19:1-6. And finally, the doom of the beast and false prophet in 19:20. Then, after these, the final consignment of the devil to the lake of fire 20:10.

Summary

Chapter 19 begins with John hearing of the final demise of the harlot (19:1-6: "After these things I heard...") and what he heard were the great "hallelujahs" of verses 1, 3, 4 and 6. We observe here that her demise is quite different from that of the beast and false prophet (19:20) and the devil (20:10). Two of these three were the forces behind the debauchery and sensuous life style she led (cf. 17:4-18; 18:3-7). The third, the false prophet came on the scene well after the corrupting influences had taken place in the church but played a major part in opposing the true Christian faith. This external opposition lasted well up into the 15th century. (compare the data on the Crusades and the final halting of the aggression of Islam in Spain). We must observe the role of the false prophet thus: (Assuming our view of him is valid as being represented by Islam. See our comments as stated above in this study).

- A. First, the prophet of Islam claims to spring from Abraham. This indicates a kind of kindred relationship to Judaism and Christianity, but imposing the thought, that he holds the truth from Allah, that the two former entities corrupted.
- B. This prompted his sometimes fierce opposition to Judaism and the church.
- C. He therefore conceived that he was the true representative of God (Allah), this being evident in practice and in the Koran's teachings which are easily verifiable.
- D. It is historically clear that he emerged with a confused concept of both the

church and Judaism, which can be seen in the data of the 7th century. Judaism was scattered, the church was faltering and being corrupted from within. This confusion of his is very clear from many passages in the Koran. Some of his most glaring errors posited are: (1) his view of the trinity, (2) denial of the deity of Christ, (3) denial of the incarnation (of God in the flesh), (4) denial of the crucifixion, and (5) denial of the resurrection. This mixture of error and the insertion of carnal aspects of reward led to what became Islam.

E. And in our current era, the most important fact is that the false church and much of secularism has acquiesced in granting to him (it) religious status as a noble and peaceful entity, thus making him (it) a danger to the church, which is evident in our time.

Now, we return to the differences in the demise of the harlot and the demise of the other three, the beast, false prophet and the devil or Satan.

The first and major difference is the place to which those latter three are condemned, the lake of fire (19:20; 20:10). The second difference is seen in the description of the harlot's condemnation in and through her constituents, that is, those who were led astray and deceived by her.

The possible reason for her demise via her constituents and not as a complete entity, as say the false prophet (Islam), may lie in the fact that within her the possibility exists that true believers are unwitting participants (cf. the warnings to "come out of her," 18:4). These may be true believers in Christ with little or no understanding of the depth of her false beliefs. In Catholicism, the sacrifice of the mass, transubstantiation, mariolatry, and baptismal regeneration are some of the false beliefs. In Protestant liberalism, false beliefs include the denial of the major tenets of the faith beginning with the deity of Christ. Then, there are all the secular and regal associations she has made down through the centuries (some of these were demonstrated in our analysis of Rev 13). The first of these we classify as religious (17:15). The second we classify as secular (18:9).

Those (the religious) who were led astray and who gave their worship to the beast (by lies and deception) and did not heed the warnings (18:4-5), but followed her receive their just reward (14:9-11). Those (the secular) who played their part with commerce, power, ruling authority via their alliance with her will reap their own reward as well (18:9, 11, 17-19, 23). Ironically, some may fall in to both categories, those who espoused the church and at the same time gained from her secular and political avarice.

The distinction between her destruction and that of the other three may be seen in the passages of Scripture that speak directly to her demise (cf. 16:19b; 17:16; 18:8-10, 18, 21; 19:3). These passages seem to describe her demise as a dissolution, perhaps because she was made up of so many parts or constituents

who will be judged individually, as stated above, as all other ungodly and unrepentant sinners (cf. 20:12-13). The former passages may be metaphors for the latter. In the same way the beast and false prophet being cast into the lake of fire (19:20) may also be a metaphor because they also were made up of many, the beast was made up of kings and forces secular (cf. ch. 13 “points to consider,” 7.c.), and the false prophet who was composed of forces religious, albeit not Christian but claiming a right to, and an allegiance to God. The demise of the devil however is separate from the beast and the false prophet because he is a distinct personal entity. We will have further thoughts on this in our summary of chapter 20.

The next section, 19:7-10, pictures the marriage of the Lamb and the bride. She is seen clothed in fine linen “bright and clean,” which is “the righteous acts of the saints” (the holy ones, cf. 14:4, which shows the OT saints, but here all of them together). John is at this point told to “write, ‘blessed are those who are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb.’” This, of course, John does (cf. 22:17-21), because “these are the true words of God.” These instructions come from the angel described here and in 22:8-9.

Then heaven is “opened” for John and he sees the glorious view of the Son of God, now exalted, coming on a white horse in all of His brilliance and ready for battle and judgment, 19:11-16. We notice the descriptive names and purpose: first, He is called “faithful and true; and in righteousness He judges and makes war”, 19:11. Second, “He has a name written upon Him which no one knows except Himself”, 19:12. Third, “His name is called The Word of God”. Finally, His most glorious name is “King of kings and Lord of lords”, 19:16. And as we also saw above His bride, there called armies, 19:14, following Him, also on white horses. [Notice the bride’s description in 19:8 with the armies description in 19:14, “clothed in fine linen, white and clean” Hence, they are one and the same, the bride].

