

Revelation Notes

Studies completed with Joe Focht, Chuck Smith, Jon Courson, John Walvoord, Henry Morris, Matthew Henry, Warren Wiersbe, William Newell, Tim LaHaye, and NIV Study Bible.

Recommended reading: Joseph Seiss (seeing the separation of the Church and Israel although it was written over 100 years ago), John Walvoord (ex-president of Dallas Theological Seminary – The Revelation of Jesus Christ), and Henry Morris (The Revelation Record).

Introduction:

“Revelation isn’t hard to understand. It’s hard to believe.” – Henry Morris

Rules for our study through Revelation –

1. Interpret as literally as possible. Metaphorical keys are “like” and “as.”
2. Follow the outline. (1:19)
3. Stay in sequence. “then...then...then.”
4. Look for Jesus – it’s really all about Him.

Despite the abnormal attraction of Americans to the strange and paranormal (ie. Supermarket check-out lines news magazines), there is a great lack of Revelation being taught in the Church.

The importance of Biblical prophecy:

1. Pressing the importance of living for Jesus today expectantly looking for the soon return of Christ.
2. Keeping the material/temporal world in perspective, in light of eternity.
3. Pushing us to live lives of purity.
4. Developing faith in us.
 - “Now I tell you before it comes, that when it does come to pass, you may believe that I am He.” (John 13:19)
 - Isaiah 41:4, 21-24, 26; 42:8-9; & 44:6-7 – God makes Himself known by telling of things that will come to pass.

Written by John, who was likely the youngest apostle. (“The apostle whom Jesus loved.”)

- The only apostle not to die a martyr’s death...“the martyrdom of a long life.”

Tradition tells us (Irenaeus, Jerome, Clement of Alexandria, Eusebius and others agree) that during the Christian persecution of 95-96 AD, Emperor Domitian tried to kill John in a vat of boiling oil. John survived, so Domitian exiled John to the island of Patmos.

Patmos was a hard labor camp on a small island, 10 miles long and 6 miles wide. It was located in the Aegean Sea southwest of Ephesus and had very rocky and forbidding terrain. According to Victorinus, John, though aged, was forced to labor in the mines of Patmos where prisoners were expected to work 14-16 hour days. John was there for 16 months.

When Domitian passed off the scene, John was allowed to return to Ephesus under the Emperor Trajan (Nerva) where tradition tells us he served as an elder in the church until his death sometime after 96 AD.

- Most agree Revelation was written in 95-96 AD (either while still on Patmos or after returning to Ephesus.)
- Christ fulfills His promise to John that he would see Him in His glory. (John 21:22,23)

The importance of the OT in Revelation:

- Daniel is quoted 53x.
- Psalms are quoted 43x.
- Zechariah is quoted 15x.
- Ezekiel is quoted 42x.
- Isaiah is quoted 79x.
- Exodus is quoted 27x.
- Jeremiah is quoted 22x.
- Of the 404 verses in Revelation, 265 verses allude to 550 OT verses. The prophecies of the OT reach their conclusion in Revelation. (Info quoted from a Greek Study Bible.)

Henry Morris' outline: Ch. 1-3 – The Church Age – of unknown, yet finite, duration.

Ch. 4-19 – Period of Judgment – 7 years.

Ch. 20 – Kingdom Age – 1,000 years.

Ch. 21-22 – Eternal Age – Endless years.

Chapter 1:

- 1:1 – “Revelation of Jesus Christ” – The purpose of this book, and the Scriptures on the whole (John 5:39), is to reveal Jesus to us. The prophecy and predictions are secondary and given to reveal Christ as He relates to the future events, His enemies, His Church, and us personally.
- “revelation” – (Greek “apokalypso”) Lit. “unveiling.” The wraps are being pulled off Jesus.
 - The Greek word “apokalypsis” appears in various forms at least 18 times in the NT (ie. 1 Cor. 2:10).
 - The last physical description of Jesus is in Acts 1, as Jesus lifts off in the clouds. Yet, Jesus and His kingdom all find their fulfillment in Revelation.
 - “Jesus Christ” – More titles given to Jesus in Revelation than in the rest of the entire NT – at least 4 titles in Ch. 1 alone.
 - o “King of kings” – Rev. 19:16; (“king” – 4 times in Revelation.)
 - King of Kings is the supreme title of Jesus. (Of the 95 Greek manuscripts that are used to compile our translation for Revelation, all of them contain 19:16.)
 - o “Lamb of God” – 25 times in 22 chapters.
 - King of kings and Lamb of God, Coming King and Suffering Servant, Lord and Savior – we need both! If we only know Jesus as the King w/o also being the Lamb, we have an all-powerful dictator that cannot be touched with our infirmities. And like the Pharisees, we have a God that produces no change in our lives. If He was only the King, He wouldn't be able to relate to us; He wouldn't have any impact on our lives. (Presidents example...)
 - If we only know Jesus as the Lamb, w/o also accepting His Kingly nature, we have an impotent God who can relate but can't help. It is the all-loving, all-accepting, all-embracing God of the New Age seeing Jesus as a great teacher, guru, spiritual guide, or ascended master.
 - “to show” – The purpose of the revelation. This book is to be known and understood. There is a common misconception concerning the book of Revelation. A lot of people think of it as a sealed book. It is exactly the opposite. It is allowing us to see what the future holds as far as Jesus Christ is concerned. (Rev. 22:10)
 - Most of the controversy and confusion over the Bible is over Genesis and Revelation. Genesis is where Satan receives his judgment. Revelation is where the sentence on Satan is executed.
 - “servants” – Lit. “bond-slaves.” This is all of us – servants are plural.

- “shortly” – (Greek “en taxia”) Lit. “in quick succession.” Doesn’t speak of soon-ness, but of short-ness or brevity. Once it starts, it will come to conclusion in quick succession.
 - The word is also used in Rom. 16:20; Luke 18:8, and Rev. 22:6.
 - The NT speaks of “sorrows,” “birth pains,” and “as a woman in travail” – looking at the signs of the times increasing with frequency and intensity.
 - Jesus said that if He wouldn’t return when He does, there would be no flesh left alive. (Mt. 24:22)
 - Unless we reject utterly the idea that this part (ch. 5-22) of the Revelation has been “gradually fulfilling itself” in this present age, we shall miss the meaning of the book. Remember Paul’s explanation of the doctrine of the Jewish remnant in Rom. 9:27-28, “The Lord will execute His word upon the earth, finishing it and cutting it short.” The present dispensation must not in any sense be confused with God’s future dealing with the Jewish remnant after the true Church has been taken to heaven.
 - “signified” – Lit. “given in signs.” The angel relates Revelation to John in signs and word pictures. It means nothing to the unregenerate mind, but reveals truths to the heart of every believer.
 - “angel” – Lit. “messenger;” most often a heavenly messenger. (The word “angel” is used 74x in this book.)
 - 17x we will go back-and-forth from earth to heaven
 - 44 separate visions
 - 22x - “like” of “likeness” is used
 - 65x – “as” is used
 - 60x – “I saw” is used
 - 30x – “behold” (meaning “consider”)
 - 84x – “great” is used
 - 54x – the number “seven” is used
 - Over 300 references to the OT
 - “John” – Identified as the author 4 times in Revelation (1:1, 4, 9; 22:8)
- 1:2 – “witness” – “testimony” – Both from the root for “martyr.” A martyr is one who is willing to die for the cause of Christ, whether or not they actually die. (Acts 1:8 – witness is something you are, not something you do.)
- 1:3 – “Blessed” – The only book promising such blessing, making this book unique.
- There are 7 blessed/beatitudes in Revelation.
 - “reads” – Singular, present tense (“he” – public context).
 - “hears” – Plural, present tense (“they” – public context).
 - “keep” – Present tense (lit. “to keep at it, to keep in it, to keep after it”).
 - The primary sense of the word is “watching over, or guarding as a treasure.” Its secondary sense is also “to give heed to.” The prophecy will be fulfilled, whether we pay attention to it or not. But there is divine blessing if we give heed to it and jealously guard its very words.
 - “prophecy” – Of the 4 interpretive views on Revelation (Preterist – Church’s struggle with Rome, Historical – Church’s struggle with the world, Allegorical – strictly spiritual with no direct application, and Futurist – straightforward prophecy) only Futurist is directly supported by the text. (v. 1 & 3)
 - Prophecy is crucial to understanding the Bible – portions of Genesis, Psalms, Daniel, Isaiah, Ezekiel, Zechariah, 1 Thessalonians 5, Matthew 24, Mark 13, and Luke 21 are

prophetic (totaling 8,362 verses in the Bible.) Over 1 in 10 verses in NT are prophecy.

- 1 Cor. 2:9-10 – “eye has not seen...but the Spirit reveals (or unveils) it.”

“time is near” – The time for Jesus to be revealed. (We are 2,000 years closer to Christ’s return than when John wrote the book.)

- If we really believe that, it will effect out lives. Believers will live in purity, be busy about His business, and have eternity in view. Unbelievers must ask themselves “how long can it go like this?”
- We cannot truly believe that Jesus’ return is imminent if we believe something must happen before Christ returns.
- Rev. 21 – “wipe every tear from our eyes.” We would’ve never thought that up on our own concerning Almighty God. He has to reveal it to us. One day is will be very clear – “as lightening flashes from the east to the west;” the King will return. But today He is revealing Himself in our hearts – as the Lamb of God to take away the sins of the world.

1:4 – “seven churches” – Who the letter was written to. (There were other churches in area.)

- Seven gives us a complete picture of the church – even to (or in) our day.
- Paul also wrote to 7 different churches.
- “Asia” – Asia-Minor; around modern-day Turkey.
- “grace and peace” – Always in that order.
 - It is “peace with God” and the “peace of God.” And this is in light of the ongoing persecution of that time and the impending judgments laid out in Revelation.
 - John hears this greeting while exiled on the island of Patmos.
- “is, was, and is to come” – From our perspective. God’s vantage point is “I am,” as He only exists in the present.
 - Makes justification, sanctification, and glorification possible at the same time.
 - We see Revelation come from both the present and eternal perspectives. (The concept of past, present, and future corresponds to the threefold chronological division of the book itself in Rev. 1:19; 1:8; 4:8; 11:17; and 16:5.)
 - Two seemingly opposing concepts can actually agree when there is added more dimensions. For example, a cone in 2-dimensions looks like a circle from the top and a triangle from the side. But in 3-dimensions, the circle and triangle are both actually the cone.
- “seven Spirits” – The Holy Spirit. The number seven denoting perfection and completeness.
 - Seven-fold Spirit – Isa. 11:2 (six attributes) and Zech. 4. Also in Rev. 4:5 and 5:6.
 - The order of the Father, Son and Spirit different than elsewhere in the Scriptures.
 - Grace and peace come from here too.

1:5 – “faithful” – Dependable and true (unlike any ruler we’ve ever seen.)

- “witness” – (Greek “martus”) Lit. “martyr.”
 - Jesus alone is the perfect manifestation of God; Jesus lets us know who God is. If we want to know what God is, we can look at Jesus Christ and know exactly what God is.
 - “If you have seen Me (Jesus), you have seen the Father.” (John 14:9)
- “firstborn” – (Greek “protocos”) Lit. “first of a new order.”
 - Speaks of Jesus being first in prominence, not first in time. (Against the Jehovah’s Witness’ claim that Jesus is a created being. See also 1 Cor. 15:20-23; Rev. 22:8-9; Rom. 1; Ps. 89:27,37; Col. 1:15-18; Heb. 1:6; Rev. 1:8,11; and John 1:1.)

- For an example of God calling a non-firstborn the firstborn according to preeminence, see Jer. 31:9 where God calls Ephraim His firstborn.
- “from the dead” – (Greek “ecnecron”) Lit. “out from among the dead.”
- “ruler of the kings” – (Greek “arcon”) This is not a democracy. God’s kingdom is an order.
 - The King we are looking for is not a president or a pope.
- “loved us and washed us” – Lit. “keeps on loving us (present tense) and who has washed us (aorist tense) once for all.”

1:6 – “kings” – Rev. 5:9-10 – “we shall reign.”

- In kingdom age, Israel will serve Jesus as the Church rules and reigns with Him.
- It is called a kingdom, because it is ruled by a King.

1:7 – “Behold” – Lit. “consider this.”

- Jesus’ soon and sure return should affect our behavior.
- Revelation begins and ends with prediction of Jesus’ second coming (22:7,17,20).
- “with clouds” – The Church (Heb. 12 – “great cloud of witness”), literal clouds (Dan. 7:13; Matt. 24:30) or both. (Matt. 26:64)
- “every eye shall see Him” – This means every eye – living and deceased. (Not just the Jehovah’s Witnesses who say Jesus came privately in 1914 to a secret chamber in Brooklyn and only those who have spiritual eyes can see Him, as He now reigns the world in the Kingdom Age from His secret chamber.)
- “they who pierced Him” – Referring to Israel. (Zech. 12:10; John 19:37)
 - The Bible prophesied of a pierced Messiah in Psalm 22:16; Isaiah 53:5, and Zech. 12:10.
- “will mourn” – This is not in repentance, this is in fear.
 - Notice the contrast between the “grace and peace” of v. 4 with the “mourning” of v. 7.

1:8 – Verse 8 contain the first words John hears from heaven in the giving of the Revelation.

- “Almighty” – (Gr. “pantokrator”) Lit. “the One of all power.” (Parallel to the Hebrew “El Shaddai.”) There can only be one Almighty.
 - 9 of the 12 occurrences of this term in the NT are used in Revelation.
 - It is fitting here, in chapter 1, after the general announcement of our Lord’s coming, and of the general contents of the Revelation, that there should be a solemn seal upon all by God as God.

1:9 – “John...your brother” – John is a brother, in the kingdom and in Christ, with us. The apostle John was the oldest living disciple of our Lord at the time of this writing, and yet he immediately identified himself with the people.

- “tribulation” – (Greek “tribulim”) The part of the threshing sled pulled over the grain to separate the wheat from the chaff.
 - The origin of tribulation changes in Ch. 5. Up to that point, tribulation is brought by a sinful world and the evil that accompanies it. In Ch. 5, the tribulation begins to be brought directly from the throne of God.
 - In 66 AD, Nero burned Rome and blamed it on the Christians. In 70 AD, Titus Vespasian leveled Jerusalem.
- “patience” – (Gr. “hypomone”) Lit. “to bear up under pressure.”
- “Patmos” – This is a poor retirement program for John.
 - Rev. 14:13 – “Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on...that they may rest from their labors.”

- Allen Redpath while dying at age 83 – “The toughest battles are fought just before the war is over.”
 - “for the word of God and for the testimony of Jesus Christ” – The reason why John is on Patmos.
 - John was on Patmos because of his faithfulness. There is a sanctified loneliness that many of the saints of God have gone through. (Moses, Daniel, John the Baptist, and Paul)
 - John was there for the reason of receiving this revelation. God takes John all the way to Patmos to give him this word.
 - “testimony” – From the Greek word for “martyr.” That is a witness – Rev. 1:2. (Acts 1:8)
- 1:10 – “in the Spirit” – Lit. “I became in Spirit.” (4:2; 17:3; 21:10) Either the Spirit is carrying and time-traveling John through heaven and to the Day of the Lord or John is seeing this vision through an experience of worship during the Lord’s Day.
- “In the Spirit” is the only way this book is really understood, as heaven is a mystery that must be revealed for us to understand. (1 Cor. 2:9-10)
 - “the Lord’s Day” – The early church met on Sundays – Acts 20:7; 1 Cor. 16:2; John 20:19-26.
 - “as of a trumpet” – Not a trumpet. But loud and sharp like a trumpet might sound.
- 1:11 – “Alpha and Omega” – “The first and the last” letters of Greek alphabet.
- Isa. 41:4; 44:6; 48:12; Rev. 1:8; 2:8; 22:12-16.
- 1:12 – “I turned to see the voice” – Note that it is the voice he turns to see. Our Lord is ever the Word of God. (John 1:1)
- “lampstands” – The seven churches. (Rev. 1:20)
- 1:13 – “midst of the seven lampstands” – Jesus’ presence in the congregation of believers.
- How often we wish that we could have been at the Sea of Galilee almost 2,000 years ago...that we could have actually seen [Jesus] ourselves. But Jesus is here, now, in the midst of his Church. Wherever the church assembles in His name, He has promised to be there with them, and He is always there to minister to the needs of the people.
 - “seven” – The number of completeness/perfection. There were more churches than this in Asia. For instance, the church of Galatia, established by Paul, and the church of Colosse which Paul wrote to, were not far from the church of Ephesus.
 - “Son of Man” – Christ’s favorite term for Himself. This title was used of Jesus over 80 times in the 4 gospels; it is only used once more of Jesus in Revelation (14:14).
 - The Son of Man is a prophetic name of Jesus. (Ps. 8:4; Dan. 7:13; Mark 8:31)
 - “clothed with a garment...golden band” – Picture of Jesus as the Priest-Judge.
- 1:14-15 – This is the only physical description of Jesus we have in the Bible.
- Revelation 1 contains 24 descriptions of Jesus Christ. Every one of them are repeated in the rest of the book of Revelation, tying the whole book together – bringing together “the things you saw” with “those things that will be.”
 - And John had seen Jesus beaten, torn in pieces, and crucified.
 - Believers “will be like Him” (1 John 1:3) and their bodies fashioned “like unto His glorious body.” (Phil. 3:20)
- 1:14 – “head and hair were white” – There are similarities to Daniel’s vision of the Son of Man in Daniel 7:9, 13-14.
- “eyes like a flame of fire” – Lit. “eyes shot fire.”

