

Understanding the Book of Revelation

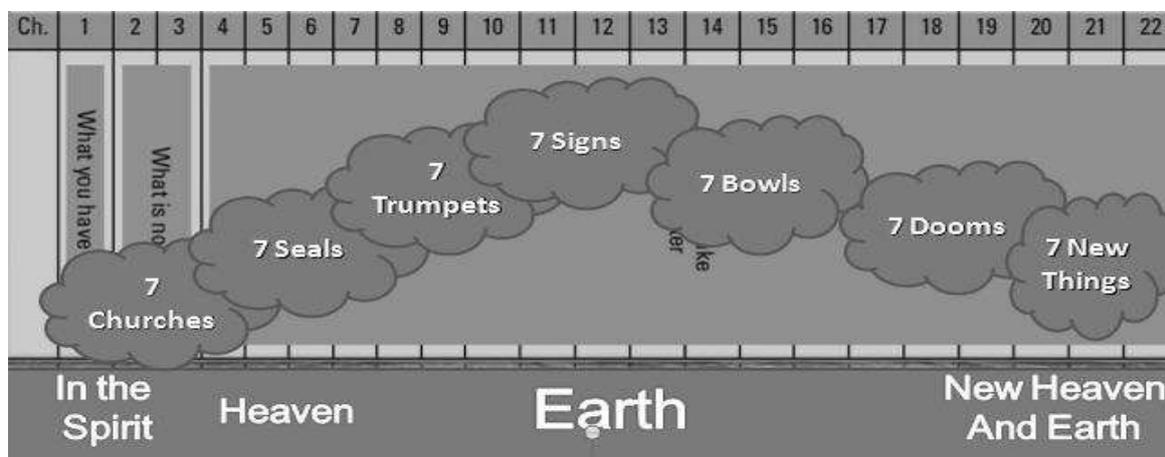
**What Revelation
really says.**

Tim Gibson

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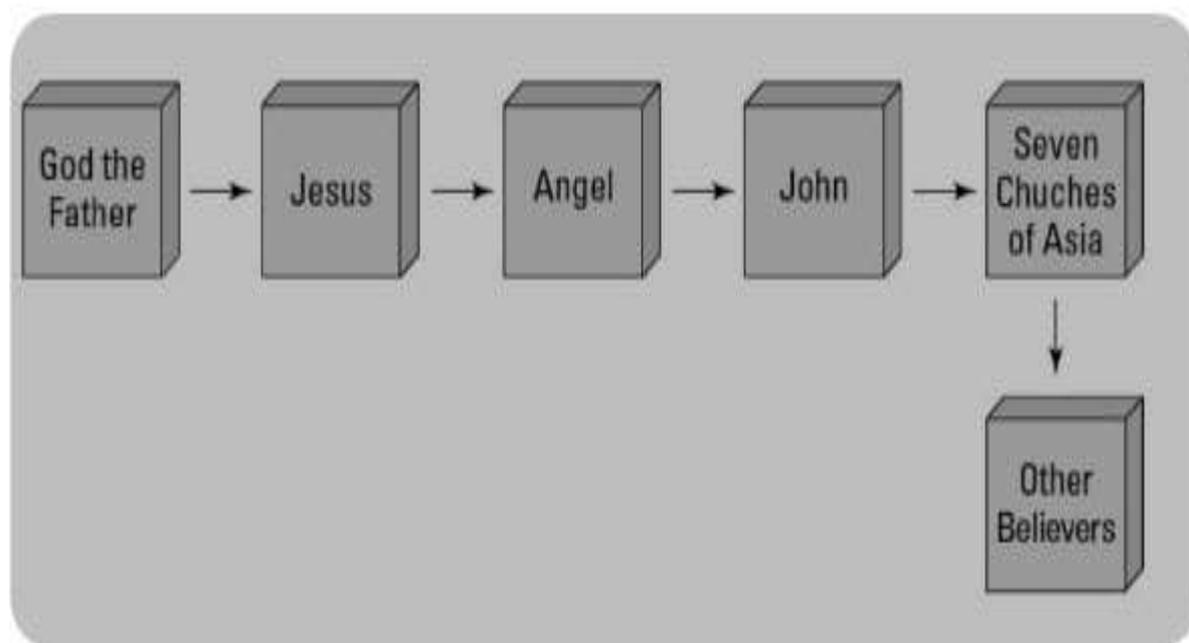
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PART ONE: RIGHTLY READING REVELATION

1. Introduction:

Revelation is a UNIQUE letter (Rev 1:1-2)

“The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave Him to show His servants, things which must shortly take place. And He sent and signified it by His angel to His servant John, who bore witness to the word of God, and to the testimony of Jesus Christ, to all things that he saw.” Revelation 1:1-2 (NKJV)



First, it must be noted that the manner in which this letter came is quite unique. The other books of the Bible were written by human authors under inspiration of the Holy Spirit and their character and personality shines through in the writing. Revelation was given to Jesus by Father God, which in turn was handed to angels who showed John, who was in the Spirit! John wrote this down and then passed this on to the churches (maybe angels were the postmen as the individual letters to the seven churches are addressed to the angel of that church).

The book of Revelation is truly a revelation that John saw and he simply took notes in short hand of what he saw. Many scholars doubt John’s authorship of Revelation as the style is so different to John’s Gospel and short epistles. However, this can be explained as John was merely scribbling down notes on what was being unfolded before him. When you take notes at a seminar or a lecture is the end product the same as a self-composed essay?

It is also noted by scholars that the Greek used is quite scrappy with many unfinished sentences. However, John did not tidy this up because God promised a curse upon anyone who tampered with what he had written! See Revelation 22:19.

Traditionally, the book of Revelation has been dated near the end of the first century, around A.D. 96. Some writers, however, have advanced the preterist (from a Latin word meaning "*that which is past*") view, contending that the Apocalypse was penned around A.D. 68 or 69, and thus the thrust of the book is supposed to relate to the impending destruction of Jerusalem (A.D. 70).

A few prominent names have been associated with this position (e.g., Stuart, Schaff, Lightfoot, Foy E. Wallace Jr.), and for a brief time it was popular with certain scholars. James Orr has observed, however, that recent criticism has reverted to the traditional date of near A.D. 96. In fact, the evidence for the later date is extremely strong.

a. **External Evidence** – Irenaeus (AD130), Clement of Alexandria (AD 155-215), Victorinus (late third century) and Jerome (AD 340-420) all suggest a later date (AD 96)

b. **Internal Evidence** – The spiritual conditions of the seven churches (Chapters 2-3) harmonize with a later date. For example, Ephesus was not founded by Paul until latter part of Claudius's reign and he wrote to them in AD61 approving them of their faith and love (Ephesians 1:15), yet Revelation 2:2 says they have left their first love. Laodicea is said to be living with great wealth (3:17) but in AD60 there was an earthquake that almost destroyed it!

Another internal evidence is that Revelation was written when John was banished to Patmos (1:9) – this was the later Emperor Domitian's favourite form of torture. Nero simply martyred the Apostles Peter and Paul.

The doctrinal departures mentioned in Revelation are more suitable to a later date. The Nicolaitans (2:6, 15) were a full-fledged sect at the time of John's writing, whereas they had only been hinted at in general terms in 2 Peter and Jude, which were written possibly around A.D. 65-66.

Persecution for professing the Christian faith is evidenced in those early letters to the seven churches of Asia Minor. For instance, Antipas had been killed in Pergamum (2:13). It is generally agreed among scholars, however, that Nero's persecution was mostly confined to Rome; further, it was not for religious reasons.

2. Overview:

a. Views on Revelation

i. GOD'S View

Special blessing: *“Blessed is he who reads and those who hear the words of this prophecy and keep those things which are written in it; for the time is near.”*
Revelation 1:3 (NKJV)

Special curse: *“and if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part from the Book of Life, from the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book.”* Rev 22:19 (NKJV)

Unlike any other book of the Bible, God places a special blessing and a special curse within this letter. There is a special blessing to all who read, hears and keeps the words revealed here and a special curse on anyone who tampers with the words in the letter (adds to or takes away from them).

This is the icing on the cake of the Bible! Revelation ties up all the loose thread and completes all the unfinished stories. Without the book of Revelation, we would end the Bible with the horrible little book of Jude that addresses the problems of a second-generation church!

ii. SATAN'S View

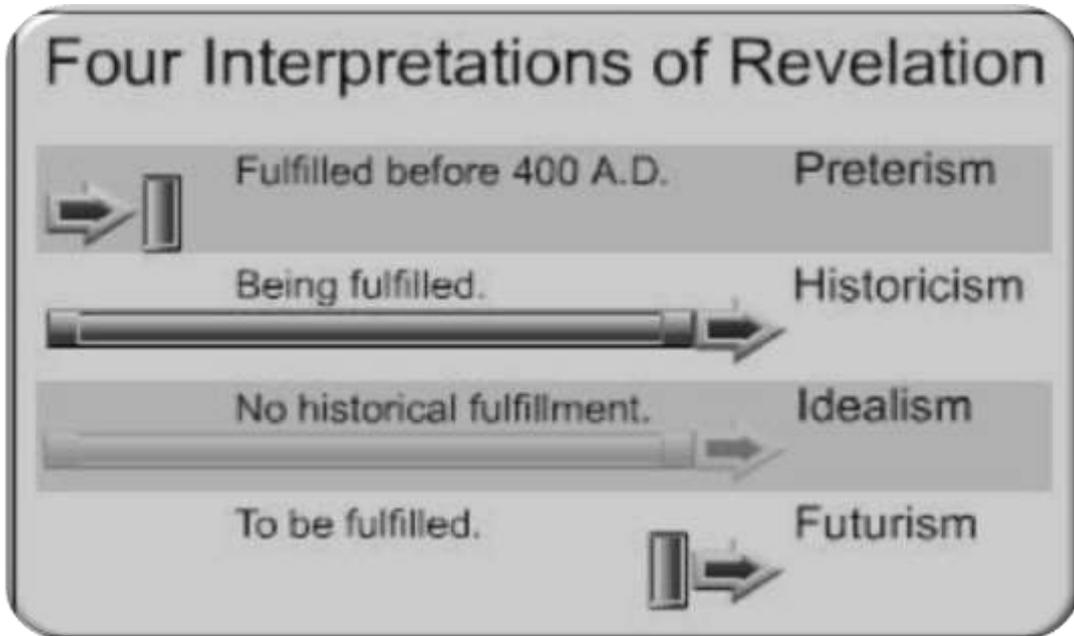
Satan hates the book of Revelation with a strong loathing.

There are two portions of Scripture Satan hates the most, they are the first few and last few chapters of the Bible! Genesis 1-3 shows the entrance of Satan onto the human scene and his strategies and methods and Revelation chapters twenty to twenty-two shows Satan's final defeat and destiny.

There is a story I heard (narrated by David Pawson) about a pastor who had a man come to his office for deliverance from demons. As the pastor prayed the man manifested and immediately ran to the study desk where there were two Bibles. The demon-possessed man opened each bible and ripped one page out of each. After the pastor and his team prayed for and cast out the demons they took a look at the Bibles and realized the man had pulled out the same page from each Bible, the page containing Revelation Chapter 20, which spells out the ultimate defeat of Satan!

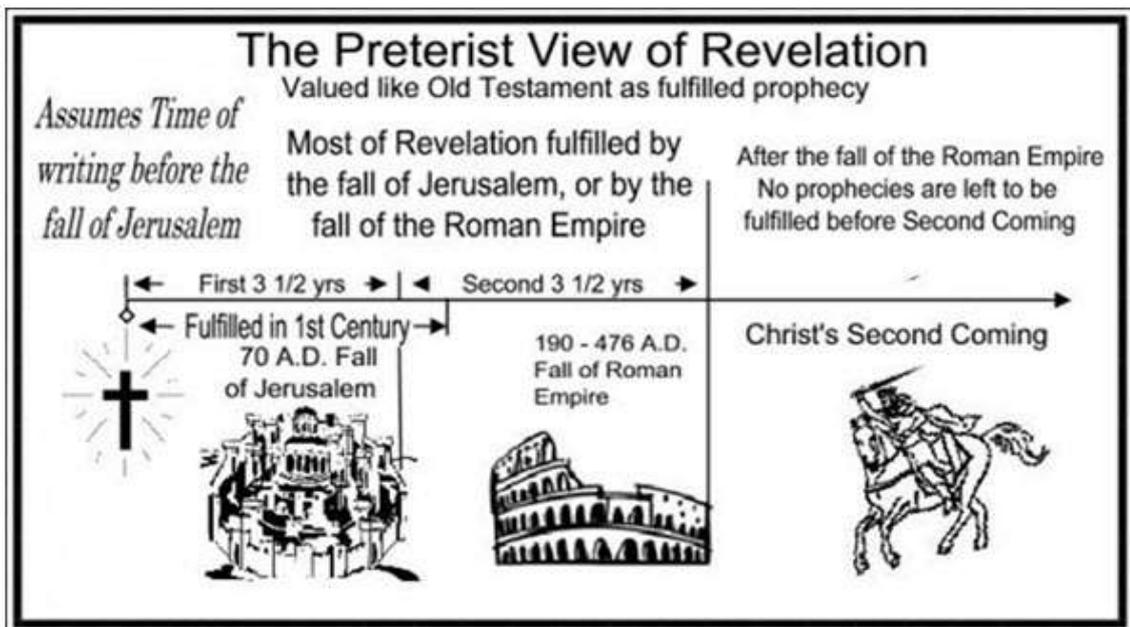
iii. **MAN'S View**

See the following chart to see the four views of Revelation that man has come up with over the centuries.

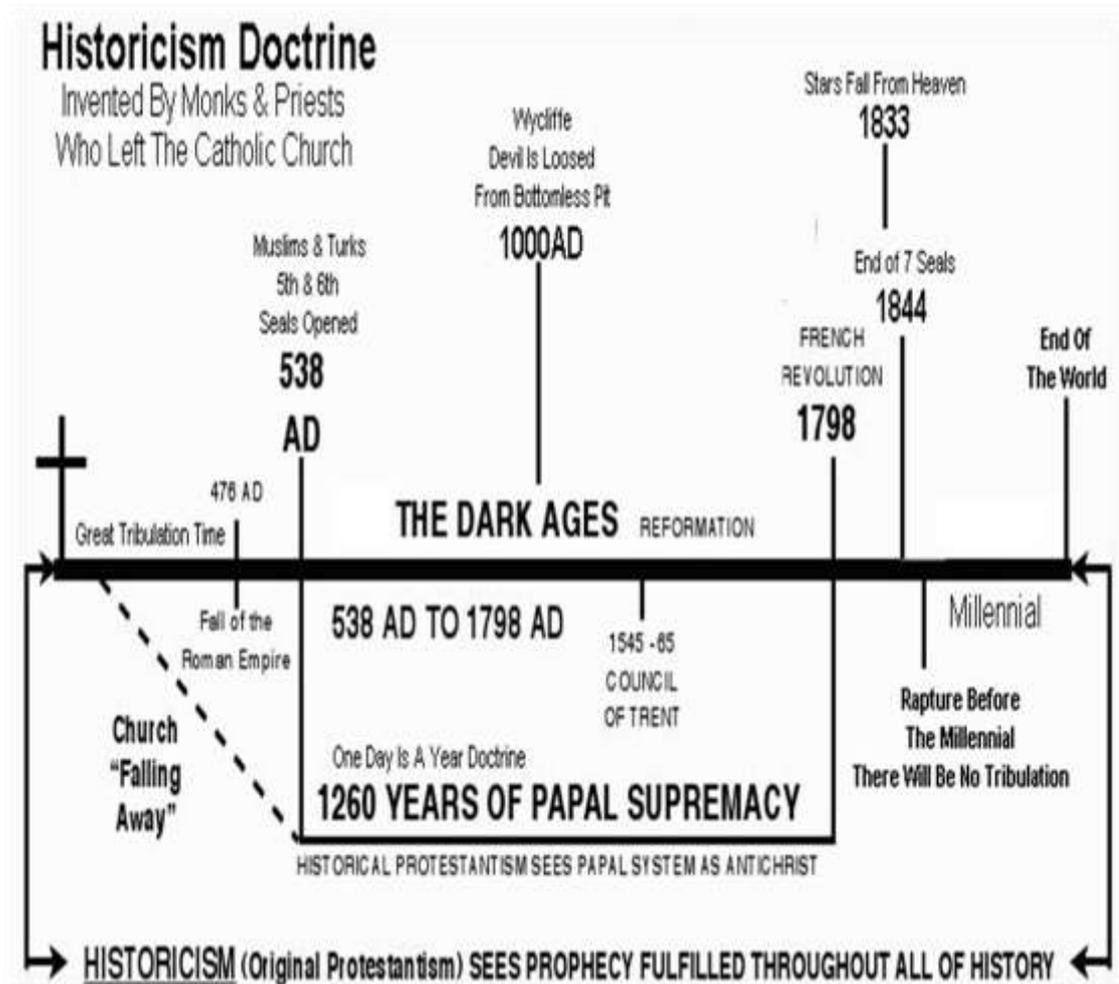


Throughout church history there have been four main schools of interpretation concerning the book of Revelation.

PRETERISM: The Preterist view derives its name from the Latin word *praeter* meaning *past*. It attempts to relate all of Revelation except for the very end to events in the first three centuries, with Rome and its early emperors, particularly Nero, being the only principals.



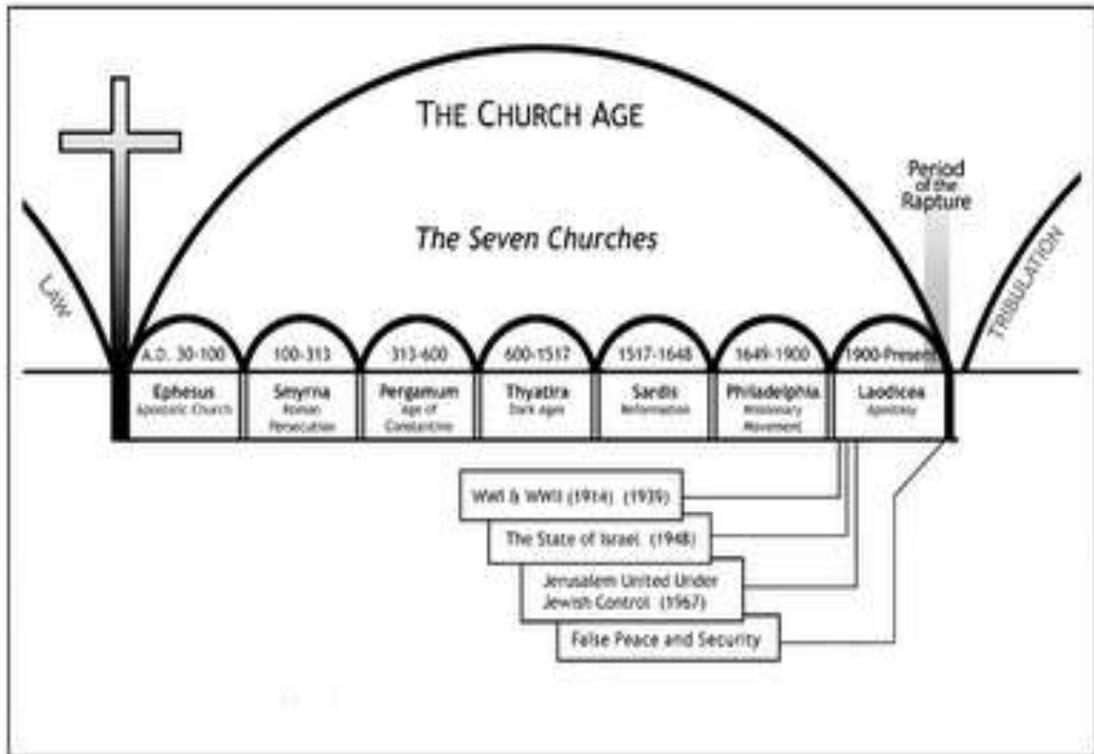
HISTORICISM: The Historicist view of Revelation attempts to map the events described in the book to historical events, providing a panorama of the history of the Church from the days of John to the end of time.



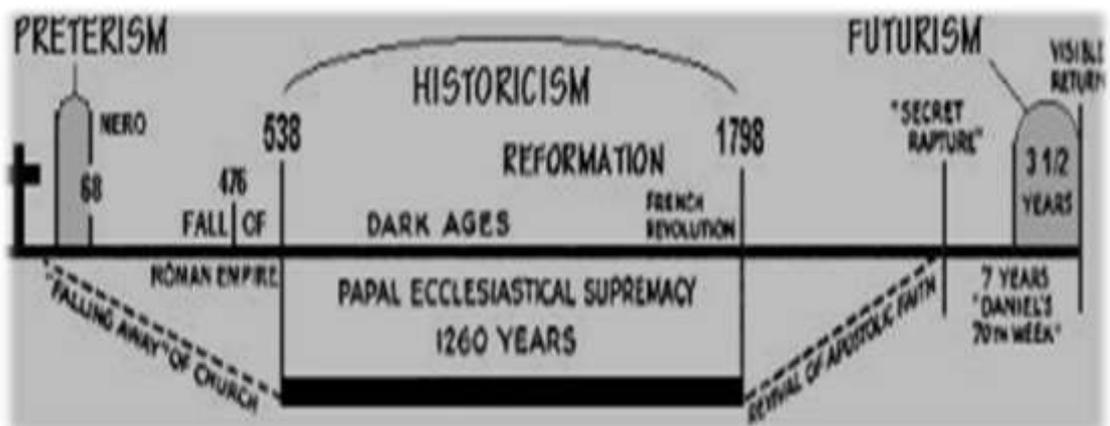
IDEALISM: The Idealist believes simply that Revelation does not refer to any historical or future event at all; rather it is a timeless allegory of the conflict between good and evil - a description of the spiritual principles of God that equip one for spiritual battles, which constantly confront the Church.

FUTURISM: Although the three views given above may entail some recognition of predictive prophecy in Revelation, not one of them permits Eschatological derivations to be made. The fourth manner in which Revelation may be understood is the Futurist viewpoint, which views most of the book (chapters 4 - 22) as prophecy yet to be fulfilled. This is the only logical interpretation if one is to interpret the text plainly. The Futurist viewpoint is the only one which most literally follows scripture under consistent and proper hermeneutics.

One Futurist model of interpretation is shown below. This assumes the seven churches are to be interpreted as *church ages*. Personally I do not feel this is justified as Jesus spoke to real churches with real problems all at the same time. In this teaching I will interpret the churches as literal churches from John's time that ALL have relevance to us today (see lesson 2).



The other diagram shows how these views compare in their placing of the Great Tribulation. For each view the time of the Great Tribulation is shown within an arch (the Idealist view is not included as they merely spiritualize this time).



Example comparison between these views.

As an example of the four main differing interpretations of Revelation let us look at the interpretation of the Scarlet Woman in Revelation 17.

Preterism would interpret it as being fulfilled in the immediate history surrounding the writing of Revelation – that is in the context of the Roman Empire being the superpower. As the text states the woman a city sitting on seven hills (Revelation 17:9,18) the Preterist would logically say she must be Rome.

Historicism interprets the woman in terms of the whole flow of world history, especially concerning Europe and the morphing of the old Roman Empire into the Holy Roman Empire. They would see the woman as the Vatican, the home of Roman Catholicism, embodied in the Pope himself.

Idealism interprets the woman as merely a symbol of evil and not a literal person or place.

Futurism sees the woman as an end time city that represents a whole system of money and pleasure (maybe also a religious center but that is not so clear from the text). One city that meets these criteria is Brussels, the center of the European Union. It is among 51 cities in the world that sits on seven hills (others being Rome, Jerusalem, Mecca, Istanbul and Tehran). This ties in with other prophecies that the Antichrist (the Beast on which the woman rides) will come forth from a revived Roman Empire (the EU actually seeing itself as such). We will look more into who this woman is when we come to lesson 10.

Many people make Revelation say what they want it to – this is not good Bible interpretation. We need to let it speak for itself and read *out of* rather than *into* the text.

b. Vista of Revelation

In their endeavor to interpret Revelation many scholars have come up with elaborate and complicated charts that confuse the reader. The main purpose of Revelation is not to give a complicated and detailed outline of end time events but to prepare the church for what is ahead and infuse us with hope knowing the end of His story. I have thrown such elaborate diagrams into the bin and hope to come up with a more simple and understandable outline within the context of the actual purpose of this letter.

“Write the things which you have seen, and the things which are, and the things which will take place after this.” Rev 1:19 (NKJV).

This verse gives the natural OUTLINE of the Revelation.

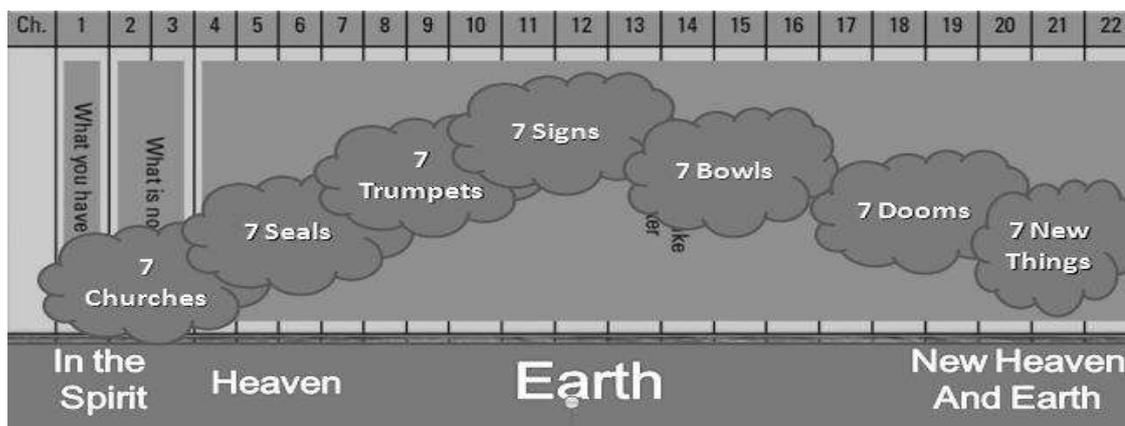
Ch.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22
	What you have seen	What is now		What will take place later																		

1. The things which you have seen (Chapter 1) – A revelation of the risen Christ (see the picture).



2. The things which are (Chapters 2-3) – The state of the seven churches.
3. The things which will take place after this (Chapters 5-22) – End time events.

This is the outline I will be using during this series, looking at the 7 Churches, 7 Seals, 7 Trumpets, 7 Signs, 7 Bowls, 7 Dooms and 7 New Things.



c. Value of Revelation

Revelation is very valuable to us as it:

i. Is ultimately a revelation of JESUS Himself (Revelation 1:1).

a. He is the righteous JUDGE (Revelation 1:12-15)

“Then I turned to see the voice that was speaking to me, and on turning I saw seven golden lampstands, 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. The hairs of his head were white, like white wool, like snow. His eyes were like a flame of fire, his feet were like burnished bronze, refined in a furnace, and his voice was like the roar of many waters. In his right hand he held seven stars, from his mouth came a sharp two-edged sword, and his face was like the sun shining in full strength.”

We should FEAR Him.

b. He is the sacrificial SAVIOUR (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.”

We should THANK Him.

c. He is the almighty GOD (Revelation 15:3-4)

“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! Who will not fear, O Lord, and glorify your name? For you alone are holy. All nations will come and worship you, for your righteous acts have been revealed.”

We should EXALT Him.

d. He is the kingly BRIDEGROOM (Revelation 19:7-10)

“Let us be glad and rejoice and give Him glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and His wife has made herself ready.” And to her it was granted to be arrayed in fine linen, clean and bright, for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints. Then he said to me, “Write: ‘Blessed are those who are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb!’” And he said to me, “These are the true sayings of God.” And I fell at his feet to worship him. But he said to me, “See that you do not do that! I am your fellow servant, and of your brethren who have the testimony of Jesus. Worship God! For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.”

We should LOVE Him.

ii. Was written to show us the FULFILLMENT of all things.

Genesis reveals to us the beginnings of all things and Revelation shows us the ending and consummation of all things. Without this letter to end all Scripture we would have the little letter of Jude that speaks into a second-generation church that is riddled with false doctrine.



iii. Was written for ORDINARY people.

Two thirds of those living in the area of the seven churches mentioned in this letter were slaves in the Roman Empire. This letter was written to

simple folk and not sophisticated scholars. It is the scholars that have messed it up and made it inaccessible to those who should be blessed by it. There is a story about a group of seminary students who were going through Revelation in their lecture and went for a break to the basketball court (to rest from the complicated teaching). The simply educated caretaker was waiting for them to finish so he could lock up and he was reading the Bible. One student asked what he was reading, and he said, “*Revelation sir!*” The student was amazed and said, “*Do you understand it?*” “*Oh yes!*” said the caretaker, “*Jesus wins!*” Really that is the message of revelation in a nutshell. Though things will get a lot worse before they get a lot better, ultimately Revelation is a message of hope.

iv. Was written to fill people with HOPE so they will be motivated to holiness.

The central and key verse of the letter is “*Here is the patience of the saints; here are those who keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus.*” Rev 14:12 (NKJV).

God’s people are to patiently endure all the terrible things to come in holiness because something much better is waiting for them. It is ultimately a book of hope where we are told the final outcome. Jesus won, the devil nil! We need to be on the side of Jesus and patiently play the game according to the rules and we are guaranteed victory!

v. Is a Call for Christians to ENDURE to the end as overcomers.

Revelation is not just about surviving the terrible things to come in the end times but being an overcomer in the midst of them (“*And he who overcomes, and keeps My works until the end, to him I will give power over the nations.*” Revelation 2:26 (NKJV)).

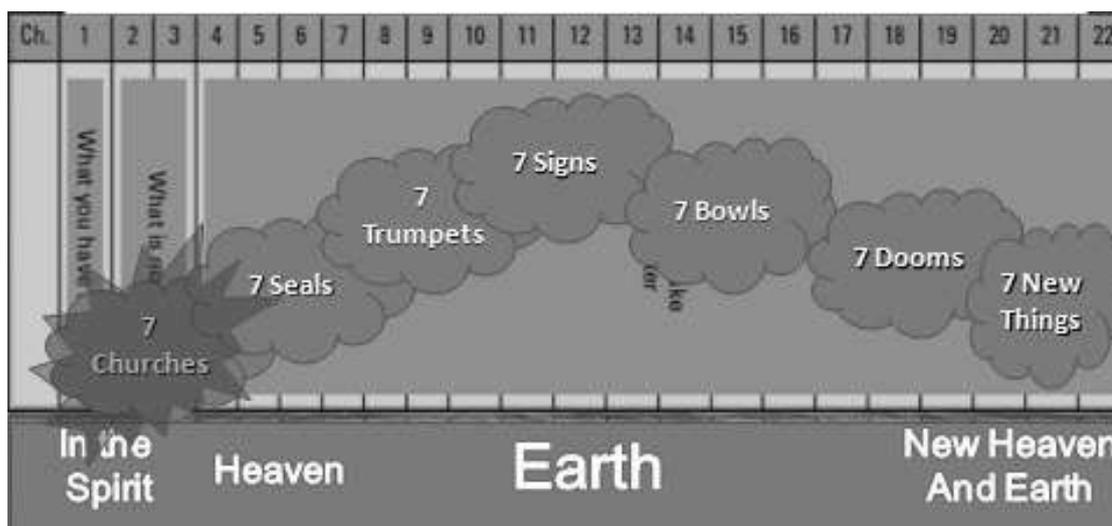
3. Conclusion

The main message of Revelation can be summed up by the two words:

OVERCOME and ENDURE.

Overcome what? Endure what? That’s what we will find out in the following lessons of this series.

PART TWO: LETTERS FROM JESUS



1. Introduction:

“John, to the seven churches which are in Asia: Grace to you and peace from Him who is and who was and who is to come, and from the seven Spirits who are before His throne, and from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn from the dead, and the ruler over the kings of the earth. To Him who loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood and has made us kings and priests to His God and Father, to Him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen” Revelation 1:4-6 (NKJV)

Revelation is first and foremost a LETTER.

The Apostle John had a network of seven Churches in Western Asia Minor (modern day western Turkey) that he made a circuit of regularly before he was exiled onto the island of Patmos. Revelation would have been sent to these churches initially.

This introductory note shows the entire book of Revelation was firstly written to all the seven churches as an encouragement to be overcomers in the troubled times through the blood of Jesus.

There is one section where there are specific letters just for each of the seven churches (Chapters 2 and 3). These seven letters are directly from Jesus Himself, dictated to John who wrote them down. No other letters of the New Testament were so directly from Jesus as these were.

In this lesson we are looking at the first two divisions – the things John saw and the things which were real concerning the churches at his time. We are particularly looking at the seven letters to the seven churches.

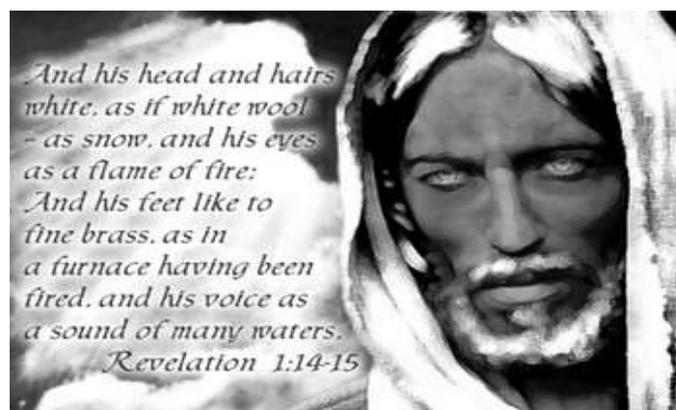
A Revelation of Jesus

Revelation 1:9-20 is the awesome revelation of JESUS that the church needs to have to endure the tribulation to come. The judge first walks among the churches – judgment comes first to the house of God before it comes upon the world (1 Peter 4:17). He comes to make sure the lamps are burning brightly in all the churches because this will need to be the case for them to endure the trials to come.

Chapter one of Revelation shows us the initial vision of John as he was in the Spirit.

"I, John, both your brother and companion in the tribulation and kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ, was on the island that is called Patmos for the word of God and for the testimony of Jesus Christ. I was in the Spirit on the Lord's Day, and I heard behind me a loud voice, as of a trumpet, saying, "I am the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last," and, "What you see, write in a book and send it to the seven churches which are in Asia: to Ephesus, to Smyrna, to Pergamos, to Thyatira, to Sardis, to Philadelphia, and to Laodicea." Then I turned to see the voice that spoke with me. And having turned I saw seven golden lampstands, and in the midst of the seven lampstands One like the Son of Man, clothed with a garment down to the feet and girded about the chest with a golden band. His head and hair were white like wool, as white as snow, and His eyes like a flame of fire; His feet were like fine brass, as if refined in a furnace, and His voice as the sound of many waters; He had in His right hand seven stars, out of His mouth went a sharp two-edged sword, and His countenance was like the sun shining in its strength. And when I saw Him, I fell at His feet as dead. But He laid His right hand on me, saying to me, "Do not be afraid; I am the First and the Last. I am He who lives, and was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore. Amen. And I have the keys of Hades and of Death. Write the things which you have seen, and the things which are, and the things which will take place after this. 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 which you saw are the seven churches." Revelation 1:9-20 (NKJV)

His vision is amazing. He sees Jesus like he's never seen Him before, standing in the midst of seven menorah (Jewish lamp stands). John was considered to be the closest disciple of Jesus and probably knew him better than the others. However, here he sees Jesus as the Righteous Judge. He is dressed just like a Roman judge of that time but even grander and far more powerful. As a result, John falls to the feet of Jesus as one dead. The one he thought he knew so well he hardly knew at all.