What John sees next in 19:17-18, is the “great supper of God”, (cf. Isa. 34:6 and Jer. 46:10) with a call to the birds of mid heaven to come and feast.

The last scene in chapter 19 is one of swift finality, 19:19-21. The enemy is assembled 19:19, the beast and false prophet are thrown into the lake of fire 19:20, the rest were killed with the sword, 19:21! And as we noted in our summary of chapter 16, God takes no pleasure in the death of the wicked, (cf. Ezek. 18:23, 32; 33:11) nor is a protracted battle necessary.

Detailed Outline for Chapter 20

Outline note: what we have in chapter 20 is a recapitulation of the final consummation with specific attention drawn to the devil who is in reality the lone entity responsible for the assault on God and His people. All other entities, represented by the names “harlot” “beast” and “false prophet” were used by him to attack and thwart the Christ of God and His followers (cf. 12:17).

- I. A vision of the binding of Satan 20:1-3
 - A. An angel with key and chain 20:1
 - B. Bound for 1,000 years (figurative) 20:2
 - C. Cast into the abyss (figurative) 20:3
 - 1. Shut and sealed
 - 2. No deception for 1,000 years
 - 3. Released for a “short time”

- II. A vision of the redeemed in heaven 20:4-6
 - A. A vision of the NT saints 20:4
 - B. A vision of the OT saints 20:5
 - C. A vision of the NT saints with confirmation to life 20:6
 - 1. Blessed and holy
 - 2. No second death
 - 3. Priests of God and Christ
 - 4. Reigning with Him (Christ)

- III. A vision of the final conflict 20:7-10
 - A. Satan released 20:7
 - B. Deception resumes 20:8
 - 1. Gathering the nations (cf. 14:18, 16:14, 16:16, 19:19)
 - 2. Immeasurable number (cf. 14:19)
 - C. Location of conflict 20:9 (cf. 16:16)
 - D. Satan’s final destination 20:10
 - 1. Place - lake of fire
 - 2. Duration - forever and ever

- IV. A vision of the great white throne and judgment 20:11-15
 - A. Awesome view of the throne 20:11
 - B. Awesome view of those standing 20:12
 - 1. Books opened
 - 2. Book of life

- 3. Judged according to deeds
- C. Awesome view of the sea, death and hades 20:13
 - 1. Giving up their dead
 - 2. Judged according to deeds
- D. Connsignment of death and hades 20:14
 - 1. Place - lake of fire
 - 2. Description - second death (cf. 20:6)
- E. Awesome view of sentencing 20:15

Chapters 20 Summary

As we stated in our outline note, chapter 20 is a recapitulation of the final consummation-judgment scene. The emphasis is now focused on the devil and his final condemnation. Our view is from a non-millennial perspective and what we see here is a brief time frame to draw our attention to the events which follow, not to the time frame itself. This vision is similar to that of chapter 7 where we see in figurative language a stopping of time, where the earth and its inhabitants are the focal point. The stopping of time demonstrated the power of God for a specific purpose, to seal the “bondservants of God” (7:1-3). Therefore, our view of chapter 20 is much the same, whereas God figuratively calls a time out. The reason being that we may essentially get a perspective of the crucial events in their proper order. The featured participants being the devil, (20:2) the church age saints, (20:4) and the OT saints (20:5), these former having been confirmed to life (20:6). These are all the saints who are described in chapter 19. They are described as armies, they are also described as the bride. (cf. also 14:3-4 and 15:2-4 where we see OT and NT saints respectively). In the chapter 19 scenario, we saw the same saints (the bride of Christ) following Him into the Judgment picture. These saints in the chapter 20 scenario are those to whom “judgment was given” (20:4; cf. 3:21), on thrones (cf. Matt. 19:28) for the purpose of judging! Or as the Apostle Paul states: **Or do you not know that the saints will judge the world? And if the world is to be judged by you, are you incompetent to try trivial cases? 3 Do you not know that we are to judge angels? How much more, then, matters pertaining to this life! 1 Cor. 6:2,3** and as Daniel also confirms: **As I looked, this horn made war with the saints and prevailed over them, 22 until the Ancient of Days came, and judgment was given for the saints of the Most High, and the time came when the saints possessed the kingdom. Dan. 7:22**

Now, in order the devil is released (20:7) and proceeds to deceive the nations of all the earth, whose number “is like the sand of the sea” (20:8). Destruction comes quickly as “Fire came down from heaven and devoured them” (20:9; cf. 2 Pet. 3:10, **But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, and then the heavens will pass away with a roar, and the heavenly bodies will be burned up and dissolved, and the earth and the works that are done on it will be exposed.** Please notice the similarity with the swiftness of the judgment scene here and as it is recorded in chapters 14:19-20; 16:14-21; and 19:19-21. We notice that the entities involved here are, for the most part, one and the same, especially those named in 16:13 (dragon, beast and false prophet) and in 19:20 (beast and false prophet). Here, in the chapter under consideration, the devil is cast “where the beast and the false prophet are also” 20:10.