1:15 – “brass” – A symbol of judgment in the Bible.

1:16 – “sword” – (Gr. “romphaia”) The Thracian long-sword (not the short-sword spoken of in Hebrews 4:12) was nearly as long as the man using it, swung with two hands, and used to deliver the death blow. This sword is referred to 5 other times in Revelation. (19:15)

- 2 Thess. 2:8 – Jesus will destroy the anti-Christ with the breath of His mouth.
- “as the sun” – This is a radiant countenance.

1:17 – “fell at His feet” – The natural reaction of having seen God through the Scriptures. (Isaiah 6; Ezekiel 1; Moses and Aaron (often); the nation of Israel in Lev. 9:24; Josh. 5; Job 42; Daniel 10:7-10)

- Does John have deja-vu? (Mt. 17:7 – John seeing Jesus’ glory on the Mount of Transfiguration.)
- This leaves no room for pride when we measure ourselves to the standard of the glorious image and the likeness of Christ.
- “right hand” – The hand of power and strength.
 - It is the touch of Jesus that restores John (as it does us.)

1:18 – “he that lives” – Lit. “the ever living one.”

- “was dead” – Lit. “became dead.”
 - Jesus is telling John that His death and resurrection were sufficient for John, even in his frailty.
- “forevermore” – Lit. “unto the ages of the ages.”
- “Hades” – Where the immaterial part of the dead believer is retained until the Great White Throne judgment and then throne into the Lake of Fire.
 - The believer, at death, is absent from the body and present with the Lord. (2 Cor. 5:6,8)
- “I have the keys” – Jesus, alone, holds the keys.
 - These keys were evidently purchased with His own blood, for according to Hebrews 2:14-15, “by his death He might destroy him who holds the power of death – that is, the devil – and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by their fear of death.”

1:19 – The outline for the book of Revelation.

- “have seen” – Revelation 1:9-18
- “things which are” – Revelation 2-3
- “shall be” – Future tense.
- “after this” – (Greek “meta tauta”) Lit. “after these things.” (Beginning at 4:1 and continuing to the end of the book.)

1:20 – “mystery” – (Gr. “musterion”) A mystery denotes not what is beyond our understanding, but simply what must be revealed to be understood. The correlative of mystery is revelation.

- “hand” – The hand of God laid out the universe at a span (Isa. 40:12) – now with nail holes...
- “stars” – Daniel 12 says “those who turn many to righteousness (will shine) like the stars forever and ever.”
- “angels” – (Greek “angelos”) Lit. “messengers.” Most often translated angels (the word is used 188 times in the NT, and nearly (at-most 6 exceptions) to denote real angels), but it could also be human messengers. Idea is the leader of the church – earthly or angelic or both.
- “churches” – 1 Peter 4:17 – “For the time has now come for judgment to begin at the house of God.”

Chapter 2:

The “seven churches” of Rev. 2-3 are:

- Letters to chosen, specific, and actual churches. There is an historical context.
- Possibly prophetic in the order of the churches.

1. Ephesus	Apostolic Age	Before AD 100
2. Smyrna	Age of Persecution	AD 100 – AD 313
3. Pergamos	Imperial Church Age	AD 313 – AD 590
4. Thyratira	Age of Papacy	AD 590 – AD 1517
5. Sardis	Reformation Age	AD 1517 – AD 1730
6. Philadelphia	Missionary Age	AD 1730 – AD 1900
7. Laodicea	Age of Apostasy	AD 1900 – ?
- Last four churches would continue “till I come.” (2:25, 3:3, 3:11, 3:20)
- Seven churches chosen by God to give a complete picture of the Church.
- Spoken to individuals as well. Churches are made up of individual people. Our responsibility is to individually (“he”) hear what the Spirit is saying (“says”).

In these chapters we see what Christ looks for in a church body. There are certain essentials that Jesus looks for that lead to life in a body. It is also interesting to see what God does not mention in these chapters. God’s estimation of these churches has no measurement of sizes of congregation or budget.

God chooses seven churches making this evaluation of the church complete, well-rounded, and without respect of persons.

According to Jesus Himself, the early church has been corrupted pretty early on. So we cannot look back to church history to find the model or the pattern. We have to look right back in to the book of Acts to find the true pattern. And the true pattern is one of great simplicity, people being brought to faith in Jesus Christ and a living relationship with Him; no fancy organizations, no great structures, no seminaries, just a simple trusting faith in the Lord, shared from person to person, friend to friend.

Each letter follows the pattern of:

1. Jesus naming the church.
2. Getting a description of Jesus that correlates to the ensuing message for that church.
 - Jesus becomes all things to all men – whatever we need Him to be.
3. Jesus gives a commendation, acknowledging their situation.
4. Jesus gives a rebuke.
5. Jesus gives a command to correct.
6. Jesus offers a reward for obedience.

About 1/8 of the book of Revelation is taken up with these 7 messages. The true student of God’s Word learns to give most attention to what God most emphasizes. There is a quote from an unnamed author that rings true: “There is always a tendency in the human heart to become occupied with the dispensation in which we are not.”

2:1 – “angel” – (Greek “aggelos”) Lit. “messenger.” There are places in the Bible where this Greek word is used of a human being. (Matt. 11:10; Mark 1:2; Luke 7:24,27; 9:52; James 2:24) And it would seem to make sense for “angel” here to refer to the human church leader at these churches as they receive instructions, commendations, and reproofs. Holy angels don’t seem

to need instructions written by humans. But the vast majority of times this word is used in the NT, it is speaking of heavenly/spiritual angels.

- If this is speaking of the church leader, John must pay more careful attention because he was a leader of the church of Ephesus for some time. John returned there after his exile on Patmos.
- “Ephesus” – means “desired.” The word has romantic connotations.

Ephesus (Acts 18:19-20:38; Ephesians, 1 & 2 Timothy, 1, 2, & 3 John):

Ephesus was a city of about 300,000. It was a powerful, influential, wealthy, and corrupt city; powerful due to its role as the Roman capital of Asia Minor (modern Turkey), influential as a result of hosting a university, a very large library, and a 25,000 seat theater, wealthy due to its position on the Cayster River just 5-7 miles from the Mediterranean Sea and its position as the banking capital of the world at that time, and corrupt due to the widespread idol worship of Diana (Artemis – Greek name).

Ephesus was most noted for its amazing Temple of Diana, one of the seven wonders of the ancient world. The Temple was supported by 127 columns, all standing about 200’ tall. But Diana was a gnarly, little lump of sky junk that the Ephesians claimed was Diana, the daughter of Zeus and the sister of Apollo. Mythology stated that Zeus threw Diana out of the heavens. The Ephesians thought she landed in Ephesus. They cleaned her up a bit and put her in their Temple.

Diana was likely a meteorite of sorts – just a lump of black rock with jutting and jagged points all over it. In keeping with Greek mythology, the Ephesians accepted Diana as a fertility goddess of sorts – claiming those 300 or so jutting points to be breasts. Therefore, her sexuality became the hallmark of her worship. The provocative and pornographic statues of Diana were such a prosperous trade that Demetrius started a riot over the thought of the idol-making business drying up. Typically, Diana would actually be served by having sex with a free, temple prostitute (whether male or female) or by serving as a prostitute.

The Ephesian church was started and initially pastored by Paul for 2 years, during which time he taught them the whole counsel of God (Acts 20:27) and “reached all Asia.” Then John the apostle pastored the church. And he was followed by Timothy. For a time, the church thrived in this city.

- “He who holds the seven stars” – This description (and all the descriptions in these letters) is taken from the scene in Rev. 1:12-16.
 - The Lord reminded them that He was in control of the ministry, placing the “stars” where He pleased. How easy is it for a church to become proud and forget that pastors and teachers are God’s gifts (Eph. 4:11) and may be taken away at any time.
- “holds” – (Greek “kraton”) Lit. “to hold authoritatively.” The messengers, therefore, are held in divine protection and under divine control.
- “walks in the midst” - Jesus is the one walking in the midst of the church with the leaders in His hand. It is from the midst of the church that he evaluates the church.

2:2-3 – Ephesus had a lot of great things going, but they lost the fuel. They became disconnected from the source. (They were branches that refused to remain in the vine.)

2:2 – “I know” – Jesus has perfect knowledge. He knows the good and the bad. And He isn’t thrown off by external appearances. Only Jesus can give a proper evaluation of a congregation – it’s His bride.

- The fact of His knowing should comfort and encourage us. Gal. 6:9 – “let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart.”
- “labor” – Lit. “laboring to the point of exhaustion.”
 - God is looking for workers. In the Bible, God calls those who are working.

- Such characteristics were typical of the churches of the 1st century – the Apostolic Age. As a result, the gospel had spread all over the known world. (Col. 1:5, 6, and 24)
- “patience” – Lit. “endurance, bearing up under pressure.”
 - And this is at a time of great and persistent persecution.
- “cannot bear those who are evil” – They cannot bear the liars, but they can bear up under pressure.
- “evil” – (Greek “caccos”) Idea is “innately evil.” (It is a nice bad.)
 - It is a healthy body that can purge a poison from its body. 1 Cor. 5 is clear that when an individual is a professing believer living in open and defiant sin, there must be church discipline for the sake of the rest of the congregation. (Restore the sinner. Remove the devisor. And reconcile personal grievances.)
 - One of the problems of the church is the evil that exists in it. Jesus declared in parables that it was going to happen. But the history of the church is shameful.
- “apostles...liars” – Paul predicted false prophets would come in Acts 20. But they have done pretty well up to this point. They have tested and proved to see those who were of God; not accepting the false prophets.

2:3 – “have patience” – Lit. “keep on having patience.”

- “for My name’s sake” – They are working for God’s glory, according to His purpose.
 - They were loving the Christian walk...Just 40 years ago (Acts 18) they begged for Paul to stay and teach them more at their first meeting. And after Paul had been there three years he could say that he taught them “the whole counsel of God.” It was even testified of Paul that he reached all Asia in that time.

2:4 – “Nevertheless” – The idea is forget about all the rest.

- “left your first love” – Motion without emotion; ritual without relationship.
- “left” – Not lost.
- “first love” – This is essential to church life – the loving relationship between God and His people. Any break in that is a cutting off from the source. For these people, the “Christian religion” has taken the place of personal devotion to the Bridegroom.
 - The thing God most wants us is for us to love Him...first and greatest commandment is that you “love the Lord your God.”
 - Ephesians uses the word “love” 20 times and Eph. 6:24 says “love the Lord Jesus in sincerity.”
 - Ephesians 4 says we are to “not grieve the Holy Spirit of God.” The word “grieve” means “sorrow (as those mourning the passing of loved ones).” God in love makes Himself vulnerable to us as He waits for our love or possible rejection.
 - The Song of Solomon is a picture of the love between God and His people.
 - God remembered the love of Israel’s espousals, when she would follow Him wherever He went. (Jer. 2:2) The first affections of men towards Christ, and holiness, and heaven, are usually lively and warm.

2:5 – “Remember” – Lit. “Be constantly remembering.”

- “fallen” – Notice: It is falling or backsliding to not be loving Jesus more.
 - This is in contrast to the letter of Ephesians that entrusted them with high and heavenly things.
- “repent” – (Greek “metanoia”) – Lit. “to change the mind or make a U-turn.”
 - First step in repentance is admitting the problem. (This is for believers too.)
 - We must be careful to stop worrying about everyone else and turn our self around.

- “do” – Go back to the things you did when you first came to Christ in obedience. True repentance is accompanied by action.
- “quickly” – (Greek “tachu”) Lit. “speedily, without delay.”
- “remove your lampstand” – The church and its witness.
 - The natural result of leaving off the first love is losing your walk. “If you love me, you will obey my commandments.” (John 14:15,21) But that doesn’t work backwards...
 - You cannot be a proper witness of Christ without loving Him. Nobody is attracted to a harsh, condemning, legalistic god...not properly represented.
 - This was ultimately fulfilled in Ephesus, where the church had retained its vigor for several centuries and was the seat of the Eastern Church until 431 AD. However, after the 5th century the city declined. And in the 14th century, the Turks deported its remaining inhabitants. Today, the city is now uninhabited and covered with silt.

2:6 – “I also hate” – First time Jesus expressly says He hates something.

- “Nicolaitans” – (From the roots for ‘nike’ and ‘laity’) Lit. “to domineer or lord it over the laity.”
 - The priesthood, the shepherding movement, or overzealous pastor.
 - We are God’s bride, His children. Nobody gets between God and His kids or God and His bride.
 - Those who lose their first love are pleased if someone else can do it for them.

2:7 – “ear” – Spiritual ears – as a result of the new birth.

- “hear” – Listening to obey.
- “says” – Present tense.
- “to the churches” – Plural, this is us as well.
- “overcomes” – This is for every true believer. (1 John 5:5; Rev. 12:11)
- “tree of life” – Which God had kept from a fallen Adam and Eve.
- “paradise” – Originally a Persian word for a pleasure garden. In Revelation it symbolizes the eschatological state in which God and man are restored to the perfect fellowship that existed before sin entered the world.
 - Promise of the future restored fellowship with God Himself is available to every believer.

2:8 – “Smyrna” – means “bitter.” Smyrna comes from the word “myrrh” as is used in anesthetics or embalming. (Exod. 30:23)

Smyrna (not mentioned anywhere else in the Bible):

It’s a city still standing under the modern name, Izmir. Current population of Izmir is approx. 200,000. It was founded under the excellent leadership and planning of Alexander the Great, being proposed as the capital of the known world even when that area was still a frontier land. The city is located about 35 miles north of Ephesus, on the coast of the Aegean Sea. It’s location on the Aegean, superb natural harbor, and location along a major trade route from India and Persia to Rome made the city an important commercial center.

But its primary importance in the Roman Empire was not a result of its commercial status, but of its foresight. As early as 195 BC, Smyrna recognized the rising Roman power and built a temple in Smyrna to a Roman goddess for pagan worship; tying itself to the Roman Empire. In 26 AD, Rome rewarded Smyrna by allowing them to build the Temple of Tiberius, making Smyrna the center of emperor worship.

Nicknames of Smyrna included “The Beauty of Asia” and “The City of Life and Strength.”

- “angel” – The human leader/pastor of the church was Polycarp. At this time, he is about 30 years old. He had been a disciple of John and later served as the pastor of the church at Smyrna. The persecution against the church there will heighten in 70 years and Polycarp will be burned at the stake in the coliseum of Smyrna. (155 AD) At that time, the synagogue of Smyrna planned to kill Polycarp under the pretense of Polycarp’s failure to worship Caesar. When the Romans were sent to capture him, Polycarp had prepared a meal anticipating their arrival and he was sleeping. His last request was to pray 1 hour. The Romans let him pray 2 hours. Before being executed, the authorities gave Polycarp one final chance to worship Caesar and not be executed to which he responded, “How can I deny Him who has been faithful to me these 86 years?” (See Foxe’s Book of Martyrs pp. 20-25 for the full account.)
 - Shortly after Polycarp’s martyrdom, as a result of the encouragement the church received from his persecution, 1,500 Christians gave their life in Smyrna at one time, (causing their blood to flow out of the coliseum on Mt. Pagas and into the streets.) Then over the next few months, 800 more were killed.
 - Christians around the world are still undergoing persecution. Open Doors International says “More Christians will die today than were slain on an average day in the Roman Coliseum. It’s true. On average, every three and a half minutes another Christian loses his life for his belief in Jesus.”
- “was dead” – Lit. “became dead.” The description is of Jesus given in Rev. 1:18. This is encouraging the believers in Smyrna with the hope of resurrection.
 - There is no word of rebuke to the church of Smyrna (in contrast to the faith confessing teachers who rebuke all sick or poor as lacking in faith).

2:9 – “works” – Lit. “labors to the point of exhaustion.”

- How many crumble or crack under much less difficulty?
- “tribulation” – (Greek “thlipsis.”) Lit. “pressure or persecution from the outside.”
- “poverty” – From one of several Greek words meaning “abject poverty of beggary.”
 - The powerful Jewish synagogue in Smyrna practically cut off the Christians from all work, money, and resources by keeping them out of the trade guilds. This aspect of persecution came from the religious or the community.
 - Someone has said that the churches of the first three centuries were marked by material poverty and spiritual power, whereas the churches of our day are marked by material wealth and spiritual weakness.
- “say they are Jews” – Not all Jews are true Jews. There are those who pretend to be in covenant with God when they actually are not.
- “synagogue of Satan” – It was the Jews who brought Polycarp to the Roman authorities. They even carried wood to the coliseum for burning him at the stake.
 - Two sources of external persecution: 1) those pretending to be in covenant with God, and 2) political power taking on religious significance.
- “synagogue” – Contrast “synagogue” – meaning the “gathering together” of the Jewish religion – with “ecclesia” – meaning the “called out ones” spoken of in God’s word for the church: “called out” from Judaism and all earthly religion, as well as from the world.
- “Satan” – This is who is behind the persecution of the Christians.
 - Persecution tends to define the teams. It has a tendency to bring Christians together while making clear who the enemy is.
- “I know” – As any father would as they watch their child get sick, suffer, and die.
 - There is no word of rebuke here. Tribulation has a purifying effect on the church.