This is the awesome revelation of Jesus that the church needs to have to endure the tribulation to come. The judge first walks among the churches – judgment comes first to the house of God before it comes upon the world (1 Peter 4:17). He comes to make sure the lamps are burning brightly in all the churches because this will need to be the case for them to endure the trials to come.

The seven stars in Jesus' right hand are the seven angels of the seven churches. This shows us that every church has at least one angel assigned to it. Opinion differs as to whether this angel is merely a human *messenger* (the meaning of the greek word *angelos*) or an actual angelic messenger. This *angel* assists the church in being a bright shining witness, if the church allows it to do so! Notice that each letter to each church is firstly addressed to this angel.



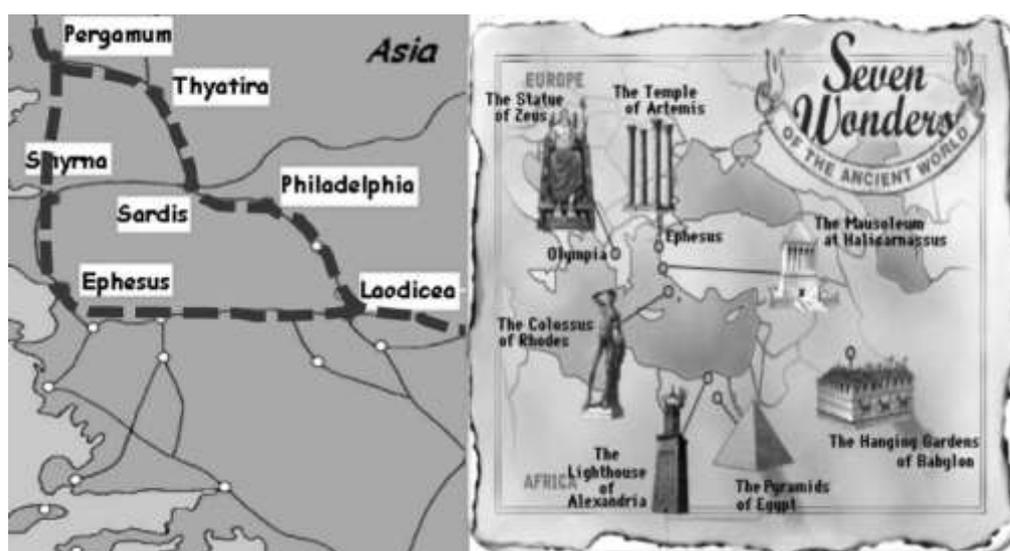
Jesus tells us we are not to judge by appearance (John 7:24). What may look beautiful and full of life may actually be dead, such as a beautiful butterfly in a museum collection!

Jesus sees the churches as they really are not as they APPEAR. Some of the churches that appeared so alive in man's estimation (such as Sardis) were actually dead in God's eyes.

2. Seven Letters to Seven Churches:

a. What was so special about these churches that Jesus Himself dictated special letters to them?

- i. This was a key area for the APOSTLES, especially Paul (three years in Ephesus) and John (ministered in a circuit to all the seven churches). Philip was killed here.
- ii. This area was an important centre of TRADE and CULTURE at the time of the apostles. Money was first made here at Sardis (in the reign of King Croesus) and the dotted routes represent important trade routes used at that time (linking Europe to Asia and Africa).



Culturally, this was the cultural centre of the earth at that time. Three of the seven wonders of the ancient world were in this area – The Temple of Artemis (Diana) in Ephesus, The Mausoleum at Halicarnassus and the Colossus of Rhodes.

It was an area of great Greek/Roman influence and where the religions of the east and west met.

- iii. Satan's HEADQUARTERS was here in PERGAMUM.

Satan is not omnipresent as God is. He roams the earth when he is not in the second heaven and needs a base of operation. At the time of John that base of operation was Pergamum. It is at Pergamum that Satan's Throne was and where Satan dwelt (Revelation 2:13). Most scholars identify the Throne of Zeus as being *Satan's Throne*. This was a seat shaped altar to Zeus placed prominently on the highest place overlooking Pergamum. It was here that those considered traitors to Rome were killed (and probably where Antipas was martyred – 2:13). In

the early twentieth century this altar was moved to Berlin just as Hitler was rising to power!

As you can see from the map, Pergamum was strategic as it was at the northernmost part of the trade routes bringing goods, knowledge and wealth from Europe. Satan would have wanted to make sure that only those things that would further his plans should be allowed through.

There are three zones that the seven churches may be divided into – those closest to Satan’s base (Pergamum, Thyatira and Sardis), those further away (Smyrna and Philadelphia) and those furthest away (Ephesus and Laodicea). Remember, by AD95 at the time of John’s writing these were all second-generation churches and Satan had been diligently attacking them during this time.



Zone 1 (closest to Satan’s base) – Pergamum, Thyatira and Sardis

Churches here were corrupt from THE INSIDE by idolatry and IMMORALITY

Looking at the descriptions of the churches at Pergamum, Thyatira and Sardis you see that they had been attacked by agents of Satan from within. They were corrupted from inside by idolatry and immorality, but they still seemed to be functioning somewhat as lights in their community as not all had succumbed to Satan’s attack. Pergamum was infected with the Doctrine of Balaam (2:14) leading them to eat with the pagans of the things offered to idols and lie with the temple prostitutes in sexual immortality. Thyatira was infected by the

doctrine of Jezebel leading the people to do the same as those in Pergamum (2:20). Sardis was infected by a spirit of death and stupor from within leading to some having *defiled garments* (3:4). These characteristics can particularly be seen today in the churches in the developing nations.

Zone 2 (further away from Satan's base) – Smyrna and Philadelphia

Churches here were suffering PERSECUTION from OUTSIDE (Jews).

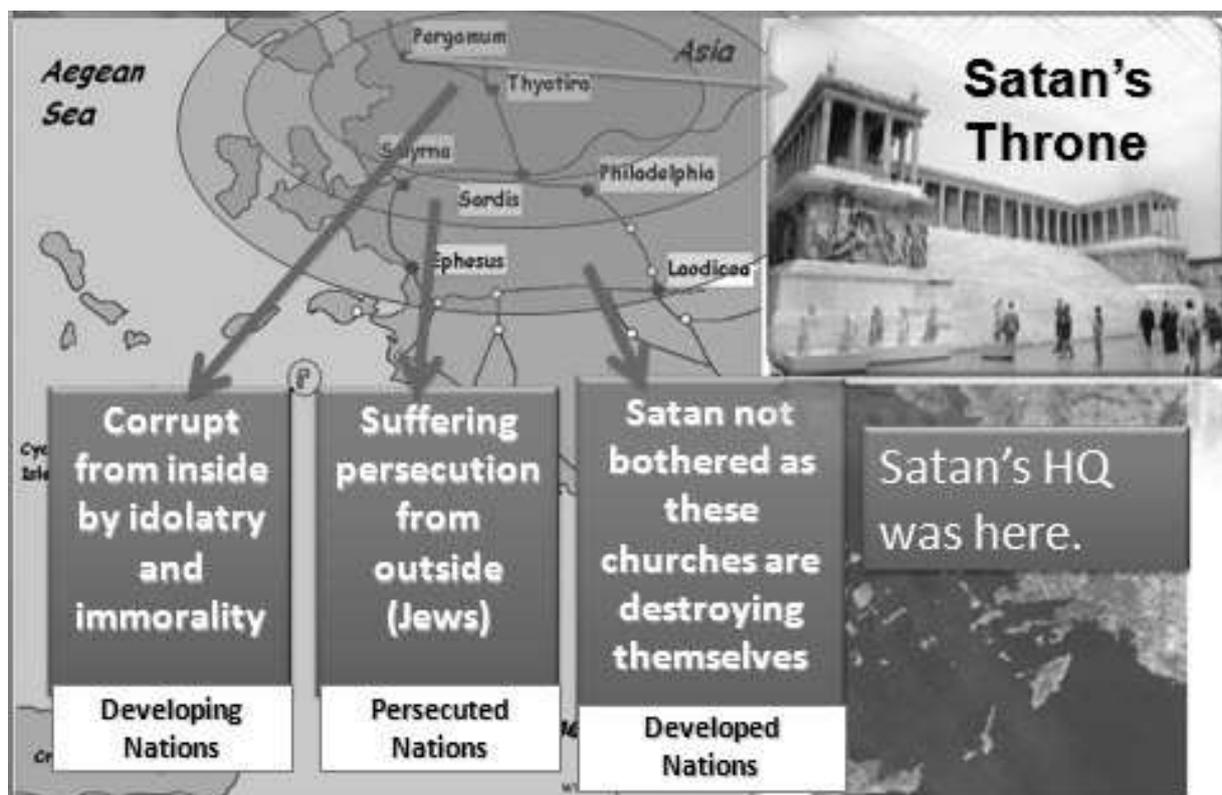
Both Smyrna and Philadelphia were far enough away from Satan's base of operation so as to not be infiltrated directly from within by his minions. However, they were being attacked from without. Both of these churches were suffering great persecution from the *synagogue of Satan* (Revelation 2:9 and 3:9), probably meaning that they were being persecuted by the Jewish leaders in their city. As we will see, these two churches had the best report of all and are only commended by Jesus. Persecuted churches tend to have the purest form of Christianity and also need the most encouragement. These characteristics can particularly be seen today in the churches in the persecuted nations.

Zone 3 (furthest away from Satan's base) – Ephesus and Laodicea

Satan not bothered as these churches are DESTROYING themselves.

Jesus has the most criticism for the last two churches, which are furthest away from Satan's base of operations. Indeed, Satan is not attacking these two churches from within or from without as they are actually destroying themselves without his help! The churches at Ephesus and Laodicea were the first churches to be established in this area and were the wealthiest and biggest of all. They were the mega-churches of their day. The Church at Ephesus was the first Church to be established here by the Apostle Paul and all the other churches had been planted by their witness. However, now the church had impressive activities but no real love (2:4). Without love they had lost their dynamic witness in the community. The church at Laodicea had become lukewarm in its witness to the community and though it was a rich church was really *poor, blind and naked* (3:17) in Jesus' eyes. Indeed, Jesus was not even attending the meetings in this church as they made Him sick and he was outside knocking on their church door (3:20)! These characteristics can particularly be seen today in the churches in the developed nations.

See the following picture that summarizes the above.



b. Seven parts to each letter.

ADDRESSEE – Who the letter is addressed to. In this case the addressees are the seven churches that John ministered to.

ADDRESSER – Who the letter is from. In every case this is Jesus but He revealed one aspect or name that they most needed.

APPROVAL – Jesus speaks words of encouragement and approval (if there are any) before moving into accusation.

ACCUSATION – Jesus does not mince His words but shows things as they really are, revealing the true state of each church.

ADVICE – Jesus does not accuse without giving a solution. He gives practical advice of how to overcome the problems.

ASSURANCE – Jesus gives beautiful assurances to those who overcome at the end of each letter.

APPEAL – Each letter end with an appeal to *he who has ears* to really hear His message and act upon it.



d. Real Places, Real Issues

Each of the letters was written to real churches with real issues. Jesus understood the churches inside out and used language that they could easily identify with. He used terms that were unique to their environments and history. For example, Jesus promised a *crown of life* to those in the church at Smyrna (modern day Izmir) that faithfully endured the persecution. This would have meant a lot to the Christian in Smyrna as the hills surrounding the city were called *The Crown of Smyrna*. These hills were lined with the pagan temples and buildings and maybe even the Synagogue that caused so much of their persecution.

Place Insight

Ephesus This was one of largest cities in the Mediterranean and a key centre for travel and commerce. Ephesus was famed for the Temple of Artemis (Diana) and Library of Celsus. It was the 'Gateway of Asia'.

Smyrna This is the only city that still is inhabited with an existing church. All other places are now uninhabited ruins. The mountains around the city were called "*The Crown of Smyrna*".

Pergamum This city had a large complex to Asclepius, the god of healing and was considered a wonder of the world in Paul's time. The Altar of Zeus was here at highest point.

Thyatira Thyatira was famous for her brass guilds Jesus showed himself to the Thyatiran church as one with feet like fine brass (2:18), who had come to judge their false doctrine!

Sardis Sardis was once the strongest city of this area under King Croesus. The king thought the Acropolis Stronghold to be impenetrable and so only posted a few guards there. However, the Persian King Cyrus sent spies who saw one guard drop his helmet down the steep cliff side guarding the city. They then saw the guard use footholds to descend to get the helmet and ascend again into the Stronghold. With this knowledge the armies of Cyrus came and took the city! In the same way the Christians of Sardis had dropped their guard and their helmets of salvation, assuming their faith was alive and kicking whereas it was on the point of death!

Philadelphia In 17AD there was a huge earthquake that virtually leveled the city, but one huge pillar remained that still remains to this day. Jesus was probably referring to this when he promised that the Overcoming Christians of Philadelphia would be a *“pillar in the Temple of My God”* (3:12).

Laodicea The best example of how well Jesus knew the churches and their environments is His letter to the Laodiceans. When He said they were neither hot nor cold but lukewarm and therefore made Him sick, He was speaking in language that would be very powerful to them. Laodicea had no water source of its own and they built an extensive water pipe system (today you can see the ruins of this) to channel water from elsewhere.

The two main places they got water from were the hot mountain springs of Hierapolis and the cool, refreshing waters of Colossae. However, in both cases, by the time the water reached Laodicea it was lukewarm and contaminated by bitter minerals that made people sick if they drank it as it came. They needed to boil the water first before they drank it. So, when Jesus said He wished they were either hot or cold does not mean He wished they were either zealous for Him (hot) or hardened and cold towards Him. He wished they were either like the healing hot springs waters of Hierapolis or the refreshing cool waters of Colossae. Also, Laodicea was famous for its wealth (gold), textiles (white garments) and medicine (especially eye salve). So, when Jesus called them *“poor, naked and blind”* (3:17), needing to buy refined heavenly gold from Him, white garments of righteousness and anoint their eyes with spiritual eye salve (3:18), they would have really got the message!

e. What did Jesus say?

The Seven Churches of Revelation							
THE 7 CHURCHES	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
SCRIPTURE REFERENCE	Ephesus	Smyrna	Pergamos	Thyatira	Sardis	Philadelphia	Laodicea
CHRIST'S TITLE AS JUDGE	REV. 2:1-7	REV. 2:8-11	REV. 2:12-17	REV. 2:18-29	REV. 3:1-6	REV. 3:7-13	REV. 3:14-22
"Walks In Midst of Candlesticks"	"Which Was Dead And Is Alive"	"He Which Hath The Sharp Sword"	"The Son Of God"	"He That Hath The Seven Spirits"	"He That Is Holy And True"	"The Faithful Witness"	
GOOD POINTS	NONE	Endured Tribulation	The Faith Not Denied	Faith & Patience	A Name That It Lived	Kept The Word	NONE
FAULTS	Left First Love	NONE	Balaam's Doctrine, Idolatry	Ruled By "Jezebel"	But Dead Spiritually	NONE	Lukewarm
REWARD TO OVERCOMERS	"Paradise"	The First Resurrection	"A White Stone"	Reign With Christ	"Name Confessed"	"The New Jerusalem"	"With Christ On David's Throne"

This chart condenses what I have already been talking about. The men holding the "X" represent criticism and accusation from Jesus. The men holding the tick represent approval and praise from Jesus. As you can see two churches only get a big "X" (Ephesus and Laodicea), only two churches get a big tick (Smyrna and Philadelphia) and the other three get a mixed reception.

Notice that Jesus introduces Himself to each church with the name that they most need –

Ephesus: Jesus comes as the one who *"walks in the midst of the Candlesticks"* as they most need His loving presence.

Smyrna: Jesus comes as He *"which was dead and is alive"* as they need comfort in the face of persecution and death.

Pergamum: Jesus comes as *"He which has the sharp sword"* as they need the double-edged sword of the Word against false doctrine.

Thyatira: Jesus comes as *"The Son of God with eyes of fire and feet of brass"* because they need a Judge.

Sardis: Jesus comes as *"He that has the seven spirits"* as they need the life of the Spirit of God.

Philadelphia: Jesus comes as *"He that is holy and true"* as then need to keep on in holiness and truth.

Laodicea: Jesus comes as “*the faithful witness*” as they need to be faithful witnesses.

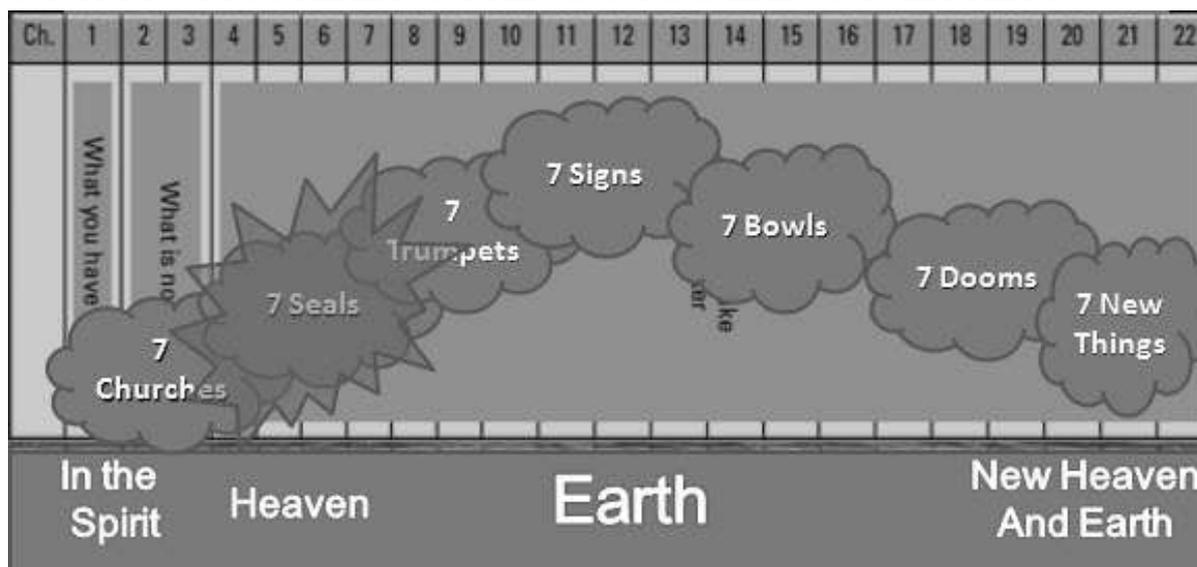
3. Conclusion:

Church	Summary	What to do?
EPHESUS	<i>Loyal but Loveless</i>	Remember and <i>Repent</i> .
SMYRNA	<i>Afflicted but Affluent</i>	Do not Fear, be Faithful
PERGAMUM	<i>Faithful but Flawed</i>	<i>Repent</i> from false Religion (Balaam and Nicolaitans)
THYATIRA	<i>Committed but Compromised</i>	<i>Repent</i> from false Religion (Jezebel)
SARDIS	<i>Dynamic but Dying</i>	<i>Repent</i> from dead Religion
PHILADELPHIA	<i>Small but Significant</i>	Hold Fast to what you Have
LAODICEA	<i>Crowded but Christless</i>	Be Refined and <i>Repent</i> .

This final chart summarizes Jesus’ message to each church. Today every church on the face of the planet is like one or more of these churches and needs to heed the advice of Jesus. Notice that to all the churches, except those being persecuted, Jesus’ message was the same – REPENT!

Notice also that He does not counsel them to leave their church and go to a better one, but to stay and be an agent of change.

PART THREE: THE SCROLL OPENER



1. Introduction:

After the messages to the seven churches John is taken up in the Spirit to the Heavenly Throne Room where he sees a tremendous spectacle. The main emphasis of his vision revolves around a scroll with seven seals that only one is worthy to open.

We now come into the section “*the things which will take place after this*” as the seven seals of the scroll represent events that were to take place after John received this revelation. The question is how soon or how long after John’s time did or do these events transpire? We will look at this in the next lesson. This lesson looks at who is worthy to open this scroll and so set the end time events in motion.

A Vision of Heaven

*“After these things I looked, and behold, a door standing open in heaven. And the first voice which I heard was like a trumpet speaking with me, saying, “Come up here, and I will show you things which must take place after this.” Immediately I was in the Spirit; and behold, a **throne** set in heaven, and One sat on the **throne**. And He who sat there was like a jasper and a sardius stone in appearance; and there was a rainbow around the **throne**, in appearance like an emerald. Around the throne were twenty-four **thrones**, and on the **thrones** I saw twenty-four elders sitting, clothed in white robes; and they had crowns of gold on their heads. And from the throne proceeded lightnings, thunderings, and voices. Seven lamps of fire were burning before the **throne**, which are the seven Spirits of God. Before the **throne** there was a sea of glass, like crystal.*”

*And in the midst of the **throne**, and around the **throne**, were four living creatures full of eyes in front and in back.” Revelation 4:1-6 (NKJV)*



The key word of this section is THRONE (used 16 times in 2 chapters)

The main message is that God is on the Throne and in total CONTROL. Though bad things are about to happen they can only happen as God allows them. This truth is vividly seen in the story of Job where Satan has to go to God to get permission to harm Job. Satan can only operate where men leave an open door for him to do so or God gives His go ahead as in the case of Job (see Job 1:10-12).

The 24 elders represent the heads of the twelve Tribes of ISRAEL and the twelve APOSTLES. They represent all of God's people through history showing that in the face of the terrible events happening on earth God's people should be before the throne worshipping God as Overcomers! They will be safe and secure under the shadow of His wings as they do so, even if He allows them to go through great persecution and even martyrdom.

Notice that John sees this vision when he is taken up in the SPIRIT. It is when we are living in the Spirit, sealed by the Spirit, that we will be safe in His presence even in the midst of Great Tribulation.

The four living creatures are representatives of all CREATION which joins in the praise of God and also groans awaiting the revelation of the sons of God (Romans 8:22). These creatures are a mix between the Seraphim of Isaiah 6 (having six wings) and the Cherubim in Ezekiel 1 and 10 who are guardians of

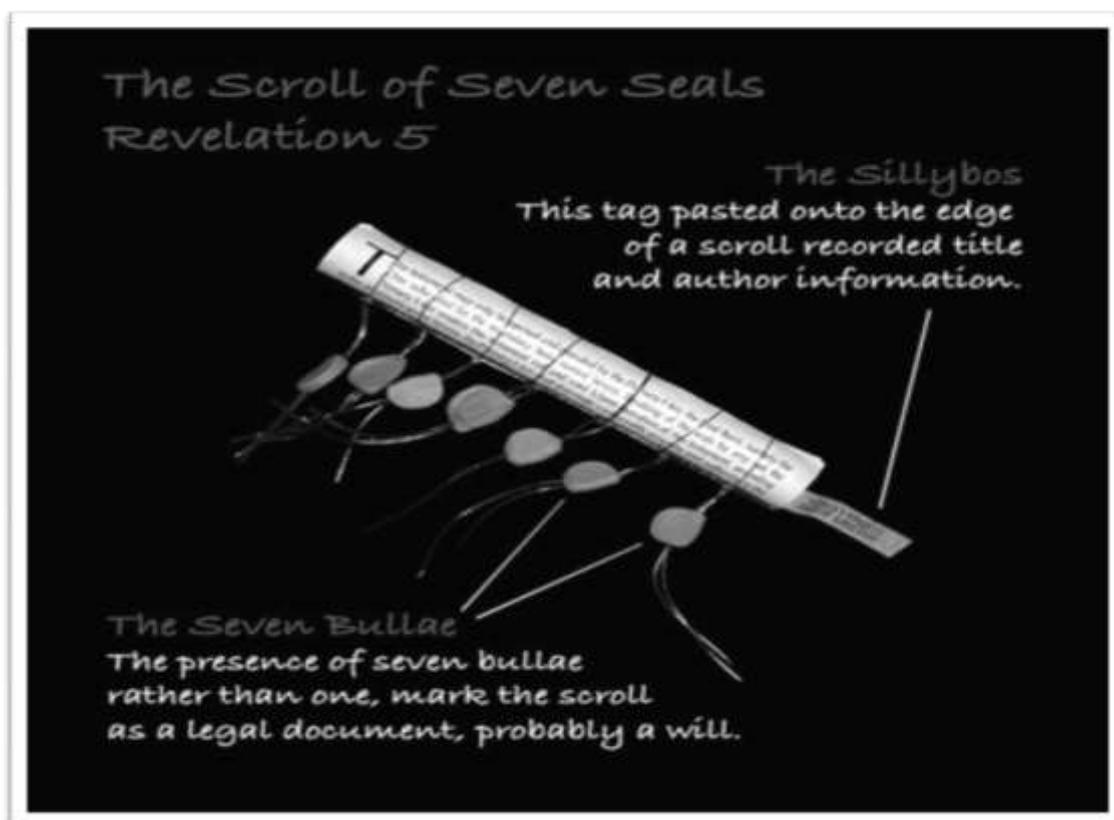
the presence of God on the Throne. They are probably metaphors for angelic beings.

2. The Scroll with Seven Seals:

a. What is the scroll?

In Chapter five we are introduced to a scroll with seven seals. A seal was a flat round wax or clay *lock* that either sealed the scroll directly on its surface or via strings as we see in the picture. The seal had the image or emblem of the one giving the authority to carry out the contents of the scroll. Scrolls usually contained special messages or commands.

For a scroll to have seven seals marked it as a LEGAL document, probably a last will and testament as we see in the following picture:



To open the scroll, someone first must break all seven seals. More than a few interpreters go awry here by failing to realize this rather fundamental point: The seals are not the contents of the scroll! They are preliminary events that must happen before the contents can be fully read. The sealed scroll in Revelation 5 is the last will and testament of God Himself. In it are the names of the heirs and a description of their inheritance. Before the heirs receive their inheritance, certain events must first unfold (the events outlined in the seven seals).

Therefore, it is possible that this scroll is the Book of LIFE itself with the names of the saved and their inheritance. The amazing thing is that it will be opened by none other than the one who wrote this will in His blood – one who died and rose again. This is the only time that a last will and testament will be opened and read by the one who died!

This scroll may be the same as that in Daniel 12:4-9:

*“But you, Daniel, shut up the words, and **seal the book** until the time of the end; many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall increase.” Then I, Daniel, looked; and there stood two others, one on this riverbank and the other on that riverbank. And one said to the man clothed in linen, who was above the waters of the river, “How long shall the fulfillment of these wonders be?” Then I heard the man clothed in linen, who was above the waters of the river, when he held up his right hand and his left hand to heaven, and swore by Him who lives forever, that it shall be for a time, times, and half a time; and when the power of the holy people has been completely shattered, all these things shall be finished. Although I heard, I did not understand. Then I said, “My lord, what shall be the end of these things?” And he said, “Go your way, Daniel, for the words are closed up and **sealed till the time of the end.**”*

This refers to a scroll that Daniel sealed up and will be fully opened at the end of the Great Tribulation time (we will look at this later) and relates to arising into our inheritance (Daniel 12:13) as the righteous ones when Jesus returns after the rule of the Antichrist.

Note that the scroll has writing on both sides, meaning some can be seen before the seals are open. This could mean that we can see our names written on the outer side of the book of life and can be assured of our salvation. The inner side would then contain our rewards when Christ returns.

b. Who is the scroll opener?

John wept when he thought there was no one to open God’s last will and testament because this meant there would be no inheritance for His people. However, there is one who is worthy to open the scroll.

“But one of the elders said to me, “Do not weep. Behold, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has prevailed to open the scroll and to loose its seven seals.” And I looked, and behold, in the midst of the throne and of the four living creatures, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as though it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent out into all the earth. Then He came and took the scroll out of the right hand of Him who sat on the throne.” Revelation 5:5-7(NKJV)



The one who is worthy to open the scroll is of course JESUS, the Lamb of God (John 1:29) and the Lion of Judah (Genesis 49:9-10). As the Lamb of God, He has become the once and for all sacrifice for our sins and bought our salvation. As the Lion of Judah, He has overcome the dark rule of the roaring lion Satan so that that we may be brought into his Kingdom of light. Jesus, because of his life, death and resurrection is worthy to open the Book of Life and save His people, giving them an inheritance with Him. His is the High King and High Priest worthy to make us kings and priests!

c. **What do the seals and scroll reveal?**

Seals = EVENTS before scroll is opened

Scroll = Names of HEIRS and their inheritance

“Now when He had taken the scroll, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb, each having a harp, and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints. And they sang a new song, saying: “You are worthy to take the scroll, and to open its seals; For You were slain, and have redeemed us to God by Your blood out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation, and have made us kings and priests to our God; And we shall reign on the earth.” Revelation 5:8-10

If we believe in Him then He has truly made us “**KINGS AND PRIESTS**” and we will reign with Him (5:10). This truth will cause us to join the four living creatures and twenty-four elders in singing this song of praise; “*You are worthy to take the scroll*”. The Bible says that presently all believers are sealed by the Holy Spirit awaiting the fullness of His inheritance (Ephesians 1:12-14) and so,

by the Spirit, we can praise and rejoice in Him even when times of great trial come.

The book of life will be opened and read out when Jesus RETURNS and the righteous are caught up in the air to be with Him. He will give the saved new resurrection bodies and then bless them with rewards – an inheritance of ruling and reigning with Him for a thousand years on earth (Revelation 20:4). But before all this can take place the seven seals must be opened and each one marks terrible events that we will look at in the next part.

3. Conclusion

This whole section teaches us that:

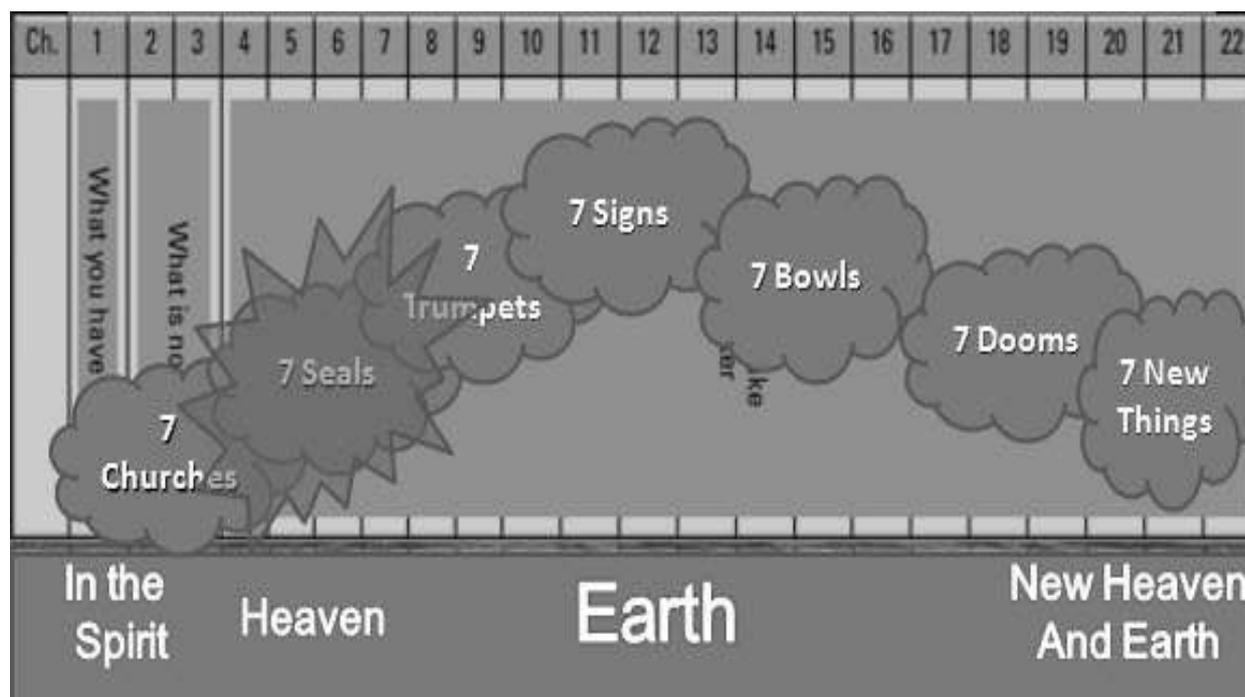
- i. God the Father is REIGNING.
- ii. Jesus Christ has REDEEMED.
- iii. The Holy Spirit brings REVELATION.

From Chapter 4 and 5 of Revelation we see that even though things are going to get worse in the end times Father God is reigning and in control. Jesus has redeemed those who believe and is worthy to give them the fullness of their inheritance. All this is possible by the seal of the Holy Spirit in our lives who brings this revelation and gives us hope.

“That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him, the eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that you may know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints.”
Ephesians 1:17-18 (NKJV)

Those who live in the Spirit will know that Father God is in control and that they are saved by the blood of the Lamb, Jesus Christ. Only these will endure tribulation to the end to rule and reign with Him after the wrath of God is poured out.

PART FOUR: THE SEVEN SEALS



1. Introduction:

A little girl came home from Sunday school saying to her Mum, “Mummy, teacher says that Jesus can make big animals come out of smaller ones”. Bemused, her mother asked what she meant to which the girl replied, “Yes, she told us that Jesus opened up seven seals and four horses came out of four of them!”

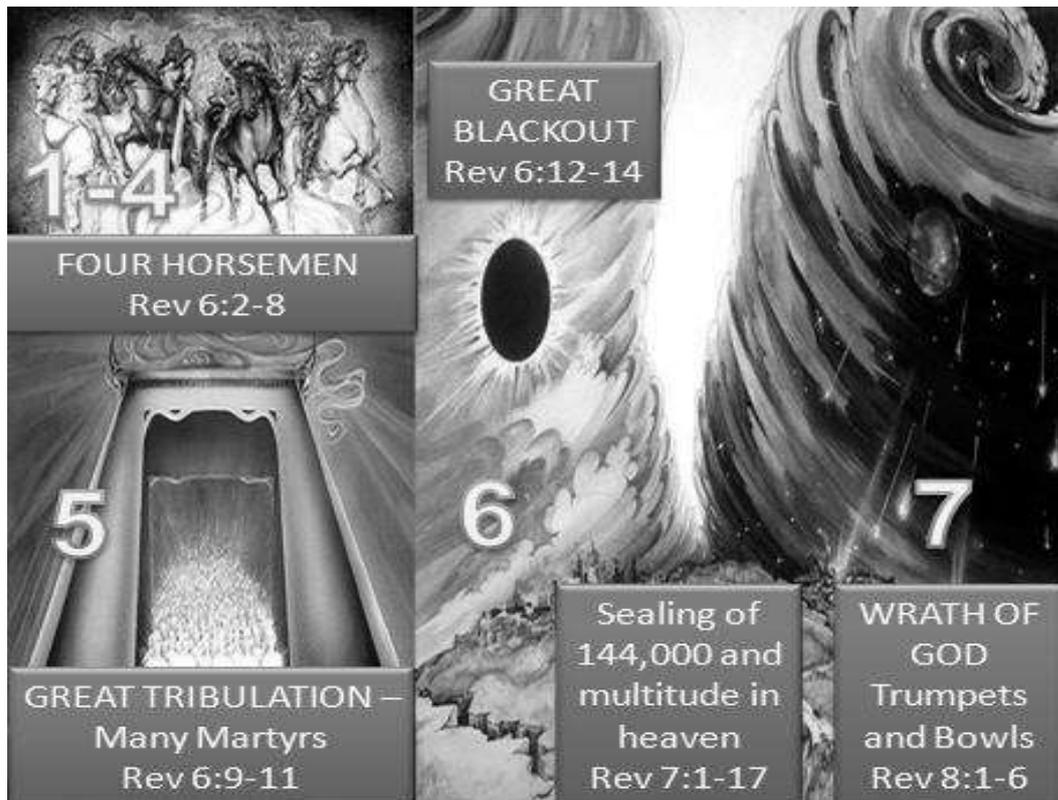
We have learnt that the seven seals are not aquatic animals, but they are METAPHORS for events that must transpire before Jesus returns to apportion out His inheritance to the saints. In this lesson we will look at what these seven seal events are and when they happen.