Here, observe what we alluded to in our summary of chapter 19 that the devil is a solitary entity who will be judged as an individual. He is the sole and premier enemy of God. In chapter 20, we have his sole demise. Scripture is full of descriptions of this sole entity, but none is more pointed than that description given

us in chapter 12 of this Revelation. We notice that within that chapter on the pursuit of the Christ and His church (12:13, 17), that the devil, even though bringing woe to the earth and its inhabitants, has only a “short time” (12:12) to work his wickedness. We also see a microcosm of his centuries old battle with that which is good (12:7) culminating in that prolepsis “short time” described in the phrase, “the time, times and half a time” (12:14), which we hold to be synonymous with the 1260 days, and the 42 months, both of which refer to the church age, the gospel period. Also, we see a descriptive difference in the phrase “short time” (ὀλίγον καιρὸν) in 12:12 and “little time” (μικρὸν χρόνον) in 20:3, the latter being certainly brief. Now, the devil being cast into the lake of fire brings wickedness in God’s eternal realm to an end with no uncertain finality.

This scene now closes and a new one opens up to John: “and I saw a great white throne and Him who sat on it” 20:11. John further sees “the dead, the great and the small standing before the throne” (20:12a) and then books, and a special book, the “of life” book, and judgment was based upon the written record “according to their deeds” 20:12b. The following scene is awesome in that all the dead, from the sea, death and hades (20:13) were judged accordingly. Our view here regarding the dead of 20:12 and those of 20:13 are one and the same, wherein 20:13 is enhancing 20:12.

The final scene demonstrates the austere picture of the finality of the second death (cf. 20:6), all those not found in “the book of life” (cf. 3:5) “were thrown into the lake of fire” (20:14-15).

We again see in this finality the swiftness of God’s actions, and the sharpness of the distinction between eternal life and eternal death. **“For we are a fragrance of Christ to God among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing; to the one an aroma from death to death, to the other an aroma from life to life. And who is adequate for these things?”** 2 Cor 2:15-16.

It is certainly clear, even though cast in figurative language, that the end of wickedness by our austere God is an event that evokes contrasting emotions. On one hand, we have our undeserved redemption with all the glorious aspects related to that redemption. On the other hand, we are confronted with a view of the lost, and their sorrow. So, we have to say with Paul, “And who is adequate for these things?”

Revelation Chapter 20

Personal Thoughts

Our purpose in this study of the Book of Revelation was to concentrate on the divine directive to “read” “hear” and “heed” that which was written concerning “the words of the prophecy (Rev 1:3). I have been personally challenged to do this over the course of a long and varied learning experience.

Early on, I yearned for an understanding of this most mysterious book. In my first listening experiences, I found many sermons intriguing. I later discovered that I was hearing certain doctrine being taught from portions of this book, but not the book itself in its own terms and as a unit.

In my early reading experience, I found much of the same in the books on the subject of Revelation, which were recommended to me. Therefore, my early exposure to the book, as I learned later, was from a premillennial perspective. I soon thereafter learned that there were various millennial perspectives, which were in themselves intriguing.

Therefore, I was under the impression that to know the content of the book, understanding had to come from one of the following millennial views.

- Premillennialism and its variations from historical premillennial thought to dispensational premillennialism that advances a number of views on a future tribulation period.
- Postmillennialism and its variations
- Amillennialism and its variations

I soon fell into what I now view as a trap of constriction: I had advanced my understanding of millenarianism while limiting my understanding of the Book of Revelation. I therefore pursued the book with the intent of letting it speak on its own and to draw my conclusions based upon that information. When I had continued this method of study for a long time, I became convinced that it was worthwhile. The study here presented is the result of that effort. It is very difficult to say to what degree I have been influenced by my previous investigations of millenarianism, but it did cause me to lose sight of the book as a whole. Therefore, I purposely put this study together without the aid of or influence by commentators until after I had drawn my conclusions by working through the book chapter by chapter.

Again, I will state the fact that I cannot say to what extent previous studies and readings have influenced my determinations. However, having said all of this, let me add that it has become clear to me that I do not agree with most millenarian positions. All the positions focus on a long period of time for this millennium. As my study continued, I found that I was leaning away from viewing the millennium as this long period, whether taken literally or metaphorically. I found that I began

to interpret the one thousand years as a very brief period that sets the scene for John and his readers to demonstrate the particular aspects of the demise of Satan and his final sentencing. I am certainly respectful of and thankful for the scholarship displayed by those wanting to see the millennium within its Revelation context over against those who would build eschatological doctrine from such a brief passage as Rev 20:1-7. Many use this passage as their starting point, forcing this idea into other portions of Scripture, equating it with kingdom pictures, demonstrated in both the Old Testament and the New Testament. The works most helpful were:

- Oswald T. Allis, *Prophecy and the Church* (P & R Publishing)
- G. K. Beale, *The Book of Revelation*, NIGTC (Eerdmans Publishing)
- Loraine Boettner, *The Millennium* (P & R Publishing)
- William E. Cox, *Biblical Studies in Final Things* (P & R Publishing)
- Herman Ridderbos, *The Coming of the Kingdom* (P & R Publishing)
- Francis Turretin, *Institutes of Elenctic Theology*, III, 20.3 (P & R Publishing)
- B.B. Warfield, *The Millennium and the Apocalypse*, *Princeton Review*, 1904

The following is a limited list of authors and their works which I encountered early in my efforts and which helped to shape my initial thinking on the Book of Revelation.