- 2:10 – “Do not fear” – Lit. “stop being afraid.” Fear seems to come from a sense of loss resulting in pain. The Christians of Smyrna have nothing left to lose, but their lives.
- God’s counsel is for them to “live a life worthy of the Lord.” (Col. 1:10)
 - “you are about to suffer” – Prophecy. There is no promise of deliverance from the immediate, physical situation. This can either be encouraging or discouraging.
 - “prison” – In Rome, they put people in prison until they were tried. After the trial, they were either released (if innocent), flogged, exiled, or executed.
 - “ten days” – Some say these are 10 major Roman persecutions under Nero, Domitian, Trajan, Marcus Aurelius, Severus, Maximinus, Decius, Valerian, Aurelian, and Diocletian. But this seems to be referring to a future persecution (“about to suffer”) and that will start with Polycarp’s execution about 70 years in the future. Here the Hebrew idiom seems more likely to be referring to limited period of time as in Gen. 24:55, Job 19:3, Dan. 1:12.
 - “death” – Part of our vocation is passing from this life to the next.
 - “the crown of life” – Singular, specific crown. James 1:12 refers to crowns given to those who endure persecution.
 - Beyond death, there are crowns. Rewards are coming.
 - “crown” – This does not refer to a royal crown (Rev. 12:3; 13:1; 19:12) but to the garland or wreath awarded to the winner in athletic contests (Rev. 3:11; 4:4,10; 6:2; 9:7; 12:1; and 14:14).
- 2:11 – “who overcomes” – We overcome “by the blood of the lamb, and by the word of our testimony” (Rev. 12:11). (See also 1 John 5:5)
- Mt 12:19-20 – “bruised reed He will not break, smoking flax He will not put out.”
 - “not be hurt” – There is a double negative in the Greek implying they shall “not at all be injured.”
 - “second death” – There are two deaths – physical and spiritual. We all will die physically, but we can escape the eternal, spiritual death through the eternal life found in Jesus Christ.
 - The physical death is temporary. The spiritual death is eternal. Everything that endures lies ahead of us.
- 2:12 – “Pergamos” – means “to be elevated through marriage.”
- This is modern “Bergama.”
 - There has continued a nominal Christian testimony in the city until the modern day.

Pergamos (not mentioned elsewhere in the Bible):

The city is located 50 miles north of Smyrna. It became a powerful city-state as early as 200 BC, as Attalus I used Pergamos as the Greek headquarters to subdue the Gauls (Galatians). The city created parchment (originally called “Pergamena Charta”), had a 10,000 seat amphitheatre, 200,000 item library (later sent to Alexandria, Egypt as a gift from Anthony to Cleopatra), medical school (Asclepius – the current symbol of the American Medical Association of a snake wrapped around a pole), and 100 sq ft altar dedicated to Zeus on a mountain in Pergamos. (The altar stood 800 ft over the plain.) Pergamos was a city full of idolatry and Caesar worship.

Gives a picture of the struggle of devotion and spiritual compromise – the problems of v. 14-15 are internal. They overcame external persecution, as described in v. 13, only to fall to internal compromise.

The corresponding time period, if Rev. 2-3 is laid out chronologically, begins at 313 AD as Constantine makes Christianity the official religion of Rome and moves the Universal (Catholic) church to Rome. History tells us, that Constantine was in a battle against Maximus to determine the ruler of Rome when he saw a flaming cross in the sky and heard a voice which said (when translated)

“In this sign, conquer.” Due to that experience, Constantine made Christianity the state religion of Rome (after the previous emperor was actively persecuting Christians).

To organize Christianity under the Roman government, Constantine called all bishops who would come to him to organize the state religion. One bishop who came from Haifa, whose name was Damasus, became the bishop of Rome and was given the title of Chief Pontiff (a title originally used by the Caesars). Damasus and the other monks of Haifa proceeded to intermingle Christianity with the Babylonian religion.

Before Constantine, the Church was called the Catholic, or Universal, church. Constantine, though, brought it to Rome and called it the Roman Catholic Church. Immediately, the eastern churches didn't want to submit to Roman authority. They broke off and from the Orthodox churches (Eastern, Russian, and Greek). Then there were competitions between the Roman Catholic and Orthodox churches over the bodies of the apostles and then over relics thought to produce healings. This struggle paved the way for excessive idolatry.

Because of this shift, there was a major change in theology. Before, during the previous persecutions, they held onto the blessed hope still to come. But because of the favor under Constantine, they now have power and authority on earth and began to claim that the former persecution was the Tribulation. They then taught the present time to be the Kingdom Age. Because of this theology, they adopted an intermingling of the world and Christianity (as well as a doing away with the nation of Israel).

Church history is a mess. We cannot base our understanding of the Church off of church history. We must go back to the Bible.

- “two-edged sword” – The sword of judgment.
 - This sword refers to the Word of God. The cure for the problems of the local church at Pergamos, of the Pergamum Church Age, or of any church is the Word of God.

2:13 – “I know your works” – Jesus begins with a word of commendation.

- “Satan’s throne” – Satan’s throne is not in hell; that is his punishment. Currently he is the “Prince of the Power of the air” eliciting authority over the governments of the world. Here is the church trying to dwell in the world with the legislating of righteousness and the legalizing of religious issues. It can’t be done. It has to come from the heart. You can’t make laws that will make people righteous or cause people to live righteous lives.
 - Jesus makes the estimation that Satan’s base of operations at that time was in Pergamos, where the Church was beginning to compromise with the false religions and political powers of the day. Before, his throne seemed to be in Smyrna with the persecution there.
- “hold” – There is active participation in that.
- “name” – (Greek “onama”) The name characterizes the person.
- “hold fast my name...not denied my faith” – At this time in chronological church history, Arius took prominence with the doctrine that Christ wasn’t God, but only a created being. At the Council of Nicea, the Church leaders were trying to dictate doctrine and Arius was convincing them when a Christian hermit from North Africa interrupted the meeting clothed in animal skins. He took off the top half of the animal skins from his body to show them the scars he received from being whipped and thrown to animals for his faith in Jesus Christ. In so doing, he convinced them of Christ’s deity and the Council agreed on proper church doctrine. (Nicene Creed – “Jesus is God, very God.”)
- “Antipas” – Not sure who is. Tertullian says Antipas was a dentist in Pergamos who was martyred for Christ by being cooked alive in a bronze pot without water.
 - Antipas means “stands against all.”
 - Jesus sees those of His Church who stand against all in an era of spiritual compromise.

- 2:14 – “few things” – Jesus had one thing against Ephesus and none against Smyrna. Here He has a few things.
- “you have there” – In the midst of the true believers (tares among wheat).
 - “doctrine of Balaam” – Teaching of compromise. From Numbers 22-25 where Balak the Moabite king summons Balaam to curse the nation of Israel. Balaam wants to curse to receive the financial gift promised by Balak, but God is controlling his tongue (just as God did to Balaam’s donkey). Balaam ends up blessing Israel. Balak is upset and threatened to withhold Balaam’s pay. So Balaam comes up with the idea to send Moabite women into the camp of Israel to draw Israel from Yahweh to Baal through sexual adultery and worship.
 - You can’t get God to turn on those under His hand, but you can get those under His hand to come out from under His protection.
 - See also Jude 1:11 and 2 Peter 2:15 for more on Balaam.
 - Balaam caused Israel to worship in a non-prescribed way.
 - “Balaam” – means “lord of the people.” It seems to be synonymous with “Nicolaitans.”
 - “idols” – That which you obey is your god. Anything that causes us to not completely obey the Word of God is an idol. (For example, the teaching of Justice Love, which is the ordaining of sexual immorality through compromise with the Word of God.)
 - Compromise effects the entire Church. When one part of the Church compromises, it makes all look bad.
- 2:15 – “Nicolaitans” – Those who domineer over the laity; (also mentioned in 2:6). This is a reintroduction of the priesthood into the Church.
- When there is spiritual compromise, people are much quicker to accept using another human as the mediator between God and man, rather than Jesus.
 - “hate” – Jesus hates the priesthood and those who suppress the laity. Jesus didn’t open the way into the Holiest of All so we could sew the veil back up.
- 2:16 – “fight against them” - God will judge, both, those in spiritual compromise and those benefiting from it.
- “with the sword” – There were 2 governors in Rome at that time. One governor (“avis gladeai”), has the right to capital punishment. Here, Jesus is taking that right to Himself.
- 2:17 – “says” – Present tense. It is what He “is saying” to us.
- “hidden manna” – The bread from heaven to sustain in the wilderness. (Exodus 6)
 - To be an Antipas, to get through the wilderness safely and enter the promised-land, in a church of compromise, we must be feeding on the bread of heaven.
 - We either feed on the Word of God or we are judged by it (“fight against them with the sword of My mouth” – v. 16). There are only two options.
 - “manna to eat” – This is an individual feeding. Just as the Israelites had to go individually and gather the manna in the desert, so the child of God in the Pergamum Church Age, or in any church age, is dependant on God for his or her individual spiritual supply.
 - “white stone” – In Roman courts, when found guilty they put a black stone forward (black ball) and when innocent they moved the white stone.
 - White stones also served as a ticket for free food and entrance to the Coliseum. This is the believer’s ticket to eternity.
 - “new name written” – Enduring through this will yield a treasure in heaven.
 - “which no one knows” – God is the only One who calls things that are not as though they were. (Rom. 4:17)

2:18 – “Thyatira” – means “continual sacrifice.”

- The historical era introduced purgatory, indulgences, and continual payments. This is undermining the power and sufficiency of Christ and His death. But Hebrews tells us that Christ died “once for all.” (Heb. 10:10)
- Thyatira is the modern Akhisar.

Thyatira (Acts 16:14):

Thyatira was founded in the Lycos Valley by Seleucus I in 311-280 BC. The city is located 30-35 miles southeast of Pergamos in Asia Minor, near the Aegean Sea. It is the most obscure of the 7 cities, although famous for the manufacture of purple dye. Church likely started through Lydia (Acts 16:14-15). It’s the smallest of the 7 churches (but receives the central and longest letter.) It was a typical small town with a large proportion of farmers along with those practicing trades. Thyatira was the first city to establish trade guilds (or unions), but associated an idol with each trade for prosperity.

Differences with this letter and church:

1. Jesus directly addresses a remnant within the church (rather than the entire).
2. First time Jesus’ second coming is mentioned in the letters.
3. First (and only time) Jesus calls Himself the “Son of God.”
4. Only time in Revelation that the word “adultery” is used.
5. The first time Jesus pronounces the warning, the crime, and the sentence at the same time.
6. The mark of Thyatira is deliberate disobedience within the church, “did not repent.” (v. 21) [Beyond the problem of compromise in Pergamos...]

- “Son of God” – Jesus deity seems to have been undermined in this church.
- “eyes like fire” – Jesus is seeing to the heart of the issue.
- “feet like brass” – Brass speaks of judgment through the Bible.

2:19 – Jesus has a commendation for this church (unlike the church of Sardis).

- “love” – (Gr. “agape”) This is the only church commended for its love.
- “service” – (Gr. “diakoneo”) Lit. “ministry.”
- “patience” – (Gr. “hupomone”) Lit. “endurance or to bear up under pressure.”
- “works” – 5 times in this letter. The emphasis is placed on their works rather than on Jesus’ work.
 - God looks for, and loves, workers. But that is not the end of it. Thyatira had all kinds of “Christian” service, but they lost the holiness that God requires.
- “more” – Not better or purer.

2:20 – “Nevertheless” – Here is the reproof.

- “that woman” – Possible means “your wife.” Alford suggests that this is referring to the wife of the angel, minister, of the church.
 - Whenever a woman is used symbolically to convey a religious teaching, she always represents a false religion.
- “Jezebel” – Jesus seems to use the name Jezebel, not as the literal name of the individual, but as a label of the level and type of seduction.
 - The Hebrew for Jezebel has two meanings, “the chaste one” and “the dunghill.” Speaks of her deceptive seduction; chaste on the outside, dunghill on the inside.
 - The Jezebel of 1 Kings 16:31; 18-21 and 2 Kings 9 was a political marriage, offering the promise of peace and prosperity, but instead opening the door to widespread Baal worship.

- “calls herself a prophetess” – Self-proclaimed, not as a result of God’s call.
 - She is claiming that her word is as or more important than the Word of God.
- “My servants” – Actively pursuing believers.
 - If you are making your decisions based on any personality or system other than God and His Word, then you are in idolatry.

2:21 – “did not repent” – Greek tense is “she does not repent.”

- This is a deliberate choice to reject Truth and refuse to repent.
- This church system is around today (“till I come” – v. 25) and remains unrepentant. This is the epitome of hypocritical – acting clean on the outside, but containing idolatry and adultery on the inside.

2:22 – “I will cast” – Lit. “I am casting.” Present tense.

- “into a sickbed” – God is changing the bed of pleasure through adultery to a bed of sickness and death.
- “those who commit adultery with her” – The pagan rites of the trade guilds at Thyatira involved immoral feasts along with idol worship, under the aegis of the “priestess” or “oracle” of their temple, and her bevy of temple prostitutes. Jezebel had seemingly led the Thyatiran church in a pseudo-Christian imitation of this system, perhaps ostensibly as a means of more easily winning converts to Christianity.

2:23 – “kill...with death” – This is an idiom denoting “to kill by execution.”

- “searches the minds and hearts” – Jesus is looking past the superficial religious actions.
- “hearts” – Lit. “kidneys.” The seat of the emotions and affections.

2:24 – “to the rest” – Speaking to the minority who have not been seduced. There are sincere Christians within the system that is unrepentant.

- Note the difference between “you” and “they” through this section.
- “doctrine” – or “teaching.”
- “depths...as they say” – Those claiming to have the heavy revelations and the latest and greatest fads to blow through the church, endeavoring to amuse the people and to persuade them to come after those who had the supposedly greater insight than their ministers had attained to. There is some heavenly sarcasm here.
- “depths of Satan” – Paul ministered in “simplicity and Godly sincerity.” (1 Cor. 1:12)
- “no other burden” – Quoting from the council of Jerusalem. (Acts 15:28-29)
 - We have Jesus, His salvation, the Holy Spirit and His Word. There is nothing deeper or heavier that we need.
 - The leaven of the Sadducees was to take away from the Scriptures. The leaven of the Pharisees was to add to the Scriptures.

2:25 – “what you have” – They already have all they need.

- “till I come” – Looking to Jesus’ return. (Is this speaking of the Rapture or the Second Coming of Christ to set up His kingdom?)
 - Jesus doesn’t want those He purchased with His blood to be seduced away into immorality and idolatry. The seducing can only happen until He comes. Then it will all be set straight.

2:26 – “keeps my works” – John 6:29 – the work of God is to believe in Jesus.

2:27 – “rule” – Lit. “tend or shepherd.” Their rule will not be simply that of executing judgment, but also that of administering mercy and direction to those who are sheep as contrasted with the goats of Matt. 25:31-46.

2:28 – “morning star” – This is Jesus Himself ushering in a new day and kingdom. (Rev. 22:16; Daniel 12:3; 1 Peter 1:19)

- The doctrinal compromise of Pergamos leads to the moral failure of Thyatira. Thyatira is a picture of the church rejecting the Truth. Sardis is a picture of the church rejecting the Spirit.

Chapter 3:

3:1 – “Sardis” – means “remnant or those escaping, or red ones.”

- Sardis is the modern city of Sart.

Sardis (no other mention in the Bible):

City located 50 miles east of Ephesus that served as the capital of Lydia by 1000 BC. It was a wealthy city located at the place where 5 highways/trade routes converged. Sardis was built as a citadel on Mt. Tmolus, 1500 ft above the valley in a mountain of rock. It was considered impenetrable from 1000 BC to 600 BC. But in 549 BC, Cyrus surrounded the city and offered a reward to any soldier who could find a way to take the city. One Medo-Persian soldier saw a Sardinian soldier drop his helmet over the wall. That soldier then went to retrieve the helmet and gave away a hidden trail to the base of the city. Cyrus’ soldier took a few other soldiers with him and conquered Sardis while the city was sleeping. (They were sleeping because they thought their position was enough to protect them.) Sardis became known as a city taken “as a thief in the night.” (v. 3:3)

In 218 BC, Antiochus the Great took the city again the same way. And in 17 AD, Sardis was completely destroyed. Tiberius later rebuilt the city at the base of the mountain, but it never would regain its power or prominence. From that time on, all Sardis had was its past glory (and they talked about it all the time.)

- The letter to Sardis (like the one to Laodicea) contains no commendation.
- “seven Spirits of God” – The Holy Spirit working in conjunction with Jesus. (Rev. 1:4)
 - The Holy Spirit was missing from the church at Sardis, and possibly especially with the pastors.
 - The Spirit started the Church in Acts, and any growth or life comes from him alone. The Spirit is in charge of missions, leadership, anointing, and function. It all happens in response and relationship to God alone.
- “seven stars” – Jesus has the leaders of the Church in His hand.
- “name” – (Greek “onoma”) We get our English word denomination from the same root word as the Greek.
 - Sardis, historically, may line up with the time of the Reformation and the denominationalization that resulted from that move of God.
 - Every generation needs their own revival. Otherwise the progression is from a Man to a Ministry to a Movement to a Machine to a Monument to a Mausoleum.
- “name that you are alive” – There was reputation without reality.
 - Barclay observes that a church “is in danger of death when it begins to worship its own past...when it is more concerned with forms than with life...when it loves systems more than it loves Jesus Christ...when it is more concerned with material than spiritual things.”

- 3:1-2 – The reproofs: 1. “you have a name...but you are dead” – It is a church in name only. There is no real life or signs of life, only a reputation. It is dead.
2. “strengthen the things which remain” – There are only a few things of their beginnings that have continued. They are asked to strengthen what has made it. Jesus told us to “bear fruit that remains.” (John 15:16)
3. “not found your works perfect” – They have not brought to completion the things that were started in the beginning (when there was life).
- “perfect” – Lit. “complete or whole.” (Their works are hollow or empty.)
 - The letter to Sardis has no reproof for heresy (like Pergamos and Thyatira), no reproof for immorality (like Thyatira), and no mention of persecution (like Smyrna). They have everything in place, everything in line. But they have no life. They trust so much in their position and performance, but nothing is living. This is a picture of dead orthodoxy. (Wilbur Smith said the greatest problem of the modern church was “dead orthodoxy.”)
 - We need God’s work to bring life, but we keep going as if we have all we need and all the while we miss the fire on top of the sacrifice.