We will see that the first six seals actually release the wrath of SATAN on mankind and the Seventh seal releases the Trumpet and Bowl plagues that represent the wrath of God to be poured out before the Book of Life can finally be opened and read out.

2. The Seven Seals

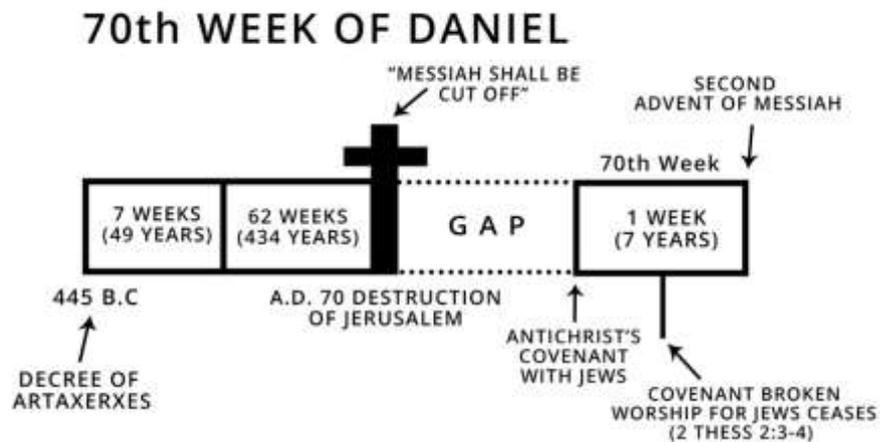
i. Events of the Seven Seals

We will now look at a picture that visually describes the events unleashed by the seven seals.



- The first four seals release the four HORSEMEN of the Apocalypse

These are foreshadowed now but will probably be opened by Jesus when the Antichrist negotiates a peace treaty in Israel for seven years (Daniel 9:24-27).



Horseman 1 = ANTICHRIST (White)

Horseman 2 = WAR (Red)

Horseman 3 = FAMINE AND ECONOMIC TROUBLE (Black)

Horseman 4 = DEATH BY WAR, FAMINE & PESTILENCE (Pale)

The first four seals release the four horsemen of the Apocalypse, bringing with them the Antichrist, wars, famine and epidemics. Some identify the first horseman as Jesus as he is a king riding a white horse going out to conquer. However, this king is holding a bow whereas Jesus is pictured having a sword (Revelation 19:11-16) and if we compare with Matthew 24 we see that prophetically it is a false Christ (Antichrist) that precedes war, famine and epidemics. Also he is only wearing one crown (stephanos – conquerors laurel wreath) whereas Jesus returns wearing many crowns (Revelation 19:12 - diadema – royal crown). Indeed, it seems to be the arrival of the Antichrist that triggers the next three horsemen representing war (Red horse), famine and economic trouble (Black horse) and finally death by war, famine and pestilence (Pale horse). This pattern can be seen through history – a conqueror comes, bringing warfare that leads to famine and eventually plagues that kill many. The Mongol invasion of Eastern Europe is a prime example of this. After their invasion there was famine due to their destruction of crops and animals and they brought with them the type of rat that triggered the Black Death in the fourteenth century that killed a third of the people in Europe.

If the first horseman is the Antichrist, then this marks a future event when the Antichrist comes on the scene. He will make a covenant of peace in Israel for seven years (one possible interpretation of Daniel 9:27) but this will trigger wars, famine and plagues around the world, probably due to radical elements angry at the peace agreement.

- **Seal five marks a turning point in the rule of the Antichrist when he will PERSECUTE many saints who do not worship him.**

Half way through the seven-year peace treaty in Israel the Antichrist will break his word (Daniel 9:27) and march into Jerusalem with his armies to take over the Temple (that will have been rebuilt), setting up an abominable image (probably of himself – see Daniel 9:27 and Matthew 24:15). From this time on he will demand worship and persecute all those that do not bow down to him. Inevitably the true believers at this time will refuse to worship him and be greatly persecuted and even martyred. That is why we see many souls of the martyrs under the altar in heaven with the opening of the fifth seal. They are the souls of believers who will be persecuted and killed for their faith in the second half of the seven-year Tribulation.

This period is called the Great TRIBULATION.

Notice these are the souls of the martyrs not with resurrected bodies and so it is before the resurrection of the dead in Christ. These martyrs cry out to be avenged – they do not want to get revenge themselves, but they cry out for God's vengeance.

Many commentators have linked these martyrs with the Christians martyred under the reign of the Roman Emperors. From Nero to Diocletian there were ten periods

of intense persecution and martyrdom of Christians, but all these were foreshadowing the Great Tribulation martyrdom yet to come. It has been estimated that more Christians were martyred in the 20th Century than in the previous 1,900 years combined, yet the martyrdom during the Great Tribulation will be the worst ever seen.

- **The Sixth Seal releases a *COSMIC* event along with a great earthquake.**

The sun and moon will be darkened (Revelation 6:12) causing a great blackout and meteors will fall to the earth (*stars fall from heaven*). There will be huge land mass displacement (*every mountain and island was moved out of its place*) as the sky will appear to be rolled up as a scroll (Revelation 6:14), which some commentators identify as the visual effect of a nuclear bomb. Whatever these events actually are they mark a transition from the wrath of the Antichrist to the wrath of God – “*For the great day of His wrath has come*” (Revelation 6:17). During the wrath of the Antichrist (in the Great Tribulation) it is the saints that run to the wilderness to find refuge in the mountain caves, but at this time it will be all the wicked men and women, especially the rulers and rich, who will flee from the wrath of God into the mountains (Revelation 6:15-16) but they will not escape.

This event is called the Great BLACKOUT.

This seal marks the beginning of the pouring out of GOD’S wrath.

In between the great blackout and the opening of the seventh seal there is a vision of the 144,000 and a great multitude in heaven (Chapter 7).

There has been fierce debate as to who the 144,000 are, the Jehovah Witnesses saying it is them (even though there are over 3 million JWs). Some interpreters say the number is not literal but is symbolic of all Christians. Some say it is a literal 144,000 who are the special, called out overcoming Christians.

A literal reading of this chapter shows us that the 144,000 is made up of 12,000 from each of the twelve tribes of Israel. Literally this would make these 144,000 Jews. They are sealed on their foreheads, so they will not be touched by the wrath of God that is about to be poured out (Trumpet and Bowl judgments). As they are called “*servants of our God*” (v3) it is highly likely that these are messianic Jews, Jews who believe in Jesus as their Messiah. This means there will be a great revival among the Jews at this time.

Notice that the 12 tribes listed here is slightly different to previous lists in the Bible.

Genesis 29-30	Numbers 1	Revelation 7
Reuben	Reuben	Reuben
Simeon	Simeon	Simeon
Levi		Levi
Judah	Judah	Judah
Dan	Dan	
Naphtali	Naphtali	Naphtali
Gad	Gad	Gad
Asher	Asher	Asher
Isaachar	Isaachar	Isaachar
Zebulun	Zebulun	Zebulun
Joseph		Joseph
	Ephraim	
	Manasseh	Manasseh
Benjamin	Benjamin	Benjamin

Jacob (Israel) had twelve sons: Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Judah, Dan, Naphtali, Gad, Asher, Issachar, Zebulun, Joseph, and Benjamin (Genesis 29:32 - 30:24 and Genesis 35:18). However, the twelve tribes turned into thirteen when Jacob gave Joseph a “*double portion*”. This meant that each of his two sons, Ephraim and Manasseh, became a tribe, rather than just the one tribe of Joseph (Genesis 48:5). However, this thirteen became twelve again as the tribe of Levi received no land. The Levites were only given certain cities and was the tribe of the priesthood who received the tithes of the other twelve tribes who tithed from their land.

Therefore, the difference between the first and second column is that Joseph was split into Ephraim and Manasseh, while Levi was dedicated to the Lord. In Revelation Levi is very conspicuously brought back alongside of the others. Obviously, this is very symbolic, indicating that this priesthood is over. Now, bringing Levi back is effectively going back to the time before Jacob gave Joseph the double portion, so technically Dan should still be on the list and Ephraim and Manasseh should not, being that they are already represented in Joseph! Truly this is odd and must have some symbolic meaning.

If we assume Dan is removed due to its idolatry (Judges 18:30-31), then Manasseh is added to fill Dan’s place to keep the number twelve.

Another plausible explanation for the replacement of the tribe of Dan by the tribe of Levi is that Dan will take over Levi’s ministry of judging Israel in the millennial kingdom in accordance with the prophecy of Jacob that “*Dan shall judge his people*”.

Then John sees a “*great multitude which no one could number, of all nations, peoples and tongues*” (v9). Who are these? One of the Twenty-Four Elders gives

the answer, “*these are the ones who come out of great tribulation and washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb*” (v14) – they are the Great Tribulation Martyrs John saw the souls of at the opening of the Fifth Seal. This shows us that the number of Christians martyred during the Great Tribulation under the rule of the Antichrist will be uncountable!

Some people say this great multitude represents the raptured Christians after the Great Tribulation and before the wrath of God is poured out (a pre-wrath rapture). This is possible but the vision of this great multitude seems to fulfill the vision of Revelation 6:11 of the martyrs awaiting the full number, wearing the same white robes mentioned in the same passage.

- **The Seventh Seal** marks the actual pouring out of God’s WRATH in the Trumpet and Bowl judgments. We will look at this more in the next lesson.

ii. Parallels with Matthew 24

One key to interpreting the timing and meaning of the events in the seven seals is the Olivet Discourse of Jesus found in Matthew 24. Here Jesus is telling the disciples the signs of His second coming, the events that will unfold before He returns.

“For many will come in My name, saying, 'I am the Christ,' and will deceive many. And you will hear of wars and rumors of wars. See that you are not troubled; for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet. For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. And there will be famines, pestilences, and earthquakes in various places. All these are the beginning of sorrows. Then they will deliver you up to tribulation and kill you, and you will be hated by all nations for My name's sake.” Matthew 24:5-9 (NKJV)

Comparing the Olivet Discourse and the Seals		
Event	Olivet Discourse (Matthew)	Seals (Revelation)
False Messiah(s)	24:4	
Warfare and bloodshed	24:7	
Famine	24:7	
Epidemics	24:7	
Martyrdom	24:9 -28	GREAT TRIBULATION
Cosmic disturbances	24:29	GREAT BLACKOUT
Coming of the Son of Man DAY OF THE LORD	24:30–31	WRATH OF GOD / SALVATION

Verses 5 to 8 seem to outline the coming of the four horsemen of the Apocalypse with many foreshadowing events being seen first before the real thing appears. Jesus said there would be false Christs followed by wars, famine, pestilences and

earthquakes. All these things will come to a head with the unveiling of The Antichrist. They are called the “*beginning of sorrows*” and come before the Great Tribulation.

Verses 9-26 outline the Great Tribulation (see v21) where the Antichrist will set up an abominable image in the Temple and there will be a time of great martyrdom of Christians where even their own family members will betray them. However, also during this time will be a great missionary thrust where the gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the entire world (Matthew 24:14) as Christians endure great suffering until the very end (v13) when Christ returns. During this time God’s people will flee into the wilderness to be provided for by God Himself.

“Immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; the stars will fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken. Then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in heaven, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. And He will send His angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they will gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.” Matthew 24:29-31 (NKJV)

The Great Blackout is also mentioned in Matthew 24:29 as coming straight after the Great Tribulation. This parallels the events mentioned in Revelation 6:12 happening at the opening of the Sixth Seal.

The Seventh Seal is also mentioned here as the time when Jesus comes with the angels to gather the elect, presumably after all of God’s wrath has been poured out.

Comparing the Olivet Discourse and the Seals		
Event	Olivet Discourse (Matthew)	Seals (Revelation)
False Messiah(s)	24:4	6:1–2 First seal
Warfare and bloodshed	24:7	6:3–4 Second seal
Famine	24:7	6:5–6 Third seal
Epidemics	24:7	6:7–8 Fourth seal
Martyrdom	24:9 -28	6:9–11 Fifth seal
Cosmic disturbances	24:29	6:12–17 Sixth seal
Coming of the Son of Man DAY OF THE LORD	24:30–31	8:1 Seventh seal Trumpet judgements

iii. The Day of the Lord

As an aside, it is interesting to note that the Old Testament prophets looked forward to a time called the Day of the Lord where the wicked were judged and the righteous receive ultimate salvation. Although they prophesied in the first instance about God's coming judgment of Babylon for its destruction of Jerusalem and the return of the Jews to their land, there was an end time element to their prophecies. Both Isaiah and Joel mentioned the Day of the Lord coming with a great blackout that has not yet been witnessed:

"Behold, the day of the LORD comes, cruel, with both wrath and fierce anger, to lay the land desolate; and He will destroy its sinners from it. For the stars of heaven and their constellations will not give their light; the sun will be darkened in its going forth, and the moon will not cause its light to shine." Isaiah 13:9-10 (NKJV)

"The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the coming of the great and awesome day of the LORD. And it shall come to pass that whoever calls on the name of the LORD shall be saved." Joel 2:31-32 (NKJV)

They are prophetically looking forward to the time of the Great Blackout that occurs after the Great Tribulation prophesied in Daniel and Revelation.

The Day of the Lord is where the wicked are JUDGED and the righteous receive ultimate salvation.

The Day of the Lord happens after a Great BLACKOUT, linking with the teaching of Revelation (See Isaiah 13:3-9 and Joel 2:31-32).

This is The Great Day of the Lord that Old Testament prophecy ultimately points to with judgment on all wickedness and salvation of all the righteous. The Day itself is actually 1000 years (as a day to the Lord is a thousand years – 2 Peter 3:8) from the second coming of Christ until the coming of the new heaven and new earth.

3. Conclusion: The Chain of Events

From what we have learnt in this lesson we can build a picture of the events that will transpire in the End Times. The chart on the next page shows that the first six seals outline the wrath of the Antichrist but the last seal marks the wrath of God with the Trumpet and Bowl judgments. The next lesson will look at the events of the Seventh Seal.

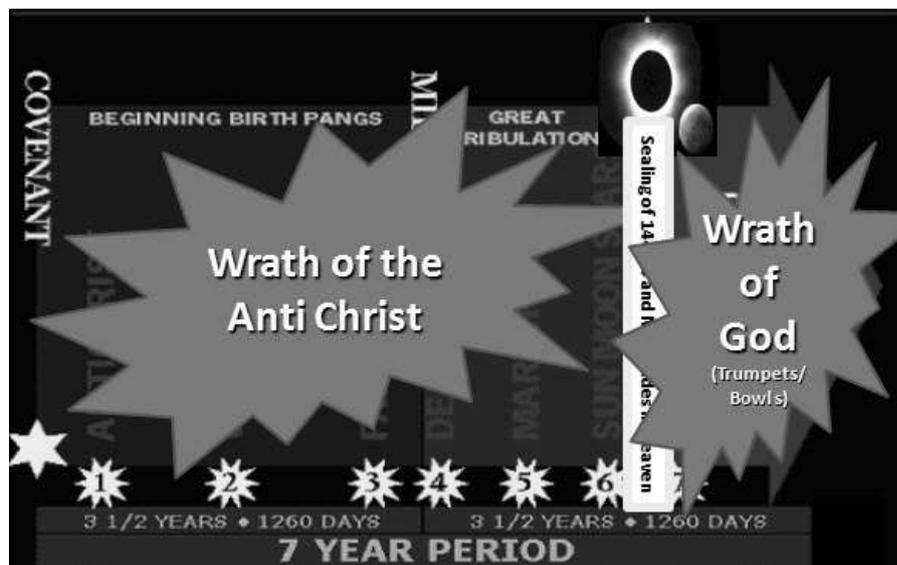
The first five seals are the wrath of SATAN.

The sixth seal marks the start of the wrath of GOD.

The diagrams on the next page summarize the teachings of this lesson. The first outlining the events of each seal (one to seven), and the second showing the two

divisions of the outpouring of the Antichrist's wrath and the outpouring of God's wrath.

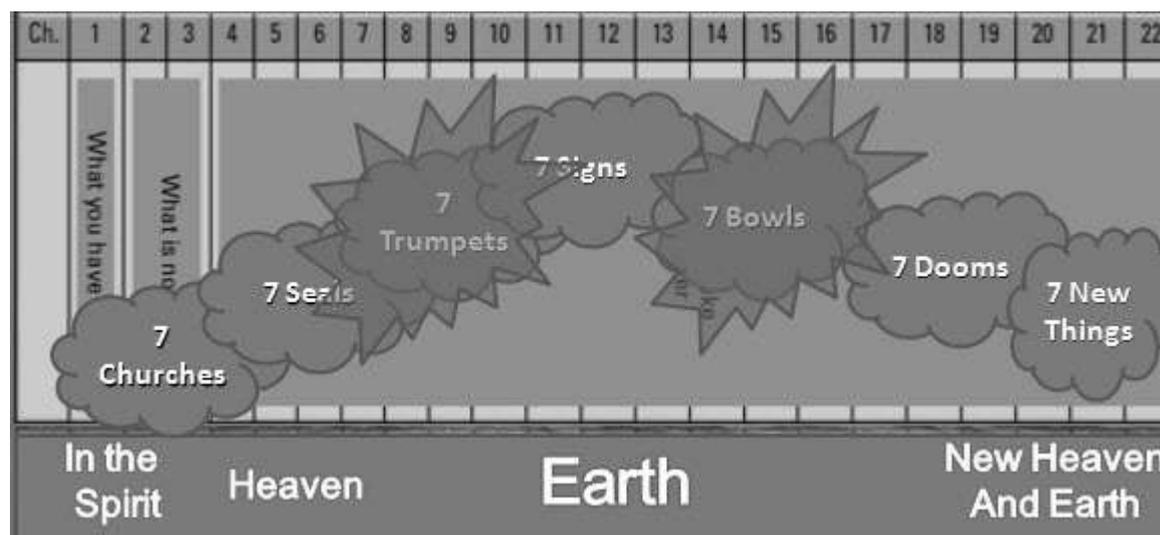
Take time to examine both diagrams on the following page.



The first five seals are the wrath of THE ANTI CHRIST

The sixth seal marks the start of the wrath of GOD

PART FIVE: TRUMPETS AND BOWLS



1. Introduction:

If the seven seals show us the final wrath of Satan through the Antichrist the seven trumpets and bowls show us the wrath of God poured out at the end of this age.

The descriptions of the seven trumpet and bowl judgments sandwich the seven signs that, as we shall see, show what happens in the time leading up to and during the period of the outpouring of God's wrath revealed in the trumpet and bowl plagues.

During this lesson we will examine the chronological relationship between the seven seals, trumpets and bowls and I will share my own personal view.

The Prayers of the Saints

"Then another angel, having a golden censer, came and stood at the altar. And he was given much incense that he should offer it with the prayers of all the saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne..... Then the angel took the censer, filled it with fire from the altar, and threw it to the earth."
Revelation 8:3, 5 (NKJV)

The wrath of God is poured out in response to the PRAYERS of the saints.

Notice that the trumpet judgments are specifically termed the wrath of God. Revelation 6:17, just before the opening of the seventh seal, announces *"For the great day of His wrath has come, and who is able to stand."*

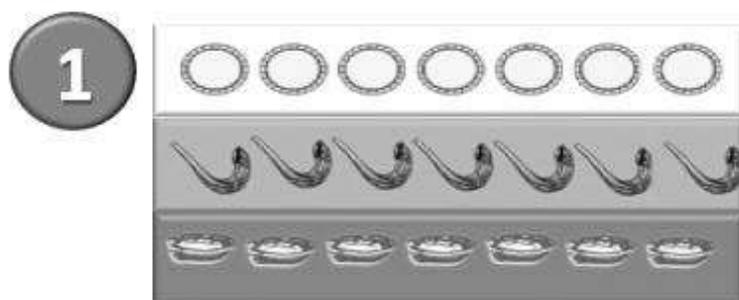


Notice also that here we see that the wrath of God is poured out in response to the prayers of the saints. In Revelation 6:10 we hear the martyrs from the Great Tribulation asking how long it will be until their blood is avenged. Here their prayer is answered. We can pray for vengeance but not exact it as vengeance is the Lords (Deuteronomy 32:35).

2. The Seven Trumpets and Seven Bowls

We now come to the question of the ordering of the seven seals, trumpets and bowls. How are they related chronologically? Interpreters are divided in this and there are four main theories with many other spin-off ideas.

i. Possible ordering of the seven seals, trumpets and bowls.



Firstly, is the theory that all three occur CONCURRENTLY, that is all at the same time. However, this does not seem to agree with the text as there does seem to be a chronological flow in Revelation that divides the time of the wrath of the Antichrist (the Great Tribulation) from the time of the Wrath of God, which marks the start of the prophesied end time Day of the Lord.

2



Secondly is the theory that all occur SUCCESSIVELY, that is one after the other. This would account for the apparent chronological ordering of Revelation but has some problems. There are certain events that seem to be the same but described in more than one place in Revelation, such as the great earthquake that occurs with the seventh seal (6:12), trumpet (11:19) and bowl (16:18). In other words, there does seem to be some overlapping of certain events and these must be reconciled.

3



Thirdly is the theory of a MIXTURE of the first two theories. That is, the first six of each series does indeed follow on successively from the previous series but the seventh of each series speaks of the same events. This would certainly compensate for the apparent mention of the same event with the seventh seal, trumpet and bowl but it also seems to chop up the sequence mentioned in Revelation in a rather abrupt and forced way.

4



Fourth is the theory that the trumpet and bowl judgment are actually the SAME events and follow on successively after the seven seals. This is the theory I hold

to as it seems to make the most sense and follow the text more accurately. The four reasons I believe this are:

1. Trumpet judgments end with His KINGDOM coming (11:5).

It would be very strange for God to pour out another set of His wrath after establishing His Kingdom on earth. Similarly, the seven bowls end with the statement "*It is done*" (16:17) which seems to point to the end of one age and the coming of His Kingdom on earth.

2. Common Jewish practice to have 2 or 3 WITNESSES.

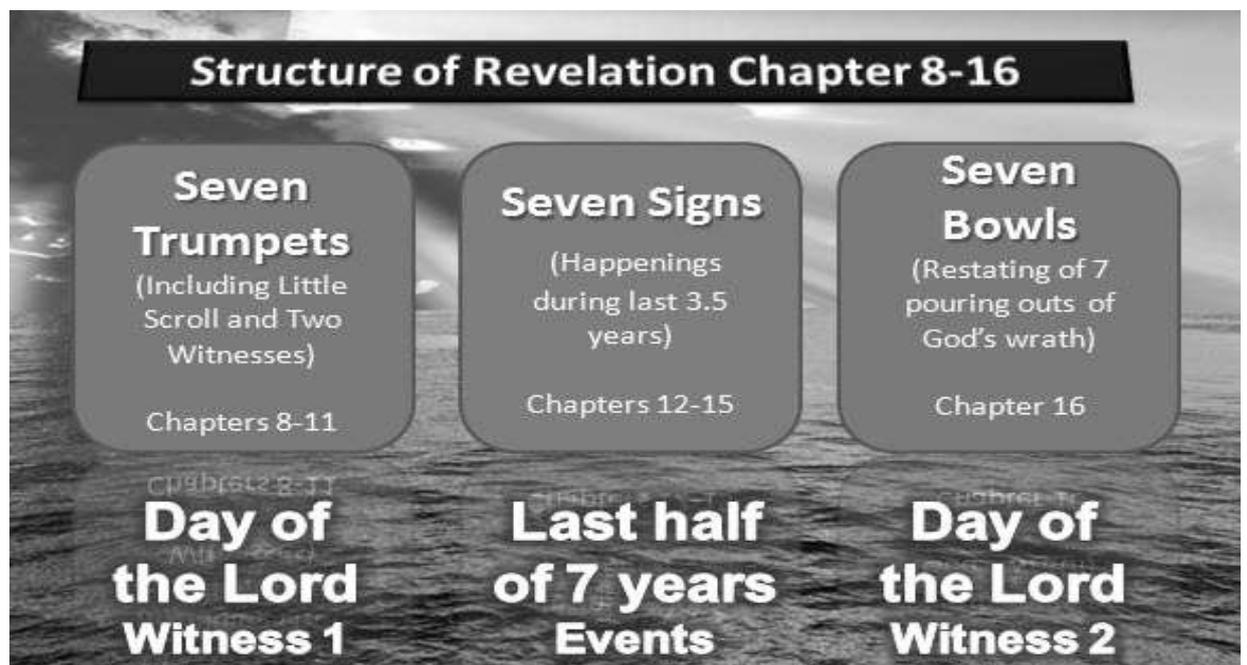
Indeed, we see the two witnesses talked about at the end of the seven trumpets. These two accounts could simply be witnessing to exactly the same series of events.

3. Great SIMILARITIES between Trumpet and Bowl judgments.

There are, as we shall see, great similarities between the Trumpet and Bowl judgments. As has been mentioned they both end in a great earthquake but differ to the ending of the seven seals in that they also end with thundering and great hail (11:19 and 16:18-21).

4. Trumpets BLOW and then bowls are POURED out.

It would be very logical for trumpets and bowls to come together in that the trumpet would sound a warning and then the corresponding bowl would be poured out at the same time.



Hence, I would say that the seven trumpets and bowls witness the same events that mark the start of the Day of the Lord. As we shall see the seven signs speak of events leading up to and/or during this outpouring of God's wrath, all within the last three and a half years of this present age.

For the reasons given I believe that the chart below best represents the ordering of events in the last seven-year period of this age. The first six seals represent the time of the Antichrist with his wrath upon the nations, especially upon believers. The seventh seal marks the start of the pouring out of the wrath of God (after the Great Blackout of the sixth seal). The pouring out of the wrath of God marks the start of the great Day of the Lord as we shall see later. I believe the best reading would put the trumpet and bowl judgments as describing exactly the same events from a slightly different perspective, both describing the pouring out of God's wrath over differing domains.



In the following chart I try to show that the events spoken of in the trumpet and bowl judgments are one and the same. The trumpet judgments are said to affect one third of the domain mentioned and the bowl judgments do not mention the extent of damage, so it could be they are talking about the same events effecting a third of each domain mentioned. Only at the end of the millennial reign of Christ on earth will the entire earth be burned up by fire, before the millennium only a third of each domain will be affected as the earth will still be inhabited for one thousand years.

7 Trumpets and bowls of Revelation

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Man's Environment Plagued				Man's Person Plagued		
 Rev. 8:7 	 Rev. 8:8-9 	 Rev. 8:10-11 	 Rev. 8:12-13 	 Rev. 9:1-12 	 Rev. 9:13-21 	 Rev. 11:15-19 
Rev 16:2 	Rev 16:3 	Rev 16:4-7 	Rev 16:8-9 	Rev 16:10-11 	Rev 16:12-16 	Rev 16:17-21 
Sores on those having mark of the beast	Sea becomes blood and sea creatures die	Rivers and springs become blood	Sun scorches men with fire and they do not repent	Kingdom of beast covered in darkness causing pain	Euphrates dries up and satan calls huge army together to Armageddon	"It is done!" Earthquake with hail and the fall of Babylon
Flaming Hail falls from the sky, burning a third of the vegetation	An asteriod falls into the sea, turning it to blood. A third sea creatures killed	Another asteriod breaks up and polutes fresh water. Many die.	Sun, moon, stars struck, diminished light by a third.	Locusts torment men 5 months. Smoke pour from pit	An Army of 200 million, kill a third of men. Euphrates bursts forth	Second Coming of Jesus Christ. Destruction of the wicked, reward of all the righteous.

The first four trumpet and bowl judgments all speak of the Wrath of God poured onto a third of the Land, the Salt Water, the Fresh Water and the Heavens. Looking at the chart you can see that the trumpets and bowls could release the same judgments.

The first trumpet will sound, and the **bowl** of God's wrath will be poured on the land burning a third of the vegetation by fiery hail that will also cause sores on those bearing the mark of the Beast.

The second trumpet will sound, and the **bowl** of God's wrath will be poured out on the sea when an impacting asteroid or an exploding island volcano will cause a third of the sea to turn to the colour of blood and a third of sea creatures to die (notice how both trumpet and bowl descriptions match perfectly here).

The third trumpet will sound, and the **bowl** of God's wrath will be poured out on the rivers and springs when an asteroid (called 'wormwood' which means bitter) breaks up and pollutes a third of all fresh water turning them to the colour of blood.

The fourth trumpet will sound, and the **bowl** of God's wrath will be poured out on the heavens so that a third of the sun is struck causing a third of the stars and moon to diminish in light and mankind to be scorched on earth. This does not immediately seem to be possible but scientist say a mega solar flare could knock out all satellites and earths lights so that a dimming will occur and yet the flares will scorch people. Another alternative is a huge nuclear explosion on earth which would scorch many and cause a cloud blocking a third of all heavenly lights.

The last three trumpet and bowl woes unleash the wrath of God poured onto the kingdom of the Beast.

The fifth trumpet will sound, and the **bowl** of God's wrath will be poured out releasing locusts from the bottomless pit that will torment the Antichrist's kingdom for five months, smoke from the pit covering his kingdom in darkness.

The sixth trumpet will sound, and the **bowl** of God's wrath will be poured out releasing an army of 200 million that will cross a dried-up river Euphrates (the border of the full land given to Israel) to gather for the battle of Armageddon.

The seventh trumpet will sound, and the **bowl** of God's wrath will be poured out, releasing one final earthquake, mighty thundering and great hail that will usher in the fullness of the Kingdom of God on earth.

So, it can be shown quite easily that the trumpet and bowl judgments are speaking of the same events that will occur with the outpouring of God's wrath at the end of this age.

Why are accounts of the Little Scroll (Chapter 10) and the Two Witnesses (Chapter 11) inserted before the seventh Trumpet? I believe they are inserted here as they are vitally related to the seven plagues.

The Little Scroll reveals the "TASTE" of the plagues.

The Two Witnesses show the DECLARERS of those plagues.

ii. The Little Scroll



In Chapter 10 John sees a mighty angel clothed with a cloud, a rainbow over his head, His face shining like the sun and His feet like pillars of fire and the voice of a lion sounding forth seven thunders. This may represent Jesus Himself with a little scroll open in His hand (compare with Revelation 1:14-16) or it may be a huge angel coming in the power and authority of Jesus.

This scroll cannot be the same as the scroll with the seven seals as the Greek word *'biblaridion'* used here as opposed to *'biblion'* in 5:1 meaning they are different types of scrolls – this one being much smaller.

Indeed, this scroll seems to be like that of Ezekiel 2:9-3:3 which has lamentations, mourning and woes written on it. This scroll probably contains the writing about the wrath of God poured out with the seven trumpets and bowls.

"Then I took the little book out of the angel's hand and ate it, and it was as sweet as honey in my mouth. But when I had eaten it, my stomach became bitter." Revelation 10:10 (NKJV)

Really when this book is read it will declare the start of the Day of the Lord. In the Old Testament this Day is looked forward to in prophecy as a time of judgment on God's enemies:

*"Behold, the day of the LORD comes, cruel, with both wrath and fierce anger, to lay the land desolate; and **He will destroy its sinners** from it. For the stars of heaven and their constellations will not give their light; the sun will be darkened in its going forth, and the moon will not cause its light to shine." Isaiah 13:9-10 (NKJV)*

It will also be a time of full salvation of His people:

*"The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the coming of the great and awesome day of the LORD. And it shall come to pass that **whoever calls on the name of the LORD shall be saved.**" Joel 2:31-32 (NKJV)*

Bitter = SUFFERING AND PAIN OF THE LOST (Isa 13:9-10).

Sweet = FULLNESS OF GOD'S PROMISES TO THE SAVED (Joel 2:31-32)

iii. Measuring the Temple



After eating the little scroll John is given a measuring rod and asked to measure the dimensions of the Temple of God which will be rebuilt on the Temple Mount during the time of the Antichrist. We know it is referring to this Temple during this time as the angel says *"it (that is the outer court of the Temple) has been given to the Gentiles. And they will tread the holy city underfoot for forty-two months"* (11:2).

This cannot correspond to Ezekiel's Temple (Ezekiel 40-48) as this is too big to fit on the Temple Mount (875 square feet) and will probably be the Fourth Temple that will be built during the Millennium. This being the case the temple here is probably a Third Temple built during the Tribulation time allowed under the peace treaty the Antichrist will make for seven years and break halfway through by setting up an image of abomination in the Temple (2 Thessalonians 2:3-4). This Temple will be destroyed by the great earthquake when Jesus Returns.

iv. The Two Witnesses

After the measuring of the Temple John sees the two witnesses who will rise during this final forty-two months (11:3 – 1260 days). They will probably come onto the scene when the Antichrist defiles the Temple and demands worship for himself.

They are called "two olive trees" which hearkens back to ZECCHARIAH 4:11-14 referring, in the first instance, to Zerubbabel and Joshua who led the rebuilding of the second Temple in just over three years, maybe indicating these two witnesses will have a hand in rebuilding the third temple during the Tribulation time.

"These are the two olive trees and the two lampstands standing before the God of the earth." Revelation 11:4

"Then I answered and said to him, "What are these two olive trees—at the right of the lampstand and at its left?" And I further answered and said to him, "What are these two olive branches that drip into the receptacles of the two gold pipes from which the golden oil drains?" Then he answered me and said, "Do you not know what these are? "And I said, "No, my lord." So he said, "These are the two anointed ones, who stand beside the Lord of the whole earth." Zechariah 4:11-14

They come in the spirit of ELIJAH and MOSES that is why many interpreters say they are Elijah and Moses. However, John the Baptist was the "Elijah that is the come" and was a very distinct person from the original Elijah so these two witnesses will probably be different people who come in the power and spirit of Elijah and Moses.



They come in the spirit of ELIJAH as they have power to shut up heaven (11:6) as Elijah did (James 5:17) and the fire from their mouths could remind us of the God of Elijah who answers by fire (1 Kings 18:24).

They come in the spirit of MOSES in that they have the power “*over water to turn them to blood, and to strike the earth with all plagues, as often as they desire*” (11:6). Indeed, many of the trumpet and bowl judgment descriptions point directly to the plagues God inflicted on Egypt through the word of Moses. The chart included here shows the amazing similarities. Indeed, it is highly likely that these trumpet and bowl plagues come in response to the commands of the two witnesses.

They will prophesy and call down the plagues and eventually be martyred by the Antichrist (11:7) for the entire world to see their bodies lying in Jerusalem, but they will rise again on the third day at the rapture (11:12) that will be at the last trumpet.

<i>Exodus</i>	<i>Revelation</i>
First Plague: Water of the Nile River turns to blood (Exodus 7:20–25)	Second Trumpet: A third of the sea becomes blood (Rev. 8:8–9)
Fifth Plague: Livestock disease (Exodus 9:1–12)	First, Second, and Third Trumpets: A third of the trees and grass burn up; a third of living creatures in the sea die; many people die from the wormwood waters (Rev. 8:7, 8:10–11)
Seventh Plague: Hail and thunderstorm (Exodus 9:22–35)	First Trumpet: Hail and fire (Rev. 8:7)
Eighth Plague: Locusts (Exodus 10:1–20)	Fifth Trumpet: Locusts (Rev 9:1–11)
Ninth Plague: Dense darkness (Exodus 10:21–29)	Fourth Trumpet: A third of all celestial light darkens (Rev. 8:12)

- v. **Where will saints be at this time?** Think about The Exodus and The Flood.

The question is: Where will God’s people be during the outpouring of His wrath? Will they be raptured before this happens?

In like manner we could ask: Where were God’s people when Moses released the plagues? They were still in the land but were not touched by God’s wrath if they applied the blood of the Passover lamb to their doorposts.