- Merrill C. Tenney, *Interpreting Revelation* (Eerdmans Publishing)
- Frederick A. Tatford, *The Climax of the Ages* (Zondervan Publishing)
- Lehman Strauss, *God's Plan for the Future* (Loizeaux Brothers Publishing)
- C. I. Scofield, *The Scofield Reference Bible* (NY: Oxford University Press)
- J. Dwight Pentecost, *Things to Come* (Dunham Publishing)
- Lehman Strauss, *Revelation* (Loizeaux Brothers Publishing)

I would encourage those interested in this study to *first read the Book of Revelation with the intent to "hear" and "heed"* as God gives understanding and then examine that which is understood by way of their own thoughts and then discuss these thoughts with others and consult some of the readings listed above.

Interactions with "others" and "readings" will prove valuable.

At this point, it seems appropriate to explain the basis for the conclusion that the millennium refers to a brief period. We have in this study viewed the term "thousand years" (Rev 20:2, 3, 4, 5, 6 and 7) as a metaphor. We have also viewed the phrase "short time" (NASB; "little while," ESV; "little time," AV) metaphorically. This, in our opinion, is similar to many such metaphors we find in apocalyptic passages in Scripture. In Revelation, we have many that deal with time, numbers, names, places, and descriptions. These descriptions are sometimes visible, he "sees" and sometimes audible, as he "hears."

Regarding time metaphors in the Book of Revelation, here are a few along with those listed above:

Silence in heaven for about half an hour, Rev 8:1

I am coming quickly, Rev 22:7, 12

Times, times, and half a time Rev 12:4 (cf. Dan 7:25; 12:7)

Forty-two months Rev 13:5

Twelve hundred and sixty days Rev 11:3; 12:6

Many people interpret these latter metaphors as very short and others see them as very long. The metaphors for numbers, names, places, and descriptions are too numerous to list fully, but here is a brief sampling:

Numbers: 144,000 (people) 666 (name)
200,000,000 (horsemen) 3 1/2 (days)

Names: beast, dragon, harlot, woman

Places: Babylon, abyss, prison, lake of fire

Descriptions: sea of glass, four corners of earth, seven heads, and golden bowls of wrath

Note also the phrases Peter uses: “**that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day**” 2 Pet. 3:8 (cf. Ps. 90:4). Even the phrase “**day of the Lord**” is a metaphor since it is not to be assumed that the Lord’s coming will take a literal 24 hours.

If we were to examine the content of the OT apocalyptic literature, we would find an abundance of uses of metaphors similar to what we have demonstrated above (cf. Ezekiel, Daniel, and Zechariah for some of that abundance). Metaphors are unique literary tools used to communicate a variety of thoughts and concepts, and in our book, John makes ample use of them.

Accordingly, Christ will appear at His second advent with the sound of a trumpet, gathering His own via rapture (catching them away). He will then execute judgment in accordance with God’s final consummation plan. This plan seems to be best described as unfolding in two phases: 1) First is the judgment-calamity phase, as we see in the following passages: Rev 14:19-20; 16:17-21 and 19:19-21 (with some specifics on the harlot and her constituents). 2) Then comes the sentencing phase in Rev 20:11-15.

There is, however, an abundance of other Scripture passages with clear reference to these events. We find that within this abundance there are different perspectives and nuances all speaking to these events, meshed and woven together.

We see in Matthew 24 one clear perspective precisely pictured in verse 31: **And he will send out his angels with a loud trumpet call, and they will gather his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.** Couple this with Rev 14:14 and then contrast these things with Rev 14:15-20, which give a fuller picture of those awful events.

And I looked, and behold, a white cloud, and sitting on the cloud was one like a son of man, having a golden crown on His head, and a sharp sickle in His hand. Rev. 14:14

And another angel came out of the temple, crying out with a loud voice to Him who sat on the cloud, "Put in your sickle and reap, because the hour to reap has come, because the the earth was reaped. 17 And another angel came out of the temple which is in heaven, and he also had a sharp sickle. 18 And another angel, the one who has power over fire, came out from the altar; and he called with a loud voice to him who had the sharp sickle, saying, "Put in your sharp sickle, and gather the clusters from the vine of the earth, because her grapes are ripe." 19 And the angel swung his sickle to the earth, and gathered the clusters from the vine of the earth, and threw them into the great wine press of the wrath of God. 20 And the wine press was trodden outside the city, and blood came out from the wine press, up to the horses' bridles, for a distance of two hundred miles. Rev. 14:15-20

We also have the perspective of the apostle Paul, notably 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18, where he has a view of both the saints that have died and those that are still living at the time of Christ's return. Another perspective is found in 2 Thessalonians 2:1-12, here the enemy of God, the lawless one is in view with his followers; compare 2 Thessalonians 2:9-12 with Revelation 20:9-15:

Now we request you, brethren, with regard to the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and our gathering together to Him, 2 that you may not be quickly shaken from your composure or be disturbed either by a spirit or a message or a letter as if from us, to the effect that the day of the Lord has come. 3 Let no one in any way deceive you, for it will not come unless the apostasy comes first, and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the son of destruction, 4 who opposes and exalts himself above every so-called god or object of worship, so that he takes his seat in the temple of God, displaying himself as being God. 5 Do you not remember that while I was still with you, I was telling you these things? 6 And you know what restrains him now, so that in his time he may be revealed. 7 For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work; only he who now restrains will do so until he is taken out of the way. 8 And then that lawless one will be revealed whom the Lord will slay with the breath of His mouth and bring to an end by the appearance of His coming; 9 that is, the one whose coming is in accord with the activity of Satan, with all power and signs and false wonders, 10 and with all the deception of wickedness for those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth so as to be saved. 11 And for this reason God will send upon them a deluding influence so that they might believe what is false, 12 in order that they all may be judged who did not believe the truth, but took pleasure in wickedness. 2 Thess 2:1-12

And they came up on the broad plain of the earth and surrounded the camp of the saints and the beloved city, and fire came down from heaven and devoured them.