- 3:2 – The corrections are to “be watchful” and to “strengthen the things which remain.”
- Watching for the return of Jesus Christ has an impact on how one lives now (v. 3). The remedy for lethargy and routine religiosity is an awakening to the imminence of Christ’s return.
 - Watching is necessary because dying by atrophy is painless.
 - Acts 1:8 – “you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you.”
 - The three ways of the Spirit: “para” – with/alongside us, “en” – indwelling, and “epi” – coming upon or overflowing.

- 3:3 – “Remember” – Lit. “Be constantly remembering.”
- It doesn’t say invent, discover, or improve.
 - Remember what it was like when you first believed. Remember how real it seemed; how real God was to me.
 - Ephesus was asked to remember their “first love.”
 - God is not casting off here. There is a reproof, but God is not rejecting them outright. This is good news for all Christians in name only; those acknowledging Jesus with their lips, yet denying Him with their lifestyle.
 - “how” – Not what (much of the church has the ‘what’ codified).
 - Thyatira failed on the what, left off the Truth. But it isn’t enough, in response to Thyatira, to only get the Truth without the Spirit. You cannot live it that way.
 - Gal. 3:1-3 – Having begun in the Spirit, are you now made perfect in the flesh?
 - There is a difference between walking in the natural and walking in the spirit.
 - A body separated from the head is dead. A body with the wrong head is a monster. A body not responding to the head is paralyzed. A body unable to properly respond to the head is impaired/retarded. But a body willing to receive direction from the head and able to accomplish His will is alive with potential to grow and reproduce.
 - “hold fast” – The Reformed creeds did not get free from Rome as regards what they still called ‘sacraments’ – a Babylonish term. For ‘sacramentalism’ was the Latin work for a ‘mystery’ of the pagan religion.
 - “as a thief” - This was their history as a city.
 - Apathy is a real enemy. It lulls us to sleep before it sticks the knife in. Apathy leads to atrophy, and death by atrophy doesn’t hurt because it happens so slowly.
 - Apathy is abated by returning to the relationship of Christianity.

3:4 – “even in Sardis” – Like God is surprised or amazed.

- Even in this system, there is life with a few. God grants encouragement to the few.
- “Sardis” – The name carries the idea of “those escaping.” The Reformation was meant to be this, but it has changed. Yet, even in the midst of it, there are a few names that are God’s.
- “worthy” – (Greek “axion”) – Lit. “to weigh as much as.”
 - The only thing making us worthy of Christ is His sacrifice and Spirit. (Rev. 19:8)

3:5 – “will not blot out” – Lit. “will never ever blot out.”

- It seems to imply that there are some who will have their names removed from this book. This is a warning to those with a name, but not having true salvation.
- Those who do not get blotted out, stand in the end in the “Lamb’s book of life.” (Rev. 21:27)
- “Book of Life” – Exod. 32:32-33; Ps. 56; 68:28; Isa. 4:4; Dan. 7; 12:1; Malachi 3:3; Luke 10:20; Philippians 4:3; Rev. 13:8; 17:8; 20:12; 21:27.
- “will confess” – Lit. “will confess boldly.”
 - Jesus will confess us with exceeding joy. (Jude 24) Christ can confess us boldly because he knows fully what His sacrifice has accomplished.

3:7 – Jesus’ description taken out of Isa. 22:22 in addition to Rev. 1:18.

- In Isa. 22, God is addressing Israel as it repents and is therefore promising authority to Eliakim.
- “holy” – (Greek “haggios”) Idea is “separate or distinct.”
- “true” – Lit. “genuine.”
- “Philadelphia” – means “brotherly love.” Love is a mark of the true church.
 - “By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.” (John 13:35)
 - The Greek word for “Philadelphia” is used 7 times in the NT – Rom. 12:10; 1 Thess. 4:9; Heb. 13:1; 1 Pet. 1:22; 2 Pet. 1:7(a); 1:7(b); and Rev. 3:7.

Philadelphia (no other mention in the Bible) –

City located in Asia Minor, Turkey. It was initially constructed in 189 BC by King Attalus II as a tribute to Eumenes II. Philadelphia was located in a beautiful valley on a main trade route to the eastern world. Rome used the city as a post for its soldiers. Some of the city’s nicknames include “the keeper of the gateway to the plateau,” “the gateway to the east,” and “the key to Phrygia.”

Philadelphia was very idolatrous; often called “Little Athens” for its many idols. Its chief deity was Dionysius (the Roman Bacchus) the god of wine; as Philadelphia was a center for the wine industry. And when they wanted to honor a magistrate or leader in Philadelphia, they would build a pillar and place it in one of the pagan temples.

The modern city is called ‘Alashehir,’ (the city of god/Allah.) But Philadelphia is the only one of the 7 churches with an active Christian church remaining – having 5 congregations totaling over 1000 believers.

In 17 AD, Philadelphia (along with Sardis and 8 other cities) was destroyed in a huge earthquake. It was then rebuilt and renamed Neo-Caesarea, the new city of Caesar.

Historically, Philadelphia is associated with the modern missionary movement that grew out of the Reformation Period. William Carey is considered “The Father of the Modern Missionary Movement” starting in 1793. Philadelphia is one stream out of the Reformation containing an open door, while Laodicea is another stream with a seemingly closed door.

- Along with Smyrna, Philadelphia is the only letter without a rebuke.

- 3:8 – “your works” – In this letter alone, the works are not described in any way; it is evident that, whatever they are, they please the Lord.
- “open door” – The church is a missionary church relying on God in its work. They have God-given opportunities to share.
 - This is a message much needed by the Lord’s servants today. There is such a tendency to compromise in order to gain opportunity, whereas in truth it is our responsibility to do right and God’s responsibility to open the doors of opportunity.
 - God opens and shuts the doors. We are dependant. We must follow His lead. Humans cannot open the door if the Lord hasn’t opened it. And neither can they stop in when God is in it.
 - The open door speaks primarily of access to God. (Heb. 4:16; 10:22)
 - Spiritual opportunity: Paul waited on open doors – Acts 14:27,28; 16:6-10; 18:9-10; 18:19-20; 19:8-20; 1 Cor. 16:9; 2 Cor. 2:12; and Col. 4:3.
 - But it’s imperative to know and wait on His voice. “My sheep know my voice...”
 - Open doors of service are a result of an open door of communion. (In contrast to the closed door of communion in Laodicea, which was closed by the people.)
 - “for” – Lit. “because.” It is the reason why God has an open door before them.
 - 3 reasons: 1. “have a little strength” – Greek “dynamous” (from Acts 1:8). Evidently, the other churches didn’t even have a little strength. (No one has a lot of strength – 2 Cor. 12:9.)
 - 2. “kept my word” – Greek “logos” (the Scriptures). They guarded (Lit. for “kept”) and obeyed God’s Word from beginning to end.
 - 3. “not denied my name” – Greek “onama” (His nature/person). There is a devotion to Jesus. They know Jesus personally because they know their Bibles, and the Bible reveals Jesus to us.
- 3:9 – “say they are Jews” – Not anti-Semitic. These are the self-righteously religious, claiming to be in the class of God’s people, yet persecuting the Christian Church..
- God will one day bring everything into the light. “All things are open....” (Heb. 4:13)
 - “worship before your feet” – One day Israel will nationally acknowledge Christ as the Messiah and the Church as His bride.
- 3:10 – “persevere” – (Greek “hupomone”) Lit. “to bear up under pressure.” Also translated “patience” and “endurance.”
- “kept...keep” – Military terms meaning “to guard or to protect.”
 - “from” – (Greek “ek”) Lit. “out from, out of.” The Greek word speaks of position.
 - “the hour of trial” – Speaking of a specific time period.
 - “the whole world” – This is a world-wide trial.
 - “try” – Lit. “to test to see if it is pure.”
 - “who dwell on the earth” – Lit. “earth-dwellers.” Word used 10 times in Revelation, always speaking of unbelievers.
 - This seems to be speaking of a pre-Tribulation rapture.
 - Currently, persecution originates with Satan. During the Tribulation, the trial will originate at the throne of God. And throughout Revelation, none who go through the Tribulation will be completely spared of the Tribulation wrath of God. (Rev. 6:9-10; 13:5,15; 17:8; and 20:4,8) Yet, God did not appoint the believers to wrath (1 Thess. 5:9).

3:11 – “I come quickly” – Jesus’ return is imminent.

- John Darby writes: “That which characterizes the church of Philadelphia is its immediate connection with Himself; It is Christ Himself who is coming. It is neither knowledge nor prophecy that can satisfy the heart; but the thought that Jesus is coming to take me to Himself is the “blessed hope” of one who is attached to Him by grace.”
- The “blessed hope” of the church is not merely escape from trouble, but escape to Jesus.
- “what you have” – Speaking of the little strength, the Word, and His name from v. 10.
- “take” – This Greek word generally indicates receiving, not seizing, as in 1 Cor. 3:8,14; 4:7 (3x); and 9:24. Of the 23 times in Revelation, 21 times this word describes receiving.

3:12 – “pillar in the temple” – This perhaps has peculiar significance to those who were in Philadelphia because of their historic experiences with earthquakes.

- “temple” – (Greek “naos”) Lit. the “Holy of Holies.”
 - They’ll never again lose the sense of His presence.
- “He who overcomes” – The believer, who overcomes by the blood of the lamb and the word of their testimony. (Rev. 12:11)

3:14 – “Laodicea” – means “rights of the people” or “the people rule.”

- God has established the church as an order, not a democracy. (This error is the polar opposite of Nicolaitanism.) The problem with democracies is that the people become more concerned with their piece of the pie than with the whole.
- We will immediately see ourselves cool in our walks with the Lord as we demand our own rights from those around us.

Laodicea (also mentioned in Col. 2:1; 4:13-16; 1 Tim. 6:21)–

Part of a tri-city arrangement with Colossae and Hierapolis. It’s mentioned in the letter to the Colossians – which emphasized the supremacy of Christ and walking worthy of Him. Archippus, mentioned in Col. 4:17, may have been the bishop/leader of the church of that region where there was, at least at one point, a seat of spiritual leadership.

Laodicea was famous for 4 things:

1. wealth and banking – In AD 60 Laodicea was leveled by an earthquake and refused assistance from Rome by saying “we have need of nothing” (v. 17). (They rebuilt the city from their own resources.),
 2. black sheep – were raised in that area producing black wool from which they made famous garments (v. 18),
 3. Phrygian powder – an eye salve to take away infections (v. 18), and
 4. two aqueducts – one from Colossae started ice cold, the other from Hierapolis started from a hot spring; both became tepid before reaching Laodicea (v. 15).
- The church at Laodicea stands in contrast to that at Philadelphia, one with an open door the other with the door closed. We cannot make open doors; God is the one to open them. But we can close them through lukewarm-ness in our walks.
- “the Laodiceans” – Jesus seems to be speaking to the individuals more than to the church corporately.
 - “the Amen” – Lit. “that is true” or “so be it.” The Greek word comes from the Hebrew that carries the idea of being “fixed” or “unchangeable.”
 - This speaks of the immutability of Christ.
 - Christ is much less prone to waver over doctrine and issues than we humans are.

- “True Witness” – Carries the idea of “genuine witness.” (“Witness” is from the Greek “martureo.”) Jesus is the only perfect representation of the Father.
- “Beginning” – (Greek “arche”) Lit. “origin.” Jesus created this world. (John 1:3; Col. 1:15,18)

3:15 – There is no commendation. Jesus goes straight to the rebuke.

- “I could wish that you were cold” – Jesus would rather that than being in the middle.
 - There are 2 views on who the lukewarm are:
 1. The hot are genuine believers and the cold are not real believers making the lukewarm former believers who have fallen away from Jesus and the faith, or
 2. The hot are genuine believers and the cold is the agnostic world making the lukewarm those who are neither openly confessing Christ or declaring themselves to be agnostic. (These are the spiritually correct trying to ride the comfortable medium of both worlds.)

3:16 – “lukewarm” – (Greek “chiliaros”) Lit. “tepid water.”

- Believers (“I love...and chasten”) or unbelievers (“wish...you cold”)?
- Those professing to follow Jesus or in some way classified as Christians.
- “vomit” – Violent expulsion of something that is hurting and sickening the rest of the body.
 - Laodicean Christianity makes all the lines fuzzy – claiming to be believers, yet living like unbelievers; looking good on Sunday, acting evil on Monday.
 - Pick a side...“How long will you halt between two opinions?” (2 Kings 18:21)

3:17 – “Because you say” - The picture of a self-sufficient church...Jesus vomit. (Jonah)

- “you say” – They make declarations out of ignorance. They don’t know what they are talking about. Until they recognize a need or a lack, God cannot do anything to bring them to a knowledge of the Truth.
 - “It is better a church of dead orthodoxy than of neutral evangelicalism” – Henry Morris.
- “you say, ‘I am rich’” – Pride and materialism.
 - Laodicea equated material prosperity and spiritual well-being.
 - This hints at the error of the positive confession, name it and claim it, prosperity doctrines.
 - Laodicea’s economic sufficiency lulled it to sleep spiritually. (Live dependently.)
 - This church stands in contrast to Smyrna who thought they were poor when they were in fact rich before God.
 - Man looks on the outward appearance, but God looks at the heart.” (1 Sam. 16:7)
- “wretched, poor, miserable, blind, and naked” – These are spiritual conditions. Physically, they had these things.

3:18 – “I counsel you” – Jesus talks and counsels with them. He doesn’t just cast them off as they deserve.

- “gold refined in the fire” – Peter talks of the genuineness of our faith which is much more precious than gold is being tested in the fire. (1 Pet. 1:7) Hardships produce depth of relationship and depth of character, and also helps to remove the impurities.
- “nakedness” – Speaks of shame and defeat all through the Bible.
- “white garments” – Representative of our clean standing at salvation. (Isa. 61:10; Rev. 7:9; 19:8)
- “eye salve” – They needed spiritual vision.
 - Jesus healed a blind man with mud in John 9.

3:19 – “chasten” – Lit. “to train, discipline, or educate a child.”

- All that is necessary for correction. (As any good father does...)
- “zealous and repent” – Be excited to repent.

3:20 – “knock” – Lit. “gently and continually knock.”

- The latch of the door is on the inside. Jesus will not force His way upon anyone.
- Jesus stands outside pleading with the unrepentant, lukewarm, and unsaved. After one of the most severe warnings of Jesus, He offers this correction in fellowship.
- “knock...hears my voice” – The knocking is His voice – its in His Word.
- “dine with him” – Sign of fellowship, close friendship, and oneness.
 - God is not concerned merely with relationship. He wants fellowship!
 - The cure for lukewarm-ness is renewed fellowship with Jesus.

3:21 – “sit with me on My throne” – Wonder if John flashbaked 60 years to when his mom asked that privilege for John and James?

- “overcomes” – By the blood of the lamb and word of their testimony. (Rev. 12:11)

Events between Revelation 3 and 4...

1. Daniel 9:24-27 – 70 seven’s have been ordained for the nation Israel.
 - 69 seven’s from the command to rebuild Jerusalem (on March 14, 445 BC) takes us exactly 173,880 days to the day of Jesus’ triumphal entry (April 6, 32 AD).
 - The Tribulation starts with a peace treaty.
 - Jeremiah 30:7 – The time of Jacob’s trouble.
2. Ezekiel 38:1-9,13; 39:1-8 – Battle in Israel (possibly position of the United States – v. 6).
 - Gog – a personage; Magog/Rosh – Russia; Meshech and Tubal – Moscow and Tubalsk; Persia – Iran; Ethiopia and Libya – black and Muslim northern Africa; Gomer – Germany or former Soviet Republics; Togarmah – Armenia and Turkey
 - Sheba and Dedan – Saudi Arabia; Tarshish – Spain or Great Britain
 - Magog and “those who live in security in the coastlands” – Russia and coastal Europe (but possibly including the United States)
3. 1 Thess. 4:13-5:11 – Rapture of the Church (“harpazo” – 13 times in the NT).
 - The Bible clearly teaches that Jesus’ return is imminent (“you do not know the day or the hour,” “come as a thief in the night,” and “I will come again and receive you to myself”). Any position that requires something to happen before Christ returns cannot say they believe Jesus could come today.
 - 2 Peter 2:9 – God knows how to separate the righteous and the wicked

Chapter 4:

Peter tells us that “judgment begins at the house of God” (1 Pet. 4:17). But it doesn’t end there.

- Revelation 4 now takes us to the heavenly scene. This is the greater reality; we will see this for ourselves some day.

4:1 – “After these things...after this” – (Greek “meta tauta”) The third segment of Revelation. (1:19)

- “these things” – The things of the Church age.
- “first voice” – What John heard in Ch. 1.
- “trumpet...come up here...I will show you” – Indicative of the rapture?

- The Greek word for church, “ecclesia,” was used 19 times in Ch. 1-3. But it won’t be used again until 22:16. We won’t see the Church again until Rev. 19 when the Church follows Jesus to earth at His second coming.
- Jesus Christ has two future comings and there is a difference between Christ coming for the Church (John 14:1-4; 1 Cor. 15; 1 Thess. 4) and Christ coming with His Church (Col. 3:4; Jude 14; Rev. 19:11).