It could well be that Christians will still be on the earth when the plagues of God are poured out after the Great Tribulation. However, they will be protected by the blood of the Lamb, Jesus.

The idea that Christians may well still be on earth during the Trumpet and Bowl judgements also has strong support from the last part of Matthew 24, Jesus' Olivet Discourse.

"But as the days of Noah were, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be. For as in the days before the flood, they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, and did not know until the flood came and took them all away, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be. Then two men will be in the field: one will be taken and the other left." Matthew 24:37-40 (NKJV)

The context here is that the final judgment of God on the earth will be like the days of Noah where the wicked were taken away. The righteous were not taken away but were hidden in the Ark, which is a type of Christ. It was the wicked who were taken by the flood waters and perished.

Could it be that, in this context, we should desire to be those left behind and not those taken? This is just something to think about.

3. Conclusion:

- a. VENGEANCE belongs to the Lord.
- b. During His wrath, the saints are SAFE – hidden in Christ.

Two life lessons we get from this lesson are that vengeance belongs to the Lord and that during the wrath of His vengeance the saints will be safely hidden in Christ (whether that is on the earth or in heaven).

PART SIX: ARE YOU RAPTURE READY?

1. Introduction:

There were two frogs on a conveyer belt heading straight for a deep vat of cream. One was vigorously exercising its limbs whilst the other was calmly sitting. The sitting frog said to the other, "Why are you so active, I believe the manager will come and save us before we reach the vat." The other replied, "Whether he does, or does not I am preparing myself to fall in the cream". Well, the frogs came to the end of the belt and the manager did not appear to save them and they both fell in. The frog who had been sitting was shocked, so shocked he was paralyzed by the experience and so drowned in the enveloping cream. The other frog continued to push its legs back and forth with great endurance until the cream turned to butter under its feet and eventually was solid enough so that the frog leaped right out of the vat and into the manager's arms!

The moral of this story is that it is better to be prepared to go through trouble, whether you are destined to go through it or not. As we will see there are many theories as to when the Church is raptured (caught up), the predominant one saying that the Church will be raptured before the Great Tribulation. In this lesson I will argue that this is only a theory, and it actually has quite a flimsy Biblical backing. There is actually more Biblical evidence that the Church is destined to actually go through the Great Tribulation. Knowing this it is better to be prepared for the worst-case scenario.

"The dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air." 1 Thessalonians 4:17



The word “*Rapture*” is found NOWHERE in Scripture, but it is described a few times. The main passage describing the Rapture is 1 Thessalonians 4:17. Indeed it is from the Latin translation of the word “*caught up*” here that we get the term “*Rapture*”.

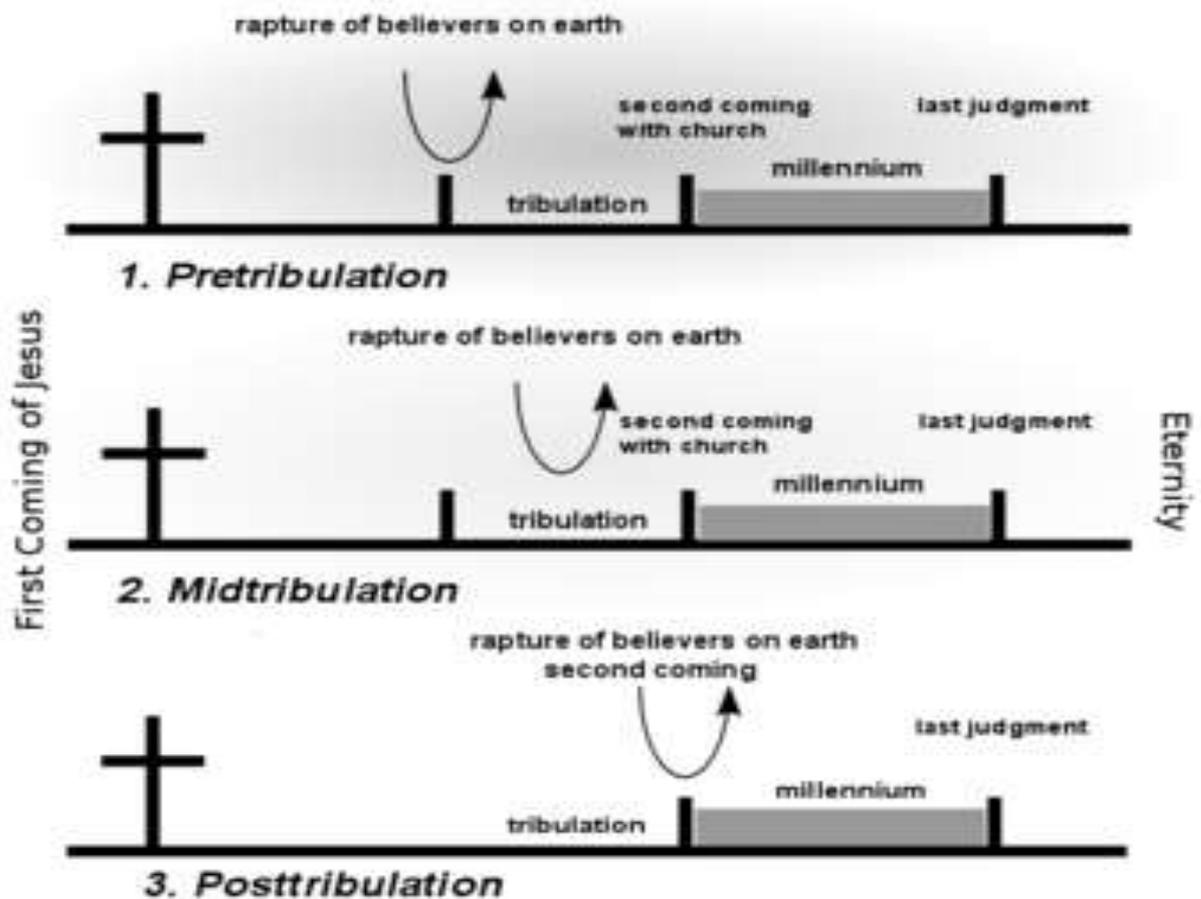
The Rapture is a future CATCHING up or gathering of the Church, dead and then living, to be given resurrection bodies and meet the Lord in the air (See also 1 Corinthians 15:52, Matthew 24:31)

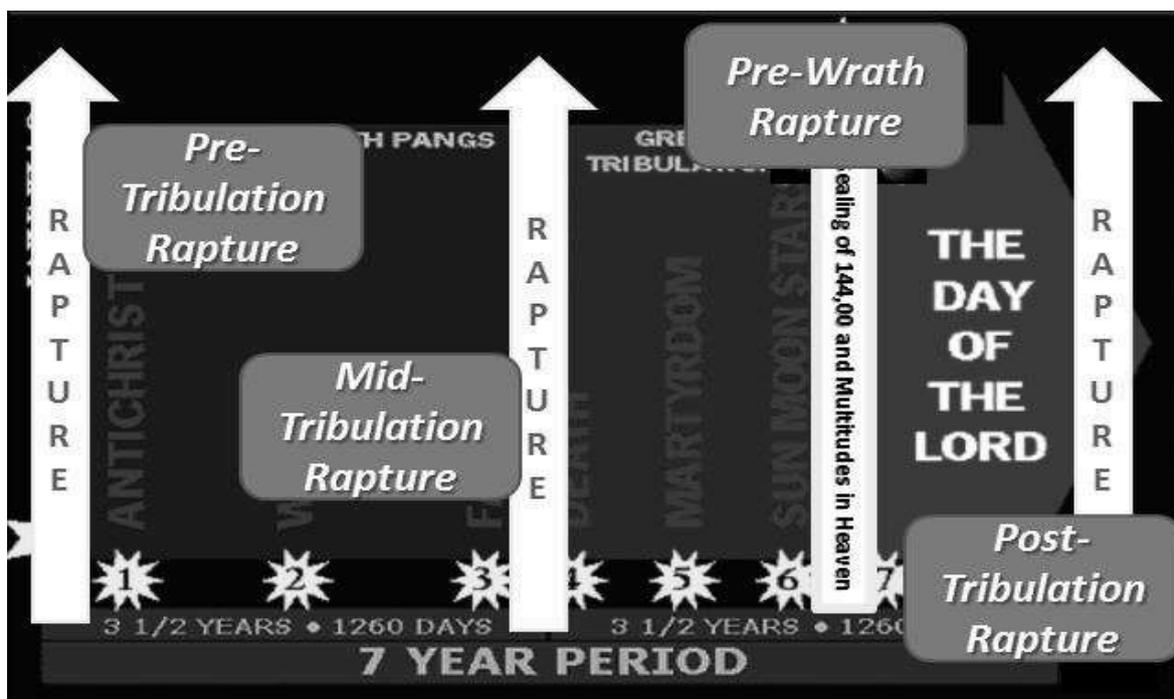
The big question then is not, “*is the Rapture Biblical?*” but “WHEN is the Rapture due to happen?” We will now explore this question.

2. When is the Rapture?

Study the following charts to see the different theories as to when the Rapture of the Saints will take place in relation to the tribulation period.

Comparison of Christian tribulation views





i. Theories of when the Rapture is.

Pretribulation Rapture:

The pretribulation position advocates that the rapture will occur before the beginning of the seven-year Tribulation period, while the second coming will occur at the end of the seven-year Tribulation period. Pretribulationists often describe the rapture as Jesus coming for the church and the second coming as Jesus coming with the church. Pre-tribulation teachers and preachers include J. Dwight Pentecost, Tim LaHaye, J. Vernon McGee, Chuck Smith, Chuck Missler, Jack Van Impe, Grant Jeffrey, and David Jeremiah. While many pretribulationists are also dispensationalists, not all pretribulationists are dispensationalists.

Midtribulation and Pre-Wrath Rapture:

The midtribulation position espouses that the rapture will occur at some point in the middle of the Tribulation period. The Tribulation is typically divided into two periods of 3.5 years each. Midtribulationists hold that the saints will go through the first period but will be raptured into heaven before the severe persecution and trouble in the second half of the Tribulation, commonly called the Great Tribulation. Mid-tribulationists appeal to Daniel 7:25 which says the saints will be given over to tribulation for "time, times, and half a time," - interpreted to mean 3.5 years. At the halfway point of the Tribulation, the Antichrist will commit the "abomination of desolation" by desecrating the Jerusalem temple (to be built on what is now called the Temple Mount). Midtribulationist teachers include Harold Ockenga, James Buswell and Norman Harrison. This position is a minority view among premillennialists. A variation on this is that the Rapture will occur before the wrath of God which will be in the latter part of the Great Tribulation.

Posttribulation Rapture:

The posttribulation position places the rapture at the end of a tribulation period. Most posttribulation writers define the tribulation period in a generic sense as the entire present age, or in a specific sense of a period of time preceding the second coming of Christ. The emphasis in this view is that the church will undergo the Great Tribulation and will also be on earth for the outpouring of the Trumpet and Bowl Judgments. *“Immediately after the tribulation of those days...they shall gather together his elect...”* (Matthew 24:29–31) is cited as a foundational scripture for this view. Posttribulationists perceive the rapture as occurring simultaneously with the second coming of Christ. Upon Jesus' return, believers will meet him in the air and will then accompany him in his return to the earth. Authors and teachers who support the posttribulational view include Pat Robertson, Walter R. Martin, John Piper, George E. Ladd, Robert H. Gundry, and Douglas Moo.

According to my chart the pretribulation rapture would occur just before the Tribulation period, hence before the Antichrist makes the seven-year peace treaty (Daniel 9:27) which triggers many wars, rumours of wars, famines and pestilences (the first four seals).

The midtribulation rapture believers claim that the rapture will occur halfway through these seven years just as the Antichrist moves into Jerusalem with his troops, setting up an abominable image (maybe of himself) in the newly rebuilt Temple on the Temple Mount (Matthew 24:15), commanding worship to himself. This will cause a great martyrdom of those not bowing down to the image of the Beast (the fifth seal), a time called the Great Tribulation (Rev 7:14).

At the end of the Great Tribulation time (shortened for the sake of the elect – Matt 24:22) there will be a great blackout where the sun is blackened, and the moon is turned to blood plus a great earthquake and other heavenly signs (the sixth seal - Rev 6:12-14) – this marks the start of the Day of the Lord where the wrath of God is poured out (the Trumpet and Bowl judgments).

Those holding to a pre-wrath rapture say that the rapture occurs just before the wrath of God is poured out, hence before the Trumpet/Bowl judgments. They would point to the multitudes in Revelation 7:9 as being the raptured saints who are raptured straight after the Great Tribulation.

Posttribulationists would say that the rapture does not occur until the end of the time of God's wrath, at the blowing of the last Trumpet and pouring out of the last bowl (even among this view there are many variations).

The rise in belief in the *“Pretribulation”* rapture is often wrongly attributed to a 15-year old Scottish-Irish girl named Margaret McDonald (a follower of Edward

Irving), who in 1830 had a vision of the end times which describes a post-tribulation view of the Rapture that was first published in 1840. It was published again in 1861 but two important sentences demonstrating post-tribulation were removed causing confusion concerning the timing of the Rapture. The two removed sentences were, *"This is the fiery trial which is to try us. - It will be for the purging and purifying of the real members of the body of Jesus"* and *"The trial of the Church is from Antichrist. It is by being filled with the Spirit that we shall be kept"*.

The popularization of the term is associated with the teaching of John Nelson Darby, prominent among the Plymouth Brethren, and the rise of pre-millennialism and dispensationalism in English-speaking churches at the end of the 19th century. In 1908, the doctrine of the rapture was further popularized by an evangelist named William Eugene Blackstone, whose book; *"Jesus is Coming"*, sold more than one million copies. The first known theological use of the word "rapture" in print occurs with the Scofield Reference Bible of 1909.

ii. Arguments for Pretribulationism

- a. The first common argument for pretribulationism is that John's catching up in Rev 4:1 speaks of the Rapture of the Church before the Tribulation period.

"After these things I looked, and behold, a door standing open in heaven. And the first voice which I heard was like a trumpet speaking with me, saying, "Come up here, and I will show you things which must take place after this." Revelation 4:1 (NKJV)

This means that they believe that the Rapture is a different event to the actual Second Coming of Jesus, which flies in the face of Church belief up until the nineteenth century and the plain reading of Scripture where we only find one event called the *"blessed hope"*.

This relating John's "catching up" to an initial secret coming of Christ before His main Coming is a weak argument as this experience would be akin to the Apostle Paul's experience in 2 Corinthians 12:4 - a spiritual trance. Also, it is John who is told to go up to heaven, not the church and this is not a time of resurrection (being clothed with his resurrection body) for John, which is the nature of the Rapture.

The same would be true for those trying to tie in Enoch's taking away (Genesis 5:24, Hebrews 11:5) and even Elijah's departure. In Enoch's case he is seen as a key type of the Rapture by Pre-Tribulation adherents as he is taken up to heaven before the flood (hence a Type of the Church being Raptured before the Tribulation). However, it must be remembered that this happened to Enoch 669 years before the flood and Enoch was three

generations before Noah, so the term *“as in the days of Noah”* (Matt 24:38) cannot be applied to him.

- b. A second claim of pretribulationists is that there is no mention of the word *“Church”* after Rev 3:22 until we come to Rev 22:16. This they claim means that the Church is not in the Tribulation period.

However, as we see this a very weak argument as in the five letters 2 Timothy, Titus, 2 Peter and 1 & 2 John only the word “elect” is used for the Church and in Jude only the word “saints” is used for the Church but the Church was still present then.

These same terms are used constantly in Revelation during the Tribulation period -The word *“saints”* occurs 12 times and *“elect”* appears 11 times after Revelation 3:22 – so to say the Church has been taken away just because the word *“church”* is not used holds no water.

A possible reason the actual word *“church”* (from the Greek word *“ekklesia”* meaning *“called out ones”*) is not used during the Tribulation is that she has to flee to the wilderness and cannot meet officially in church gatherings under the Antichrist.

- c. A third argument used by pretribulationists is that Scripture says that the Church is not destined for wrath and promises we will be taken out of the way before the wrath comes. They use such passages as 1 Thessalonians 5:9 (*“not appointed for wrath”*) and Revelation 3:10 (*“keep you from hour of trial”*) to show we will not go through the Tribulation period.

All these passages used do not say this at all.

The first passage, 1 Thessalonians 5:9, says the Church is not appointed for wrath but this is referring to the wrath of God, not the wrath of the Antichrist. There is no promise that the Church will escape persecution (indeed persecution is guaranteed to those who live godly lives – 2 Tim 3:12). Also, just because we are not appointed for God’s wrath does not mean we will not be around when His wrath is poured out! The Hebrews who applied the blood of the lamb to their doorposts were still in the land when the plagues of God’s wrath came but they remained untouched as they were not appointed to that wrath.

In the second passage, when Jesus says to the Church in Philadelphia that they would be kept from the hour of trial it does not mean they would be plucked up before trials came but that they would be protected or guarded in the midst of trials.

A related argument used by pretribulationists is that Paul said his teaching on the rapture was to comfort the believers and for them to comfort others (1 Thessalonians 4:18). They argue that the message of the church going through the Tribulation is no comfort at all and therefore cannot be right. However, this is a misunderstanding of the Biblical usage of the word “comfort”. “Comfort” is derived from the English words “come” and “fort” and originally had a meaning more akin to the Biblical meaning, hence its use in the King James Version. Its actual meaning is “to give strength to go through tough times” (hence to help people ‘come’ to the ‘fort’). So, Paul was actually saying that his end time teaching was to give them strength to endure the coming tribulation, to come to the fort, to Jesus, and be hid in Him during these times.

- d. A fourth argument the pretribulationists use is that the Rapture will come quickly and quietly like a thief in the night. They teach that this part of His Coming could come any time, even now and is an imminent possibility. There will be no signs to herald the Rapture, but it will come at a time no one can predict. This belief comes from such verses as Luke 23:39 and Matthew 24:36.

However, in Matthew 24:36 (Jesus will come on a day and hour we do not know) the word “hour” means a literal point of time. However, in Matthew 24:43 (if the master of the house knew the hour the thief was coming, he would protect his belongings), the word “hour” is better translated “watch”, meaning season of time. What Jesus is saying here is that His Second coming will come at an unexpected point of time but within a season of time that we can expect as there will be signs we can watch out for.

To say that a thief comes quietly is to understand how a thief works in modern times. In Bible times the thief would come to “kill steal and destroy” (John 10:10). As the dwelling places were often crowded with people sleeping on the floor the thief would have found it impossible to steal things quietly so would come armed and make a noise to scare off the people so he could take their possessions.

It is interesting that Jesus’ interjection of “Behold I am coming as a thief” (Revelation 16:15) comes just before the pouring of the seventh bowl. Could this be pointing to the fact that he is coming to Rapture the church at the end of the pouring out of His wrath, for the battle of Armageddon (mentioned in the next verse). This is not a quiet coming but a loud one with a battle cry! It is also not an unexpected coming, but one accompanied by clear signs.

- e. A fifth argument for a pre-tribulation rapture, and probably the strongest, comes from the statement in 2 Thessalonians 2:6-8: “And now you know what is restraining, that he may be revealed in his own time. For the mystery

of lawlessness is already at work; only He who now restrains will do so until He is taken out of the way. And then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord will consume with the breath of His mouth and destroy with the brightness of His coming.”

A common interpretation of this is that “*He who now restrains*” is the Holy Spirit. When the Church is raptured, it is claimed, the restraining influence of the Holy Spirit will be taken away and full lawlessness will be let loose upon the earth through the Antichrist.

However, there are many alternate interpretations of this. Some think “*he who now restrains*” is actually Satan, waiting for the time to possess the Antichrist and release hell on earth. Others say it could refer to the Roman Empire or human governments that are holding back or restraining the Antichrist from arising until the right time. But all these do not seem plausible as Satan would welcome lawlessness, the sooner the better, and it would also mean his taking away, which is not at this time. The Roman Empire is long gone, and human governments will not be taken away by the revelation of the Antichrist.

Better alternatives are that this does refer to God’s restraint being taken away, but not the presence of the Holy Spirit in and through the Church. One theory of what is restraining is that this is what Daniel 8:11 refers to: “*He even exalted himself as high as the Prince of the host; and by him the daily sacrifices were taken away, and the place of His sanctuary was cast down.*” It could mean that when the daily sacrifice is taken away by the Antichrist the restraining power of God will be taken away, so the Great Tribulation will begin, and true lawlessness be seen on the earth.

Another theory is that God is restraining full lawlessness from breaking out by His personal power or by angelic intervention (‘*He*’ could refer to an Archangel such as Michael, mobilizing the angels to prevent the Antichrist from arising until the right time). I would favour this last theory.

Worst case scenario.

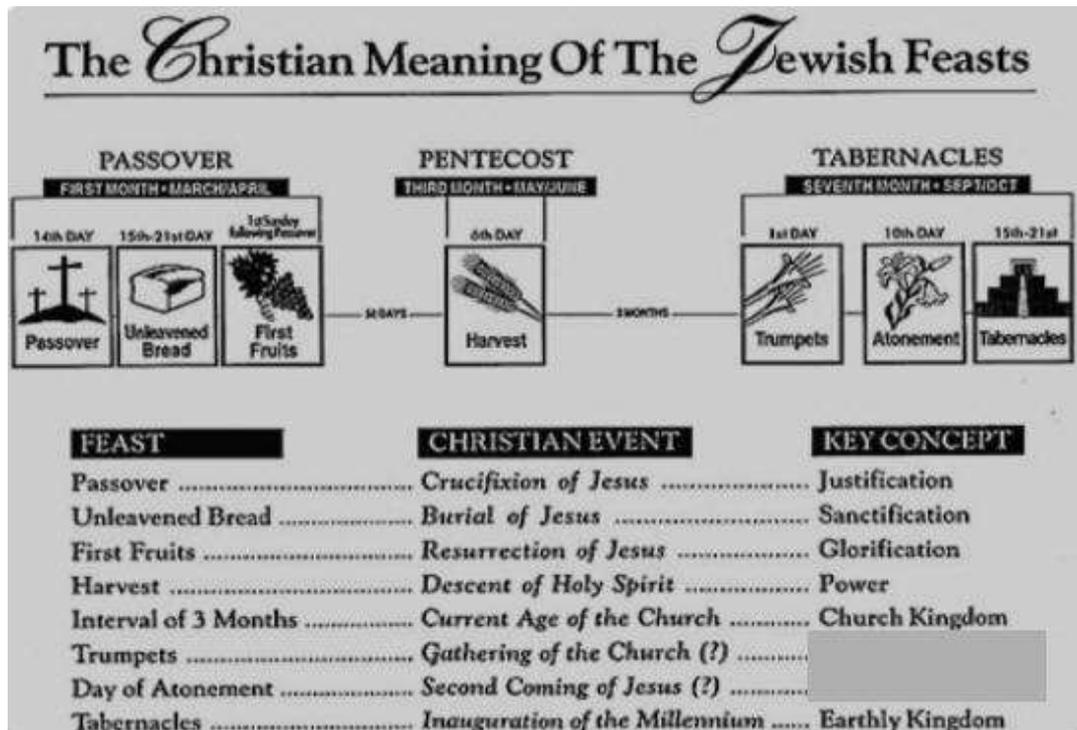
Hence it is entirely possible to draw up a scenario from Scripture where the Rapture happens at the end of the Great Tribulation time, even at the end of the pouring out of God’s wrath (Trumpet and Bowl judgments). The next chart shows the worst-case scenario where the Second Coming of Jesus is all one event, the Rapture being at the same time as His coming in power and glory to execute final judgment at Armageddon with His saints.

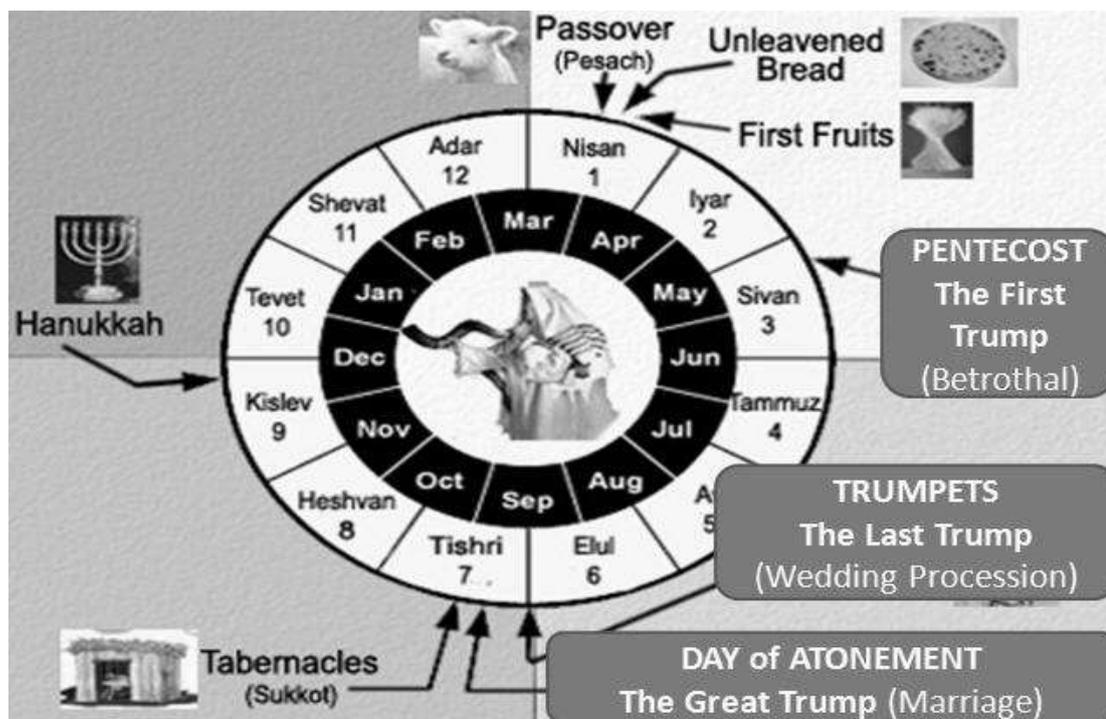
This would mean the Church has to go through Satan's wrath (especially the Great Tribulation) and may even have to endure the time of the outpouring of God's wrath with the Trumpet/Bowl judgments.

It is this scenario we must prepare ourselves for like the parable of the frogs tells us.



Prophetic Seasons – Study these charts then read on.





There is a clue in Scripture as to the season of the Lord's Coming when the Rapture will take place. It is to do with the feasts of Israel.

There are seven feasts that are split into three main ones of Passover, Pentecost and Tabernacles. As the chart shows Passover has been fulfilled in the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus and Pentecost has been fulfilled at the birth of the Church (Acts 2) but Tabernacles has yet to receive a fulfillment.

Prophetically the fulfillment of the feast of Tabernacles happens with the Second Coming of Christ. The Feast of Trumpets marks the Rapture of the Church, the Day of Atonement marks the actual coming of Christ where all the Raptured saints are gathered around Him for battle and the feast of Tabernacles marks the start of the Millennial reign of the Saints with Christ.

In Rabbinical tradition the horns of the Ram that Abraham offered up instead of Isaac are the First and Last Trump. Indeed, all Shofars derive from that ram. It is interesting that Jesus is seen in Revelation as a Ram with seven horns and that there are seven trumpets (shofars) blown to pour out His wrath.

In the first century, the last trump (shofar) meant a specific day in the year. In Judaism, there are three trumpets (shofarim) that have a name. They are the first trump, the last trump, and the great trump. Each one of these trumpets indicates a specific day in the Jewish year. The first trump is blown on the Feast of Shavuot (Pentecost) (Exodus 19:19). It proclaimed that God had betrothed Himself to Israel. The last trump is synonymous with Rosh Hashanah (Feast of Trumpets). It is interesting that the Feast of Trumpets starts on the 1st Tishri, which is a new moon and starts the seventh month of the religious calendar

and the first month of the civic calendar. Prophetically this fits with the sign of the eclipse (great blackout) starting the Day of the Lord.

It is stated that early Jews recognized the Day of Trumpets as a type of Memorial Day. More than our modern versions of the holiday, it was instead a day that was symbolic of the time *"when the dead return to rejoin their descendants at the beginning of the year."* (This uncannily seems to be echoed in the Chinese belief that on the seventh month the ghost of the ancestors come back to visit the living relatives). This was the time that became a symbol of the Last Trump.

The great trumpet is blown on Yom Kippur, which will herald the return of the Messiah, Jesus, back to earth (Matthew 24:31).

On top of these beliefs the Rabbis taught that Pentecost marked the betrothal (engagement to be married) of God to Israel. Hence, the Day of Trumpets (lasting ten days before the Day of Atonement) can be likened to the Wedding procession before the actual marriage (the Day of Atonement).

Hence, it seems possible that Scripture is pointing towards the Return of Christ as being at the Great Trumpet (Day of Atonement), immediately preceded by the Rapture of the Saints (a bodily resurrection and catching up into the air) sometime during the ten days Feast of Trumpets (the Last Trump). All of this will be at the end of the seven-year Tribulation, after the Great Blackout and at the end of the Trumpet and Bowl judgments.

The LAST Trump:

*"In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at **the last trump**: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed."* 1 Corinthians 15:52

*"For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and **with the trump of God**: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.*
" 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17

The Trumpet blast referred to here is the *"Last Trump"* where the dead are raised first (fits in with Jewish beliefs about the Day of Trumpets being a time when the dead return to join their descendants). Hence, the Rapture could well take place at the Feast of Trumpets and the *"Last Trump"* referred to here could well be at the 6th Trumpet of Revelation (the 7th being the Great Trump), blown sometime in the ten-day period of the Feast of Trumpets.

The GREAT Trump:

*"Immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; the stars will fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken. Then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in heaven, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. And He will send His angels with a **great sound of a trumpet**, and they will gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other."* Matthew 24:29-31 (NKJV)

This trumpet blast may well relate to the "Great Trumpet", blown on the Day of Atonement. The saints (the church and all 144,000 Jews who turn to Christ) will be raptured at the 6th Trumpet (the Last Trump), caught up into the air and then gathered together around Christ at the 7th Trumpet (the Great Trump) for His second coming to the earth in power and glory (for the battle of Armageddon).

"Now after the three-and-a-half days the breath of life from God entered them, and they stood on their feet, and great fear fell on those who saw them. And they heard a loud voice from heaven saying to them, "Come up here." And they ascended to heaven in a cloud, and their enemies saw them." Revelation 11:11-12 (NKJV)

The Rapture of the TWO WITNESSES (the only specific mention of the Rapture in Revelation) happens just as the 7th Trumpet (Great Trump?) is about to be blown (Rev 11:11-15) – Is this the same time as the Rapture of all at the "Last Trump"? (Both 144,000 Jews and rest of saints)

3. Conclusion: Are You Rapture Ready?

How to prepare for the Rapture? In the light of all we have seen we must know how to be Rapture Ready.

1. Be BORN Again and SPIRIT-Filled.

Only the Saved have their names written in the Book of Life (the contents of the Scroll the seals unlock). The seal of the Spirit (Spirit Baptism) will keep us through the Tribulation time so we need to experience the empowering of His Spirit. The Pre-tribulation message usually only includes this shallow admonition - "*Be Born Again so you will not be left behind*" – leaving out the next three important points.

2. Be prepared for the worst-case scenario ("*are you prepared to DIE for your faith?*").

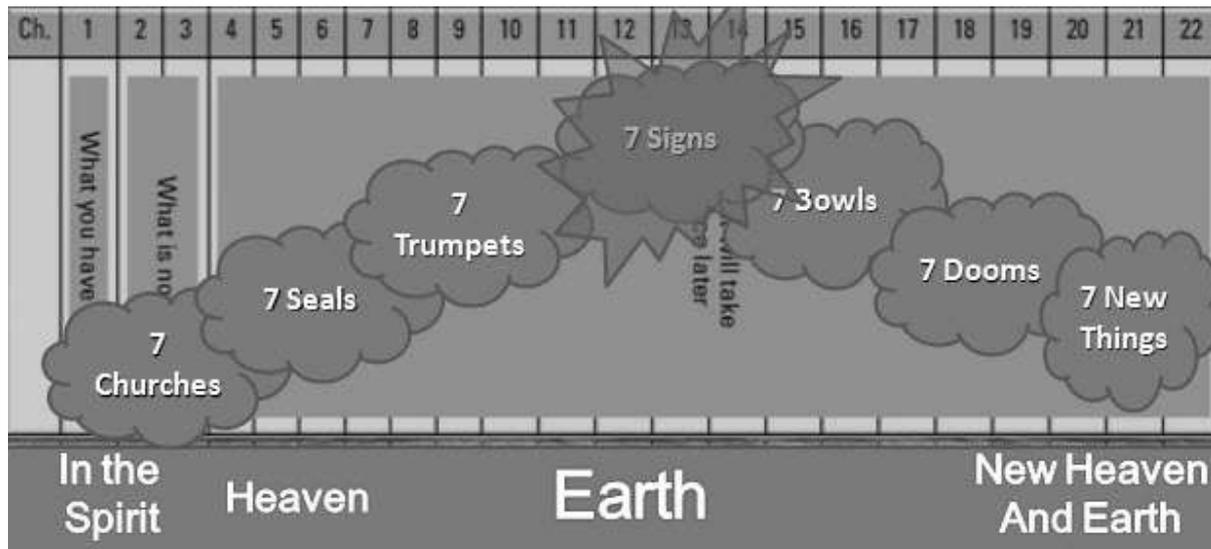
3. LIVING as though Christ is coming back today to reward you for your faithfulness to His calling on your life but PLANNING as though He is coming back at the end of your natural life and you will have to endure the Great Tribulation, maybe even facing martyrdom.

4. Learn to live by FAITH.

During the Great Tribulation the Church will flee into the wilderness to trust the Lord for His provision and protection – right now we need to exercise our faith so that it will be second nature to us if indeed we do go through the Great Tribulation.

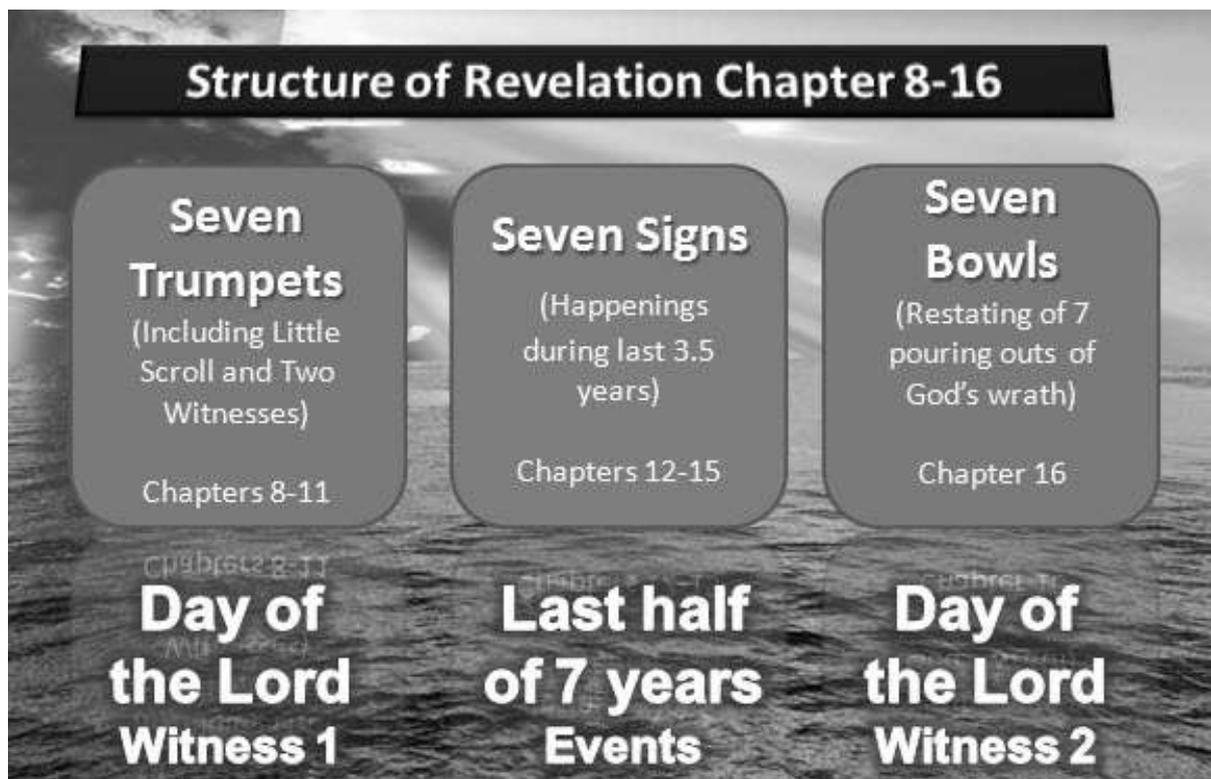
5. Minister to and from the THRONEROOM daily. Build a strong and effective Prayer Altar where you daily come before the Throne of Grace and pray and live according to His will.