10 And the devil who deceived them was thrown into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are also; and they will be tormented day and night forever and ever. 11 And I saw a great white throne and Him who sat upon it, from whose presence earth and heaven fled away, and no place was found for them. 12 And I saw the dead, the great and the small, standing before the throne, and books were opened; and another book was opened, which is the book of life; and the dead were judged from the things which were written in the books, according to their deeds. 13 And the sea gave up the dead which were in it, and death and Hades gave up the dead which were in them; and they were judged, every one of them according to their deeds. 14 And death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire. 15 And if anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire. Revelation 20:9-15

The apostle Peter gives us still another perspective: **7 But by the same word the heavens and earth that now exist are stored up for fire, being kept until the day of judgment and destruction of the ungodly. 8 But do not overlook this one fact, beloved, that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. 9 The Lord is not slow to fulfill his promise as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance. 10 But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, and then the heavens will pass away with a roar, and the heavenly bodies will be burned up and dissolved, and the earth and the works that are done on it will be exposed** 2 Pet. 3:7-10. Clearly, he speaks of the judgment (v. 7) and calamity (v. 10). The overwhelming evidence and data in all of Scripture make it easier to draw conclusions on Revelation 20.

The following is a listing of common features of the coming of Christ and judgment exclusive to Revelation:

Chapter 11

- Rapture nuances 11:12
- Final trumpet sound, kingdom picture 11:15
- Christ reigning, preparatory to judgment 11:17
- Judgment imposed 11:18

Chapter 14

- Picture of saints in waiting (OT) 14:1-5
- Picture of the Gospel age 14:6-7
- Picture of the harlot conditions 14:9-13
 - Warnings to the unfaithful 14:9-11
 - Encouragement to the faithful 14:12-13
- Ingathering, picture of reaping the saints 14:16

- Ingathering, picture of judgment of the ungodly 14:17-19
- Picture of the awful judgment scene 14:20

Chapters 15 and 16

- Picture of the rapture (note 15:2) 15:1-4
- Picture of preparation for judgment 15:5-8
(Note “tabernacle of testimony” and the “pure” array of dress of the angels)
- Judgment executed (phase 1) 16:1-9
- Judgment executed (phase 2) 16:10-14
- Parenthetical view of Christ coming 16:15
- The final great battle with evil 16:16
- Final bowl - Fini, “it is done” 16:17
- Special view of the harlot’s demise 16:18-21
(with specific details in ch’s 17 and 18)

Chapter 19

- Dissolution of the harlot (the false church) 19:1-3
- Rejoicing in heaven preparatory 19:4-6
(“the Lord our God, the Almighty reigns”)
- Christ comes to execute judgment 19:11-16
(Here on a white horse with glorious names)
- Invitation to the supper (carnage) 19:17-18
- Gathering of evil duo with kings to do battle 19:19
- Judgment imposed 19:20-21
(Note: “Fini” as in 16:17)

Chapter 20

- Preparation for Satan’s demise 20:1-3
- Gathering together of the saints (all of them) 20:4-6
- Picture of Satan and his followers 20:7-8
- Place of final conflict and end 20:9
(cf. 16:16 - place, 16:17d, “it is done”)
- Place of Satan’s final demise 20:10
- Picture of final sentencing 20:11-15
(Note the throne and the books)

The reader may note that we have not intended these thoughts to be a polemic against certain forms of millenarianism. Listed above are the name and works of men far more skilled to do just that. I highly recommend the work by Allis, particularly chapters 1, 7, 8, 9 and 10. I would also suggest the work by Cox, chapters 12 and 13. For an older perspective, I found Turretin very clear and pointed (*Institutes*, III, 20.3). Particularly helpful is the following quote from Gerhardus Vos: “In regard to a book (Revelation) so enigmatical, it were presumptuous to speak with any degree of dogmatism, but the uniform absence of the idea of the millennium from the eschatological teaching of the New Testament elsewhere ought to render the exegete cautious before affirming its presence here” (“The Second Coming of Our Lord and the Millennium,” *The Presbyterian*, 1916, which is chapter XXIV, 415-422, in *Redemptive History and Biblical Interpretation: the Shorter Writings of Geerhardus Vos*, P & R Publishing, 1980, p. 422).

At this juncture, I would like to share some thoughts I gleaned and learned from B. B. Warfield on this subject, primarily in the area of a metaphorical view on Revelation and more specifically on chapter 20. The thoughts deal with the “timeframe” of the term millennium. Even though we are seemingly at odds regarding the “timeframe” (Warfield believes it to be synonymous with the church age leading into a golden age, with which I cannot agree), there is much common ground. Therefore, I also recommend His article, “The Millennium and the Apocalypse” in the Princeton Theological Review (1904).