4:2 – “throne” – Used 14 times in Ch. 4. (Used 45 times in Rev; 15 times in rest of NT.)

- The throne is the first thing that captures John’s attention.
- The throne John saw is quite possibly the same as “the judgment seat of Christ,” before which all Christians must appear (Rom. 14:10; 2 Cor. 5:10; 1 Cor. 3:13). The judgments described in Rev. 6-19 have to do with the earth and its Christ-rejecting inhabitants, and nothing is said concerning the judgment of believers in heaven for rewards. Consequently, the latter (that is, the judgment of believers for rewards at the “bema” throne of God) can only have occurred immediately after the rapture and prior to the unleashing of the plagues on earth.
- The Tribulation judgment originates at the throne of God, as opposed to the current persecution which originates with Satan (and is only permitted by God).
- “One sat” – It is a King. No congress. No voting. No politics.
 - One of the handful of scenes picturing God on the throne through the Bible. (Exod. 24:9-18; Isa. 6; Ezek. 1)

4:3 – “was like...” – Metaphorical language. Not a physical description.

- God is Spirit and those who worship Him worship in Spirit and in Truth. (John 4:24)
- There is nothing in this scene that dulls or reflects God’s glory in heaven. It is completely unhindered.
- Paul said that we are renewed day by day, not as we look to the things that are seen, but to the things that are unseen. (2 Cor. 4:16,18)
- “jasper” – Rev. 21 describes the stone as clear as crystal. Possibly like a diamond.
- “sardius” – Blood red. Possibly like a laser.
 - Significantly, the jasper and the sardine stone are the first and last of the 12 stones that were on the High Priest’s breastplate (Exod. 28:17-21). This signifies that John is seeing God in relation to the nation of Israel (who He is now turning His full attention to).
- “rainbow” – Also in Gen. 9, Ezek. 1:28, and Rev. 10:1.
- “around the throne” – Not just a half-arc, it’s a full circle around the throne.
- “emerald” – Green. Speaks of life or regeneration.
 - Psalms tells us that God is encompassed by faithfulness (Psalm 89:8). Maybe that is more literal than we would tend to think.

4:4 – “thrones” – These are lesser thrones.

- “twenty-four thrones” – In 1 Chron. 24-25, David established courses of 24 priests and 24 musicians to represent the rest of Israel.
 - There are different ideas on who these 24 elders are:
 1. That they are 12 human representative members of the Church.
 2. That these are an elevated class of angelic beings. (Rev. 7:11,14 – “all the angels stood”.) [This view is favorable to the post-Tribulation rapture view.]
 3. That they are 12 leaders from Israel and the 12 apostles representing Israel and the Church together before God. (If this is true, John would have seen himself.)

- There appearance is similar to the descriptions of the churches that overcome. They are sitting on thrones (3:21). They are dressed in white (3:4-5). They have crowns on their heads (2:10).
 - “crowns” – (Greek “stephanos”) Lit. “the victor’s crown or wreath.” This is in contrast to the “diadem” which is the crown of the king.
- 4:5 – Now the audible stuff starts. Up until this it was all visual.
- Heaven is a loud place, but pleasantly loud.
 - “seven Spirits of God” – The Holy Spirit is before the throne as well. (Rev. 1:4)
 - “lightnings, thunderings” – Similar to Exod. 19:16-19 before the giving of the Law.
- 4:6 – “sea of glass, like crystal” – Before the OT tabernacle stood a sea or basin in which the priest washed before carrying out any of their duties. Here the priests are seated and the water is still. There is no need for further cleansing.
- In the middle of this scene, noise, and creatures, the sea is perfectly calm. This is an awesome stillness. [The Bible says that right now the earth is a raging sea (Ps. 2). But in heaven there is a peace and a calm. Like God is calling for us to enter into our rest (Heb. 4).]
 - Rev. 15:2 says “they stood on a sea of glass mingled with fire.” But that comes after the seals are opened.
 - “four living creatures” – Cherubim guarding the way to the throne of God.
 - Not seraphim (as in Isaiah 6), not the arch-angel (that is Michael), not Gabriel (whatever his order is), but a separate order of angelic being.
 - Satan was the anointed cherub – Ezek. 28. Satan led worship and was described in Eden in his un-fallen state. (Eph. 4 says the children of disobedience are energized by Satan. He may still use music to be accomplishing his purposes.)
 - Cherubim in the OT - Genesis 3; Numbers 2; Ezekiel 1 & 10; and over the ark of the covenant, on the veil before the Holy of Holies (and the OT tabernacle was an earthly representation of a heavenly reality), and on the flags of the camps of Israel.
 - Early Christians, when in hiding, marked there meeting places with an ichthus (SP?) or the cherubim. They believed cherubim represented the 4 gospels.
 - “living creatures” – (Gr. “zoa”) Lit. “living ones.” We get “zoology” from that Greek root.
- 4:7 – “like a calf” – Ezekiel says that face was “like an ox.” (Ezek. 1)
- “like...like...like...like” – Metaphorical language. These aren’t animals as we know them.
- 4:8 – “full of eyes” – The more you see, the more disillusioned and frustrated you can become, unless the Lord is in view. That is why they declare “Holy, holy, holy; Lord God Almighty.”)
- “holy” – Lit. “separate or distinct.” Only two things exist: that which is God and that which is not God. God is the Creator. Everything else is the creation.
 - The thing that will most blow our minds and cause us to worship is how utterly distinct and different He is from us. He is completely different from us is His power, His forgiveness, and His love. Not relying on anything else, no strings attached, unconditionally; He is unlike anything we have ever seen before. Only God’s holiness, His separate love and grace toward us would make it possible for us to be a part of this scene, for there is nothing in us that deserves to be in this scene.
 - The cherubim don’t take a break; they don’t tire; and they don’t get bored singing the same song for all eternity. A glimpse of the Almighty God infuses life into their routine.

- This song is our cue to bow and cast our crowns at the feet of God on the throne. Rev. 19:4 says the cherubim also fall down and worship Him too.

4:9 – “give glory” – Billy Graham has said that “we are never more like Satan than when we touch the glory.”

- “honor” – Lit. “value.”

4:10 – “worship” – (Greek “proskuneo”) Lit. “to bow in the dust.”

- “The real test of being in the presence of God is that you either forget about yourself altogether or see yourself as a small, dirty object. It is better to forget about yourself altogether” – C.S. Lewis.
- “True worship is the relinquishing of your own rights to God” – Joe Focht. Worship is a lifestyle of surrendering, of constantly bowing in the dust before the King.
- “crowns” – Heavenly rewards for faithfulness. (Not salvation, that isn’t a reward.)
 - More crowns in the NT – 1 Pet. 5; 1 Tim. 4; James 1.
- “cast their crowns” – The beautiful crowns with which they have been rewarded for faithful service as overcoming believers will somehow suddenly seem unseemly. They will realize that even their faithfulness has been made possible by His faithfulness.

4:11 – “You created all things” – They are worshipping God here in accordance to His creation, because without that, the people, the elders, and even the cherubim wouldn’t be there.

- God’s creation and creative power make Him worthy to be worshipped.
- “created” – The Greek word carries the same idea as the Hebrew “bara” – to create out of nothing. (Gen. 1:1)
- “by Your will” – (KJV “for your pleasure”) Jesus declares to us the will of God – that we would be held close to Him in relationship. (John 6:39-40) Ephesians says that it is His good pleasure to make us His sons.
 - Greek “thelema” – used 64 times in NT, translated “will” 62 in KJV. (i.e. Matt. 6:10)
 - We were made for God and His pleasure – not the other way around. And we will only ever be complete in this life as we fulfill the purpose for which we were made.
 - Are we willing to relinquish our own rights for His pleasure? This can be a serious affront to our independence and will, but Jesus said “He who loses his life for Me and My sake will find it...”
- The will of God not merely worship or service or obedience, but fellowship and relationship. (Matt. 22:37 – the first commandment is to love the Lord your God with all your heart. See also Rev. 21:3-7 and Matt. 1:23.)
 - God’s pleasure demands vulnerability on His end. (In Ezekiel, God is broken by their whorish heart. Eph. 4:30 says “grieve not the Holy Spirit of God. Hosea shows God’s love for His adulterous bride.) You can only love someone to the degree that you are willing to make yourself vulnerable to them.
 - The weight of the will of God falls on Jesus, not on us.

Chapter 5:

In the middle of this scene with God on the throne and the creatures around the throne worshipping Him, John’s attention soon goes to the scroll in the right hand of God on the throne.

5:1 – “scroll” – Title deed to the creation, the universe’s redemption papers.

- Jeremiah 32 demonstrates this ancient Jewish practice. When property was lost (usually due to debt), a title deed-scroll was made that had the parameters for the property written

on it. On the backside of the scroll would be written the requirements that needed to be met to break the seals and open the scroll.

- Leviticus 25:23-25 tells us of the right of property reacquisition by a near relative, called a kinsman-redeemer. He could bring the property back into the family by paying off the debt of his relative and taking possession of the land.
- Ruth gives us the requirements of the kinsman-redeemer (called in Heb. “ga’al”). There were 4 main requirements: 1. they had to be a blood relative (the nearest had the first rights); 2. they had to be willing to redeem the property (freely); 3. they had to be able to purchase the property (wealthy enough to pay the debt); and 4. they must be willing to take the bride that is associated with the land (as her children would be given the land as an inheritance).
- God gave humankind control of the earth “to tend and keep it” (Gen. 2:15). But Adam and Eve forfeited it over to Satan through sin. And “the wages of sin is death” (Rom. 6:23) for us and for the creation which “groans and labors with birth pangs until now” (Rom. 8:22). As a result, Satan usurped control of the earth, even being called by God “the prince of this world” and “the god of this world.” (John 12:31; 14:30; 16:11; Eph. 2:2; 2 Cor. 4:4; 1 John 5:19). [Satan told Jesus that he had power over all the kingdoms of the world and Jesus didn’t argue with him in Matt. 4:8-12.]
- So to regain control of the earth, Jesus became our kinsman-redeemer; becoming a near relative (“made like us in every way yet without sin”), choosing to pay the redemption price (“humbled Himself to death on the cross”), able to offer the payment of the blood of an innocent substitute, and taking the bride (the Church).
- This explains the parable of Matt. 13:44.
- “seven seals” – The scroll was never meant to be sealed; that is a result of its forfeiture through sin. It will be the seals that bring destruction on earth.
- The seals are not necessarily a punishment; they are the natural consequence of losing the scroll. Either the seals get broken or the earth doesn’t get redeemed.

5:2 – “Who is worthy?” – Not ‘Who is willing?’ Or ‘Who thinks they can?’ There have been many who were willing to take control of the earth, but only one who is worthy.

- There is no naming it and claiming it here!

5:3 – “able” – (Greek “edynato”) Lit. “to have the power or authority.”

5:4 – “wept much” – Lit. “audibly and continually wept.” (This is the same word for when Jesus wept over Jerusalem on His triumphal entry.)

- At least here, if no where else, there is crying in heaven. (John is a time-traveler. He won’t be weeping when we get there.)
- John wept because the situation seemed absolutely hopeless. Without that seal being broken, none of God’s promises would be fulfilled to His people and the earth would remain under the control of Satan throughout eternity.
- “no one was found worthy” – That takes the pressure off us. We cannot make ourselves worthy and we don’t even have to try to be worthy.
- Jesus Christ is completely separate in His holiness, His majesty, and His worthiness. Only He is worthy, because only He is the Lamb as it had been slain.
- Satan’s fall (of Isa. 14) was to try to be like/as God. Humankind’s fall was from Satan’s lie (in Gen. 3) that we would be like God.

- “worthy” – Lit. “qualified;” to break the seals of the scroll.

5:5 – “one of the elders” – Being a redeemed saint, the elder would understand John’s weeping; unlike the angels who desire to look into the things that pertain to the redemption of mankind. (1 Pet. 1:12)

- “Lion of the tribe of Judah” – Referring back to Jacob’s prophecy in Gen. 49:9-10.
 - This is the only time in Revelation that Jesus is referred to as the Lion, in contrast to the many times throughout this book that He is called the Lamb.
- “has prevailed” – (Greek “euikesen”) Lit. “has conquered.” (Translated “overcomes” in letters to churches.)
 - Only Jesus is worthy; the lion who became the lamb.
 - All the imagery here is very Jewish, which would make sense if the Church is raptured.

5:6 – “Lamb” – The Greek word for “Lamb” literally means “a little pet lamb.” Jesus is called “the Lamb” at least 28 times in the book of Revelation.

- “as it had been slain” – Lit. “with the marks of slaughter.” (Isaiah 50; 53; John 20:27)
 - Jesus brings this scene to a focus. Standing at the center of time and eternity, Jesus brings all the disjointed glimpses together. (Rev. 5:12)
 - We may be very surprised with the first thing we will see in heaven very possibly being Jesus Christ still bearing the marks of His slaughter.
 - Without Jesus bearing the marks of slaughter, none of this makes sense. The slaughtered lamb stands today in the midst of all we do and are about in our day.
- “midst of the throne” – Jesus goes unnoticed in the heavenly scene until this point. (“He had no form or comeliness...that we should desire Him” – Isa. 53:2)
 - Jesus was on the same throne with the Father; He was nearer to Him than either the elders or ministers to the churches.
- “seven horns and seven eyes...seven Spirits of God” – It is the completed power and completed vision sent to all the earth in the form of the Holy Spirit resting on Jesus.

5:7 – “took the scroll” – Jesus takes the title-deed to Himself. (Dan. 7:13-14)

5:8-14 – When Jesus takes the scroll, all heaven breaks loose.

5:8 – “harp” – Stringed instruments in heaven.

- “bowls” – Lit. “broad, shallow bowl.”
- “incense...prayers of the saints” – All the prayers spoken in God’s will/name, that God has chosen to answer at a future date.
 - Ps. 141:2 – “Let my prayer be set before you as incense.”
 - Ps. 56:8 – “You put my tears in a bottle.”
 - We may very well see our own prayers before God someday. The prayers of the saints are all ultimately answered as Christ opens the scroll.
- “harp...prayers” – In song and in prayer, they are falling down in worship.
 - Worship songs should be prayers put to music sung to God with, not just words, but a pouring out of the heart.

5:9 – “new song” – The song is new in character; a song that has never been sung before.

- “sang” – The first particular mention of singing in Revelation.
- “you have redeemed us” – Song of redemption. (The first was for creation – 4:11.)

- “redeemed” – Lit. “to purchase.” The Greek word was used for the purchase of a slave by paying off the slave’s debt for the purpose of setting the slave free.
- “us” – Some translations say “men” or “them.” But of the 95 Greek manuscripts, 23 of the 24 manuscripts containing vs. 9-10 have “us” making the singers of this song be the Church.
- “by your blood” – The purchase price of redemption.
- “of every tribe and tongue” – The Gospel has reached to the ends of the earth, as Jesus predicted; even the tribe of ‘the man on the island.’

5:10 – “kings and priests” – Three times in the book of Revelation is said that believers are to be make kings and priests. (Rev. 1:6; 5:10; 20:6)

- “we shall reign” – Speaking of the actual millennial reign upon the earth. We will reign with Christ in righteousness.
 - There are no divisions in this scene, everyone there will be a prince or a princess.
 - Christ’s sacrifice accomplishes this for us too.

5:11 – “angels” – These are not the cherubim, but a different class of angelic beings.

- The angels chime in on the chorus to this song. They cannot sing the verse.
- “ten thousand” – Lit. “myriad.” In Hebrews 12:22, this word is translated “innumerable.”

5:12 – “worthy” – (Greek “axion”) Lit. “to weigh as much as.”

- Col. 1:10 – “walk worthy of the Lord.”
- Eph. 4:1 – “walk worthy of the calling with which you were called.”

5:13 – “every creature” – This is a very broad statement.

- Rom. 8:19 – “the creation eagerly waits for the revealing of the sons of God.”
- May be referring to the time when “at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on the earth, and of those under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord.” (Phil. 2:10-11)

5:14 – “four living creatures” – The cherubim.

- “said” – Lit. “continually and repeatedly said.”
 - Jesus’ will is for us to be with Him, seeing His glory (John 17:24). One day we will see this in all reality and actuality.

Chapter 6:

6:1 – “the Lamb” – Jesus in redemptive form.

- “one of the seals” – This begins the 7-year Tribulation period beginning with the ratification of a peace treaty between Israel and the anti-Christ.
 - The Great Tribulation is specifically the last 3½ years of that 7-year Tribulation period.
 - The wrath of the Lamb has already come by Rev. 6:16-17 and is completed in Rev. 15:1.
- “Come and see” – Lit. “Come.” Context of v. 2 seems to imply that it is John coming and seeing and not speaking of the horses coming forth.

6:2 – “horse” – The imagery of the four horseman come from Zech. 1:8-17; 6:1-8.