PART SEVEN: THE WOMAN & THE DRAGON



1. Introduction:

Now we look at the seven SIGNS of Revelation. These signs are found in Chapters 12-15 in-between the seven trumpet and seven bowl judgments (indeed the seventh sign is the seven-bowl judgment).



Between the two accounts of the pouring out of the wrath of God, the seven plagues, there is a series of seven signs that covers the last half of the seven

years tribulation from beginning to end. This period covers the Great Tribulation (the wrath of Satan through the Antichrist) and the start of the Day of the Lord (the wrath of God through the Lamb).

How can we say that the signs are events in the last 3.5 years of the Tribulation Period?

Because the terms 42 month, 1260 days and Time and Times and half a Time (from Daniel's prophetic language meaning 3.5 years) are all used for the time of these events and the content reveals them to be concerning the Great Tribulation (persecution of the Saints especially) and the pouring out of God's wrath at the end of this time.

3½ Years occurs 5X's in Revelation!		
Clustered together in 3 consecutive chapters at Rev 11, 12 & 13!		
3½ Years x 2 = 7		
42 Months	Rev 11:2	"trample the holy city for 42 months "
1,260 Days	Rev 11:3	2 Witnesses "prophesy for 1,260 days clothed in sackcloth."
1,260 Days	Rev 12:6	"woman fled into the wilderness, where she has a place prepared by God, in which she is to be nourished for 1,260 days ."
Time, times & a ½ time	Rev 12:14	"the woman was given the 2 wings of the great eagle so that she might fly from the serpent into the wilderness, to the place where she is to be nourished for a time, & times, & half a time ."
42 Months	Rev 13:5,7	"beast... exercise authority for 42 months ." "allowed to make war on the saints & to conquer them."

Don't be Confused!
Its all the same amount of time expressed in different ways!
3½ Years = 42 Months = 1,260 Days = Time Times & ½ a Time.
RevelationScriptures.com

The Seven Signs:

The Satan Signs

Sign One: WOMAN clothed with the sun

Sign Two: The DRAGON.

Sign Three: The Beast from the SEA.

Sign Four: The Beast from the LAND.

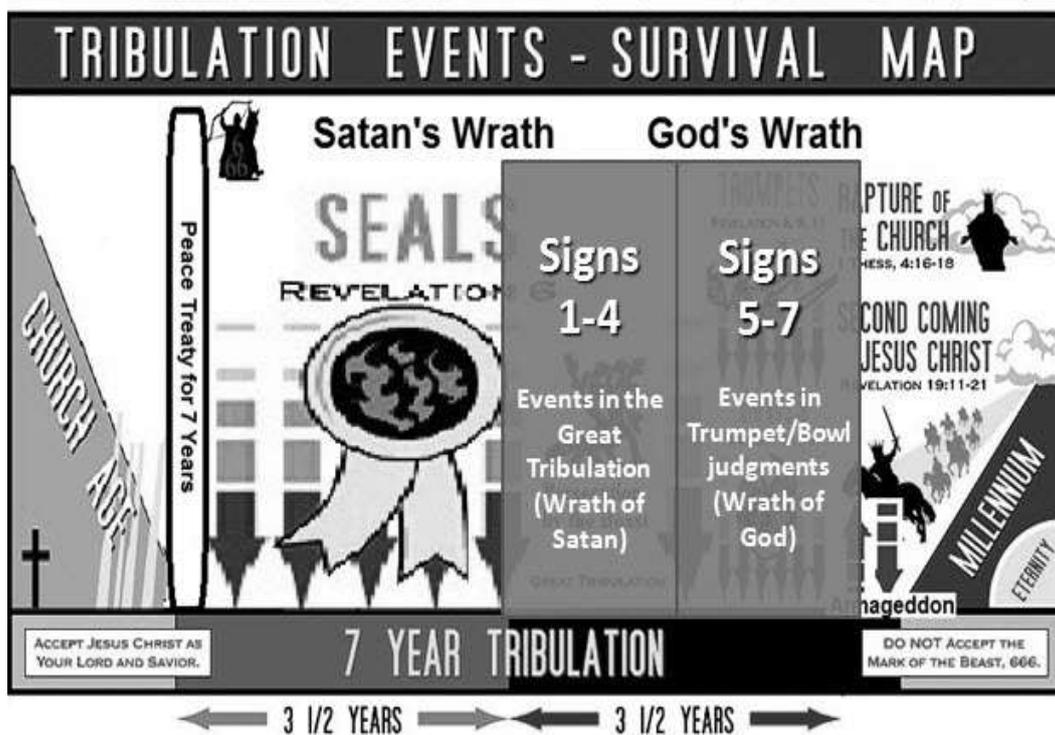
The God Signs

Sign Five: The LAMB on Mount Zion

Sign Six: Son of Man on White CLOUD.

Sign Seven: The Seven PLAGUES.

Notice how the signs are split into groups of four and three just like the Seals, Trumpets and Bowls are. The first four signs are to do with the wrath of Satan through the reign of the Antichrist and the last three signs are to do with the wrath of God with the triumph of the Lamb who unleashes God's judgment on the wicked. This is reflected in the following chart...



In the diagram above we see the key events happening in the Great Tribulation period before the Great Blackout and the Day of the Lord.

- i. The Two Witnesses prophesy from the time the Antichrist desecrates the Temple (setting up the Abomination of Desolation – Matthew 24:15) and the forces of the Antichrist (Gentiles) take over Jerusalem (Gentiles tread Jerusalem – 11:2) – they continue to prophesy for 42 months (1260 days – 11:3), maybe even calling down the Trumpet/Bowl judgments from heaven (see 11:6). They will be martyred towards the end of the Trumpet/Bowl judgments (during this time they will be calling the people to repent). Then, just before the Seventh Trumpet they will be Raptured (11:11-12) in the sight of the entire world (through internet/TV).
- ii. Simultaneous to the ministry of the Two Witnesses the “*woman*” will flee from the Dragon into the wilderness to be provided for and protected for 3.5 years – in this lesson we will consider who the dragon, woman and her children are.
- iii. In the next lesson we will see that during this same time two beasts arise (one from the sea and one from the land – Chapter 13) – we will examine who these are then.

2. The First Two Signs: The Woman and the Dragon



“Now a great sign appeared in heaven: a woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet, and on her head a garland of twelve stars. Then being with child, she cried out in labor and in pain to give birth. And another sign appeared in heaven: behold, a great, fiery red dragon having seven heads and ten horns, and seven diadems on his heads. His tail drew a third of the stars of heaven and threw them to the earth. And the dragon stood before the woman who was ready to give birth, to devour her Child as soon

as it was born. She bore a male Child who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron. And her Child was caught up to God and His throne. Then the woman fled into the wilderness, where she has a place prepared by God, that they should feed her there one thousand two hundred and sixty days.”
Revelation 12:1-6

Who is the Dragon? (See Rev 12:9)



The Warring Dragon

There is no dispute as to who the dragon is as Revelation 12:9 and Revelation 20:2 spell out his identity clearly for us.

“So the great dragon was cast out, that serpent of old, called the Devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world; he was cast to the earth, and his angels were cast out with him.” Revelation 12:9 (NKJV)

He is the devil, Satan, the fallen archangel Lucifer (v4 – a third of the stars thrown to earth probably represent the fallen angels following Satan to earth before the fall of man). The dragon’s seven heads and ten horns (also seen on the first beast in Chapter 13) hearken back to prophecies in Daniel that we will look at in more details as we examine Chapter 13.

Presently he roams on the earth but has access to the heavenlies and must appear before God to get permission to harm the righteous (Job 1:6-12). But during this time (the Great Tribulation) Michael and his angels will successfully cast out Satan and his demons onto the earth without access to the heavenlies (v9). This means that there will now be no restraint on Satan’s wrath towards the saints during the Great Tribulation period. That is why some believe that the restraining power* referred to in 2 Thessalonians 2:6 is this present restraint on Satan that he has to appear before God before touching His elect. In the Great Tribulation there will be no such a

restraint and Satan will have a field day persecuting and martyring God's people through the reign of the Antichrist. However, at the same time Satan will not be able to accuse the saints before God's throne and the saints will have power to overcome him (v11).

* Many scholars identify "*what is restraining*" (2 Thessalonians 2:6) as the Holy Spirit. However, the "*that he may be revealed in his own time*" in context could refer to the Antichrist so that the restraining force is not a person but the power of or a decree from God restraining Satan from harming the saints without His permission. If the Holy Spirit is taken away during the Great Tribulation, then how can people be saved? True, it could simply mean that the restraining power of the Holy Spirit is taken away, but the Holy Spirit is still active in and through the elect at this troublesome time.

Who is the Woman?



There is much debate about who this shining woman is. There are five basic beliefs:

- i. The Roman Catholic Church has interpreted the woman here as Mary who gives birth to Jesus. However, why would we suddenly go back to Bethlehem here where the context is Satan's persecution of God's people in the Great Tribulation (1260 days)? This is the least likely interpretation given the context.
- ii. More literal interpreters (and those wanting to justify the Pre-Tribulation position) interpret the woman as national Israel. This view has only really come to the forefront in the last 200 years. It says that the Sun, Moon and Stars refer to Joseph's dream where the stars are the brothers of Joseph, the heads of the tribes of Israel. But this does not make much sense when

we realize the woman is initially in heaven pregnant with the male child and then later earth gives birth to more offspring (12:17). The woman does not represent national Israel, but the heavenly woman could well represent true Israel throughout all history. According to Romans 9:6 "*not all who are descended from Israel are Israel*" - in the Old Testament true Israel would have been Jews who truly believed and in the New Testament it is those who are part of the body of Christ, the one new man, made up of believing Jews and Gentiles grafted into the true Israel.

- iii. It could be that the heavenly image refers to the prophecy of Genesis 3:15, spoken in the first instance over Eve. The prophecy states that the seed of the woman (Eve) will crush the head of the serpent (that is the Devil) and the serpent will bruise the heel of the seed of the woman. This is a prophecy that was fulfilled at the Cross where Satan seemingly gained the victory by nailing Jesus to the cross (His heels being pierced by a nail) but where Christ (the seed of the woman) triumphed over the works of the Devil, crushing his head. But even if this symbolism holds it is more likely that the woman in heaven represents God's people throughout all time, identified now, at this point in time, as the Church (the woman on earth).
- iv. Many scholars say that the woman represents the Church. Yes, the woman on the earth is most likely the Church (made up of Jews and Gentiles) that goes through the Great Tribulation. She gives birth to many offspring that the Dragon seeks to devour, probably meaning that the Church in the Great Tribulation period wins many converts, many of whom will be martyred. During this time, the Church will be persecuted greatly but will flee into the wilderness where she will receive supernatural provision and protection for 3.5 years. She will not cease to "*give birth*" during this season of trial but will win many for Christ. However, the totality of the woman, initially seen in heaven, seems to be much broader than the New Testament Church.
- v. The best view seems to be that the woman in heaven represents God's people through all generations (Old and New Testaments) and the woman on earth is her manifestation as the Church during the Great Tribulation period. She could represent God's Bride (Israel in the Old Testament and the Church in the New Testament). She is clothed with the sun, maybe referring to God's people being clothed with His righteousness. The twelve stars could also represent the twelve tribes of Israel in heaven – the church is grafted onto real Israel (Rom 11) and becomes part of her. However, Revelation 1:20 interprets the seven stars as the seven angels of the churches, so to be consistent these stars should represent angels over God's people. Her feet being on the moon probably indicate her power to rule over the created order.

Who is the Male Child?



There are three main views of who the male child is:

- i. The Roman Catholic Church has long held that the child is Jesus as they interpret the woman as Mary. In modern times the child is interpreted by Pre-Tribulationists as Jesus, who was born from out of the nation of Israel 2000 years ago. The strongest evidence that the Man-Child is indeed Jesus is that he is to “*rule the nations with a rod of iron*” (v5), which is used of Jesus in Psalm 2:9 and Revelation 19:15. Also he is caught up to God’s throne, which could be a description of the ascension of Jesus. The only way that it could possibly be seen as Jesus is by separating the woman in heaven from the woman on the earth (who we have seen is the church) – the woman in heaven, as we have seen, could represent God’s people through all time (hence it is called a ‘*great sign*’). The actual Greek used is that this is a ‘*man son*’ (a mature young adult and not a baby) who is born, which could mean that from the godly seed (the seed of Abraham and the seed of David) comes the Messiah, the Son of Man, Jesus Christ. Heaven is eternal, outside time and space, so the image in heaven could span eternity!
- ii. Some have suggested this is a special “*elite*” group of overcomers who are raptured in a special “*out-of*” rapture before the rest of the Church. Those believing in this theory say only these elite overcomers will rule with Christ in the Millennium (they point to Revelation 2:26-27 showing that these overcomers will ‘*rule with a rod of iron*’ just like Jesus). However, 12:17 mentions that the woman had other offspring in the period of hiding in the wilderness, meaning that the male-child is not a special elite group but the

first of many. This talk of “*elite*” groups of Christians is more of a Gnostic belief and is not part of Jesus’ teaching. Yes, he had an inner core group of three (Peter, James and John) but all the 12 Apostles were promised an equal rule with Jesus (Matthew 19:28 – Sitting on Twelve Thrones).

- iii. Another explanation is that this Male-Child represents groups of new converts (born by the Church in the Great Tribulation) who, though young, show they are mature by giving their lives for Christ in the Great Tribulation. Hence, they are taken up to heaven by Martyrdom, which parallels with the martyrs of the fifth seal (Rev 6:9-11) and of Revelation 7:14. There are many other groups that follow as the woman has other offspring that the Dragon seeks to devour (v17). I believe that the other offspring of the woman on earth are converts that may well be martyred but the initial Male-Child is actually Jesus as I have explained in point one.

In conclusion, I feel the most satisfactory identification of the Male-Child is Jesus – not from Mary or from national Israel but from the godly seed of Abraham and David. He is the first fruits of the resurrection who has already been caught up to God’s throne after Satan tried to devour Him from birth (Herod’s killing of all firstborn males under two) to the Cross.

3. Conclusion:

Provided for in the wilderness

Having established that the Woman who flees into the wilderness is the Church during the Great Tribulation period we can say that Christians who live at this time will be hunted down by Satan (probably in the form of persecution from the forces of Antichrist due to not bowing down to his image or taking his mark). The best option during this time will be running into wilderness areas, living out the 3.5 years in caves, improvised shelters and so forth (very much like David on the run from King Saul).

The fact that the woman is “*given two wings of a great eagle*” (12:14) seems to deliberately remind us of God’s care for Israel in their wilderness wanderings (Exodus 19:4-6). Notice that the expression “*I bore you on eagle’s wings*” is indicating that God brought them to himself (closer to His personal, manifest presence). Just as God came close to His people and provided for them (water, manna, and quail), so will He provide miraculously for the fleeing Christians in the Great Tribulation.

Protected in the wilderness

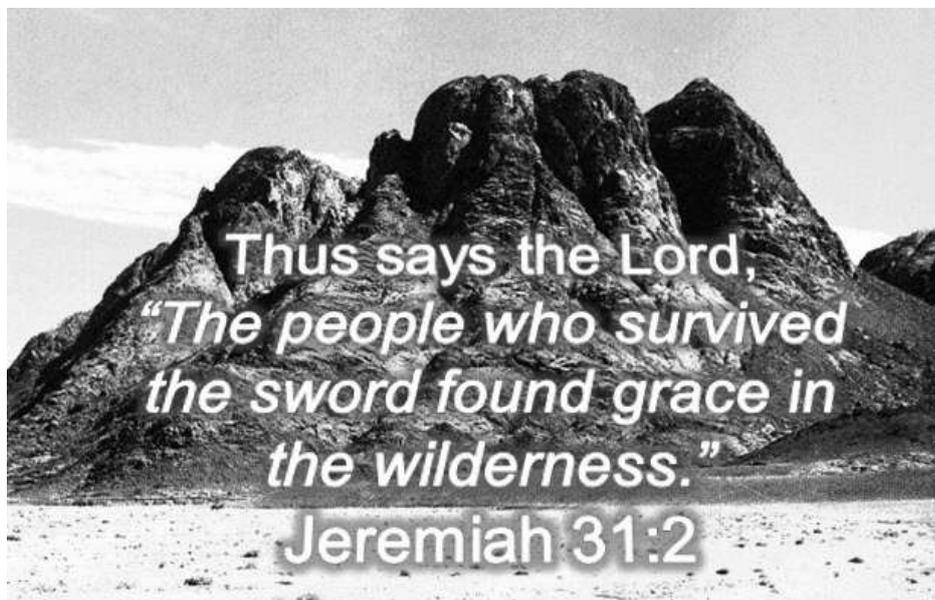
On top of God’s miraculous provision during this time will be His miraculous protection. The woman will be protected from the “*flood*” that comes from the Dragon (12:15-16) as she remains an overcomer.

The enemy will come in like a flood (*“the serpent spewed water out of its mouth like a flood” 12:15*). This reminds us of God’s promise in Isaiah 59:19-20 that when this happens the Spirit of the Lord will lift up a standard against him.

“So shall they fear the name of the LORD from the west, and His glory from the rising of the sun; When the enemy comes in like a flood, the Spirit of the LORD will lift up a standard against him. “The Redeemer will come to Zion, and to those who turn from transgression in Jacob, “ Says the LORD.” Isaiah 59:19-20 (NKJV)

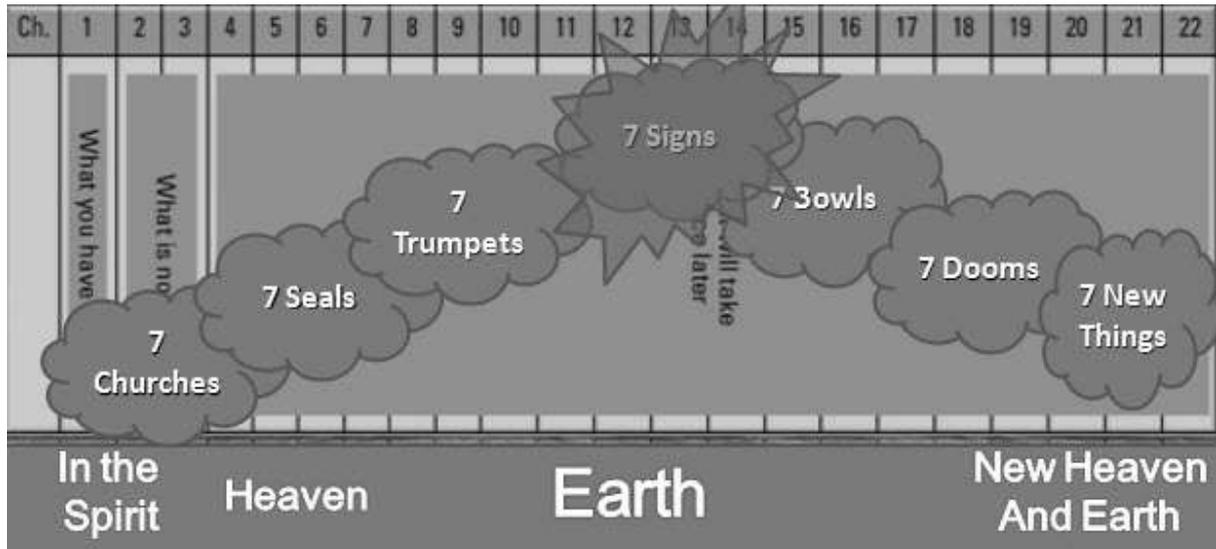
What is this standard? It is the standard by which all God’s true people live and is found as the quality marking out the overcomers during this period – *“the blood of the lamb, the word of our testimony and not loving our lives unto death”* (Revelation 12:11).

During the Great Tribulation, the Woman will be PROVIDED for (12:14) and PROTECTED (12:15-16) in the Wilderness and will overcome the Dragon by THE BLOOD OF THE LAMB (12:11).



She will find GRACE in the wilderness (Jeremiah 31:2)

PART EIGHT: THE TWO BEASTS



1. Introduction:

We continue to look at the seven signs: the first four concern the work of SATAN and the last three concern the work of GOD.

We have looked at Beauty, the end time church, the Bride of Christ, persecuted and chased into the wilderness by the Dragon (the Devil). We will now look at the Beast, or, more correctly, the Beasts!

In Revelation Chapter 13 we see the unholy TRINITY – The dragon, the beast from the sea and the beast from the land.



They represent SATAN, the ANTICHRIST and the FALSE Prophet who come to earth in a last-ditch attempt to win people to their side. Notice how they present themselves as a trinity – the Dragon as the Father of lies (see John 8:44), the Antichrist as the Son of Lies (called Son of Perdition in 2 Thessalonians 2:3) and the False Prophet as the Unholy lying spirit (see 1 Kings 22:22). In every way this false trinity will set itself up as a counterfeit of the real thing (God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit).

The dragon is Satan who is behind the scenes and controlling two key figures during the Great Tribulation. These two figures are revealed in the next two signs as two beasts, one from the sea and one from the land. As we shall see, these two beasts represent the Antichrist and the False Prophet.

Although the Antichrist and False Prophet appear on the scene before the Great Tribulation (second half of the seven-year Tribulation period), their main prophetic activities take place in this final three-and-a-half-year period, probably after they have been demonized (possessed by Satan and his demons).

During this time, the forces of the Antichrist will capture Jerusalem and overrun her. The Antichrist will be proclaimed as God by the False Prophet who will cause many in the world to worship his image and take his mark. This will be marked by the Antichrist breaking his peace treaty with Israel and setting up his image in the Temple, which in turn will lead to the ministry of the two witnesses who will prophesy against the Antichrist and his false system for the entire Great Tribulation period. They will bring the judgment of God down in the form of the Trumpet/Bowl judgments and will be martyred at the end of that time only to be raptured and meet Christ in the air at the last Trump.

Also, during this time, we have seen that the church will flee into the wilderness from the persecution that will be intense at this time, the dragon representing Satan who will be behind the Antichrist and the False Prophet in stirring up hatred towards God's people.

This lesson looks in more detail at the characteristics of the Antichrist and his right-hand man, the False Prophet.

2. The Two Beasts.

a. The Beast from the Sea (Revelation 13:1-10)

“Then I stood on the sand of the sea. And I saw a beast rising up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and on his horns ten crowns, and on his heads a blasphemous name. Now the beast which I saw was like a leopard, his feet were like the feet of a bear, and his mouth like the mouth of a lion. The dragon gave him his power, his throne, and great authority. And I saw one of his heads as if it had been mortally wounded, and his

deadly wound was healed. And all the world marveled and followed the beast. So they worshiped the dragon who gave authority to the beast; and they worshiped the beast, saying, "Who is like the beast? Who is able to make war with him?" And he was given a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies, and he was given authority to continue for forty-two months. Then he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme His name, His tabernacle, and those who dwell in heaven. It was granted to him to make war with the saints and to overcome them. And authority was given him over every tribe, tongue, and nation. All who dwell on the earth will worship him, whose names have not been written in the Book of Life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. If anyone has an ear, let him hear. He who leads into captivity shall go into captivity; he who kills with the sword must be killed with the sword. Here is the patience and the faith of the saints." Revelation 13:1-10 (NKJV)



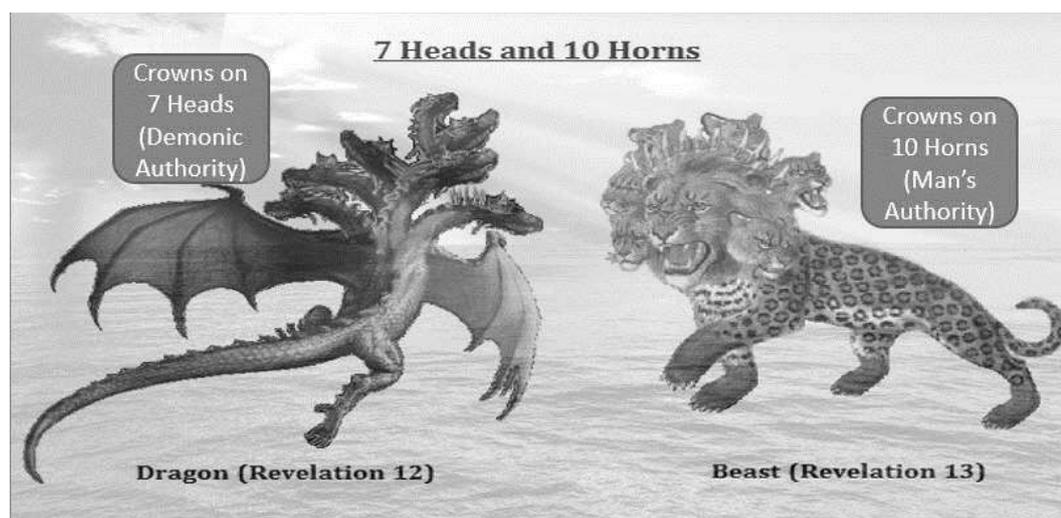
This first beast is the ANTICHRIST. There are characteristics that show it represents the Antichrist in end time prophecy, even though the word Antichrist is not used. The similarities to Daniel 7 (see next slide) clearly mark this out as such. The word “*Anti*” does not mean “*against*” in the original Greek but “*instead of*” – he will be a counterfeit of Jesus the true Christ. Six characteristics of the Beast will be:

i. Out of sea (NATIONS)

The beast comes out from the seas, representing all peoples of the world. He will come out from a system that seeks to rule over all people and will succeed in doing so in his short demonic reign.

ii. 7 heads 10 horns (Leopard, bear, lion)

There are obvious similarities and differences of this beast with the dragon in Chapter 12 (Revelation 12:3). Both have seven heads and ten horns, but the dragon has seven crowns on its seven heads whereas the beast has ten crowns on its ten horns (Revelation 13:1). This can be explained by understanding that the dragon represents the spiritual, demonic power behind the Beast (the Antichrist). The dragon as a whole represents Satan, and the seven heads represent seven spiritual princes (demons such as the Prince of Persia mentioned in Daniel 10:13) who are the real power behind the seven kingdoms they rule over, from which the Antichrist will arise in the end times. The ten horns represent ten earthly kings that come out from the previous kingdoms as an end-time coalition from which the Antichrist will arise (deposing three of those kings). Another difference is that instead of a dragon we see the beast is an amalgam of lion, bear, and leopard – we will see what this means in the next section.



iii. Power from THE DRAGON.

The dragon is the force behind the beast (Revelation 13:2). Just as Jesus would do nothing except the Father show him, so the Antichrist does only what his father (the Devil) tells him to do (the difference is that he has no real choice as he will sell his soul to the Devil). It is interesting that the Devil tried to get Jesus to bow down and worship him to be his Antichrist, but Jesus refused (Matthew 4:8-10). There is one who will not refuse in the end times and will become Satan's puppet, and be doomed to the lake of fire

(Revelation 19:20). It is evident that the Antichrist will start off as a gifted and loved leader, doing much to help and bless the nations but will turn into a monster when he is possessed by the Devil (Revelation 11:7) for his final three and a half years rule of terror (the Great Tribulation).

iv. Mortally WOUNDED then healed.

One of the beast's heads is mortally wounded but will be healed, like a resurrection from the dead (Revelation 13:3, 17:8). This will probably be his transition from a great human ruler to a demonic force. He will be killed by the sword (assassinated) but then seem to rise from the dead (possessed by the Devil).

v. World follow and WORSHIP him.

The world will marvel at the apparent resurrection from the dead (counterfeit of Christ's resurrection) and will follow and worship him (Revelation 13:4) for 3.5 years (same time as Christ's ministry). We know from other scriptures that the Antichrist will set up an image in the Temple in Jerusalem and demand worship to him through this image (Matthew 24:15) – this image will be broadcast and promoted around the world by the False Prophet to be worshipped (Revelation 13:15) and those who do not worship it will be killed or, at least, persecuted and banned from buying and selling.

vi. Makes WAR against God and saints

The Antichrist will hate God and His people (Jews and the Church) – he will blaspheme terribly against God (especially the name of Jesus) and will launch the worst persecution of Christians and Jews the world has ever known (Revelation 13:6-7).

	DANIEL 7	
BABYLON	LION	<p><i>"The seven heads are seven mountains on which the woman sits. They are also seven kings. Five have fallen, one is, the other has not yet come; but when he does come, he must remain for a little while. The beast who once was, and now is not, is an eighth king. He belongs to the seven and is going to his destruction. The ten horns you saw are ten kings who have not yet received a kingdom, but who for one hour will receive authority as kings along with the beast." Revelation 17:9-12</i></p> <p>1. Fallen = Assyria 2. Fallen = Babylon (Lion) 3. Fallen = Media (Bear) 4. Fallen = Persia (Bear) 5. Fallen = Greece (Leopard) 6. One is = Rome 7. Yet to come = End Time Kingdom</p> <p>The seven heads could represent demonic principalities whereas the 10 horns are human leaders.</p>
MEDO-PERSIA	BEAR	
GREECE	LEOPARD	
ROME	WOLF	
End Time Kingdom of 10 kings	TEN HORNS	



If we refer to Daniel 7 and the extra insights we are given in Revelation 17:9-12 it becomes apparent that the Antichrist will arise from a long line of kingdoms bearing some of their characteristics.

The Lion, Bear and Leopard kingdoms are identified in Daniel 7 as the Babylonian, Medo-Persian and Greek kingdoms. The ten horns are a coalition of kings in one final end-time kingdom that seems to be a revived Roman Empire. The Antichrist will depose 3 of these kings and rule overall, setting up HQ in Jerusalem after breaking his seven-year peace treaty.

Notice that the beast has the main look of a leopard (Greek influence will be the major characteristic), the feet of a bear (Medo-Persia's conquering power and might) and the mouth of a lion (Babylon's speech and eloquence).

- **Characteristics of the Antichrist:**

If we combine all the teaching on the Antichrist from Daniel 7,9,11; Revelation 13; 2 Thessalonians 2, Matthew 24; 1 John 2 and 2 John 7 we come up with 10 Characteristics of the Antichrist (I have summarized them under the acronym of ANTICHRIST):

ARROGANT yet successful leader

NATIONAL leader from ancient roots

TURNS from his religious roots

INITIATES deceptive covenant

CHANGES laws and seasons

HATES God and His people

RISES, as it were, from the dead

IMMORAL and sexually perverted

SETS himself up as god

TAKEN over by Satan

- **Types of the Antichrist:**

“Little children, it is the last time: and as ye have heard that antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists; whereby we know that it is the last time.” 1 John 2:18

“For false christs and false prophets will rise and show great signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect.” Matthew 24:24

Through history there have been many figures that people have said was the Antichrist. They are not THE Antichrist but a foreshadowing of him as they do not line up on ALL the points we have seen.

One example is Hitler. His name adds up to 666 and he made war on God's people, the Jews and was a man of war. He was a Christian and deceived many Christians into joining his cause. At first, he seemed the ideal leader of Germany, reviving the economy (during his rule the Autobahn was put in place and the Volkswagen (VW) was born). However, soon it became apparent he was “*possessed*” and even an assassination attempt from within his own ranks failed (they thought he was surely dead, but he walked away with minor injuries).

We learn from Hitler not to be taken in by charismatic speakers or gifted leaders but to recognize the signs of a counterfeit – we do this by knowing the real thing – Jesus!

So, we see that the Antichrist will be a political leader who comes out from an alliance of 10 kings. This alliance will be a type of revived Roman Empire but with a difference (something like the European Union), seeking one world governance. He will appear to be a saviour from world crisis at first and will make a peace agreement for seven years in the Middle East that he will break halfway through and then persecute Jews and Christians and others who don't worship him with great hatred for the second half of that time until God's wrath is poured out and Jesus returns for His Bride.

Some have noted that the Islamic world is also waiting for such a figure called Al Mahdi (a title not his name). The following table shows the amazing similarities between the Al Mahdi and the Antichrist:

+ The AntiChrist	☾ Al Mahdi
Head of one world government (Dan 7:24, Rev 13:2-4)	Head of one world government
Leads a one-world religion (Rev 13:3-8)	Sets up Islam as one-world religion
Confirms a 7-year treaty between Jews & Gentiles (Dan 9:27)	Upholds a 7-year treaty between Jews & Gentiles
Rules for approx. 7 years (Dan 9:27)	Rules for Approx. 7 years
White horse rider of the Apocalypse (Rev 6:2)	White horse rider passage in the Bible used by Muslim scholars as evidence of the Mahdi
Conquers Israel & Jerusalem (Dan 8:9-11, Rev 11:2)	Conquers Israel & Jerusalem
Rules from Jerusalem (Dan 8:9-11)	Rules from Jerusalem
Targets and persecutes Christians & Jews who do not convert or submit (Dan 7:25)	Forces Christians & Jews to convert or face death
Changes the laws and calendar (Dan 7:25)	Implements Sharia Law & the use of the Islamic Calendar
Assisted by the false prophet (Rev 19:20)	Assisted by Isa (Islam's Jesus)
Granted supernatural powers from Satan to perform signs & wonders (2 Thess 2:9-12, Rev 13:11-14)	Granted supernatural powers from Allah to perform signs & wonders
Arrives on the scene during a period of great turmoil caused by war, crime, natural disasters and religious apostasy (Matt 24, 1 Jn 2:18)	Arrives on the scene during a period of great turmoil caused by war, crime, natural disasters and religious apostasy

b. The Beast from the Land (Revelation 13:11-18)



“Then I saw another beast coming up out of the earth, and he had two horns like a lamb and spoke like a dragon. And he exercises all the authority of the first beast in his presence, and causes the earth and those who dwell in it to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed. He performs great signs, so that he even makes fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men. And he deceives those who dwell on the earth by those signs which he was granted to do in the sight of the beast, telling those

who dwell on the earth to make an image to the beast who was wounded by the sword and lived. He was granted power to give breath to the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak and cause as many as would not worship the image of the beast to be killed. He causes all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and slave, to receive a mark on their right hand or on their foreheads, and that no one may buy or sell except one who has the mark or the name of the beast, or the number of his name. Here is wisdom. Let him who has understanding calculate the number of the beast, for it is the number of a man: His number is 666.” Revelation 13:11-18(NKJV)

The second beast is the FALSE PROPHET. Though not called the False Prophet here but clearly named elsewhere (see Revelation 16:13), he will be the religious right-hand man of the Antichrist and he will promote the religion of the first Beast. The six characteristics of the False Prophet will be:

i. Out of earth (SELF).

This beast comes out from the earth (Revelation 13:11), the dust, where man came from. His religion will be a cult of self, earthly, sensual, and demonic wisdom (James 3:15). It will probably be very Gnostic (from Greek thought) in character.

ii. Lamb, 2 horns (Speaks like the DRAGON).