Detailed Outline for Chapters 21-22

Note

Chapters 21 and 22 overlap in one sense, and mesh together in another sense to the degree that we are compelled to outline them together.

In the midst of the glorious picture of the “new heaven” and “new earth,” the “holy city,” “the tabernacle of God,” “the river of the water of life,” and of course, “God the Almighty” and the “Lamb,” we have a negative picture as well. As the phrases above speak to the glorious picture in both chapters, so do the following speak in negative pictures: **"But as for the cowardly, the faithless, the detestable, as for murderers, the sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars, their portion will be in the lake that burns with fire and sulfur, which is the second death" 21:8. "But nothing unclean will ever enter it, nor anyone who does what is detestable or false" 21:27. "Let the evildoer still do evil, and the filthy still be filthy" 22:11. "Outside are the dogs and sorcerers and the sexually immoral and murderers and idolaters, and everyone who loves and practices falsehood " 22:15**

Also in contrast in both chapters are the designated conditions for the redeemed and the unrepentant: for the former, **They will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads (22:4)**, for the latter, **their portion will be in the lake that burns with fire and sulfur, which is the second death (21:8b)**. With this in view, here is the outline.

- | A. <u>Final Conditions</u> | <u>21:1-22:5</u> |
|---|-------------------------|
| I. Message to the redeemed | 21:1-7 |
| A. New heaven, new earth 21:1 | |
| B. Holy City, as a bride 21:2 | |
| C. God tabernacling with men 21:3-4 | |
| 1. The bond 21:3 | |
| 2. The balm 21:4 | |
| D. God’s edict (speaks to John) 21:5-6 | |
| 1. All things new 21:5 | |
| 2. “It is done” 21:6 | |
| E. The recipients 21:7 | |
| 1. The overcomers 21:7a (cf. ch’s 2 & 3) | |
| 2. The confirmation 21:7b | |
| II. Message to the non-redeemed | 21:8 |
| A. Their description 21:8a | |
| B. Their destruction 21:8b | |
| III. Description of the city | 21:9-21 |
| A. The spokesperson - an angel 21:9a | |
| Note: one who had a bowl of plagues ch 16 | |

B. The view twofold 21:9b-10	
1. The bride 21:9b	
2. (The place of viewing) 21:10a	
3. The Holy City 21:10b	
C. Infinite description 21:11	
D. Physical description 21:12-21	
1. Measurements 21:12-17	
2. Materials 21:18-21	
IV. The sanctuary within	21:22
A. Lord God Almighty	
B. The Lamb	
V. The light and lamp	21:23
A. Light - glory of God	
B. Lamp - the Lamb	
VI. The occupants	21:24-27
(See summary for comments on “occupants”)	
A. The nations	
Vision of the redeemed of Israel	
(cf. Isa 60) 21:24-26	
B. All the redeemed in the book of life	
further defined 21:27	
VII. Conditions within the city	22:1-5
A. The water of life 22:1	
B. The tree of life 22:2	
C. Perfection and worship 22:3-4	
D. Endless day 22:5	
B. Final Confirmation	22:6-21
I. Confirmation introduction (the angel of 21:9)	22:6-7
A. Words of attestation 22:6	
B. Words of encouragement 22:7	
II. Confirmation involvement (John)	22:8-9
A. John attests to hearing & seeing 22:8	
B. The angel’s response 22:9	
III. Confirmation to propagate	22:10-15
A. Preach warnings 22:10-11	
1. Seal not this prophecy 22:10	
2. To the wrong and filthy 22:11a	
3. To the righteous and holy 22:11b	
B. Attested by Jesus	22:12-15

1. He is coming 22:12
 2. He is Alpha and Omega 22:13
 3. Believers 22:14
 4. Non-believers 22:15
- IV. Jesus Christ's personal confirmation (epilogue) 22:16-21
- A. The message "these things" 22:16
 1. Via "my angel"
 2. To the churches - NT
 3. I am...of David - OT
 - B. The invitation 22:17
 - C. The warnings 22:18-19
 - D. Jesus' final attestation 22:20
 - E. John's benediction 22:21

Chapters 21-22 Summary

As we suggested in our note to the outline for chapters 21 and 22, the information overlaps from one chapter to another. Therefore, we will discuss that information accordingly in this summary. The key points are the rich and glorious expectations for the saints and the terrible consequences for the unrepentant. The glorious expectations are based upon “reading,” “hearing,” and “heeding” (1.3), and the terrible consequences are viewed as the unheeded warnings and the neglect. The former listen to the appeal of our Lord Jesus Christ, “Therefore be on the alert, for you do not know which day your Lord is coming.” The latter do not listen, “But be sure of this, that if the head of the house had known at what time of the night the thief was coming, he would have been on the alert and would not allowed his house to be broken into” (Mat. 24:42-43). The apostles John, Peter and Paul echo their master’s seriousness as they write:

John: Behold, I am coming like a thief! Blessed is the one who stays awake, keeping his garments on, that he may not go about naked and be seen exposed! (Rev. 16:15).

Peter: But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, and then the heavens will pass away with a roar, and the heavenly bodies will be burned up and dissolved, and the earth and the works that are done on it will be exposed (2 Pet. 3.10).