- “he who sat on it” – Jesus Christ or Anti-Christ? Anti-Christ followed by destruction.
 - At this time, Jesus is in heaven opening the seals. We will see Jesus coming on the scene on a white horse in Rev. 19:11.
 - The anti-Christ will come as a man of peace. He will come on the scene suddenly and “shall confirm a covenant with many” (Dan. 9:27). He will be a great orator and come with

- “flatteries” (Dan. 11). He will win the favor of the Jews by granting permission to the Jews to build a Temple on the Mount in Jerusalem.
- At this time, deception will no longer be restrained and people will be given over to “strong delusion.” (2 Thess. 2:11)
- “bow” – The anti-Christ will hold military power to back up the treaty. (Dan. 7:8,20; 8:9; 11:40-43 – warfare.)
 - NATO has re-written their mission to become the world’s police force.
- “crown” – (Greek “stephanos”) Lit. “the victor’s crown.” [Not “diadem” – the sovereign’s crown.]
 - Rev. 13:2,4 – Anti-Christ will be given “exousia” by Satan. (Mt. 4)
 - The word “authority” (also translated “power”) is the Greek word “exousia.” It is used 21x in Revelation, its last occurrence being 22:14, “Blessed are they that wash their robes, that they may have the right (power) to come to the tree of life.”
 - “Power (exousia) means authority to do a thing.” (Liddell and Scott)
 - Church has “dunamis” power which is not left to the discretion of the individual.
- “crown was given” – Through some political election or oppression, this position will be willingly handed to the anti-Christ.
- “conquering and to conquer” – By deception first, then later by might.
 - Jesus warned us of deception and lawlessness. Mt. 24:4-12 – “many will come in my name” using Jesus to deceive many. Mt. 24:12 - “Lawlessness will abound” causing the ‘agape’ of many to grow cold.
 - The restraining force on the earth is the work of the Holy Spirit in the Church. (The world we are living in now is the restrained version.)
 - Warning...2 Thess. 2:1-12:
 1. There will be a falling away – a great apostasy.
 2. Lawlessness is already working – in the world and around the Church.
 3. People are looking for a miracle maker.
 4. If people don’t believe the truth, they will fall for the lie.
 - 1 Thess. 5:3 says “when they say ‘Peace and safety!’ then sudden destruction comes upon them.” That destruction comes first in the form of natural disasters (things we see currently on earth, just greatly intensified): deception, war, famine, death, martyrdom, cosmic disturbances...

6:4 – “take peace” – Evidently, up to this point there is peace.

- He is not killing outright (supernaturally), but simply letting humans get at it by taking peace from the earth.
- This world without peace: By 1990, \$3 trillion/year (or \$8½ billion/day) was spent on military spending worldwide. The US has a 5 earth arsenal; Russia has a 4 earth arsenal.
 - Some say that if we would take government spending on armaments for one year, we could feed the entire earth for 100 years.
- More were killed by handguns in the previous century than were killed by war in that century.
- Over 40 million abortions over the last 40 years in the US.

6:6 – “denarius” – A day’s wage.

- In John’s day, they could buy 8 quarts of wheat with a day’s wage.
- A modern-day salary of \$48,000/year works out to \$200/day. At this time, all will go to wheat and barley.
- Currently, nearly 50% of the world’s population is malnourished to some degree.

- Some statistics say that an average American family throws away enough food to feed a family of 6 in a 3rd world country every day.
- “quart” – Or “measure.” About 1½ pints to 1 quart.
- “three quarts of barley” – Normally, you could get 24 measures for the same price.
 - A quart of wheat was enough food for one person for one day. Three quarts of barley, while much less nutritious than wheat, was enough to feed a small family for one day.
- “the oil and the wine” – The privileges of the wealthy.
 - The rich get richer and the poor get poorer.
- Famine always follows war.

6:8 – “pale” – (Greek “cloros”) Yellow/green color. The idea is sickly.

- “Death” – The name of the rider. The only horse whose rider is named.
 - After WWI, more people died of influenza and typhoid than died during the war itself.
- “Death, and Hades” – Death takes the physical body. Hades takes the spiritual body.
- “over a fourth of the earth” – Over ¼ (likely well over 1 billion people) of the earth’s population will be dead by the end of the fourth seal.
 - A quarter of the earth’s population corresponds to all of South America, Central America, and North America eliminated.
- “sword” – The red horse.
- “hunger” – The black horse.
- “death” – The pale horse.
- “beasts” – (Greek “therion”) Usually speaks of political or military leaders. These beasts speak of tyranny.
 - ‘Therion’ used 38 times in Revelation; nearly every time it speaks of human, political rulers. Most often the word used to refer to the Anti-Christ.

6:9 – “under the altar” – When the OT priest presented an animal sacrifice, the victim’s blood was poured out at the base of the brazen altar. (Lev. 4:7,18,25,30)

- “souls” – What does a soul look like? This is a person without a body.
 - This is not soul-sleep. When we are apart from the body, we are “present with the Lord.” (2 Cor. 5:8)
 - These souls are conscious and struggling with why the wicked prosper and the good are suffering.
- “those who had been slain” – The martyrdom of believers during the Tribulation.
 - Dan. 7:21 and Rev. 13:7 says the Anti-Christ will war against the saints and prevail.
 - The Tribulation will likely be the greatest time of evangelism the world has ever seen. But it will also be the greatest time of martyrdom this world has ever seen as well.
 - The rise of beheadings (Rev. 20:4) to evoke a response worldwide.
- “testimony” – (Greek “marturia”) The Greek root word we derive our English “martyr” from.

6:10 – “You judge and avenge our blood” – They don’t ask for forgiveness, but for vengeance. They are asking for vengeance of the unjust deaths of those left behind to go through the Tribulation.

- “those who dwell on the earth” – Lit. “earth-dwellers.” Unbelievers on earth.

6:11 – “white robes” – How do you clothe a soul? (Rev. 19:8)

- You can only make your eternal destination sure while you are still alive.
- “killed as they were” – Beheaded. (Rev. 7:14; 20:4)
- “completed” – Even the death of the saints is under God’s sovereignty.

- God is not slow in keeping His promises as some understand slowness, He is patient, not willing that any should perish. (2 Pet. 3:9)

6:12 – “sixth seal” – It seems to take time for these seals to be fulfilled and come to completion.

- “behold” – Lit. “consider this.” This scene amazes John.
- “great earthquake” – An earthquake that effects the entire globe (possibly accompanied by volcanic activity that would block out the sun and moon.)
 - At least three earthquakes in Revelation: 6:12, 11:13, and 16:18-19.
 - Haggai 2:6-7 – I will shake the heavens.
 - Joel 2:30-31 – Sun turned to darkness...before the great and terrible day of the Lord.
- “sun became black” – Even with earthquakes like Krakatoa and Mt. St. Helens, the soot from the eruptions hung in the air and darkened the sky leaving the moon look blood red.

6:13 – “stars of heaven” – Greek speaks of any heavenly body; meteors or asteroids.

- In Winslow, Arizona, a meteor left a crater over 1 mile wide.
- The earth wobbles once every 7-11 years.
- Chuck Missler says a series of nuclear explosions could effect the earth’s orbit. Hal Lindsey says the earthquake and fallout seem to be the results of a nuclear exchange.
- “late figs” – The dried up figs left after the harvest that would blow off in the wind.

6:14 – “as a scroll” – John is trying to describe its appearance. It is not a scroll, but it rolls up like a scroll would.

- Some have equated this to a possible nuclear mushroom cloud.
- “mountain and island was moved” – Tremendous geological shift.

6:15 – “the great men, the rich men, the commanders, the mighty men, every slave and every free man” - There is no advantage to anyone here; the rich and the poor, the powerful and the weak, the slave and the free all experience the same thing.

- In the third seal, the wealthy were still relatively unaffected. (Rev. 6:6)
- The people that initially marveled at the anti-Christ now beg to be dead. So much for the power of the anti-Christ.

6:16 – “fall on us” – The people don’t cry out in repentance; they cry out in agony and would rather die. People would rather die, than turn to God. People will rather pray for rocks to crush them, than for God to preserve them.

- “wrath” – The Church has not been appointed to wrath. (Rom. 5:9; 1 Thess. 1:10; 5:9)

6:17 – “who is able to stand?” – No one. But all will have to stand before God someday.

Chapter 7:

Ch. 7 takes us back to heaven and gives us the view of God’s work in the midst of the seals.

- This chapter answers the question of Rev. 6:17. There are 144,000 who will be able to stand in the day of the wrath of the Lamb.
- Before the supernatural judgments begin some are sealed for preservation.
- Comparing and contrasting the 144,000 sealed and preserved through the tribulation (v. 1-8) with the multitudes of other believers that will be martyred during this 7 year period (v. 9-17).

- 7:1 – “four angels” – Despite the physical results and corresponding judgments, it is ultimately the angels that are holding back the wind.
- “four corners” – Or “four quadrants.”
 - “four winds” – Dan. 7:2 – “the four winds of heaven were stirring up the Great Sea.”
 - “wind should not blow” – Possibly having an impact on the famine from the third seal (6:5-6), and likely contributing to the drought accompanying the two witnesses of Rev. 11:3-6.
 - Possibly a result of sorts from the asteroid shower in the sixth seal. The earth will have already slowed in its revolving around the sun, and is likely slowed (or at least disturbed) in its rotation on its axis.
 - Isaiah 24:19-23
 - “After these things” – The sealed have to go through the first set of judgments with the earth dwellers (much as Israel went through the first set of plagues against Egypt but was spared the latter, more severe, ones.)
- 7:3 – “we” – Plural.
- “Do not harm...till” – There is a delay here, but it could be really short.
 - “sealed” – The two groups of seals in the tribulation: 144,000 sealed to preservation with the name of their God (Rev. 14) and others sealed with the mark of the beast for eternal destruction at the midpoint of the 7-year period (Rev.13).
 - This is similar to the sealing on the Jews in Ezek. 9:1-7.
 - This is not the Church where believers are individually sealed by the Holy Spirit upon their salvation for delivery to heaven (Eph. 1:13-14; 4:30). [The Church is likely raptured.]
 - Also, not the Jehovah’s Witnesses, who have well over 250,000 members.
 - Also, not Herbert W. Armstrong who claimed to contain the 144,000 in the Worldwide Church of God – members need only to send tithes.
 - Also, not Ellen G. White of the 7th Day Adventists and Brigham Young of the Mormons.
 - “servants” – (Greek “doulous”) The same word used by Paul and James when referring to themselves as the “servants” or “bond-slaves” of Jesus Christ.
- 7:4 – “of Israel” – The 144,000 are Jews. God even knows what tribe they are from.
- Herod the Great destroyed all historical records of the Jews because he felt threatened when Jesus came on the scene. But God knows...
 - Israel is the key to Biblical prophecy; especially as Israel is occupying the land.
- 7:5-8 – Dan and Ephraim aren’t included. Those tribes introduced idolatry to Israel and God cursed the idolatrous tribes in Deuteronomy 29.
- Some believe that the Anti-Christ will come from Dan. (Gen. 49:17)
 - Dan is mentioned first when the land is divided in Ezek. 48 for the millennial kingdom. This means there will be some of Dan to survive the Tribulation though not sealed of the angel of v. 2.
 - The tribes are listed 29 times in the Bible. There are many variations.
- 7:9 – “of all nations” – Not just Israel, but even the man on the island.
- Matt. 24:14 possibly speaks of this group being saved through the witness of the 144,000 sealed Jews.
 - “great multitude” – The multitude of martyred tribulation believers.
 - These seem to be the remainder spoken of in Rev. 6:9-11.

- Some take 2 Thess. 2:10-12 to say that those who have heard the Gospel and rejected it before the Rapture will not be able to get saved during the Tribulation. (The Spirit's removal has to do with His restraining power, not His saving ability.)
- "palm branches in their hands" – Probably pointing to the Feast of Tabernacles/Ingathering.
 - There are a lot of similarities between this crowd and that crowd on the road to Bethany to Jerusalem on the day that Jesus make His descent from the Mount of Olives.

7:10 – "Salvation belongs to our God" – An oasis in the midst of these judgments. Jesus is still the focus.

7:11 – "all the angels" – These are not the 24 elders. The angels are breaking into the chorus of this song again.

7:12 – "thanksgiving" – Differs from the chorus of the Church's song – here 'thanksgiving' replaces 'riches.' (Rev. 5:12)

- The songs are different and the groups seem different too. Chapter 5 being the Church raptured out of the Tribulation and Chapter 7 being that of believers being martyred during the Tribulation.

7:14 – "Sir, you know" – John refuses to answer this loaded question.

- "out of" – (Greek "ek") Lit. "out of the midst of."
- "the great tribulation" – Lit. "the tribulation – the great one."
 - This scans down to the end of the Tribulation period. Those martyred in the Great Tribulation are those who have chosen not to receive the mark of the beast and who are not of the 144,000 sealed of Israel.
 - This phrase is used only 3 times in the Bible (Mt. 24:21; Rev. 2:22; 7:14).
- "the blood of the Lamb" – They aren't saved because they are martyrs. They are saved because they have chosen to be covered by the blood of Jesus rather than their own.

7:15 – "serve" – Those saved during the Tribulation will serve in the Kingdom Age, as opposed to the Church which seems will rule and reign with Christ.

- "day and night" – This seems to be referring to the Kingdom Age. There are no day and night in heaven.
- "temple" – (Greek "naos") Lit. "the holy of holies part of the temple."
 - The temple speaks of God's presence.

7:16-17 – "shall...will" – Still future at this point in Revelation.

- "anymore" – They suffered these things during the Tribulation period.
- "the Lamb...will shepherd" – In glory, the Lamb is the shepherd.
- "wipe away every tear" – Rev. 21:4
 - This seems to be God's heart's desire for the people of the Tribulation period.

Chapter 8:

Ch. 8 brings us to the seventh and final seal on the scroll. The judgments of the trumpets and the vials are nested in this final seal.

8:1 – "He" – Jesus.

- "silence" – This must be an odd, deafening silence; especially in light of the noise typically surrounding the throne (4:8 – cherubim resting not; 5:9 – multitudes praising).

- “Be silent...for He has risen up.” (Zech. 2:13)
 - This is the only mention of silence in Revelation.
 - This is the point of no return. Within the 7th seal are the 7 trumpets and 7 vials. In this seal are the final, but most destructive judgments of all.
 - God seems to be brooding over this impending series of events. God’s heart must be breaking at the destruction coming upon the world He loves. He is patient and desires for all people to be saved. He doesn’t take pleasure in the death of the wicked. This must hurt.
 - All the angels, cherubim, and people are looking at the heart-broken Father on the throne.
- 8:2 – “given seven trumpets” – Silently the 7 trumpets are given to 7 angels surrounding the throne.
- “angels who stand before God” – These are not archangels. Michael is “the archangel” (Jude 9). Gabriel is one of these angels standing before God (Luke 1:19)
- 8:3 – “another angel” – Some have claimed this to be Jesus; but that doesn’t seem right.
- “another” – (Greek “allos”) Lit. “another of the same kind.”
 - “censor” – The Greek word is derived from the word for “frankincense.”
- 8:3-5 – “censor...altar...incense” – This is the heavenly reality which the temple and tabernacle pointed to.
- “much...all...filled” – The severity is building here.
 - “prayers of the saints” – The savor of the prayers of the saints must serve as consolation to the breaking heart of God.
 - Ps. 73 – “How long will the righteous perish while the wicked prosper?”
 - “noises, thunderings, lightnings, and an earthquake” – Without mention of rain or clouds. It would be an awesome sight to have lightning bolts crashing down from a sun-filled sky and clear atmosphere.
- 8:6 – “trumpets” – Obviously supernatural judgments (1-4 on ecology, 5-7 on mankind).
- This is different from the seals in that the seals gave way to tyranny, war, famine, and an earthquake. Those things have happened before and could lead the people to explain these occurrences apart from God. But the trumpet judgments are going to make it know that these things are coming directly from God.
 - At the same time, there is the testimony of the two prophets and an eagle/angel traveling through the sky. God has not left Himself without witness. (Rev. 11)
 - It is God’s mercy to only destroy a third. The upcoming vials will destroy all.
 - “When your judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world learn righteousness.” (Isa. 26:9)
- 8:7 – “hail...fire...blood” – No symbolic language, actual hail, blood, and fire from the sky.
- God doesn’t need nuclear weapon to pull this off. He did similar things in Egypt without the help of nuclear warfare. See the plague of hail in Exod. 9:23-24.
 - “trees” – The Greek word usually means “fruit trees.”
 - The destruction on the fruit trees and the green grass would devastate the meat and milk industries.
 - “grass” – Lit. “herbage.” Grass, trees, plants, etc. Everything that was green is gone.
 - With the wind stopped in Ch. 7 and the inevitable ensuing drought, the earth foliage would be extremely dry and combustible.

- This will be a great affront to tree-huggers. Their mistake is to miss that the greatest resource on the planet is not the environment, but humans. And the most dangerous threat to the environment overall is sin.

8:8 – “like a great mountain” – Not an actual mountain.

- “the sea” – May refer to the Mediterranean, but effects all the oceans. And the context of this judgment seems to be directly on “earth dwellers” (v. 13).

8:9 – “destroyed” – Scientists have identified 2,000 asteroids of the large variety. Only one asteroid the size of 1 km hitting the earth would be more destructive than a limited nuclear exchange (without the nuclear fallout.) If it hit the ocean, it would produce 200 ft tidal waves all over the earth. This collision would likely send the earth into a wobble.

- Because of the earth’s atmosphere, the earth has been protected. But the pock-marked moon gives ample evidence of an asteroid’s destructive capabilities.
- “third of the ships” – Proportionally, this would be over 1.5 million men and could quite possibly take out a nuclear submarine.
 - 80% of the earth’s oxygen comes from plankton. That would equate to a 20-25% reduction in the earth’s oxygen.
 - The animals destroyed in this catastrophe constitute the lowest and most basic components of the world’s food chain.

8:10 – “star” – Lit. “any heavenly body.”

- “springs of water” – The poison here is reaching to the water table and affecting the underground sources of water..
 - This judgment is on the fresh water. The previous judgment was on the salt water.

8:8-10 – “like a great mountain...like a torch” – One is mostly solid; the other is mostly fluid.

8:11 – “star is Wormwood” – In Job, we are told that God has all the stars named.