Notice how the False Prophet is likened to a Lamb with two horns (Revelation 13:11) – Jesus is the Lamb of God, seen in revelation as having seven horns. The False Prophet will be the counterfeit of the Lamb-like part of Jesus just as the Antichrist is the counterfeit of the Lion-like part of Jesus. He will be a wolf in sheep's clothing, appearing very holy and pure but he is the mouth of the Devil himself.

iii. Power from the ANTICHRIST.

Just as the Holy Spirit is promised and sent by Jesus so the False Prophet will be sent forth by the Antichrist, with his authority and power (Revelation 13:12).

iv. Causes people to WORSHIP the antichrist.

Just as the Holy Spirit glorifies Jesus and helps us worship Him so the False Prophet will glorify the Antichrist and make the people worship him (Revelation 13:12). The image talked about here that the False Prophet makes people worship will probably be a living representation of the Antichrist set up in the Temple but broadcast around the world.

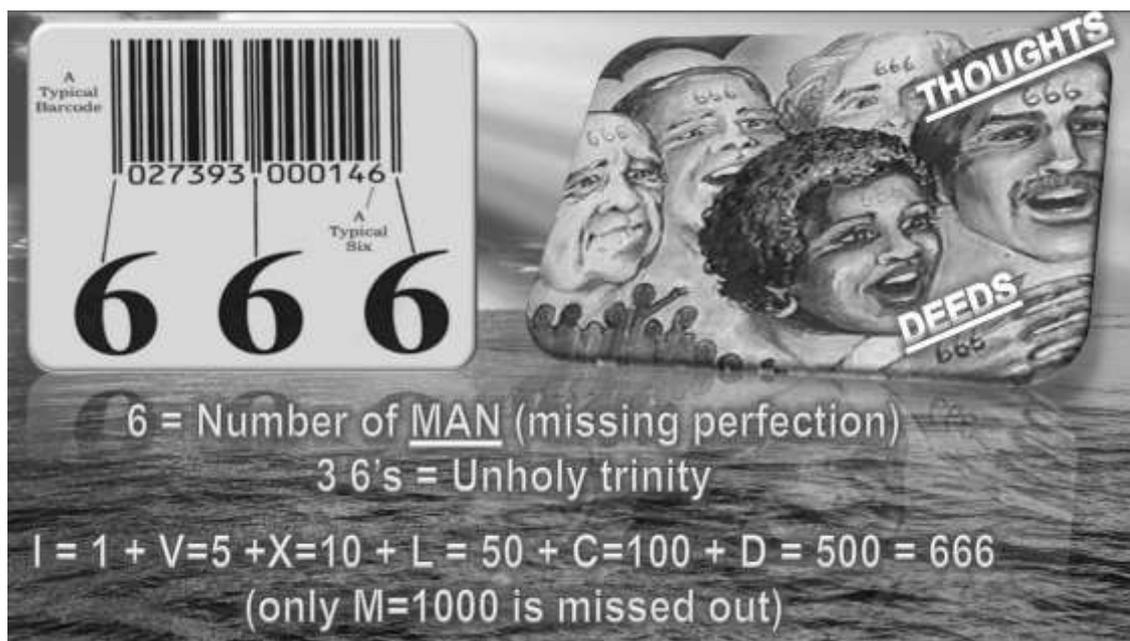
v. Performs great SIGNS and WONDERS.

The Holy Spirit empowers us to work mighty signs and wonders, but the False Prophet will work deceiving signs and wonders (Revelation 13:13-14; Matthew 24:24).

vi. Causes many to take THE MARK of the Beast.

The Holy Spirit is the seal, the mark of a true Christian (Ephesians 1:13) but the False Prophet will cause those who follow and worship the Antichrist to be sealed with the Mark of the Beast (Revelation 13:16).

- **The Mark of the Beast**



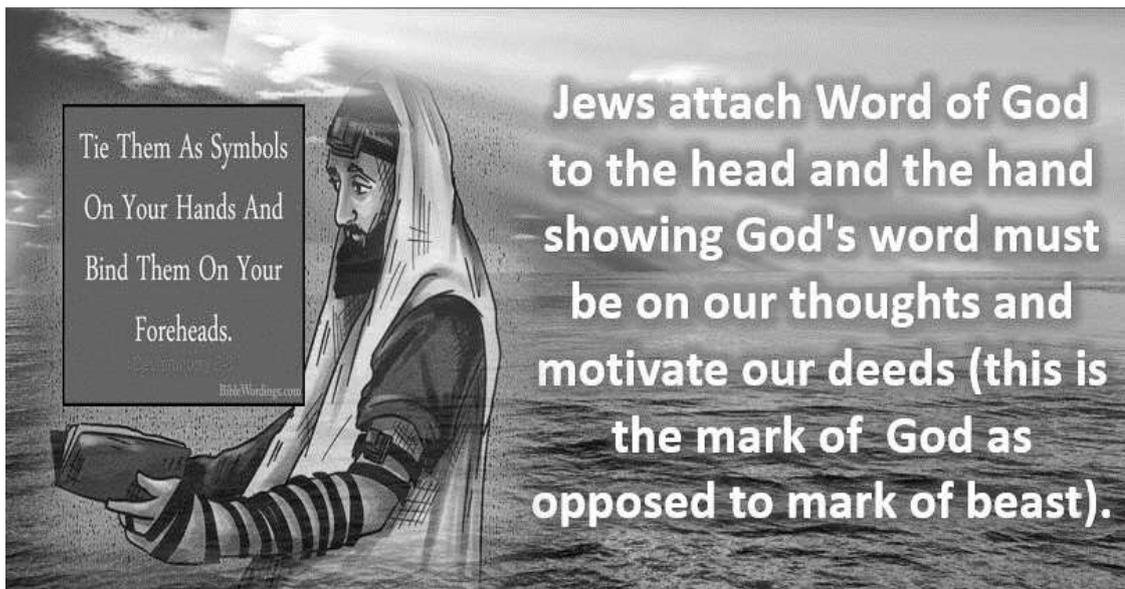
Most basically the mark of the beast, the number 666, is a numerical picture of the nature of the Beast.

Six is the number of IMPERFECT, fallen man, eternally one short of perfection. Three sixes show forth the unholy trinity of the Dragon, the Antichrist, and the False Prophet. The mark that true Christians have is 777, the Holy Spirit.

Of note is the fact that if you add all Roman numerals together, excluding M (1000) you get 666 – taking the mark of the beast will exclude you from reigning in the thousand-year millennium period!

This mark is on either the head (THOUGHTS) or the hand (ACTIONS) meaning that is an aligning of thoughts and actions with the Beast. Some say this will take the form of an embedded computer chip in either the forehead or the hand, without which one cannot buy and sell (Revelation 13:16-17). Whatever it is,

Christians are to have no part in it as it will be an element of worshipping the Beast. Those who take this mark are destined for hell (Revelation 14:9-10).



There are many characters through history that have been thought to be the Antichrist because their name came out as the number 666 using Gematria (the science of transforming letters into number). Some of them certainly may have been Antichrists (a foreshadowing of the actual Antichrist) such as Nero, Hitler and some of the Popes:

To derive 666 from Nero's name, we must first convert the Greek version of his name, "NERON KAISAR," into its Hebrew (or Aramaic) equivalent, which reads something like "NRWN QSR." Now, if we take the Hebrew numeric values for each letter - N = 50, R = 200, W = 6, Q = 100, and S = 60, the result is $50 + 200 + 6 + 50 + 100 + 60 + 200 = 666!$

Let us try another notorious tyrant - Adolph Hitler. If we assign an increasing numerical value to each letter of the alphabet, such as A = 100, B = 101, Z = 125, and assign those numbers to "HITLER," we get $107 + 108 + 119 + 111 + 104 + 117 = 666!$

The Pope has often been a favourite of the Protestant church for the Antichrist. They have used the same method to "prove" that the Pope is the Beast. The Pope's official title is "Vicarius Fi Dei," or "vicar of the Son of God." The Roman numerals of this title are $5 + 1 + 100 + 1 + 5 + 1 + 50 + 1 + 1 + 500 + 1 = 666!$

Some, however, are the product of an overactive mind:

Take fundamentalist televangelist Pat Robertson. His organization is called the "700 Club." By using a system of A = 0, B = 1, etc, "CLUB" = $2 + 11 + 20 + 1 = 34$, and $700 - 34 = 666!$

Even Bill Gates' (William Henry Gates III) name can be written numerical as 666. By converting the letters of "*BILL GATES*" into ASCII (A = 65, B = 66, etc) values, we get the following: 66 + 73 + 76 + 76 + 71 + 65 + 84 + 69 + 83 = 663. Almost, but not quite enough. However, by adding the suffix "III" (3), we get the desired result of 666!

There are some funny names that have the number 666 such as Barney the Dinosaur. Everyone knows Barney is a cute purple dinosaur. However, by converting "*Cute purple dinosaur,*" to Roman numerals (making sure to convert "U" to "V," as Romans had no "U" in their alphabet), we get C + V + V + L + D + I + V = 100 + 5 + 5 + 50 + 500 + 1 + 5 = 666!

More recently both Barrack Hussein Obama and his initial right-hand man, Rahm Emmanuel have been targeted (as Antichrist and False Prophet) as their names both add up to 666 using English Gematria. However, their placing, actions and so forth do not add up if we compare them with the characteristics we have seen in this lesson.

3. Conclusion:

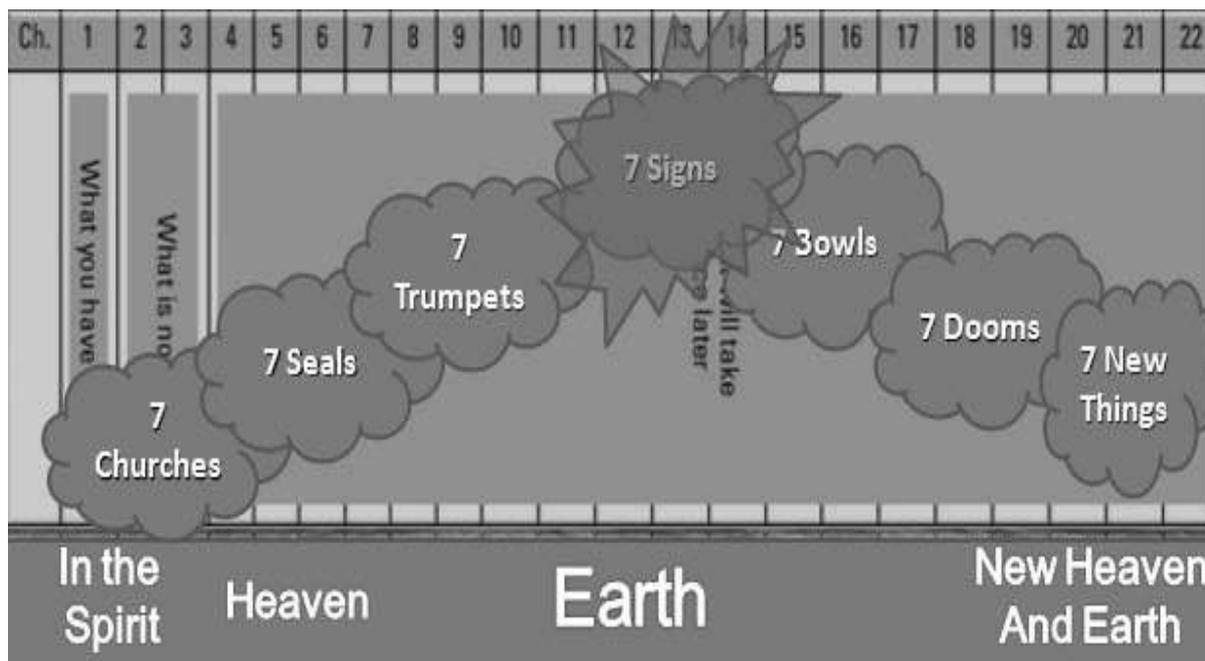
Do not be DECEIVED.

"Let no one deceive you by any means; for that Day will not come unless the falling away comes first, and the man of sin is revealed, the son of perdition."
2 Thessalonians 2:3 (NKJV)

The coming of the Antichrist will mark a time of FALLING away, where many will leave the true church and follow the deceiving doctrines of the Antichrist and False Prophet. Many may well be disillusioned if the Rapture is indeed after the Great Tribulation and they find themselves confronted with the choice of taking the mark of the Beast, which they will not be prepared for. This end time falling away is mentioned in many passages of Scripture (e.g., 1 Timothy 4:1).

To avoid being one who will fall away we must learn to RECOGNIZE the counterfeit – the best way to do this is to know the real thing! Specially trained policemen know how to recognize counterfeit money by knowing the real thing inside out. Now is the time to know Jesus more intimately than ever before, drawing near to Him and learning to live in and be led by His Spirit.

PART NINE: THE GOD SIGNS



1. Introduction:

We have seen that the 'SATAN Signs' are the Devil being cast down to earth, possessing the Antichrist and the false Prophet who will persecute the Church like never before. There are specific things we are told to look out for so that we will know when these signs are upon us.

The last three 'GOD Signs' show us the final intervention of God to wrap up this age and institute the Day of the Lord (judgment on the wicked and rewards for righteous, who will rule and reign for one thousand years with Christ on earth). These three signs show us the final events of the final 3.5 years straight after the Great Tribulation (Satan's wrath through the Antichrist). They show us God's final act of mercy in extending His salvation to all but also his decisive judgment on the wicked who refuse to repent and turn to Him.

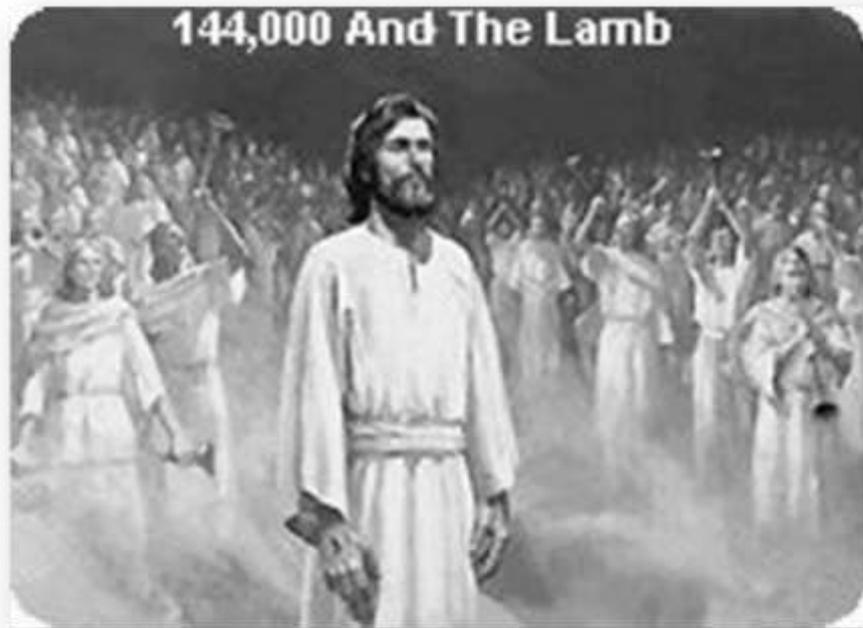
The following diagram shows us roughly where the Satan Signs (Signs one to four) and the God Signs (Signs 5-7) will take place in the overall scheme of things. The Satan Signs take place in the final three-and-a-half-year period known as the Great Tribulation and the God Signs follow them at the end of this time, just before the Second Coming of our Lord and during the trumpet/bowl judgments of God.



2. The Three God Signs

a. The Sign of the LAMB on Mount Zion.

“Then I looked, and behold, a Lamb standing on Mount Zion, and with Him one hundred and forty-four thousand, having His Father's name written on their foreheads. And I heard a voice from heaven, like the voice of many waters, and like the voice of loud thunder. And I heard the sound of harpists playing their harps. They sang as it were a new song before the throne, before the four living creatures, and the elders; and no one could learn that song except the hundred and forty-four thousand who were redeemed from the earth. These are the ones who were not defiled with women, for they are virgins. These are the ones who follow the Lamb wherever He goes. These were redeemed from among men, being firstfruits to God and to the Lamb. And in their mouth was found no deceit, for they are without fault before the throne of God.” Revelation 14:1-5 (NKJV)



The Fifth Sign is the Lamb on mount Zion with the 144,000. This vision is then followed by the messages of three heavenly angels.

Who is the Lamb? Some say “a lamb” referred to in verse 1 is the False Prophet (Revelation 13:11) and “*The Lamb*” in verse 4 is Jesus. However, if this was so then the 144,000 would not be with him but would have fled into the wilderness as they are part of God’s people. Also, the False Prophet is only “*like a lamb*”, whereas Jesus has the title of “*Lamb of God*”. I think this passage clearly refers to one Lamb who is Jesus.

Where does this happen? This question is really asking if the 144,000 are with Jesus in heaven or on earth. Mount Zion could refer to either the literal Jerusalem or the heavenly Jerusalem (Hebrews 12:22). However, since I do not believe that the heavenly Jerusalem comes until the after the Millennium (Revelation 21:2), I believe this is talking of the Jerusalem on earth that exists in the nation of Israel today. At the time of John, Mount Zion was what the Jews called the place we call The Temple Mount today or it could also refer to all Jerusalem. John would recognize this place as he had been there many times with Jesus. In verse two John says “*and I heard a voice from heaven*” seemingly meaning the scene of the Lamb was elsewhere. It is true that verses 2-3 refer to music in heaven but does not mean the 144,000 are in heaven.

When does this happen? If this is a vision of heaven, then it could be any time during the Tribulation period depending on who you see the 144,000 as. However, if you see this as taking place in earthly Jerusalem then it must be at the Second Coming of Christ when He returns to meet the saints in the clouds and descend to Jerusalem (See Zechariah 14:4) to conquer the forces of the

Antichrist at the battle of Armageddon. I would favour this interpretation as the context seems to point to the final moment of God's judgment on the Antichrist kingdom.

Who are the 144,000? Some scholars say these are the same as the 144,000 mentioned in Revelation 7 others say they are a different group. Those that interpret, as I do, the 144,000 in chapter 7 as Jews (the context supporting this as they come from the literal tribes of Israel) tend to say the 144,000 in chapter 14 are not the same as they are described quite clearly as Christians (see verses 4-5).

However, there is no contradiction to say this speaks of the same group if you see them as Messianic Jews. These are Jewish believers in Jesus Christ who will be sealed (7:4) and protected during the outpouring of God's wrath (Rev 9:4) and who will be raptured up to be with Jesus in the clouds at the end of this time (with all the saints, dead and alive) and then descend with Him to Jerusalem either before or after the final battle of Armageddon. They alone are seen with Jesus in Jerusalem as it will probably be Jewish believers that will rule and reign from Israel during the Millennium, all other Gentile Christians will rule and reign around the world.

This group are called the *"first fruits"* of the redeemed maybe referring to the truth that the Gospel is to the Jew first then to the Gentile: *"For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek."* (Rom 1:16 KJV)

If so, this is a glorious vision of hope for the Jews that many will receive Christ in the end of days, one group being especially holy. The Apostle Paul taught that when the fullness of the gentiles has come in then all Israel shall be saved (Romans 11:25-26) – this will happen when Christ returns. When they see Him whom they (the Jewish nation) have pierced they will weep with real repentance and be saved (Zechariah 12:10, Revelation 1:7).

- **The three DECLARING angels (Revelation 14:6-10)**

After the vision of the Lamb with the 144,000 John sees three declaring angels. Just as the vision of the 144,000 is a great hope for Jewish believers so these three angels give great hope for all believers around the world. These three angels show that, right up to the last moment, God is bending over backwards to extend His salvation to all.

These three angels offer a LAST chance of salvation



Angel 1: The BIBLE Angel (14:6-7)

This angel declares the importance of **BELIEVING** properly.

The first angel from heaven (a messenger from God) comes to earth with the everlasting gospel message to all nations, tribes, and tongues. We know that The Gospel has been given to Christians to proclaim to the world and not to angels. Some see this as proof that Christians are raptured before the Tribulation period so that only this angel can spread the Gospel during this time. However, it only says the angel encourages the people to fear, glorify and worship God the Creator, it does not tell them how. That is the Saint's privilege as we go forth preaching the good news about Jesus Christ's death and resurrection. Maybe this angel will strengthen the saints during the final period of Tribulation and wrath to endure and share the Good News right to the end. Matthew 24:14 shows us that the priority of the Saints during this period will be to preach the gospel of the kingdom as a witness to all nations then the end (Christ's second coming) will come.

In other words, this angel declares the importance of **BELIEVING** properly. Salvation only comes through belief and trust in Christ alone.

Angel 2: The BABYLON Angel.

This angel declares the importance of **BEHAVING** properly.

The second angel comes to declare the fall of Babylon the Great. We will look more at this in the next lesson, but here it is enough to say that this angel is warning us not to drink of the wine of this Babylon, this false system of the world. All are to flee from Babylon or will suffer her fate. The eventual

destruction of Babylon seems to be the final event in God's calendar of destruction (Revelation 16:19) before the rule and reign of the Saints with Him for a thousand years, so in this angel's cry is a warning to flee from Babylon right up to the very last moment. God extends His salvation to all right up to the very end.

Really, this is a cry to live properly, not be joined to this harlot called Babylon and drink of her wine. The symbol of wine speaks of partaking of a particular source of pleasure and satisfaction. We are not to be drunk on the wine of this world, but we are to be filled with the Spirit of God (Ephesians 5:18) and live uprightly, partaking in His life.

In other words, this angel declares the importance of **BEHAVING** properly. True belief in Christ leads to godly behaviour.

Angle 3: The BEAST Angel.

This angel declares the importance of **BELONGING** properly.

The last of this trilogy of angels brings a warning not to take the mark of the Beast. Doing this will mean one has bowed down to worship the Antichrist and belongs to him. The mark of the Beast is really a seal of ownership just as the Holy Spirit seals true believers so that they belong alone to God. Those who willingly take the mark of the Beast are destined to an eternity in Hell.

In other words, this angel declares the importance of **BELONGING** only to God. If we don't believe properly and behave properly, we show we do not really belong to God. We need all three aspects in our life, and we need to be like these three angels, going forth to all peoples with an urgency to witness of the truth before it is too late.

- The PATIENCE of the Saints.

"Here is the patience of the saints; here are those who keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus. Then I heard a voice from heaven saying to me, "Write: 'Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on.' " "Yes," says the Spirit, "that they may rest from their labors, and their works follow them." Revelation 14:12-13 (NKJV)

Revelation 14:12 is the key verse in Revelation. Not only does it indicate Christians will have to patiently endure the Great Tribulation period and maybe even the outpouring of God's wrath, but that they will be labouring hard to bring the harvest in.

Christians will not only be patiently enduring PERSECUTION during this time but will be actively witnessing to non-believers, explaining the messages of the three angels to them.

b. The sign of the SON of Man on the white cloud.



“Then I looked, and behold, a white cloud, and on the cloud sat One like the Son of Man, having on His head a golden crown, and in His hand a sharp sickle. And another angel came out of the temple, crying with a loud voice to Him who sat on the cloud, “Thrust in Your sickle and reap, for the time has come for You to reap, for the harvest of the earth is ripe.” Revelation 14:14-15 (NKJV)

The SIXTH Sign – *The Lord of the Harvest followed by three reaping angels.*

This may well be the ‘*Sign of the Son of Man*’ appearing in heaven referred to in Matthew 24:30. It speaks of the Second Coming of Christ to complete His judgment of the Antichrist’s kingdom. Jesus is seen as the Lord of the Harvest, with a harvesting tool (sickle) in his hands. He will firstly gather all the good part of the harvest (with the Rapture of believers) and then destroy the chaff, the bad part of the harvest.

The chain of events seen here is that the first HARVEST angel comes from the Temple calling for Jesus to reap the harvest. Jesus starts reaping and another angel comes out from the Temple who is commanded by a third angel to commence reaping and he does.

What is described here is probably the final JUDGMENT of the Antichrist and his forces outside Jerusalem (the Battle of Armageddon). With the word of His mouth, He will destroy them so that blood will flow up to the horses’ bridles for 1600 furlongs (180 miles) outside Jerusalem (verse 20).

What we see here is that, though God desires for all to be SAVED (1 Timothy 2:4) He is a just God and must punish all wickedness. He has actually been 'delaying' that Day of Judgment, not willing that any should perish (2 Peter 3:9), but his Justice will be fully carried out. That is why it is essential we pay heed to the message of the three angels and now go forth into the entire world sharing the good news of Jesus before it is too late.

c. **The Final Sign: The Seven Last PLAGUES (Rev Ch 15-16)**



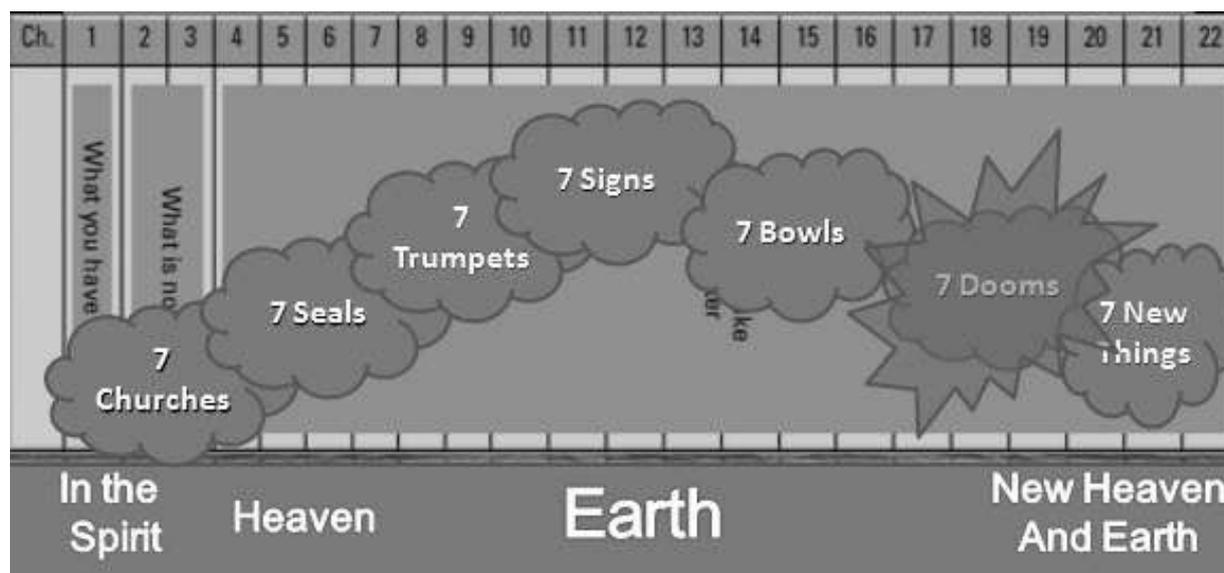
3. **Conclusion:**

The last sign is really an overall SUMMARY, revealing that God's wrath will surely come to destroy the Antichrist's kingdom. *We have already looked at the seven bowl judgments alongside the seven trumpet judgments so will not dwell too long on them here.*

Chapter 15 introduces this last sign as seven angels with the seven last plagues. We have looked at Chapter 16 in previous lessons so will not go into the details here.

Seven is the number of PERFECTION or COMPLETENESS so these plagues are the complete judgment of God on the kingdom of the Antichrist. The harpists in heaven sing the song of Moses and the Lamb, declaring the victory of God over the Beast. The song echoes the message of the first declaring angel (Revelation 14:6-7) that God is to be feared, glorified, and worshipped as He will surely judge all wickedness. This song also echoes the song of Moses found in Exodus 15:1-21 which declares God's victory and judgment over Pharaoh and his armies and salvation of His people. The song of Moses in Deuteronomy 32 is also strongly echoed here.

PART TEN: THE FALL OF BABYLON



1. Introduction:

In this lesson we look at the first of the seven DOOMS – the fall of Babylon the Great.

The seven dooms show God's ultimate JUDGMENT on all His enemies before He establishes the fullness of His Kingdom. The problems that were introduced in Genesis, Satan's kingdom and the Fall of man, are dealt with completely at the end of this age.

All the major characters that have been introduced in Revelation as being against God are seen here receiving their final judgment. God is a just and merciful God. Even as He is faithful in being merciful to the repentant, He is faithful in carrying out ultimate judgment upon the wicked.

Again, there is a 4:3 division of this seven. The first four dooms occur at the Second Coming of Christ and the last three occur at the end of the Millennium period.

The Seven Dooms

Doom One: Babylon the GREAT (17:1-19:10).

Doom Two: NATIONS and Leaders (19:11-18).

Doom Three: BEAST and False Prophet (19:19-21).

Doom Four: DRAGON (20:1-3).

Doom Five: Gog and MAGOG (20:4-10).

Doom Six: Wicked DEAD (20:11-13,15).

Doom Seven: Death and HADES (20:14).

The seven dooms all occur with the coming of the DAY of the Lord – the Lord’s ultimate judgment and salvation. At the coming of Jesus there is the judgment of Babylon the Great, The Wicked Nations and their leaders and the Antichrist and his right-hand man, the False Prophet. At the end of the Millennium will come the final doom of Satan, Gog and Magog and the wicked dead (we will look at these in the next lesson).

The following chart shows you where the seven dooms take place (in the boxed area) - after the God Signs at the Second Coming of Jesus.



2. Babylon the Great

a. A Tale of Two WOMEN.

There are two women contrasted in Revelation – the BRIDE of Christ and the harlot Babylon the Great. This contrast is nothing new; it is seen in the Old Testament Prophets.

"I adorned you with ornaments...and a beautiful crown on your head. Thus you were adorned with gold and silver, and your clothing was of fine linen, silk, and embroidered cloth. ... You were exceedingly beautiful, and succeeded to royalty. Your fame went out among the nations because of your beauty, for it was perfect through My splendor which I had bestowed on you," says the Lord GOD." Ezekiel 16:11-14 (NKJV)

"But you trusted in your own beauty, played the harlot because of your fame, and poured out your harlotry on everyone passing by who would have it. You have also taken your beautiful jewelry from My gold and My silver, which I had given you, and made for yourself male images and played the harlot with them." Ezekiel 16:15-17 (NKJV)

Ezekiel prophesied from the Exile in Babylon to God's people in 16:11-17 saying that they were made a beautifully adorned bride by God but had become as a harlot due to their alliance with the spirit of Babylon. They sought after the glory and wealth of Babylon rather than God's glory.

- b. PLUNDERING the Harlot to adorn the Bride.



The ADORNMENT that was for God's bride was now upon the harlot Babylon. The church is to regain this adornment, this crown, from the harlot. For the bride to claim back her rightful adornment she needed to return to the Lord and do His will in humility and integrity.

Old Testament examples of this:

In the time of the Exile God raised up Zerubbabel, Ezra, and Nehemiah to lead the people out of Exile in Babylon back to rebuild the Temple and Jerusalem. Nehemiah gained favour from the king to return with ample permission and resources for the rebuilding of the walls and gates of Jerusalem (Nehemiah 2:5-8) – this is a practical example of how God will use the world's system to provide resources to His people to build His Kingdom.

Notice that Nehemiah prayed to God what he should ask for from the pagan king and because of his integrity before the king he was granted all that he asked for to rebuild Jerusalem. He was plundering the harlot (the spirit of Babylon) to adorn the bride (God's people, now the Church).

Another scriptural example of plundering the harlot to adorn the bride is found at the Exodus. In Exodus 3:22 we see God promising that the Egyptians would release great wealth to God's people as they left to go to worship God in the wilderness.

"But every woman shall ask of her neighbor, namely, of her who dwells near her house, articles of silver, articles of gold, and clothing; and you shall put them on your sons and on your daughters. So you shall plunder the Egyptians."
Exodus 3:22 (NKJV)

This was fulfilled in Exodus 12:35-36.

As God's people flee from Babylon, they will go into the wilderness to worship God and build a place of worship to Him with the gold and silver they have plundered back from the harlot, just as the Israelites went miraculously through the Red Sea to Sinai to build the Tabernacle using the resources taken from the Egyptians.

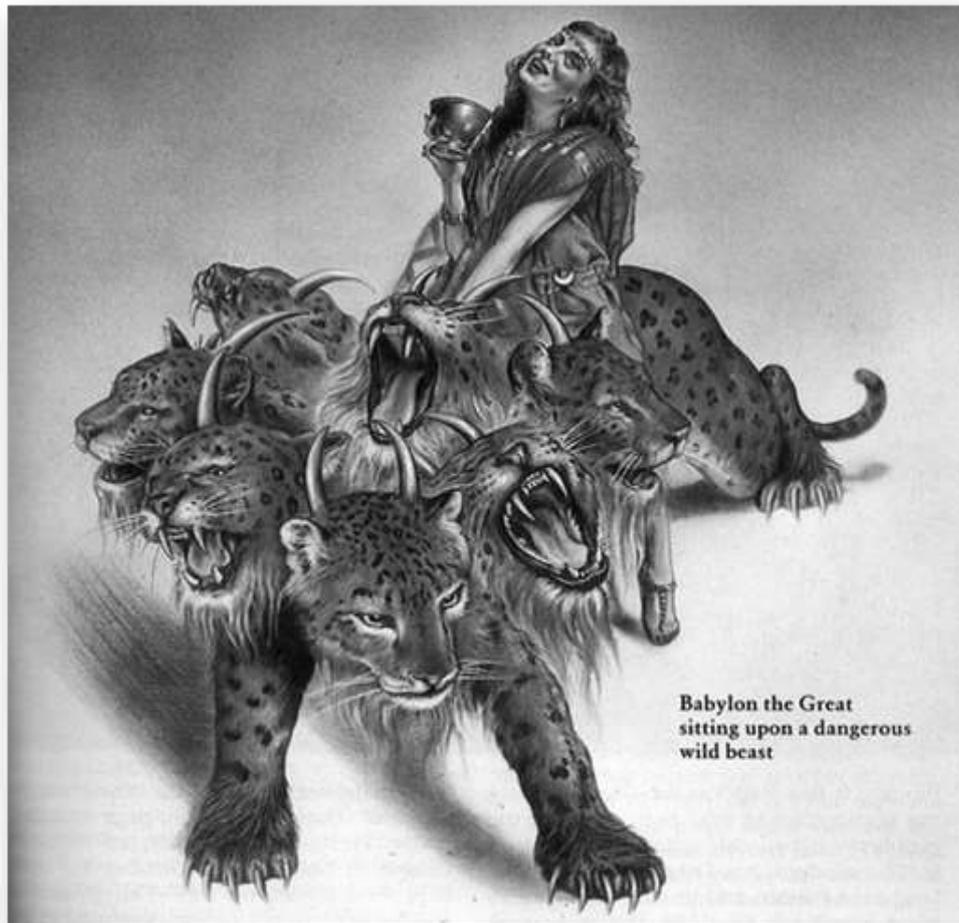
This really speaks of God's people being in the world but not of the world. It is not the boat in the water that sinks the boat, but it is the water in the boat that brings about its demise! It is not the Christian in the world that corrupts them but the world in the Christian that shipwrecks their faith. Upright Christians in Businesses around the world will not compromise as the world does (likened in Scripture to laying with the harlot Babylon the Great) but will trade in integrity and claim back money and resources that will be used to build His Kingdom.

c. The SYMBOLISM.

"I saw a woman sitting on a scarlet beast which was full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns. The woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet, and adorned with gold and precious stones and pearls, having in her hand a golden cup full of abominations and the filthiness of her fornication. And on her forehead a name was written: MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND OF THE ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH."
Revelation 17:3-5 (NKJV)

The harlot (Chapter 17 and 18) is seen sitting on many WATERS (peoples), riding the seven headed beast that we have already seen in Chapter 13. She is riding upon what will become the Beast System, the world-wide kingdom ruled by the Antichrist. The ten rulers (horns) that the Antichrist comes out from

will initially willingly allow her to work her charms in their nations and around the world.