Paul: For you yourselves are fully aware that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night (1 Thess. 5:2).

We also see the sentencing of the unrepentant (**And if anyone’s name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire, Rev. 20:15**) contrasted with the expectation for the saints (**Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more, Rev. 21:1**). Together, these verses make up a brief snapshot of consummation detail.

All the elements of the final state for believers are clearly shown in vision to John in 21:2-4:

2 And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. 3 And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, “Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God. 4 He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away.”

God, now speaking, confirms to John audibly what He has just experienced visually: 21: 5-7

5 And he who was seated on the throne said, “Behold, I am making all things new.” Also he said, “Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true.” 6 And he said to me, “It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. To the thirsty I will give from the spring of the water of life without payment. 7 The one who conquers will have this heritage, and I will be his God and he will be my son.

In this confirmation is the directive to “write,” not so much as to what he has seen but what the Almighty God has said, for God’s word is confirmation indeed! By the phrase, **He who over comes** (21:7), we are instantly transported back to chapters 2 and 3 and find reinforcement to our faith to continue overcoming. In contrast to the overcomers of 21:7, we see in some detail the description of the lost and their destination and ultimate destruction (21.8).

Our focus now returns to further details and descriptions of the elements we suggested above. But first, we, along with John, are confronted with “one of the seven angels” who was instrumental in pouring out the “seven last plagues.” This helps us link the message to come with what has been revealed previously to John, to keep our understanding in vision and future timeframe in focus. John is carried away to a lofty place (in the Spirit) to view the “bride, the wife of the Lamb.”

What we see first is “the holy city, Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, having the glory of God” (21:10b-11a). This then would be the infinite description with its “brilliance” being described in physical measurements and materials (21:11b-21). The picture we see here in figurative language is an expansive, timeless condition, if we may use the word condition rather than place for the brilliance and glory associated with the eternal God. The motif is further enhanced by the fact that its occupants are God, the Almighty and the Lamb who illuminate this expanse. Therefore, the notion here is not about taking up space, rather it is about being in their eternal presence. An example of this can be easily seen in 21:22, **And I saw no temple in the city, for its temple is the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb.** Here it is clear that the metaphor addresses a timeless condition rather than physical space. And that may be the way to describe our place (condition) in that glorious setting, for time has no value there nor space a limit for the church, the bride in endless relationship with her redeemer, the Lamb, the bridegroom. This timeless condition is further enhanced if we couple the statement from the throne, recorded above (Rev 21:3): **And I heard a loud voice from the throne, saying, “Behold, the tabernacle of God is among men, and He will dwell among them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself will be among them.** This metaphor shows God dwelling with His people, as we shall show further, that God is not confined to walls and gates, and therefore we see “conditions” in the passage, not a physical place.

We then see the nations and kings (21:24, 26) as well in this figurative sense as occupants in fulfillment of the picture to Israel in Isaiah 60:1-5, **“Arise, shine, for your light has come, and the glory of the LORD has risen upon you. For behold, darkness shall cover the earth, and thick darkness the peoples; but the LORD will arise upon you, and his glory will be seen upon you. And nations shall come to your light, and kings to the brightness of your rising. Lift up your eyes all around, and see; they all gather together, they come to you; your sons shall come from afar, and your daughters shall be carried on the hip. Then you shall see and**

be radiant; your heart shall thrill and exult, because the abundance of the sea shall be turned to you, the wealth of the nations shall come to you”; and also 60:19-20, **“The sun shall be no more your light by day, nor for brightness shall the moon give you light; but the LORD will be your everlasting light, and your God will be your glory. Your sun shall no more go down, nor your moon withdraw itself; for the LORD will be your everlasting light, and your days of mourning shall be ended.”** Among the occupants, the OT saints are featured in particular along with all the saints whose names are **“written in then Lamb’s book of life”** Rev 21.27b.

We have saved our thoughts on the discussion of the bride referenced in 21:2 and 9 for our closing of this study. In 21:2, the holy city Jerusalem is the subject. The phrase "made ready as a bride adorned for her husband" describes the city. In 21:9, the bride, the wife of the lamb, is the subject and she is described in the following glorious terms as "The holy city Jerusalem". We therefore conclude immediately that this vision is speaking of one entity, and that one entity is the glorious gathered body of Christ, the church of God in total, now described as the betrothed of the Lamb. At 21:11, we see that the glory of God is her brilliance. The next ten verses 21:12-21 speak to the measurements and materials in human terms, (cf. 21:17) that make up a visual picture of that brilliance and adding its expanse to it.

We are now faced with a grand twofold picture of the eternal state: on the one hand, the city is described as a glorious bride, 21:2, and, on the other hand, the bride is described as a grand and opulent city, 21:9-21. Both of these aspects of the vision speak from different perspectives, yet remaining one glorious picture. If we think of these metaphors as they are, figurative pictures, available to us as humans in our finiteness, then we can draw out some reasonable inferences regarding what we see and hear. At this point we must address the concept of what we actually see regarding the city. The consensus among those who see the city, by its descriptions in verses 12 through 21 as a literal, physical place, is that, that place will be the home or abode for the saints. My main objection to that consensus has been briefly stated above. **FIRST:** Verses 12 through 21 are speaking of physical characteristics which can be taken as literal or figurative. **SECOND:** The description continues through verses 22 and on to the conclusion of that description in verse 5 of the following chapter 21:22-22:5.