- “Wormwood” – The corresponding OT word is “hemlock.” Hemlock is poison.
 - In the OT, wormwood always relates to God’s judgment on a rebellious Israel.
 - In the Ukraine, Chernobyl means “wormwood.”

8:12 – “struck” – This Greek word is used only once in the NT and its etymology and meaning are somewhat uncertain. This phenomenon cannot be merely explained by clouds or haze in the sky, since it is specifically said to be caused by a smiting of the heavenly bodies.

- “third of the sun...moon...stars” – A third of the whole or a third of its power.
 - This is only temporary. The sun will increase in intensity 7 times later. (Rev. 16:8-9)
 - In 6 verses (7-12), ‘third’ is used 9 times. It is God’s mercy to delay the total destruction. He is slowly taking the things we take for granted, the sunrise, drinking water, green grass and growing crops, food, oxygen...
 - God is long-suffering to bring some to repentance.

8:13 – “angel” – or “eagle” or both. (This could be a cherub.)

- “woe” – In Greek it is not a threat, but a cry of anguish.
- “woe...because of the remaining blasts” – The first four trumpets are not only judgments in themselves, but warnings of the last three trumpet judgments which will be far more severe in character.

- The prophet Jeremiah spoke of the sun and moon as tokens of God's faithfulness to His promise to the nation of Israel and as symbols of their continuance as long as the earth endures. (Jer. 31:35-36)
- "inhabitants of the earth" – Lit. "earth-dwellers." (Rev. 3:10; 6:10)
- "heard" – This is an audible.
 - It is a supernatural warning before the punishments to come directly upon the people.

Chapter 9:

The 5th and 6th trumpets are the first judgments aimed directly at humans. The trumpet judgments are directly from the spiritual realm. And the 5th-7th judgments constitute the 3 "woes" of Rev. 8:13.

- Time may have elapsed as 9:4 makes mention of green grass again (see 8:7).
- Revelation 9 gives a deeper glimpse of the spiritual realm and of hell in particular.
- Take special note of the metaphorical language ("like" and "as") of this chapter.

9:1 – "star" – Speaks of a personage... "him" in v. 1 and "the angel" of v. 11.

- Isa. 14:13 – "above the stars of God."
- Luke 10:18 – "I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven."
- "fallen" – Greek aorist tense. Completed in the past and accomplished by the subject.
 - The star caused him or itself to fall to the earth.
- "was given the key" – This angel has no power to move outside the permission of God.

9:2 – "bottomless pit" – (Greek "abussos") Lit. "the shaft or hole to the abyss." (Rev. 9:11; 11:7; 17:8; and 20:1-3)

- 1 Pet. 3:19, 2 Pet. 2:4, and Jude 6 speak of angels being held in a compartment of Hades until the day that Hades is sent into Gehenna. (Rev. 20:14)
- Jewish rabbis teach that the abyss is actually in the center of the earth, as it would be the only place without a bottom.
- The demon called "Legion" in the man of Gadara asked not to be tormented in the abyss before the set time. (Luke 8:28-31)
- "smoke" – The first time in Scripture smoke is seen is found in Gen. 19:28.
- "sun and the air were darkened because of the smoke" – Here we see smoke from a spiritual realm directly impacting the physical universe.

9:3 – "locusts" – Spiritual beings of some sort left out of the pit.

- Joel 1:4-2:11 seems to scan down to these locusts.
- Solomon spoke of physical locusts in Prov. 30:27, that they do not have a king. But these spiritual locusts from the pit have a king, Abaddon/Apollyon (Rev. 9:11).
- "as the scorpions" – These are not actual scorpions.

9:4 – "not to harm the grass" – Going against the nature of a true, physical locust.

- These locusts have intelligence. They know who to get and who to stay away from.
- "the seal of God on their foreheads" – From Rev. 7:3.
 - God is beginning to make a distinction between believers and earth-dwellers.

9:5 – "not given authority" – Their power is God given and under His sovereignty.

- "for five months" – Five months is the lifespan of the typical locust.
 - Five months was also the duration of the rising flood waters in the days of Noah. (Gen. 7:24-8:1)

- “as the torment of a scorpion” – Not actual scorpion stings, but even worse, these stings last (or the people are repeatedly struck) for a total of 5 months.
 - Those struck by scorpions say it feels like the entire nervous system is on fire. And the scorpion of the Middle East is said to produce the most painful sting known to man.
 - Psalm 22 speaks of Jesus being encircled by the “bulls of Bashan” while on the cross. That may speak of spiritual creatures much like this and may indicate that Jesus took this bit of hell on the cross for us as well.

9:6 – “seek death and will not find it” – Much like hell itself.

- God will not allow the spirit to disconnect from the body under any conditions. The people could possibly remain alive without limbs, gunshot wounds through the chest or head, or paralyzed as a result of failed suicide attempts.
- This is worse than the judgment at the Flood (Gen. 6). At least there they could drown.
- This is harsh and merciful at the same time. Harsh that they must go through the pain with no possibility of release. Merciful that God is giving them as many opportunities to turn as possible. (God takes no pleasure in the death of the wicked – Ezek. 18:23.)

9:7-10 – “like...” - Note all the figurative language, making a distinction between what is stated clearly and what is described through metaphorical language.

- These locusts are not Apache helicopters coming out of the center of the earth.

9:10 – “five months” – The lifespan of a common locust. It seems that at the end of the 5 month stint these locusts return to the abyss. (They are spiritual beings, so they would not die.)

9:11 – “Abaddon” – The Hebrew word is used 6 times in the OT and every time is translated “destruction.”

- “Apollyon” – means “destroyer.”
 - It is in the nature of Satan to “steal, kill, and destroy” (John 10:10) and he does so with ferocity and insanity. We see that clearly in his dealings with Job.

9:13 – “altar” – The altar of incense (Rev. 6:10; 8:2-4) is associated again with the prayers of the saints.

9:14 – “Euphrates” – This river was a busy place in the OT – Adam/Eve, Noah, tower of Babel, Abraham’s family, Assyria/Babylon, and the reach of the Davidic Israelite empire.

9:15 – “prepared for the hour” – This is a specific and chosen time period.

- “hour and day and month and year” – Some scholars believe this is speaking of a time duration of 13+ months.
- “bound...prepared...released” – These are fallen angels under God’s control and will fulfill God’s purposes.
- “to kill” – These creatures have the power to kill, unlike the creatures under the 5th trumpet.
- “kill a third” – In addition to the ¼ that died by the fourth seal.
 - The total now killed in the first 3½ period of the Tribulation is over ½ of the total population of the earth at the beginning of the Tribulation.

9:16 – “horsemen” – John doesn’t tell us where these come from, but somehow they are connected with the 4 angels.

- The Bible speaks of an authority structure in the demonic realm where principalities, powers, and rulers are over the fallen angels.
- “200 hundred million” – These are demonic creatures and not the present standing army of any current world power including the Chinese.

9:17 – “vision” – Lit. “sight or appearance.” (Rev. 4:3)

- “like” – Note again the difference between the symbolic and literal language.
- “heads of the horses were like the heads of lions” – Perhaps similar to the fabled centaurs.

9:18 – “By these three” – The power to kill seems to rest in the horses alone (and not on the riders thereof). And the power comes from what they spew from their mouths.

9:19 – “they do harm” – The serpent-tails may not kill, but they can strike.

9:20 – “rest of mankind” – Does this mean that from here on out none get saved or will some repent later? It seems like some will refuse the mark of the beast. (Rev. 19)

- “repent” – (Greek “metanoeo”) Lit. “to change the mind, make a U-turn.”
 - Repentance is a decision of surrender; the first and necessary step to salvation.
 - The repeated state of non-repentance throughout Revelation – 9:20; 11:10; 16:11; 19:19.
- “did not repent” – In God’s eyes, to this point, repentance is still an option.
 - The judgments of God do not generally bring people to repentance. People generally harden their hearts against His judgments. But it is the goodness of God that brings man to repentance (Rom. 2:4). Therefore in the day of grace, we stress the goodness of God above the judgments of God in order to see people come to Him in repentance.
- “they should not worship” – The list from v. 20 points to the first table of the Law.
- “worship demons” – They are worshipping the demons that are killing them. They want them, so God is turning them over and letting them have their hearts’ desire.
- “worship” – A great deal of “religion” will be practiced at this time, but it will be false religion. People will worship the works of their hands, which could well include the buildings they construct, the machines they make, and the cities they build, as well as their idols.
- “gold, silver” – Money and wealth.

9:21 – “murders...” – The list from v. 21 points to the second table of the Law.

- “sorceries” – (Greek “pharmakeia”) Lit. “drug use, abuse, and sales.” (Gal. 5:20)
 - Drug use and abuse can open an individual to demonic, spiritual realms.
- “sexual immorality” – (Greek “porneia”) Fornication, not just adultery.
 - There will be no atheists and humanists at this point. There will be plenty of evidence of God and the spiritual realm all around them. It is just that they cannot give up their idols because they love their idols more than God and His light. (John 3:19-20)

Chapter 10:

Chapters 10, 11, and 12 give snapshots of the events taking place at the mid-point of the 7-year period. They seem to be nearly simultaneous. (Ch. 13 will kick off the 2nd 3½ year period of the Tribulation.)

- The angelic activity of Rev. 10 draws such a stark contrast with the demonic activity of Rev. 9. It is to show God’s power over all, the duty of ministers (especially John), and God’s ministry to ministers until the end comes.
- As we had a break between seals 6 and 7, we also break between trumpets 6 and 7.

- 10:1 – “mighty angel” – Two views: 1. Jesus Christ. The description closely mirrors that of Jesus in Rev. 1. (But that makes this chapter parenthetical or, worse, ethereal/non-physical.) 2. Angel. John has seen Jesus before and likely would have called him that.
- The phrase “mighty angel” is used to describe the angel of Rev. 5:2. (See another angel with great authority in 18:1.)
 - It seems the angel is still speaking in 11:2 where he speaks of “my two witnesses.”
 - “another” – (Greek “allos”) Lit. “another of the same kind.”
 - “angel” – Lit. “messenger.”
 - “coming down from heaven” – The origin of this angel is heaven (as compared to the spiritual creatures of Rev. 9).
- 10:2 – “little book” – (Greek “bibliaridion”) Diminutive form of the word for “scroll” in Rev. 5.
- When one inherits or purchases a large tract of land, it is permissible and common to subdivide that tract into many smaller lots, which can then either be sold to subsequent buyers or transmitted to subsequent heirs.
- 10:3 – “seven thunders uttered” – The angel gets a powerful response. He seems to carry some authority.
- This angel comes either as God or as God’s representative.
 - “right foot upon...” – Idiom of having authority or dominance over. (Joshua on the necks of the kings after his victory at Aijalon – Josh. 10:24.)
- 10:4 – “seven thunders uttered” – Thunder doesn’t speak. But somehow John understands what they are saying.
- “seal up those things” – Seems inconsistent with the unveiling of Revelation. John was earlier told to write (1:19) and will be told later to not seal up the words of the book (22:10).
 - No doubt there is much that Revelation doesn’t share concerning end times events. It only intends to share those things concerning the revealing of Jesus.
 - God’s ministers/servants are constantly in the place of hearing mysteries and secrets concerning God, His heart, and the minister’s present situation that he is unable to share with those around him.
 - Many commentators try to guess what was said here, but John seals it and we won’t know it.
- 10:6 – “swore by him” – Hebrews tells us that God swears by Himself for there is nothing greater to swear by. Here the angel seems to be swearing by someone in heaven while he is on earth, but we don’t know for sure. (It could also be Jesus swearing by Himself.)
- “who created heaven...the earth...and the sea” – Speaking of Jesus Himself. (Col. 1:16-17)
 - “delay” – (Greek “chronos”) Lit. “time or delay.” Context seems to determine the proper translation to be delay.
 - “delay no longer” – As we near the mid-point of the Tribulation, there is a sense of urgency for its completion.
 - “as He declared to His servants the prophets” – The entirety of the prophetic Scriptures will find their fulfillment by the end of Revelation.
- 10:7 – “declared” – (Greek “evangelizo”) Lit. “share the good news.”
- “mystery” – Truth not attainable by human reason alone.
 - Prophets were evangelized before they’d properly prophecy of the good news.

10:8 – “the voice which I heard from heaven” – John again hears and responds to the voice from heaven.

- “Go, take” – That is a pretty imposing request for John to approach this angel.

10:9-10 – “take and eat” – We speak of “devouring books.”

- Similar to Jesus’ institution of communion to “take and eat” His body which is an act of accepting, identifying with, and becoming one with.
- Psalm 19:10, 119:103; Jer. 15:16; and Ezek. 2:6-3:3 speak of ingesting the Word.
- This command to devour the Word of God comes in the context of a time when the people surrounding John are living in rebellion (9:20-21). He must eat the Word to not become like them. (In an age of sin and rebellion, devour the Word.)
- “sweet as honey...became bitter” – God’s Word is sweet as we touch the promises and work of God; identification with us through Jesus’ incarnation and our justification, sanctification, and glorification accomplished by Jesus. But it becomes bitter as it touches our life; removal of continuing sin in the life of the believer and eternal punishment for the unrepentant.
- “Unless when you read the Bible you are also left with a bitter taste in your belly, then you aren’t really getting it” – John Courson. A true understanding of the Word will lead us to compassion for others and conviction personally.
- Everyone gets burned. Life is a fight. Might as well fight in the right battle.
- This is like labor in childbirth, it is hard and bitter, but the end is so sweet.

10:11 – “before many peoples” – Lit. “unto, against, or concerning many peoples.”

- This is being done as we are studying through Revelation.
- “must” – Compelled from within. Idea is driven, not externally forced.
- A minister/servant must ingest God’s Word to be able to share it with others. It is through the feeding on the Word of God that the minister becomes His/his message.
- In 1 Tim. 3, of all the requirements to be a bishop or deacon, all but one deals with the issue of personal holiness. God seeks our lives first. The ability to teach is almost a secondary issue.

Chapter 11:

11:1 – “temple” – The Anti-Christ’s covenant with Israel at the beginning of the Tribulation agrees to rebuild their temple and permit sacrifice. (Dan. 9:27)

- John saw the Temple demolished 25 years earlier by Titus Vespasian in 70 AD.
 - Through the Middle Ages, the Church took all prophesy for Israel as applying to the Church. But as prophesied here, Israel is back in the picture.
 - Ezek. 40-48; Amos 9:11; Micah 4:1; Zech. 6:12-13
- Orthodox Judaism is looking for the temple of the Kingdom Age. The Temple of Rev. 11 is not that Temple, but many will consider it so as it is being constructed only to be devastated when the Anti-Christ turns on the nation.
- It is estimated that with unlimited money, modern technology, and the signing of the covenant with the Anti-Christ for 7 years (Dan. 9:27) which will give the Jews access to the Temple Mount and permission to rebuild, it could be accomplished in as little as 9-18 months.
- “altar” – The place of animal sacrifice.
 - That sophisticated men and women would actually start offering blood of bulls and goats on a sacrificial altar once again will be too much for many to take.
- “those who worship” – The worshippers are measured also.

- 11:2 – “leave out the court” – Part of the Temple Mount will be given to non-Jews.
- Ezek. 42:20 – Ezekiel measured a wall around the temple to separate the common from the clean.
 - Asher Kaufman (in a Biblical Archeological Review article from March/April 1983 and www.templemount.org and www.templeinstitute.org) claims that the Holy of Holies of Solomon’s temple stood 322’ north of the Dome of the Rock mosque which is the current site of the Dome of the Spirits/Tablets.
 - “they will tread the holy city underfoot” – The Jew’s enjoyment of their freedom will be brief, and the Gentiles will soon drive them out of their Temple and city once more.
 - “42 months” – The first or second 3½ years of the Tribulation?
- 11:3 – “my two witnesses” – Greek is emphatic, lit. “the two witnesses of mine.”
- These are two particular people; they have bodies and they die.
 - These two witnesses will be a very vocal thorn in the side of the Anti-Christ as they are powerfully sharing the truth of the situation with all who will hear in the city of Jerusalem and possibly on the Temple Mount itself.
 - “one thousand two hundred and sixty days” – That is 42 months (from v. 2) at 30 days each.
 - Dan. 7:25 speaks of the Anti-Christ changing times, possibly referring to the calendar change from 365¼ day to 360 day years.
 - “clothed in sackcloth” – Their power is not indicated by their dress. This is in stark contrast to the health and wealth teachers of our day.
- 11:4 – “olive trees” – Similar to Zech. 4
- Three views of the 2 witnesses:
1. Joshua, son of Jehozadak, and Zerubbabal – The picture in Zech. 4 differs slightly with only 1 lampstand.
 2. Elijah and Enoch – The two OT saints spared death (Heb. 9:27 – appointed unto men once to die, then the judgment.)
 - Elijah is clearly one of them from Malachi 4:5 and Mt. 17 (Jesus).
 3. Elijah and Moses – The Jude 9 dispute over Moses’ body, in Mt. 17 both were with Jesus, and the miracles are typical of Moses and Elijah.
 - Luke 24:4 and Acts 1 speak of “two men in shining garments.” Are they angels, as is commonly thought, or they Elijah and Moses following up on their ministry with Jesus on the Mount of Transfiguration.
- 11:6 – “no rain falls in the days of their prophecy” – The day the treaty is signed, Elijah takes power over the rain for 3½ years.
- May look like they are also bringing the destructions of the seals and trumpets on the people as well, in addition to being the only voices continuing to speak against the Anti-Christ and his scheme.
- 11:7 – “finish their testimony” – They are indestructible until their course is run.
- “the beast” – First mention in Revelation. The word is used 36 times in Revelation, most frequently in Rev. 13 and 17.
 - Rev. 13:2 – “the dragon gave him his power, his throne, and great authority.”
 - “out of the bottomless pit” – The Anti-Christ shows his true colors at this point in the Tribulation as he takes on the power and will of Satan himself who has come out of the abyss. (Rev. 17:8)

11:8 – “great” – The word is used 8 times in Ch. 11.