She represents 'TRADE for pleasure', hence the imagery of a prostitute. Just as going to a prostitute involves immorality, deception, lack of integrity and so forth, so the kind of trade this harlot represents is perverted and self-centered.

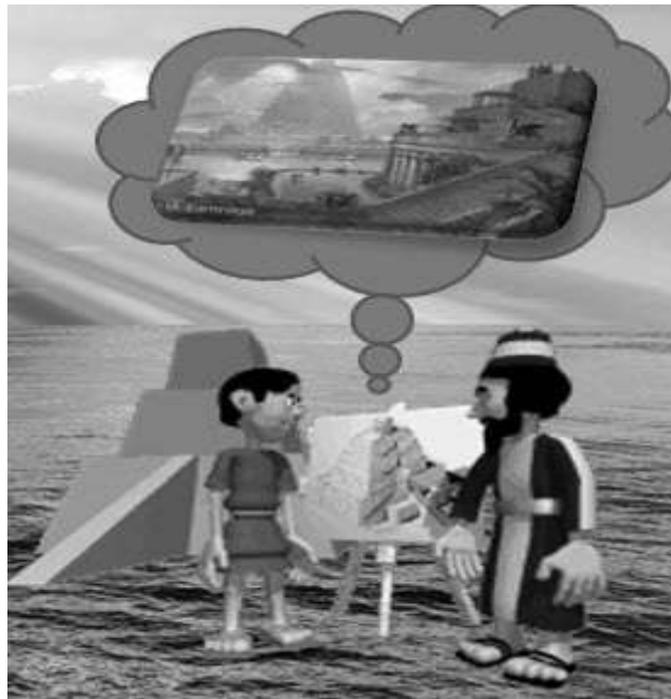
Many commentators say that there are two ASPECTS of Babylon here, one in Chapter 17 and one in Chapter 18.

They say that in Chapter 17 '*Mystery Babylon*' (17:5) is a RELIGIOUS system as prostitution in the Old Testament was usually used as a symbol of false worship, the Roman Catholic Church being a prime target of Protestant interpreters. The '*Babylon the Great*' (18:2) in Chapter 18 is seen as more of a financial/trading system as the language is purely that of trade. However, we must remember that there were no chapters in the original document and reading chapters 17 and 18 together it seems to only be speaking of one '*Babylon the Great*' characterized as a corrupted center of world trade that will be used and abused by the Antichrist and his followers.

The use of a PROSTITUTE as the main image simply gives us an example of a perverted trading system. Indeed, the original Greek for the passage giving the name on the woman's forehead is best paraphrased as *"And on her forehead a mysterious name was written "Babylon the Great. The Mother of all Harlots", of the abominations of the earth"* (Revelation 17:5). Hence, the names in chapters 17 and 18 are one and the same.

She represents an end time world TRADING centre that is corrupt to the core that Christians must flee from, taking her adornments in the process to adorn His end time Bride.

d. The SPIRIT of Babylon



To understand how the Spirit of Babylon the Great works we need to go back to the roots of Babylon – the Tower of BABEL.

"And they said, "Come, let us build ourselves a city, and a tower whose top is in the heavens; let us make a name for ourselves, lest we be scattered abroad over the face of the whole earth." Genesis 11:4 (NKJV)

The city of Babylon started as a monument to man's PRIDE. *The Tower of Babel, the precursor to the City of Babylon, was built as man wanted to build his own kingdom rather than let God build His through them. They wanted to reach the heaven to become as gods, making a name for themselves.*

They feared being SCATTERED as their security was in their ability to build a safe haven for themselves, not having to trust in the provision of God. Really it

is the spirit of building one's own kingdom, surrounding oneself with false securities.

The spirit of Babel is characterized as travelling INWARDS and upwards. They huddled together as a human corporation and aimed to go higher and higher. This can be seen in modern terms as wanting to ascend the corporate ladder at all costs, even if it means trampling on others to get there or using devious means to reach the pinnacle.

Indeed, Babylon went on to be a centre of trade that INFECTED the world with all types of moral corruption. It was a centre of proud trade and pleasure that poisoned the known world.

Even though the literal Babylon fell, being conquered by the Medo-Persians, the spirit of Babylon remained ever strong even to this day. At the time of the Apostles the city of Rome had the code name "*Babylon*" (1 Peter 5:13) as it was then the inheritor of the spirit of Babylon.

e. **TYPES of Babylon the Great**

In modern times the spirit of Babylon is alive and kicking. Today the spirit of Babylon is seen in man's desire to build taller buildings through trade that feels that "*the end justifies the means*", that as long as a profit is obtained the method of getting there can be devious, lacking integrity and uprightness.

The Bible shows us that this spirit is only going to get stronger and stronger, centered around one final end time city at the time of the Antichrist, until one day it will collapse overnight in a time of fiery terror.

"For in one hour such great riches came to nothing.' Every shipmaster, all who travel by ship, sailors, and as many as trade on the sea, stood at a distance 18 and cried out when they saw the smoke of her burning, saying, 'What is like this great city?'" Revelation 18:17-19 (NKJV)

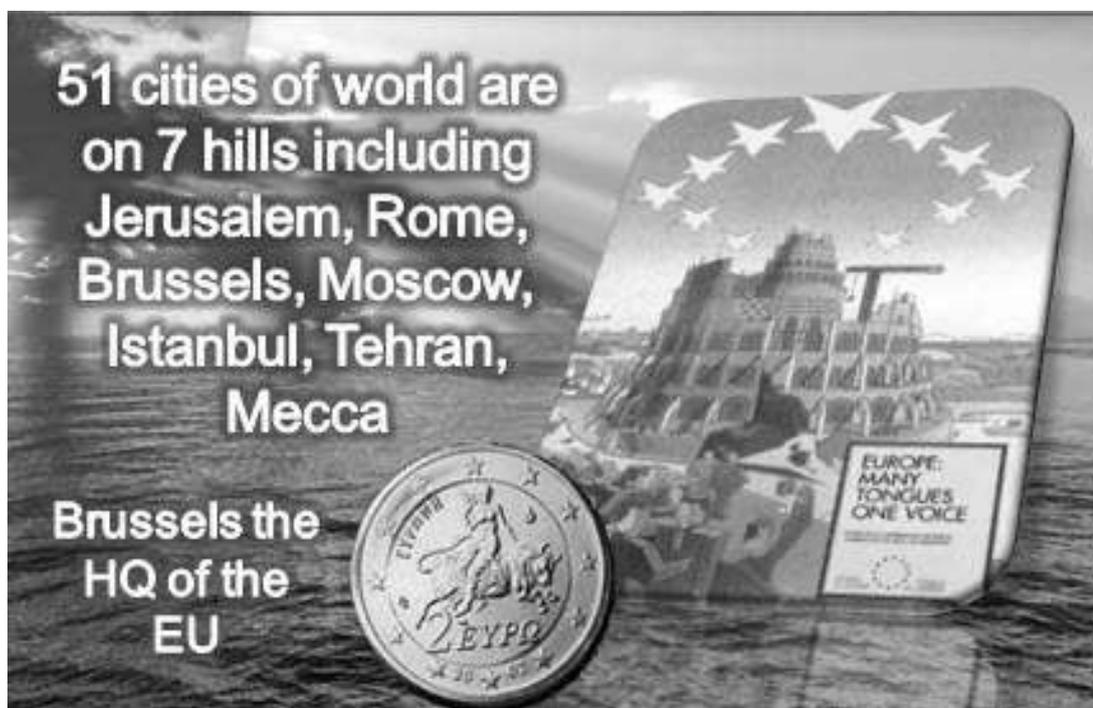


When 9/11 happened many read Revelation 18:17-19 and felt that the prophecy was being fulfilled before their eyes – with TV pictures showing the twin towers about to fall, smoking profusely with witnesses from the ships of the sea. To them it was clear that New York was Mystery Babylon.

I would say, just as there are many foreshadowings of the Antichrist, so there are foreshadowings of Babylon the Great. New York is just a Type of Babylon the Great as it does not show forth all the Biblical characteristics that will be seen in the real thing. The real Babylon the Great is yet to be revealed as being centered in a revived Roman Empire (somewhere in Europe), a place that will be used by the Antichrist and False Prophet to form a cashless society that will operate by the mark of the Beast. It will ultimately be a city that will be anti Christian and be the center of great persecution of the Saints (Revelation 17:6).

f. **MODERN day Babylon.**

There are many contenders for Babylon the Great. Revelation 17:9, 18 seems to show that she will be represented by a great city on seven hills and key contenders, all on seven hills, are Jerusalem, Rome, Brussels, Moscow, Istanbul, Tehran, and Mecca.



It may be early days yet to predict which one is the real Babylon the Great but presently the best option seems to be Brussels as it is the head quarters of the European Union which prides itself on being a revival of the Roman Empire. Indeed, the imagery used by the EU is of the Tower of Babel crowned by the crown of twelve stars that really belongs on the head of the Bride of Christ!

Outside the EU building in Brussels (and seen on the Euro currency) there is a statue of Europa, a woman on a beast!

g. The FALL of Babylon the Great



Initial Fall (Rev 17:16)	Final Fall (Rev 18:21)
<p><i>“And the ten horns which you saw on the beast, these will hate the harlot, make her desolate and naked, eat her flesh and burn her with fire.”</i> Revelation 17:16 (NKJV)</p>	<p>“Then a mighty angel took up a stone like a great millstone and threw <i>it</i> into the sea, saying, “Thus with violence the great city Babylon shall be thrown down, and shall not be found anymore.” Rev 18:21 (NKJV)</p>

Surprisingly, Babylon the Great does not initially fall due to the direct hand of God. She will be destroyed by the very beast that she rode on! This end time world trading center will be turned on by the very nations and leaders that once supported her. The political powers (especially the ten kings) will turn against the financial powers at the start of the Great Tribulation when they “give their kingdom to the beast” (17:17). This will be the time that people will need the mark of the beast to buy and sell (13:16-17) as the world’s financial system will crash and not be saved by the ten leaders but instead will be made desolate.

In 2008 we saw how the financial sector needed the government to bail it out but when a great economic collapse takes place in the time of the Antichrist there will be no one to help.

Babylon the Great will go up in flames initially as the ten leaders turn on her and burn her. In chapter 18 there is mention of her still smoking in verse 18. However, her final judgment and downfall will come a bit later right at the end of the outpouring of the wrath of God (as mentioned in Revelation 16:19). At the end of Chapter 18 we see a mighty angel taking a great millstone and throwing it into the sea saying that Babylon will perish in like manner. She will initially be sent to a fiery grave by the Antichrist and

his followers but will eventually have a watery grave at the time of Christ's return when a huge earthquake will displace land masses, causing Babylon the Great to be cast into the sea and sink forever.

h. The HALLELUJAH chorus.

The Hallelujah Chorus of Handel's Messiah is actually from Revelation 19:1-6 – celebrating the fall of Babylon the Great (including all our savings, investments and businesses!)

God's people will have no part in Babylon the Great and will sing Hallelujah at her eventual demise. God's people in heaven will rejoice over her destruction, firstly all the apostles and prophets who perished at her hand - *"Rejoice over her, O heaven, and you holy apostles and prophets, for God has avenged you on her!"* Revelation 18:20, and then all heaven, including all believers, will join in the Hallelujah Chorus!

Revelation 19:1-6, which inspired the Hallelujah Chorus in Handel's Messiah, records all heaven rejoicing and glorifying God at the destruction of Babylon the Great. Though her destruction will take with it all stock exchanges, our bank accounts, savings, investments, pensions, businesses and so forth, true Christians will not weep as the world will (see Revelation 18:11) because they never truly found their security in her, but in God.

3. **Conclusion: The PROPHETIC cry.**

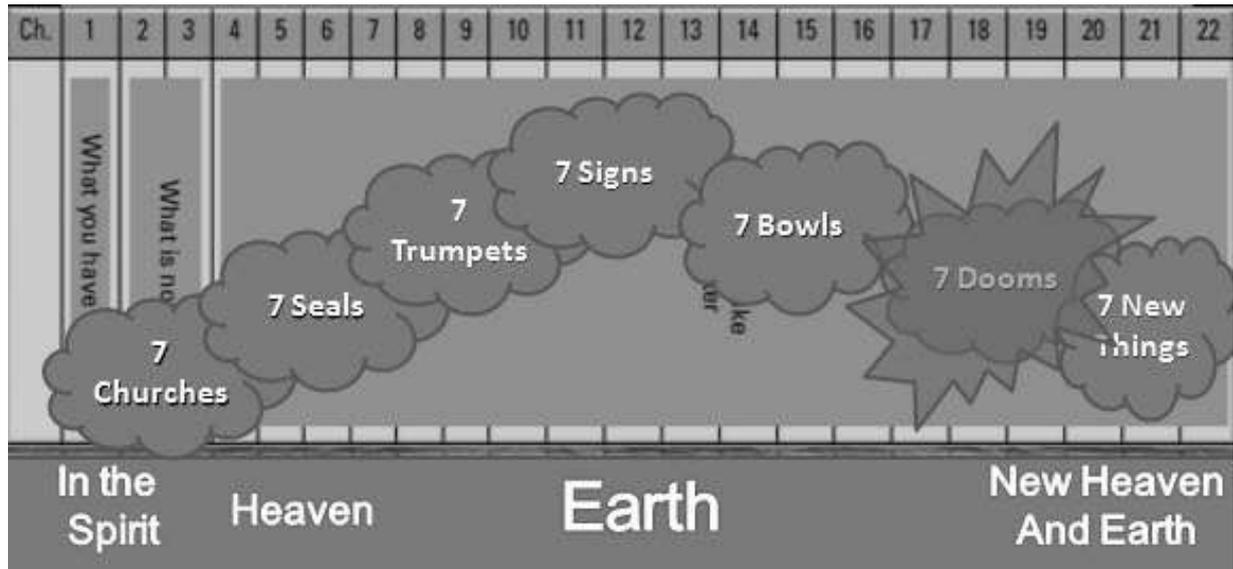
"Come OUT of her, my people, lest you share in her sins, and lest you receive of her plagues." Revelation 18:4 (NKJV)

"FLEE from the midst of Babylon, and every one save his life! Do not be cut off in her iniquity, for this is the time of the LORD's vengeance; He shall recompense her." Jeremiah 51:6 (NKJV)

"Make the arrows bright! Gather the shields! The LORD has raised up the spirit of the kings of the Medes. For His plan is against Babylon to destroy it, because it is the vengeance of the LORD, the vengeance for His temple." Jeremiah 51:11 (NKJV)

Christians in business are to be Bright Arrows, coming against the spirit of Babylon and hitting the target of the high, holy, and heavenward call in Christ Jesus. We are not to be dirty, rusty arrows, but polished, clean, holy, upright for Him, like a righteous Robin Hood plundering back the riches from the world that truly belong to the poor in spirit, the Bride of Christ, the Church!

PART ELEVEN: THE END OF ALL WICKEDNESS



1. Introduction:

Revelation is a book of ENDINGS. Here we see that there will be an end of all wickedness that really began in Genesis with the fall of Satan and the fall of Man. Here Jesus is really seen as the Alpha and Omega, the First and the Last, the Word that started it all off and the one who will tidy it all up!

We continue looking at the sixth group of seven. The seven dooms reveal the fate of all the enemies of God. It is interesting that these enemies are dealt with in the REVERSE order in which they are introduced in Revelation.

Divided by term "I saw.."

- Doom One: Babylon the Great (17:1-19:10).
- Doom Two: Nations and Leaders (19:11-18).
- Doom Three: Beast and False Prophet (19:19-21)
- Doom Four: Dragon (20:1-3).
- Doom Five: God and Magog (20:4-10).
- Doom Six: Wicked Dead (20:11-13,15).
- Doom Seven: Death and Hades (20:14).

These all happen from Return to Christ to the end of the millennium.

Babylon the Great, the last enemy to be introduced in Revelation, is seen to be destroyed first. We have dealt with this and will now look at the next six enemies of God and His people and what their fate will be.

What we really learn in this section is that vengeance belongs to the Lord (Hebrews 10:30) and He will deal with all our enemies in His way which is perfect. If we try to take vengeance into our own hands, we will always do it wrongly.

We have seen that God gives many CHANCES to turn to Him even through the pouring out of His wrath with the Trumpet and Bowl judgments.

However, right at the very end He executes His righteous *JUDGMENT* with finality on His enemies who refuse to repent. All these seven dooms occur in the period between the second coming of Christ and the final destruction of heaven and earth after the Millennium before the coming of the New Heaven and New Earth.

There is a cry to come to the MARRIAGE Supper of the Lamb.

"Let us be glad and rejoice and give Him glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and His wife has made herself ready." And to her it was granted to be arrayed in fine linen, clean and bright, for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints. Then he said to me, "Write: 'Blessed are those who are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb!' " And he said to me, "These are the true sayings of God." Revelation 19:7-9 (NKJV)

The COUNTERFEIT bride (Babylon the Great) has been destroyed and now the true Bride, the Church, is revealed in all her glory and the marriage supper of the Lamb is now seen to be ready. God's true church is made up of those who have clothed themselves with righteous deeds. They are not saved by these works but will manifest these works because of their salvation through the blood of the Lamb. Anyone not found wearing these "*wedding clothes*" will not be allowed to the supper and cast into outer darkness (Matthew 22:11-14) as they were not really His people.

The Bridegroom and Guests

"Now I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse. And He who sat on him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He judges and makes war. His eyes were like a flame of fire, and on His head were many crowns. He had a name written that no one knew except Himself. He was clothed with a robe dipped in blood, and His name is called The Word of God. And the armies in heaven, clothed in fine linen, white and clean, followed Him on white horses." Revelation 19:11-14 (NKJV)



Now the BRIDEGROOM arrives and the Bride (made up of all the righteous) is following Him as a mighty army. God's people are told to flee from the first doomed one (Babylon the Great) and they had no direct part in her downfall. However, the following dooms are executed by Jesus with the righteous by His side.

2. **The next six dooms** (*Doom 1 was of Babylon the Great*)

Doom #2: Striking the Nations and Leaders

a. **The Nations**



*“Now out of His mouth goes a sharp sword, that with it He should **strike the nations**. And He Himself will rule them with a rod of iron. He Himself treads the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. And He has on His robe and on His thigh a name written: KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS.” Revelation 19:15-16 (NKJV)*

The first doom after the fall of Babylon the Great is the striking of the NATIONS. Jesus alluded to this judgment of the nations in Matthew 25:

"When the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, then He will sit on the throne of His glory. All the nations will be gathered before Him, and He will separate them one from another, as a shepherd divides his sheep from the goats. And He will set the sheep on His right hand, but the goats on the left. Then the King will say to those on His right hand, 'Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: for I was hungry and you gave Me food; I was thirsty and you gave Me drink; I was a stranger and you took Me in; I was naked and you clothed Me; I was sick and you visited Me; I was in prison and you came to Me.'" Matthew 25:31-36

Notice that Jesus says this will be a judgment of the nations when He returns. This is not a handing out of rewards to individual Christians (Bema Seat of Christ – see 1 Corinthians 3:12-15) or the Great White Throne judgment (Revelation 20:11) at the end of time but is a judgment of whole nations left after the pouring out of His wrath. There will be sheep nations and goat nations. Sheep nations are nations that acted *"righteously"* especially in their treatment of the poor and needy of Jesus' brethren (maybe referring to the Jews). Goat nations are ones that oppressed the poor and needy and they are the ones that will be struck by Jesus at this time. By His Word (the sword coming out of His mouth) they will be destroyed with His *"rod of iron"* which is a fulfillment of Psalm 2:8-9.

*"Ask of Me, and I will give You
The nations for Your inheritance,
And the ends of the earth for Your possession.
You shall break them with a rod of iron;
You shall dash them to pieces like a potter's vessel."*

Exactly how this is done is not stated but it will affect the state of that nation as it goes into the Millennial reign where Christ will rule over them through His glorified saints.

b. Kings and Leaders

"Then I saw an angel standing in the sun; and he cried with a loud voice, saying to all the birds that fly in the midst of heaven, "Come and gather together for the supper of the great God, that you may eat the flesh of kings, the flesh of captains, the flesh of mighty men, the flesh of horses and of those who sit on them, and the flesh of all people, free and slave, both small and great." Revelation 19:17-18 (NKJV)

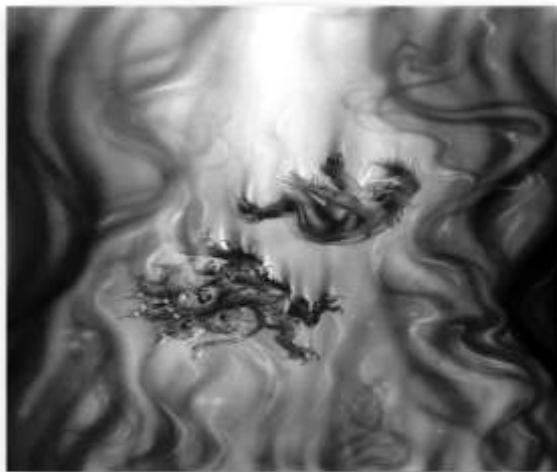
This is God's revenge over the EVIL national leaders. The kings and leaders that have defied God by joining forces with the Antichrist will meet their doom at the Battle of Armageddon. They will not perish by human weapons but by the Word of God. Jesus will simply speak His judgment and they will perish.

This seems to be the actual WEDDING banquet (the supper of the great God) and the menu is quite grisly. The dishes include the flesh of kings, captains, mighty men and even of their horses (compare with Ezekiel 39:18-19 that describes the war with God of Magog). However, this must be seen idiomatically and not literally. Just as Jesus telling us to eat His flesh means we should partake of His life, eating the flesh of kings here means partaking in His victory over them. The saints will participate in Christ's victory over the wicked world leaders, seeing final justice for their atrocities.



“When the righteous are in authority, the people rejoice; But when a wicked man rules, the people groan.” Proverbs 29:2 (NKJV)

Doom #3: Beast and False Prophet (Revelation 19:19-21)



“And I saw the beast, the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against Him who sat on the horse and against His army. Then the beast was captured, and with him the false prophet who worked signs in his presence, by which he deceived those who received the mark of the beast and those who worshiped his image. These two were cast alive into the lake of fire burning with brimstone. And the rest were killed with the sword which proceeded from the mouth of Him who sat on the horse. And all the birds were filled with their flesh.” Revelation 19:19-21 (NKJV)

The Antichrist and the False Prophet are the only wicked HUMANS not to go before the Great White Throne for judgment. Indeed, they are the first people to be sent directly into hell (the lake of fire). All those that suffered under their tyrannical rule will be avenged here and God will answer the cry of the martyrs in Revelation 6:10, *“How long, Sovereign Lord, holy and true, until you judge the inhabitants of the earth and avenge our blood?”*

Doom #4: The Dragon (*Revelation 20:1-3, 20:10*)

“Then I saw an angel coming down from heaven, having the key to the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. He laid hold of the dragon, that serpent of old, who is the Devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years; and he cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal on him, so that he should deceive the nations no more till the thousand years were finished. But after these things he must be released for a little while.

And I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and judgment was committed to them. Then I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded for their witness to Jesus and for the word of God, who had not worshiped the beast or his image, and had not received his mark on their foreheads or on their hands. And they lived and reigned with Christ for a thousand years. But the rest of the dead did not live again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection. Blessed and holy is he who has part in the first resurrection. Over such the second death has no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ and shall reign with Him a thousand years.” Revelation 20:1-6 (NKJV)

“The devil, who deceived them, was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone where the beast and the false prophet are. And they will be tormented day and night forever and ever.” Revelation 20:10 (NKJV)

After the doom of the Antichrist and the False Prophet the Devil’s final doom will be delayed as God knows he still has a role to play. Satan will be thrown into the bottomless pit to render him powerless in deceiving people until the end of the thousand-year rule and reign on earth of Christ and the saints. This thousand-year rule and reign on earth will show what the Kingdom of God looks like in fullness. Christ will rule with the 144,000 from Jerusalem and all the other

resurrected, glorified saints will be distributed over the earth to rule over areas according to their faithfulness to God's call on their lives before the Second Coming. Those ruled over will be the gentile non-believers who remain on earth. As Satan will be bound during this period and the curse will be removed from the earth it will be a time of peace and prosperity like never before, a realization of God's vision for the Garden of Eden covering the whole earth.

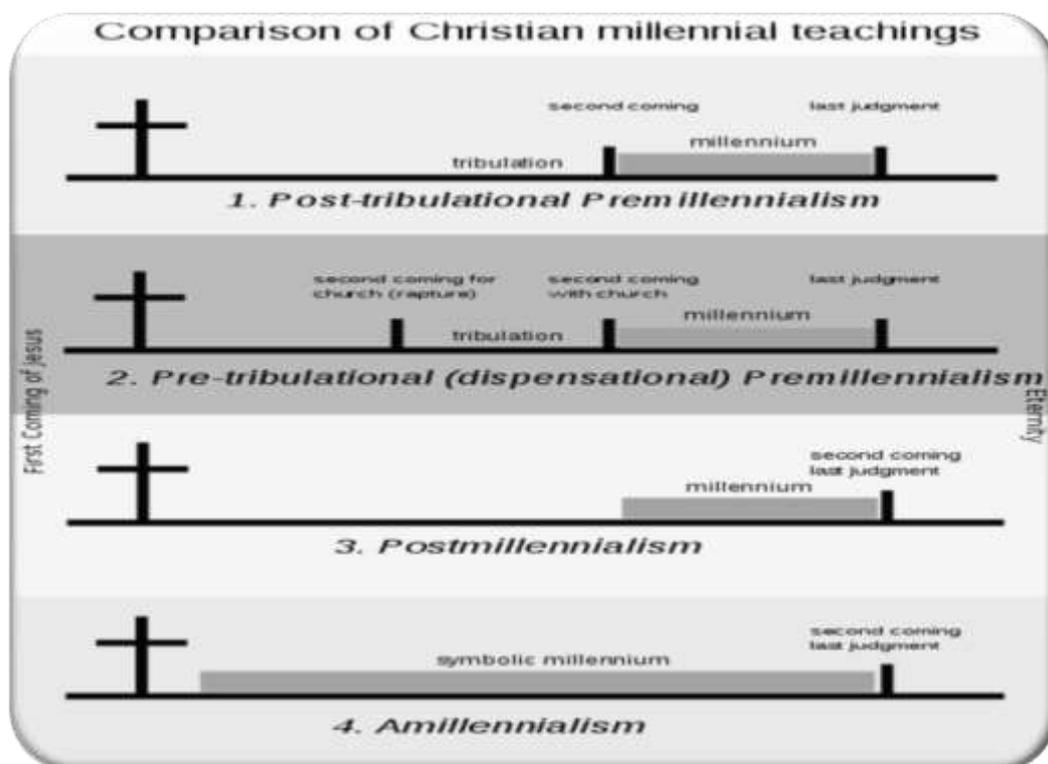
This can be rendered in the following diagram...



Satan's final doom is when he is thrown into hell (the lake of fire) after he has performed his final act, which we will look at now in the next doom.

Millennial Views

This following chart shows the various views concerning the Millennium. I am presenting a form of the first one in this teaching. This is called Post-tribulational Premillennialism. This chart with the description of terms following will help you understand the various beliefs concerning the thousand-year period we call the Millennium.



Read Revelation 20:4-6 (NKJV)

1. Post-Tributational (Historical) Premillennialism:

This view teaches that the Rapture occurs at the same time as the Second Coming of Jesus, after the Tribulation period and the Millennium comes straight after this where the saints will fully rule and reign with Christ. This was widely held in the early church until 400AD.

2. Pre-Tributational (Dispensational) Premillennialism:

This is like the former but teaches that the Rapture occurs before the Tribulation time and that the Second Coming of Jesus is another event after the Tribulation and just before the Millennium where the saints will fully rule and reign with Christ. This originated with Pre-Tribulationism and is relatively recent.

3. Postmillennialism:

Postmillennialism teaches that we are presently in the literal Millennium, with the saints already ruling and reigning with Christ, awaiting the Second Coming of Jesus and final judgment. Remerged during the Enlightenment.

4. Amillennialism

Amillennialism teaches that there is no such thing as a literal thousand-year period but that it is merely symbolic of a rule and reign with Christ in our spiritual lives now. This came with the emergence of the Roman Catholic Church.

	Dispensational Premillennialism	Historical Premillennialism	Amillennialism	Postmillennialism
Will Jesus return physically?	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
When will Jesus return?	After a 7-year tribulation; before the millennium.	After a 7-year tribulation; before the millennium.	Anytime; a detailed time frame is not important.	After the millennium.
Do the rapture and second coming of Christ occur at the same time?	No, they are events separated by either 7 years (pre-tribulation rapture) or 3½ years (mid-tribulation rapture).	Yes	Yes	Yes
Will there be a great tribulation?	Yes	Yes	The tribulation occurs any time Christians are persecuted or wars and disasters occur.	The tribulation is the conflict between good and evil since Jesus' death and resurrection.
Will Christians suffer during the tribulation?	Christians are either raptured before the tribulation (pre-tribulation rapture) or 3½ years into the tribulation (mid-tribulation rapture).	Yes, Christians will go through the tribulation and endure suffering and persecution for the cause of Christ.	Yes, Christians will suffer and endure persecution until Jesus returns; persecution will increase in the end.	Yes, Christians are called to share the gospel, and tribulation will occur when that gospel is opposed.
Will there be a literal 1,000-year millennium?	Yes, after the 7-year tribulation, Christ will return and reign for 1,000 years.	Yes, after the tribulation, Christ will return and reign for 1,000 years.	No, the millennium refers to the reign of Christ in the hearts of his believers.	No, the millennium refers to a period of peace when the gospel reaches all people.
Who is saved?	Christians only	Christians only	Christians only	Christians only
Is the modern state of Israel relevant to the prophecies in Revelation?	Yes	No	No	No
When was this view most held?	Became popular about 1860. Has increased in popularity.	The earliest view of the end times, emerging at the end of the first century.	Popularized in AD 400. Continues to be accepted today.	May have been popular as early as AD 300. Less popular today.

Doom #5: Gog and Magog (Revelation 20:7-9)

“Now when the thousand years have expired, Satan will be released from his prison and will go out to deceive the nations which are in the four corners of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle, whose number is as the sand of the sea. They went up on the breadth of the earth and surrounded the camp of the saints and the beloved city. And fire came down from God out of heaven and devoured them.”
 Revelation 20:7-9 (NKJV)

Because there will still be unredeemed people on earth still possessing a sinful nature there will be room for rebellion. This will happen at the end of the thousand years when the Devil will be released from the bottomless pit. He will traverse the earth to deceive many of these people all over the earth. Those who follow him are called Gog and Magog, which is a term mentioned by the prophet Ezekiel in 38:2. Gog is generally considered the leader of the nation Magog that by the end of the thousand years will have spread over the whole earth. From these people Satan will raise a huge army that will surround Jerusalem, the HQ of Jesus.

Magog was a son of Japheth (Genesis 10:2). There are many theories as to who these peoples are today, but the strongest contenders are those from Central Asia and Russia. The war mentioned in Ezekiel 38-39 seems to be referring to the Battle of Armageddon (as Ezekiel 39:18-19 seem to parallel Revelation 19:18) whereas the war in Revelation 20 is at the end of the Millennium.

ATTACK OF GOG OF MAGOG
(EZEKIEL 38:2, 10-13)

Gog OF Magog War
(Ezekiel 38-39)

▲ GREAT TRIBULATION BEGINS

GOG OF MAGOG:
A group of nations that unite to try to destroy God's people

ARMAGEDDON:

- Jesus saves God's people
- Gog of Magog destroyed (Revelation 16:14, 16)
- Satan and the demons thrown into the abyss (Revelation 20:1-3)

▲ THE BEGINNING OF CHRIST'S 1,000 YEAR REIGN

ATTACK OF GOG AND MAGOG
(REVELATION 20:8, 9)

Gog AND Magog War
(Revelation 20:8-9)

▼ END OF THE 1,000 YEARS

▲ **SATAN RELEASED**
Causes some to rebel against Jehovah and His people

GOG AND MAGOG:
Rebellious humans will surround righteous humans, wanting to destroy them

▲ **THE END OF WICKEDNESS:**

- Fire from heaven destroys Gog and Magog. (Revelation 20:9)
- Satan and the demons thrown into lake of fire (Revelation 20:10)

They will all be destroyed by fire that will come down from God. Indeed, this fire will consume and burn all heaven and earth as described in 2 Peter Chapter 3.

“But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in which the heavens will pass away with a great noise, and the elements will melt with fervent heat; both the earth and the works that are in it will be burned up. Therefore, since all these things will be dissolved, what manner of persons ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness, looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be dissolved, being on fire, and the elements will melt with fervent heat?

Nevertheless we, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells". 2 Peter 3:10-13 (NKJV)

This is the time when Satan meets his doom and is thrown into the lake of fire.

Doom#6: The Wicked Dead (Revelation 20:11-13; 20:15)

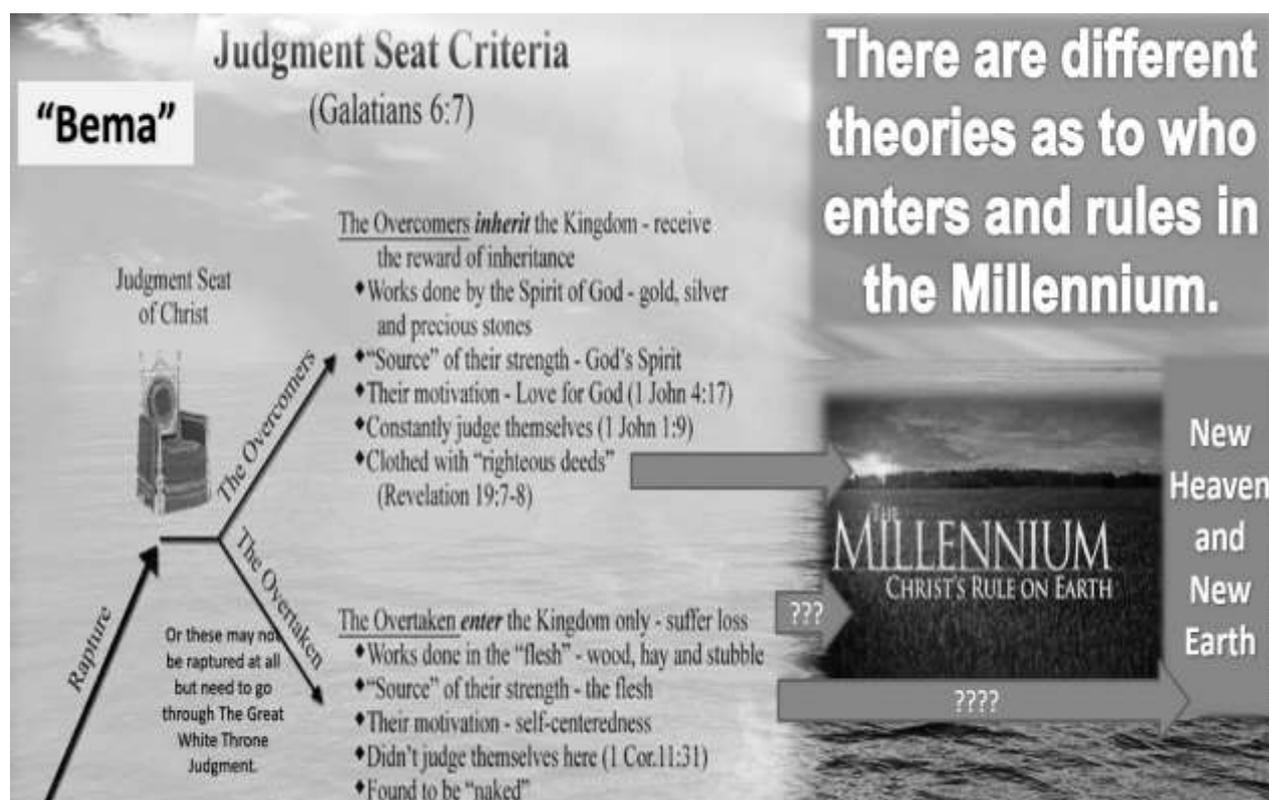
"Then I saw a great white throne and Him who sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away. And there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead, small and great, standing before God, and books were opened. And another book was opened, which is the Book of Life. And the dead were judged according to their works, by the things which were written in the books. The sea gave up the dead who were in it, and Death and Hades delivered up the dead who were in them. And they were judged, each one according to his works." Revelation 20:11-13 (NKJV)

"And anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire". Revelation 20:15



The penultimate doom is on the wicked dead from all GENERATIONS. Those who were not raised in the first resurrection (The Rapture) will be raised here to face God at the Great White Throne judgment. This seems to be the judgment prophesied in Daniel 7:9-10. They will be judged according to their works and only those found in the book of life will be saved. All who fail this test will join Satan, the Antichrist, and the False Prophet in the lake of fire, that is hell. All the glorified saints will not go through this judgment but will be with Jesus, probably in the New Jerusalem.