Here, other than another brief mention of a gate in 21:25 is a picture, now of conditions. And, as we stated above, a timeless condition. We also stated that the physical characteristics can be taken literal or figurative. We see them as figurative, metaphors to describe that condition. Edward Payson, an eighteenth century, New England clergyman, who had a remarkable, although brief ministry has a beautiful and eloquent article on, and entitled "The new Jerusalem". [*The Works of Edward Payson*, Sprinkle Publications, Volume 1, pgs. 574-586], Even though Mr. Payson

takes a literal view of the city, I am compelled to share his thoughts on the conditions (as he sees them), that the saints will enjoy. In this article, which is a small chapter in his "*Works*" he deals primarily with these conditions, and remotely with the physical characteristics and descriptions. He does however take some comfort in the latter. He therefore lays much stress on the fact that the earthly conditions we are accustomed to will have absolutely no meaning to us in that place, or condition. This is where we agree.

These thoughts reinforce my concept that the descriptions in this passage, 21:9 -22:5, are only an aid to describe in human terms the indescribable! If, as verse 22 states "no temple", (material- physical) and verse 23 states "the city has no need of the sun or the moon", (material- physical), why would we need gates and a two hundred foot wall, (material- physical)? If you visualize this cube, fifteen hundred miles in every direction, where is the wall in its relationship? Where are the gates and at what intervals? Then we may ask to what purpose, if literal and actually material- physical? Can we honestly think that we, the bride of Christ the Lamb of God will be bound by literal walls and gates? As we stated above it appears that the earthly - material - physical has been negated. If on the other hand we view this as figurative and metaphorical much can be stated.

In thinking of the conditions and culture of the first century I offer the following: (A) IDENTITY - The gates are speaking to the twelve tribes of Israel, the Old Testament Saints. The foundation stones speak to the twelve Apostles, the New Testament Saints. All manner of application can be made from these descriptions. The first being that both groups make up the Bride, in perfect identity with God. (B) STRENGTH - Solid foundations in those times spoke to that strength. Think of the wisdom of building upon the rock (foundation) of our salvation, strength indeed. (C) SECURITY - Walls in ancient times were security for all people. The very idea of an insurmountable wall is security at the highest level. Herein is the comfort afforded the saints in this physical description, but in the eternal state there will be no need. (D) GLORY - Unimaginable glory is seen in the description, using known precious stones and metals in quantities so massive the mind of anyone in any century would be overwhelmed. Having the Glory of God in "Her Brilliance" and even though these are valuable and precious in a material - physical world, there will be no need in eternity, compared to the Glory of God and his Christ, they will be insignificant.

John, by way of the Spirit is writing in this way to the first century church in terms far beyond in scope, yet close enough in identity to give a view, the best that man can understand, of the glorious future state for that people and for us. In this vision we see that, as stated in (A) through (D) above, all that embodies "The Bride, the wife of the Lamb". This embodiment is by way of IDENTITY, Old and New Testament saints, in all their STRENGTH, SECURITY, and GLORY. Any

view of this city as literal would negate the words of 21:2 "And I saw the Holy city New Jerusalem, coming down out of Heaven from God, made ready as a Bride adorned for her husband" and 21:9b -21:11 "Come here, I shall show you the bride, the wife of the Lamb." John describes his next vision in the following way: "And he carried me away in the Spirit to a great and high mountain, and showed me the holy city, Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, having the glory of God. Her brilliance was like a very costly stone, as a stone of crystal - clear jasper." Both of these passages speak synonymously of the city being the bride and the bride being the city. My conclusion, therefore, is that to think of the city literally is thinking in an earthly way (I trust Mr. Payson would agree with me here), and to think of the city figuratively (as metaphors) is more in keeping with the book's intent.

So, as it applies to us personally, we have a twofold description of our final state in glory. Because we are described as a bride, we are the focus of Christ in glory (How he views us as the object of His love). Conversely, the opulent city is a focus on the blessings that Christ bestows on us in glory. Consequently, the reader of the book of Revelation "sees and hears" the focus of Christ on his bride and the focus of the bride on her blessings in the final state, which gives us all the more incentive to "heed" the words of this prophecy, Rev. 1:3. The next view to John is seeing the angel of God speak "And he said to me, 'These words are faithful and true'; and the Lord, the God of the spirits of the prophets, sent His angel to show to His bond-servants the things which must shortly take place", Rev. 22:6.

Herein begins the confirmation process. He along with John and ultimately with Jesus the Christ of God testify to all that has been spoken. We hear their voices weaving in and through the remainder of the chapter and throughout the book. In some places, it is difficult to identify with certainty who is speaking; in other places, it is clear. In 22:10-15, the angel seems to be quoting Jesus. In 22:16, clearly Jesus speaks. In 22:17-21, we have many possibilities, but that aside, we are assured that it is the voice of God audibly speaking, either by the angel, by John, or by Jesus (The Logos). We see in these verses, strong and stern warnings being stated regarding the words of the prophecy of the book. Nothing shall be added to these nor anything taken away or deleted, anyone who does, does so to his own peril.

As John ends this book, we end this study: **"The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with you all, amen," 22:21.**

FINIS