This is not the same as the “Bema” Judgment seat of Christ (Romans 14:10) which will be at the start of the Millennium where Jesus will reward the righteous with an inheritance of ruling and reigning with Him (see 1 Corinthians 3:12-15).



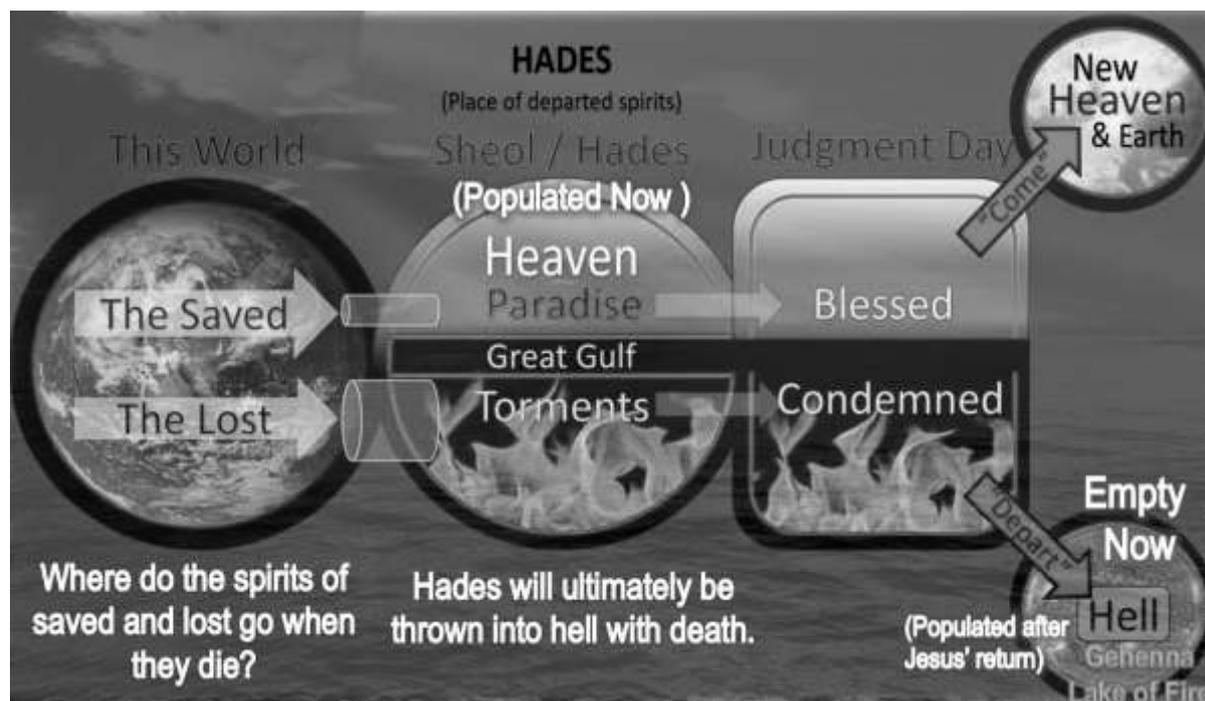
Doom#7: Death and Hades

“Then Death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire.” Revelation 20:14 (NKJV)

The final doom is on Death and Hades, which are PERSONIFIED here. Both will be thrown into the lake of fire. From this time on there will be no more death and those in hell will live eternally separated from God and those in the New Heaven and the New Earth will live eternally with God in their glorified state. Hades is a biblical term for the disembodied state of the dead awaiting judgment and this state will no longer be needed as final judgment will have come.

The Difference between Hades and Hell (Gehenna)

Hades and hell are two different words. Hades has not been translated, only transliterated. Hades is found eleven times in the Greek New Testament. Out of the eleven occurrences, Hades is translated “grave” once and “hell” ten times in the King James Version. Hell is from the Greek “Gehenna”. “Gehenna” is found twelve times and is consistently translated “hell” in most translations.



Hades and hell are not the same. “*Gehenna*” (hell), as used in the scriptures, denotes a place of eternal punishment. Jesus associates damnation with “*Gehenna*” (Matthew 23: 33). Hell (“*Gehenna*”) is the place of eternal fiery punishment, “*fire that never shall be quenched*” and “... *their worm dieth not*” (Mark 9: 43 ff.). Therefore, the lake of fire we see here is hell or “*Gehenna*”. Hades, on the other hand, should never be translated hell.

Hades is the place of departed spirits. Jesus' soul, when He was crucified, went to Hades (Acts 2: 27). The soul of the rich man also went to Hades (Luke 16: 23). Thayer defines Hades as, “*The common receptacle of disembodied spirits*” (Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon, pg. 11). As best as we can determine, Hades includes “*paradise*” (Luke 23: 43) and torments, which may be the same as *tartarus* as used in 2 Peter 2: 4. “*Paradise*” and “*Abraham's bosom*” appear to be the same, a place of comfort for the saved with torments being the holding place of torment for the unsaved. These two areas are separated one from another (Luke 16: 26). Hades, consisting of paradise where Jesus went and torments, is temporary and will ultimately be thrown into the lake of fire, which is hell (Revelation 20: 12-15). After the Judgment Day, the saved will ultimately go to heaven and the unsaved to hell (“*Gehenna*”, Revelation 20: 12-15).

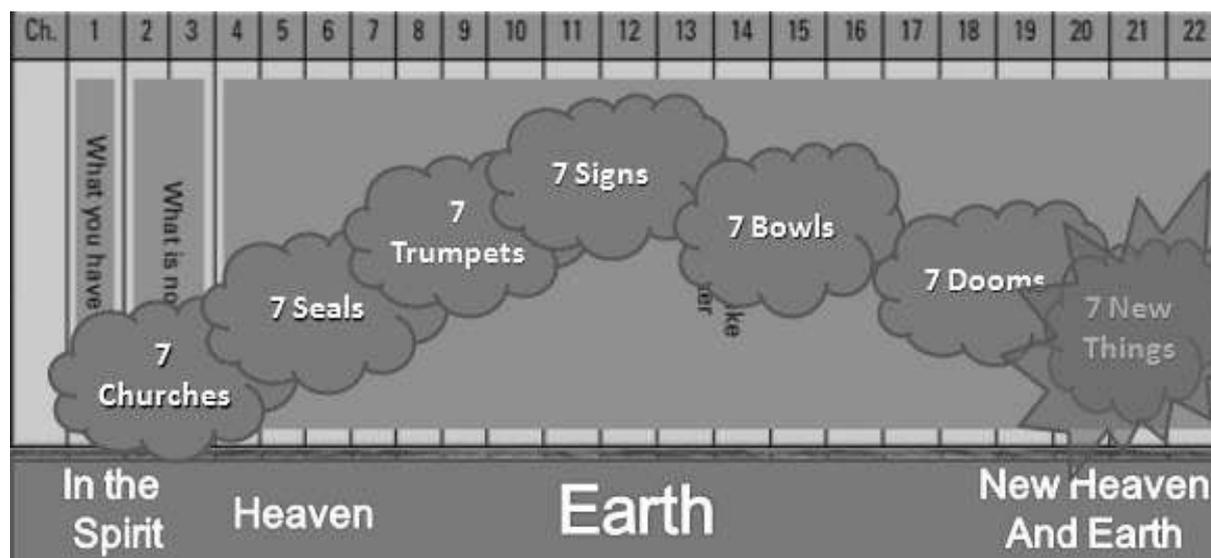
Therefore, Hades is that which is populated by the dead now and hell (the lake of fire) is presently empty. Hell will be first populated by the Antichrist and the False Prophet and, after the Millennium, by the Devil and all the wicked dead. At that time Hades itself will be thrown into hell as it would have been emptied.

HADES	HELL
<p><i>Waiting place of the dead spirits now.</i></p> <p><i>Divided into Paradise (heaven), where the saved souls go, and Torments, where the damned souls go.</i></p> <p><i>This is not the same as purgatory where lost souls are given another chance.</i></p>	<p><i>This is the Lake of Fire, the destination of all the unsaved. Presently this is unpopulated as the Antichrist and False Prophet are seen as being the first beings to be thrown here.</i></p> <p><i>This was actually prepared for the Devil and his demons but the unsaved will join them.</i></p>

3. Conclusion:

All of God's enemies will be dealt with for eternity. VENGEANCE truly is His and we should not execute it ourselves but wait in hope, knowing He will deal with all our enemies righteously, justly and in the proper time.

PART TWELVE: ALL THINGS MADE NEW



1. Introduction:

Finally, we come to the last lesson that looks at the CULMINATION of God's great plan: All things made new.

This last section shows us the fulfillment of Ephesians 1:9-10:

“Having made known to us the mystery of His will, according to His good pleasure which He purposed in Himself, that in the dispensation of the fullness of the times He might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth--in Him.”

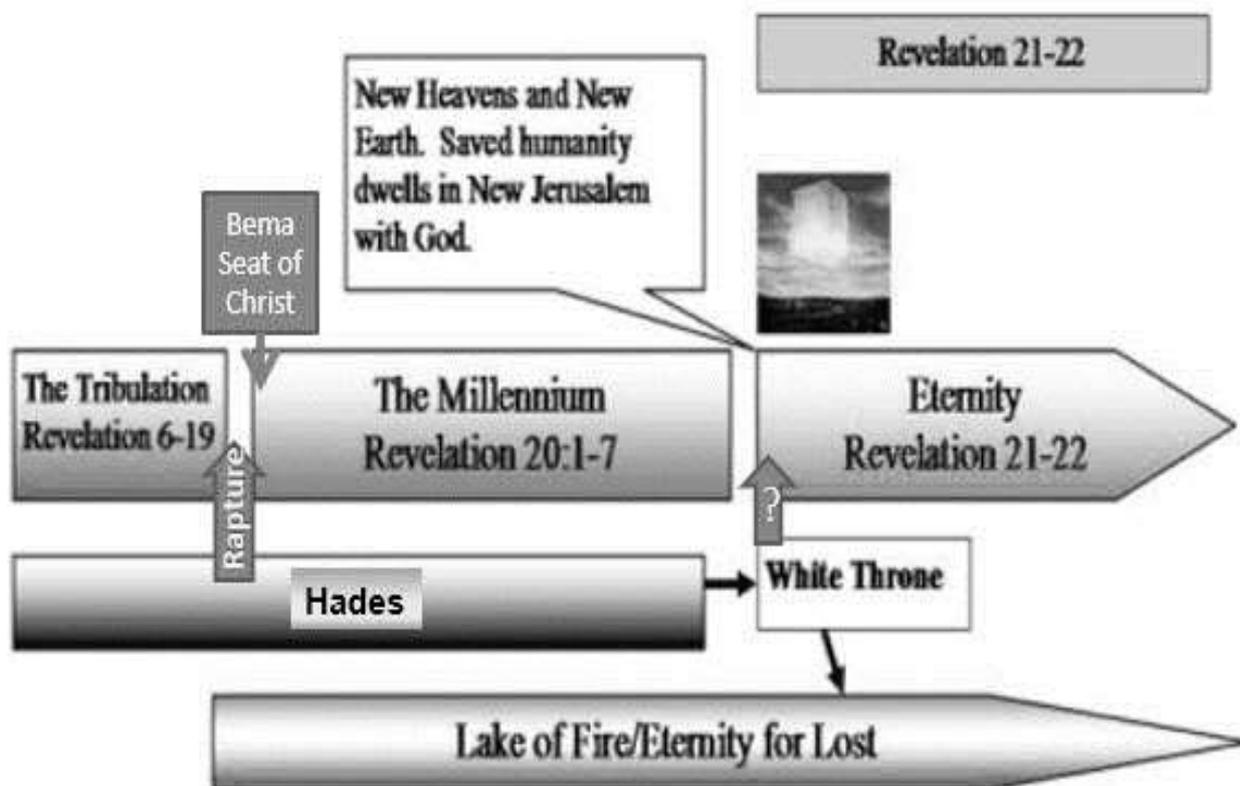
We now come to the final group of seven – the seven new things. This is a glorious ending to the book of Revelation, indeed to the whole Bible and to the whole history of mankind. Seven is the number of completion and perfection and these seven new things will complete His eternal plan and perfect all His creation.

The Great Timeline

The following timeline summarizes all we have learnt, especially about the very last part of Revelation.

After the Tribulation period, after all God's wrath has been poured out and after the Battle of Armageddon the saints will rule and reign with Christ for a thousand years in The Millennium. During this time all the unbelieving dead will be in Hades (the same as Sheol in the Old Testament – a place of the spirits of the dead in their disembodied state). Only the Antichrist and the False Prophet will be in the Lake of Fire (final hell) at this point. However, at the end of The

Millennium the Devil will join them and the wicked dead will also be cast into the Lake of Fire after the Great White Throne judgment.



After all wickedness has been dealt with (as we saw in the last lesson), God introduces a series of seven new things in Revelation 21-22. These seven new things, to do with the new heavens, new earth and saved humanity dwelling in New Jerusalem with God, are what we will look at in this final lesson.

The Seven New Things

New Thing One: The New HEAVEN.

New Thing Two: The New EARTH.

New Thing Three: The New JERUSALEM.

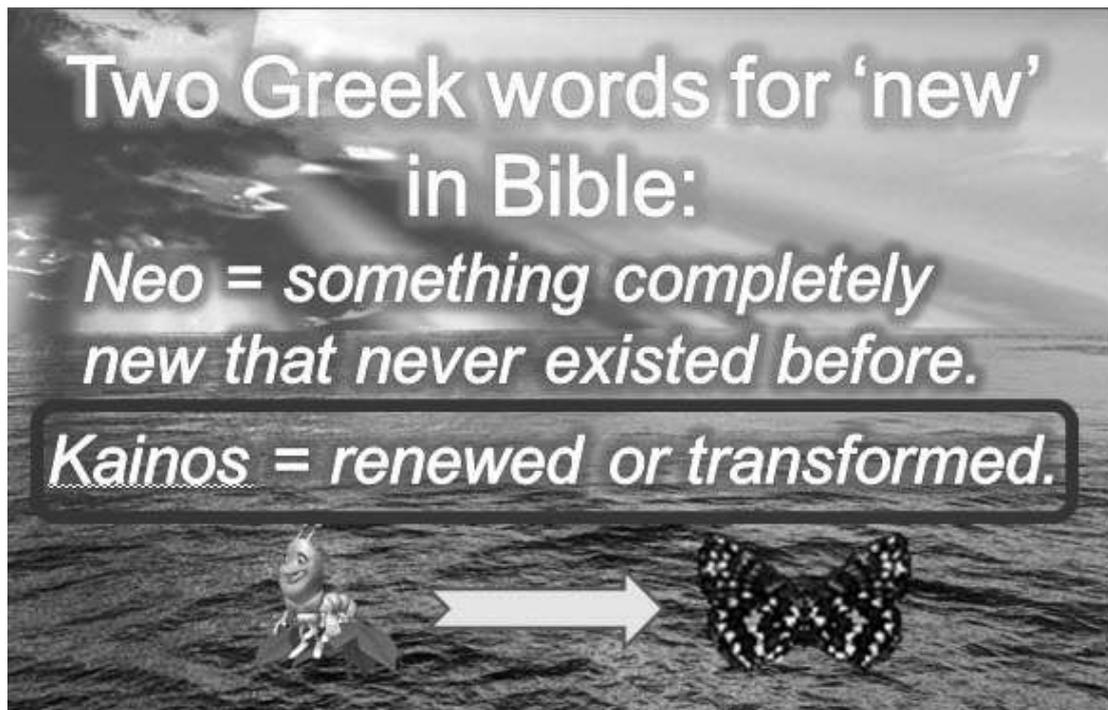
New Thing Four: The New NATIONS.

New Thing Five: The New RIVER.

New Thing Six: The New TREE of LIFE.

New Thing Seven: The New THRONE.

- **How new is New?**



Two Greek words for “New” in New Testament:

The key to this section is the word “new.” Two Greek words are used for ‘new’ in the Bible. The first is the word, “neo”, which describes something completely new that never existed before. The other is the word “kainos” meaning renewed or transformed.

In every case here the Greek word KAINOS is used. So, all the new things described are transformations just as a caterpillar transforms into a butterfly. It is still the same creature but has undergone a dramatic transformation or renewal.

Our Lord illustrated the use of these words in Matthew 9 verse 17: “Nor do they put new (neo) wine into old wineskins, or else the wineskins break, the wine is spilled, and the wineskins are ruined. But they put new (neo) wine into new (“kainos”) wineskins, and both are preserved.” In Jesus’ day, freshly made wine was stored in leather wineskins. The old wineskins were cleaned and retreated after each use by being soaked in olive oil, to restore the suppleness of the leather. The new (neo) wine was stored in new (“kainos”) wineskins. Here Jesus was saying that the new wineskin is the new covenant, and he uses the word “kainos” to show the old covenant is not cast away but renewed or transformed (Jesus came not to do away with the Law but to fulfil it).

Paul gives us another illustration in 2 Corinthians 9:17: “Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new (“kainos”) creation; old things have passed away; behold

all things have become new (“kainos”). Becoming "born again" makes us a new (“kainos”) creation. We still live in our earthly bodies and retain our physical DNA. However, the core of our nature is renewed to enable it to live forever in the presence of God. Our new (“kainos”) natures will continue to be frustrated by the limitations of our flesh nature and by the Curse until we participate in the rapture.

2. The Seven New Things

“Now I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away. Also there was no more sea.” Revelation 21:1 (NKJV)

As we have seen this is not a brand-new heaven and earth that will appear out of nowhere after the Millennium (as would be the case if the word “neo” was used). The existing heaven and earth will be renewed or transformed in a spectacular way, much like the transformation of a caterpillar into a butterfly. At the end of the Millennium heaven and earth will be purged by fire:

“But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in which the heavens will pass away with a great noise, and the elements will melt with fervent heat; both the earth and the works that are in it will be burned up. Therefore, since all these things will be dissolved, what manner of persons ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness, looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be dissolved, being on fire, and the elements will melt with fervent heat?” 2 Peter 3:10-12 (NKJV)

It must be noted that the Greek word translated “dissolved” here is “luo” meaning “loosed” and translated elsewhere at “put off” such as in putting off the old man and putting on the new. Hence, it is not a complete annihilation but a burning off of all corruption and a putting on of new beauty. A loosing from all that is not of God and an entering into the fullness that God has prepared.

When it says the first (or former) heaven and first earth will *pass away*, the word “*aperchomai*” is used meaning “to go away”. This could simply be referring to the old nature that which is not of God, as having gone away, just as a Christian may say, “*The former me has gone, I am a new creation*”.

New Things #1: New Heaven (Revelation 21:1)

The Greek word used for “heaven” is “ouranos”, which is the word used both of the sky and of God’s abode. Here, in context, it probably means the earth's sky and atmosphere will be transformed, maybe even the universe beyond. There may well be no more sun and moon at this time as revelation 21:23-24 says, “*The city does not need the sun or the moon to shine on it, for the glory of God gives it light, and the Lamb is its lamp. The nations will walk by its light, and the kings of the earth will bring their splendor into it.*”

SUNLIGHT will not be needed as God's glory will light up the world just as it did before the heavenly lights were first created (See Genesis 1:1-5,14).

New Things #2: New Earth



The earth will be transformed into its GLORIFIED state. Just as Christians go through two transformations, so will the earth. The new earth of Revelation 21 will have no sea, only water that comes from the throne of God in the form of the River of Life. It will only contain fresh, life giving water.

Presently the earth is in its unregenerate form, sick and dying, like we were spiritually before being born again. However, when Christ comes back and starts His rule and reign with the saints for a thousand years in the Millennium, the earth will truly be born again. It will be renewed and flourish like the Garden of Eden. However, this is not its final state. Just as Christians are to be glorified and given resurrection bodies, so the earth will receive its glorified body after the Millennium. That is why the *“earnest expectation of the creation eagerly awaits for the revealing of the sons of God”* (Romans 8:19) as the earth will have the curse fully removed when the saints enter fully into their inheritance.

This would certainly seem to tally with James 1:18: *“He chose to give us birth through the word of truth that we might be a kind of firstfruits of all he created.”* What happens to Christians, being born again and then being glorified, will also happen to the rest of creation.

New Things #3: New Jerusalem

"Then I, John, saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from heaven saying, "Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them and be their God. And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away." Then He who sat on the throne said, "Behold, I make all things new." And He said to me, "Write, for these words are true and faithful." Revelation 21:2-5 (NKJV)

Next, John is shown the New Jerusalem coming down from the new heavens to settle on the new earth. It is a time when God's people come to live in a place where there is no sin or death, pain or suffering as all these things have been purged by fire.

This city is introduced as the Bride, the Lamb's wife (Revelation 21:9-10):

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

Because of this many have speculated that this picture is purely SYMBOLIC of God's glorified people coming to live on this new earth, as the Church is now called the Bride of Christ (Ephesians 5:22-33). This may be the case, but it could also be describing a literal garden city. God's people and the city of Jerusalem are often linked in Scripture as being His bride, adorned with precious stones. In Isaiah 54, after saying He is a husband to Israel, God says he will *"lay your stones with colourful gems and lay your foundations with sapphires. I will make your pinnacles of rubies, your gates of crystal, and all your walls of precious stones"* (Verses 11-12), hinting at the restoration of the literal Jerusalem as part of their restoration as a people, as His Bride.

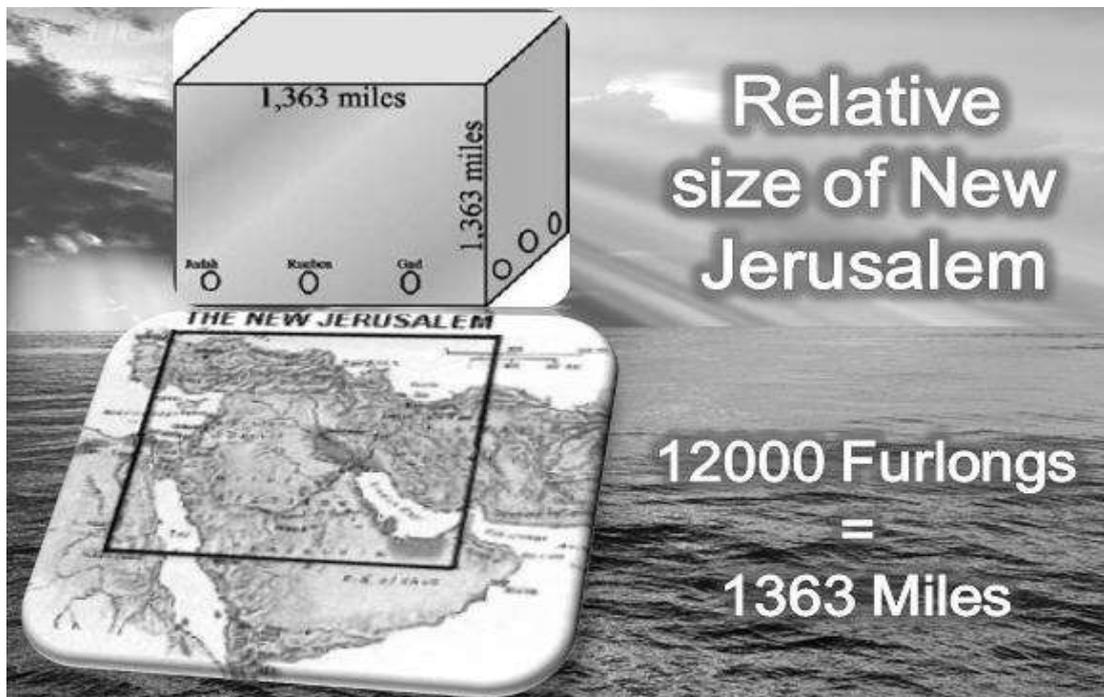
It could well be that this is a vision of God's perfected COMMUNITY, dwelling in a literal city, New Jerusalem, descending to live eternally on the new earth. Whether it is to be taken literally or metaphorically will only be fully revealed when it happens, but we can categorically say that it represents the community of God's people with God Himself coming to dwell in holiness on a purified and transformed earth.

Let us look further at the description of the New Jerusalem:

“Also she had a great and high wall with twelve gates, and twelve angels at the gates, and names written on them, which are the names of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel: three gates on the east, three gates on the north, three gates on the south, and three gates on the west. Now the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and on them were the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb.” Revelation 21:12-14 (NKJV)

This bride is made up of all God’s people, Jew, and Gentile as one NEW man. This is clear as the twelve gates (each made of one massive pearl) have the names of the twelve tribes of Israel on them and the twelve foundation stones have the names of the twelve apostles on them. Hence all godly Jews and Gentiles are included together as God’s bride. They are not separated as some scholars teach, Jews having one destiny and Christians another, they are all together as one Bride in one city, the New Jerusalem

Relative Size of New Jerusalem.



This New city is huge!

“And he who talked with me had a gold reed to measure the city, its gates, and its wall. The city is laid out as a square; its length is as great as its breadth. And he measured the city with the reed: twelve thousand furlongs. Its length, breadth, and height are equal. Then he measured its wall: one hundred and forty-four cubits, according to the measure of a man, that is, of an angel.” Revelation 21:15-17 (NKJV)

As the picture shows the New Jerusalem will be a perfect cube 12000 furlongs on each side that is 1,363 miles taking the standard measure of a furlong (it could be even larger as a furlong to an angel may be longer than to a human). This would cover most of the Middle East with its base as seen on the map, the square representing the area of its base. It would snugly fit inside the moon with all corners touching the surface!

Notice the numbers given are multiples of 12 (12,000 and 144) – 12 is the key number in the New Jerusalem being the number of Divine Government (the leaders of God's people).

Comparison of the New Jerusalem with Aaron's BREASTPLATE.

"The construction of its wall was of jasper; and the city was pure gold, like clear glass. The foundations of the wall of the city were adorned with all kinds of precious stones: the first foundation was jasper, the second sapphire, the third chalcedony, the fourth emerald, the fifth sardonyx, the sixth sardius, the seventh chrysolite, the eighth beryl, the ninth topaz, the tenth chrysoptase, the eleventh jacinth, and the twelfth amethyst. The twelve gates were twelve pearls: each individual gate was of one pearl. And the street of the city was pure gold, like transparent glass." Revelation 21:18-21 (NKJV)

The twelve stones that make up the foundations of New Jerusalem along with the twelve gates parallel the twelve stones on the breastplate of the High Priest as seen in Exodus 28:17-21.

"And you shall put settings of stones in it, four rows of stones: The first row shall be a sardius, a topaz, and an emerald; this shall be the first row; the second row shall be a turquoise, a sapphire, and a diamond; the third row, a jacinth, an agate, and an amethyst; and the fourth row, a beryl, an onyx, and a jasper. They shall be set in gold settings. And the stones shall have the names of the sons of Israel, twelve according to their names, like the engravings of a signet, each one with its own name; they shall be according to the twelve tribes."

In each case there are twelve precious stones arranged in a square with four sides and three stones on each side, each stone representing a tribe and the whole thing is the covering of the High Priest who is now Jesus.

"So Aaron shall bear the names of the sons of Israel on the breastplate of judgment over his heart, when he goes into the holy place, as a memorial before the LORD continually." Exodus 28:29 (NKJV)

Breastplate of Aaron	New Jerusalem
12 precious stones	12 precious stones
Arranged in square	Arranged in square
4 sides with 3 stones on each side	4 sides with 3 gates on each side
Each stone represents a tribe	Each gate represents a tribe
Worn by the High Priest	The home of the Great High Priest, Jesus Christ



Just as Aaron wore the stones close to His HEART (Exodus 28:29) so Jesus longs to have us close to His heart and this will be fully realized in the New Jerusalem.

New Things #4: New Nations (Revelation 21:24-27)

“And the nations of those who are saved shall walk in its light, and the kings of the earth bring their glory and honor into it. Its gates shall not be shut at all by day (there shall be no night there). And they shall bring the glory and the honor of the nations into it. But there shall by no means enter it anything that defiles, or causes an abomination or a lie, but only those who are written in the Lamb's Book of Life.” Revelation 21:24-27 (NKJV)

New nations shall be formed out of the old. These nations will bathe in God's glory and walk in His light. Maybe the nations that were stricken by Jesus at His second coming (the goat nations) will be the ones purged away and only the righteous nations with His righteous glorified saints will remain.

New Things #5: New River of Life (Revelation 22:1)

“And he showed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding from the throne of God and of the Lamb.” Revelation 22:1 (NKJV)

The River of life is present even today, coming forth from the heart of Spirit-filled believers:

“He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.” But this He spoke concerning the Spirit, whom those believing in Him would receive; for the Holy Spirit was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified.” John 7:38-39 (NKJV)



The River Now:

Amazingly we can *“taste the powers of the age to come”* (Hebrews 6:5) right now. This River that will be fully realized in the New Jerusalem is flowing for us right now by the Holy Spirit. By faith we must dive into this river and allow the Spirit to empower us with its mighty miracle-working, life giving force to bring healing to the nations.

Now we are individually Temples of the Holy Spirit from which the River of Life flows from (John 7:38-39) but in the Millennium the River of Life will literally flow from the Temple that is envisaged in Ezekiel 47, bringing life to all it touches. This is also mentioned in Zechariah 14:8-9:

The River in the Millennium

“And in that day it shall be that living waters shall flow from Jerusalem, half of them toward the eastern sea and half of them toward the western sea; In both summer and winter it shall occur. And the LORD shall be King over all the earth. In that day it shall be-- “The LORD is one, and His name one.”” Zechariah 14:8-9 (NKJV)

So, we see that in the Millennium the River of Life will flow from out of Ezekiel’s temple (see Ezekiel 47) both eastwards into the Dead Sea making it alive and westwards into the Mediterranean Sea. We know this is not on the New Earth as there will be no seasons then without the sun, but the seasons summer and

winter are mentioned here. There will also be no sea on the new earth but both the eastern and western seas are mentioned in this passage.

The River in the New Jerusalem

“And he showed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding from the throne of God and of the Lamb.” Revelation 22:1 (NKJV)

However, with the coming of the New Jerusalem to the New Earth, the River of Life will flow from the Throne of God and the Lamb, out from God Himself, out of the gates of the city and into all the new nations of the new earth. There will be no more temple (Revelation 21:22) as God will now dwell eternally with His people.

Technically this is not a new River of Life as this river is flowing even now, but it is a new location that it will be flowing from and into.

New Things #6: New Tree of Life (Revelation 22:2)

“In the middle of its street, and on either side of the river, was the tree of life, which bore twelve fruits, each tree yielding its fruit every month. The leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.” Revelation 22:2 (NKJV)

The Tree of Life is first seen in the Garden of Eden:

“And out of the ground the LORD God made every tree grow that is pleasant to the sight and good for food. The tree of life was also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.” Genesis 2:9 (NKJV)

It was a tree containing fruit to give true life; however, mankind was barred from it when at the Fall the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil was eaten. Man could only eat again from this tree in a righteous state, now found only through believing in Jesus as our personal Lord and Saviour.



The Tree of Life Now

Presently we partake of the Tree of Life when we walk in God's wisdom:

"She is a tree of life to those who take hold of her, and happy are all who retain her." Proverbs 3:18 (NKJV)

Living in His wisdom by partaking of His Word and Spirit we bring life to others and our life become a Tree of Life to the nations:

"The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life, and he who wins souls is wise." Proverbs 11:30 (NKJV)

"A wholesome tongue is a tree of life, but perverseness in it breaks the spirit." Proverbs 15:4 (NKJV)

The Tree of Life in the Millennium

In the Millennium, this Tree of Life will probably be seen along the banks of the River of Life flowing from the Millennial Temple. The leaves of this tree will bring healing to the nations at this time.

The Tree of Life in the New Jerusalem

In Revelation 22:2 where it says the leaves of this tree are for the healing of the nations, the word healing is "*therapeia*" in the Greek. This is where we get the word "*therapy*" from. It means a cure from sickness or malady. You may ask, "*Why is this needed in the New Jerusalem where there will be no sickness or suffering?*" Probably the leaves will remain as reminders of how God healed the nations in the previous ages.

What is new here is that the Tree of Life has twelve fruits and there are many such trees lining the banks of the River of Life in a new location, proceeding directly from the Throne of God.

New Things #7: New Throne (Revelation 22:3-5)

"And there shall be no more curse, but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it, and His servants shall serve Him. They shall see His face, and His name shall be on their foreheads. There shall be no night there: They need no lamp nor light of the sun, for the Lord God gives them light. And they shall reign forever and ever." Revelation 22:3-5 (NKJV)

You may ask here, "*What is new about this throne, hasn't God always been on His throne?*" That is true, but what is new here is the LOCATION of the Throne. His Throne is now seen as with His people in the New Jerusalem and coming down to the New Earth. Previously in Revelation we have had many glimpses

of God's Throne, but always in heaven. Now heaven comes down to Earth permanently and forever:

"And I heard a loud voice from heaven saying, "Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them and be their God." Revelation 21:3 (NKJV)

"But I saw no temple in it, for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are its temple." Revelation 21:22 (NKJV)

As I said before, we can now *"taste of the powers of the age to come"* by seeing His Kingdom come in our midst. This is merely a foretaste of the fullness to come but it is still a present reality. As we spend time praising, glorifying and worship Him the Lord will be enthroned in our praises:

"But You are holy, enthroned in the praises of Israel." Psalm 22:3 (NKJV)

There are times now, briefly, when His THRONE will come down to earth as a foretaste of the time when this will be a permanent reality. In times of revival and anointed worship services we can now have a taste of heaven on earth as it will be with the New Heaven, New Earth, and the New Jerusalem. We can now truly touch heaven to change earth.

3. Conclusion:

"And behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me, to give to every one according to his work. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End, the First and the Last." Blessed are those who do His commandments that they may have the right to the tree of life, and may enter through the gates into the city. But outside are dogs and sorcerers and sexually immoral and murderers and idolaters, and whoever loves and practices a lie. I, Jesus, have sent My angel to testify to you these things in the churches. I am the Root and the Offspring of David, the Bright and Morning Star." And the Spirit and the bride say, "Come!" And let him who hears say, "Come!" And let him who thirsts come. Whoever desires, let him take the water of life freely.

For I testify to everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: If anyone adds to these things, God will add to him the plagues that are written in this book; and if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part from the Book of Life, from the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book. He who testifies to these things says, "Surely I am coming quickly." Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus! The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen." Revelation 22:12-21 (NKJV)

THE END

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