- “city which spiritually is called Sodom” – The Jews, with untold millions of dollars will have built up a city where, according to v. 9, “peoples, tribes, tongues, and nations” – like very Babylon, are present. Yet those Jews will have built a temple in the name of Jehovah their God, although not really knowing Him – and the majority of the nation will be ready to make a covenant with the Anti-Christ.
- “Sodom and Egypt” – The OT references were known for their immorality and idolatry.
 - In the OT, these cities received similar judgments as to what the two witnesses are now bringing.
- “where also our Lord was crucified” – Jerusalem is now given over to sin as were Sodom and Egypt.

11:9 – “will see” – This is global. Everyone around the world will see them in 3½ days.

- This is only logistically possible with the relatively modern invention of satellite TV.

11:10 – “rejoice” – The only use of this word in Revelation.

- “make merry, and send gifts” – Sounds like an American Christmas celebration.
 - This is the first 3½ years; after the 2nd there is no celebrating over dead prophets.
- “tormented” – Simply speaking truth will be a torment to the people of that day.

11:11 – “breath” – (Greek “pneuma”) Lit. “spirit, or breath.” Possibly referring to the Holy Spirit.

- “great fear” – This is what God wants.
 - It seems that they are more afraid of the resurrection of these two men than they were of the judgments of fire and water turning to blood.

11:12 – “saw them” – Idea is “transfixed stare” and denotes a process of time.

- Tremendous picture of resurrection before the Great Tribulation.
- God always has the last laugh.

11:13 – “seven thousand people” – The form of expression is peculiar in the Greek: “names of men seven thousand.” Many have believed this indicates prominent men.

- “the rest” – or “remnant.” Some repent at the sight of resurrection and ascension.
 - They were unwilling to repent in 9:20,21, but will refuse the mark of the beast in chap. 13.

11:14 – “quickly” – (Greek “tachy”) Lit. “shortly or in quick succession.”

11:15 – “seventh angel sounded” – The 7th and final trumpet now sounds after the interlude of Rev. 10:1-11:13.

- This is the final trumpet of the trumpet judgments. This is not the last trumpet of God spoken of in 1 Thess. 4:16 that marks the rapture of the Church.
- This trumpet seems to take some time in the sounding – “in the days of the sounding” (Rev. 10:7). It may sound the duration of the final 3½ years of the Tribulation. The final acts of God upon earth are encapsulated in this trumpet.
- This final trumpet prepares the King to take His throne. This is the most momentous event since the Lamb took the scroll in Rev. 5.

- “kingdoms of this world have become the kingdoms of our Lord” – The problem of this world since the fall.
 - “There cannot be the right kingdom until you have the right king” - Joe Focht.
 - “Why do the nations rage, and the people plot a vain thing?” (Ps. 2:1)
 - In Daniel and Revelation, the nations are typified as beasts and wild animals. This seems to give us God’s view of the human powers of the world.
- Notice how heaven responds to the King. (v. 17-18)
 - The word “kingdom/kingdoms” is used 562 times in the Bible. 69 times in the NT in reference to the Kingdom of God and 32 times in Matthew in reference to the Kingdom of Heaven.
 - The Church’s job is in bringing people from darkness to light, not in taming wild beasts.
- “have become” – (Greek is in the aorist active indicative tense) Lit. “are already becoming.”

11:18 – “destroy the earth” – Lit. “corrupt the earth.”

- 11:19 – “temple” – We hear of a temple/sanctuary in heaven in chap. 15, 16, and 17. Then in chap. 21 the temple is called the New Jerusalem. (Rev. 21:2,3,22)
- The earthly tabernacle was a model of the heavenly sanctuary...“according to all that I show you, that is, the pattern of the tabernacle and the pattern of the tabernacle and the pattern of all its furnishings, just so shall you make it.” (Exod. 25-28; Heb. 1-5)
 - “temple of God was opened” – There is no veil there.
 - “ark of his covenant” – At the center of heaven is a promise, a covenant. All of heaven hinges on this covenant-promise.

Chapter 12:

Ch. 12 continues our series of snapshots of the midpoint of the 7-year Tribulation period.

- Here we see Israel’s place in the world and the surrounding angelic activity.

- 12:1 – “sign” – The only chapter in Revelation denoted as symbolic from the start. (v. 3)
- Signs of the spiritual struggle from the Garden of Eden to the Tribulation.
 - “a woman clothed with the sun” – This seems like a huge figure, of size and stature. This is the nation of Israel and specifically of that nation, Mary.
 - This is also looking at Mary in particular. 1 Tim. 2:15 – “She will be saved in childbearing...they continue in faith...”
 - This image takes us back to Gen. 3:15 and “her seed” that is to crush the head of Satan.
 - “woman...twelve stars” – Images taken from Joseph’s dream in Gen. 37:9-11.
- 12:2 – “she cried out in labor” – John sees this huge figure going through labor, transition, and delivery.
- Isa. 66:7 – Speaking of Israel in labor.
 - “with child” – Greek is masculine singular (v. 5). This is Jesus, the Messiah.
 - The greatest role and purpose of the Jewish nation is to birth the Messiah.
- 12:3 – “dragon” – Satan. (v. 9)
- The imagery of the seven heads and ten horns, and crowns/diadems will carry through the book of Revelation, especially as associated with the Anti-Christ. (Rev. 13:1; 17:3)
 - Jesus said He saw Satan fall from heaven (Luke 10:18). The OT gives us little more details on Satan’s fall. (Isa. 14:12-15; Ezek. 28:11-19)

- 12:4 – “third of the stars” – Fallen angels taken down in Satan’s fall. (Rev. 12:7,9)
- An angel is also identified as a star in Rev. 9:1.
 - “devour her child” – From Gen. 3:15, Satan has known his fate will be to fall under the Messiah’s heel. He has been trying to stop that process by plotting against the Jews, and especially against the Messiah’s line.
 - Leading to the Messiah: Cain killed Abel.
 - Fallen angels perverted the human race before the flood.
 - Large regional famine of Joseph’s day.
 - Pharaoh of Egypt exterminated the Jewish males of Moses’ day.
 - Canaanites, Jebusites, Amorites...fought during the wilderness journeys.
 - Saul relentlessly attacked David.
 - Athaliah nearly annihilated the Davidic line.
 - Babylon and Persia (including Haman’s plot) mingled and attempted to kill Jews.
 - Antiochus Epiphanes desecrated and removed Jews (Judas Maccabeus.)
 - Herod the Great killed all boys 2 years and under.
 - Satan directly tempted Jesus to commit suicide.
 - Jesus executed on the cross.
 - After Jesus’ ascension: 70 AD (under Romans and Titus Vespasian) 1.1 million Jews were killed (w/about 600,000 deported).
 - 132-134 AD 500,000 killed.
 - 1096 AD 1,200 killed in Rhineland, Germany.
 - 1298 AD 100,000 killed in Bavaria and Austria.
 - 1648-1658 AD 400,000 killed in Russia-Polish-Swedish War.
 - 1935-1945 AD 4-6 million killed in Nazi Germany.
- 12:5 – “male Child” – Masculine, singular. This is speaking of a person, not a nation. This is Jesus Christ, the Messiah.
- “rule” – Probably more accurately translated “shepherd.”
 - “rod of iron” – Ps. 2:9; Rev. 19:15.
- 12:6 – “the woman fled” – At the sight of the “abomination of desolation” Israel will realize that they have been deceived and will flee for safety.
- In 70 AD, at the destruction of Jerusalem by Titus Vespasian, the Jewish remnant fled toward the Dead Sea...and eventually mass suicide at Masada.
 - “place prepared” – Dan. 11:1, 36-45 points to Ammon and Moab. Isa. 16:1-5 points more specifically to Petra (of “Indiana Jones’ Last Crusade” fame).
 - Jordan presently one of the only countries in the region with treaty with Israel.
 - In our day, over 1,000 Jews a day from Israel are touring Petra between January and June, passing through the crevasse between Israel and Jordan.
 - “one thousand two hundred and sixty days” – The final 3½ years of the Tribulation.
- 12:7 – “war” – Doesn’t seem to be a “sign” anymore.
- “Michael and his angels fought” – Greek indicates that Michael “assaults” Satan.
 - The event here prophesied was predicted by Daniel the prophet in Dan. 12:1, where it is recorded that Michael “shall stand up, the great prince which stands for (Israel),” marking the start of the Great Tribulation.
 - Satan and Michael have battled before. (Jude 9)

- “Michael” – The archangel (there is only one “arch”-angel). (Jude 9)
 - Jesus said He could have called down 12 legions of angels to fight for him before the cross. (Matt. 26:53)
 - Rev. 20:1 tells us one unnamed angel binds Satan for 1,000 years in the abyss.

12:9 – **This is the very middle verse of the Revelation.**

- “cast out” – This is not Satan’s fall. That has already happened. This is the full and final removal of Satan from access to God’s presence.
 - From here, Satan directly enters, or has influence over, the Anti-Christ.
 - Satan is insane as we see clearly in Job when God gives him freedom to get at a human.

12:10 – “accuser” – (Greek “kategoreo”) Lit. “to categorize.” Satan categorizes our life to the sacred and the secular, to wins and losses, to failures and successes. He also moves people to categorize others based on some external situation or circumstance.

- Zech. 3 – Satan accuses Zechariah as he stands in filthy garments, but God gives him new, clean garments.

12:11 – “overcame” – Past tense. The victory is accomplished by Christ on the cross.

- People tend to put so much emphasis on our work to defeat Satan and live a victorious Christian life, but Jesus has already accomplished that on our behalf.
- “word of their testimony” – We all have a testimony.
 - L.E. Romaine – “All our testimonies are the same. I was a jerk, Jesus saved me. The rest is just details.”
- “love” – (Greek “agapeo”) The devoted, Christ-like love. They are more devoted to Christ than to their own lives.
 - The struggle of the believer is one of surrender! (Rom. 12:1-2)
 - We cannot lay down our lives as a sacrifice to the Lord and accuse and categorize others in a judgmental attitude at the same time.

12:12 – “having great wrath” – Satan is a sore loser and is infuriated at his treatment, so he moves to take vengeance on God’s people – Israel and Gentile believers.

- “short time” – Until the head crushing (Gen. 3:15).

12:13 – “he persecuted the woman” – God will use this time for intensive instruction and reconciliation with His ancient people, preparing them to nationally receive the Lord Jesus as their Messiah and Savior when He comes to the earth again after their 3½ exile. (Hosea 2:14-23)

12:14 – “nourished” – Lit. “fed.”

- “a time and times and half a time” – 3½ years. This refers us back to Dan. 7 and 12 – the “time of Jacob’s trouble.”
 - The Anti-Christ will set himself up as “the abomination that causes desolation” (Matt. 24:15) and then persecute Israel for the next 3½ years in a way Israel has never seen before...“such as has not been since the beginning of the world until this time” (Matt. 24:21).

12:15 – “water...like a flood” – Either an army (Isa. 59:19; Jer. 46:8, 47:2; Dan. 11) or literal water.

- Russia was, at one point, developing seismic weapons...mudslides, tsunamis, etc.
- “to be carried away by the flood” – Satan directly attempts to kill the fleeing Jews.

12:16 – “earth opened her mouth” – The Jordon Valley Rift (a very active geological rift 1/5 of the earth’s circumference) stands between Jerusalem and Jordon.

12:17 – “woman...her offspring...testimony of Jesus” – Jews are getting saved!

- “testimony of Jesus Christ” – This is the same testimony as that of the pre-Tribulation Church.

Chapter 13:

13:1 – The symbolic language describing both the king and his kingdom refers us back to the “sign” of Rev. 12:3 (but with slight differences). The interpretation of Rev. 13 is given in Rev. 17.

- “beast” – The Anti-Christ and his kingdom.
 - The name Anti-Christ literally means “instead of Christ.” It does not so much mean ‘against Christ’ as many tend to think. When the Anti-Christ comes on the scene, he will not claim to be the Anti-Christ. He will claim to be the actual Christ, the Messiah. When Jesus came the first time, He came to save people from their sins. But they were looking for a political ruler. The Anti-Christ will be the political Messiah they were looking for at Jesus’ first coming.
 - The Anti-Christ comes on the scene riding a white horse (Rev. 6:2) and doing signs and wonders (2 Thess. 2:9). 3½ years into a very difficult time, he will set himself up as God in the Temple (by that time having come under the control of or being possessed by Satan). From there on out, it is hell on earth as the Anti-Christ, and Satan through him, is in dominant control.
- “the sea” – (17:15) The nations of the world; esp. the nations around the Mediterranean.
- “seven heads” – (17:3,9) Seven mountains/kingdoms from which the great harlot arises.
 - The 7 major world empires Satan has used to persecute God’s people, both Jews and Christians; Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, Rome, and Rome re-established. ([17:11] The Anti-Christ is the 8th coming out of the 7.)
- “ten horns” – (17:12) The ten kings/kingdoms current with and giving authority to the Anti-Christ.
 - Refers back to Dan. 2 and the ten toes of the statue made of iron and mixed with clay which is Rome re-established. And that is either a 10 nation European world super-power or a European power-base with a worldwide conglomeration of 10 regions that will be smashed by the rock not cut out with hands.
 - The Club of Rome met for the first time in 1948 to form the Common Market (now the European Union). [1948 was the year Israel got it’s land back as well.]
 - The Anti-Christ seems to be Jewish (Dan. 11:37-38) but coming from anywhere in the territory of the former Roman Empire (east or west).
- “ten crowns” – This imagery is slightly different from Rev. 12:3 where there are 7 diadems as opposed to ten crowns.
 - The crowns on his heads (from 12:3) signify Satan as the power and authority behind those kingdoms.
 - Daniel 7:8 says that 3 horns are consolidated and controlled by this one horn that springs up out of the 10 horns.
- “on his heads a blasphemous name” – The nations signified in these heads have all persecuted God’s people, Jews and Christians.

- 13:2 – “the beast which I saw was like” – The 4 beasts refer back to Daniel 7. They are either a re-iteration of the nations of Daniel 2 (Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, and Rome) or contemporary nations with the beast making “the lion” Britannica/Britain, “the bear” Russia, and “the leopard” China (or alliances thereof). The 4th beast is a Roman-European alliance that arises out of the powerbase of these other three nations.
- “the dragon” – Satan. (Rev. 12:9)
 - He offered this power to Jesus at the temptation and Jesus didn’t argue with him that it was possible for him to grant that authority to someone. (Matt. 4:8-10)
- 13:3 – “mortally wounded” – Refers to both the king and his kingdom. Rome was dead and revived (re-established). But the Anti-Christ was also wounded with a deadly wound (v. 12) by a sword or knife (v. 14) and revived or resurrected.
- The Anti-Christ mimics the miracle of resurrection, but it also leaves the Anti-Christ crippled in his right eye and right arm. (Zech. 11:17)
 - It seems to be this “miraculous resurrection” that is commemorated in the statue set up by the false prophet. (Rev. 13:12-15)
 - “wounded” – Can be translated either “wounded to death” or “wounded to the point of death.” Linguistically, it can be that he either died or swooned at the point of death.
 - “wound” – Lit. “plague.”
 - “all the world marveled” – Even the movers and shakers will be amazed by him.
- 13:4 – “worshipped the dragon” – Satan worship.
- There is no question the spiritual realm exists now. The preaching of the two witnesses combined with the great judgments of the seals and trumpets, will finally eliminate every vestige of the scientific skepticism that has dominated the intellectual world for two centuries or more. But instead of accepting Jesus, people worship Satan. Because people “did not receive the love of the truth, that they might be saved...God will send them strong delusion, that they should believe the lie.” (2 Thess. 2:10-11)
 - Satan is the one with the military force (“god of fortresses” - Dan. 11:38). He is the one making himself tangible. And he is the one feeding people’s bellies (Phil. 3:19).
 - The Anti-Christ will be economical and political. Jesus Christ was of the heart. Why do so many believers focus on the economical and political instead of the heart?
 - Yikshak Shamir – “I will talk to Satan, if necessary, to get Middle East peace.”
- 13:5 – “was given” – Four times in the Greek text of v. 5-7, the passive “was given” occurs, emphasizing the subordinate role of the beast; (see v. 2,4).
- “mouth speaking great things” – A great politician, speaker, and peacemaker. This is typical of how the Anti-Christ is portrayed through Scripture.
 - “42 months” – 3½ years as the calendars return to 30-day months.
 - Even the Anti-Christ has a time limit. God is still sovereign and He governs the Anti-Christ’s reign. The Anti-Christ doesn’t even have the ability to change his number (666 – v. 18).
- 13:6 – “blaspheme His name” – (Greek “onama”) lit. “His character, His person.”
- The spirit of Anti-Christ is to deny the Father and the Son. (1 John 4:2-3)
 - “those who dwell in heaven” – That is where the Church will be at this time.
- 13:7 – “the saints” – Those saved during the Tribulation. (Rev. 12:11,17)
- At least 7 books of the OT use “saints” to speak of believing/saved Jews, including Daniel 7.

13:8 – “All who dwell on the earth...whose names have not been written” – There will be a clear line drawn between believers and non-believers here.

- “from the foundation of the world” – This refers to both the names written from the foundation of the world and the lamb slain from the foundation of the world. (Rev. 17:15; 1 Pet. 1:19-20)

13:9 – “If anyone has an ear” – The Church is omitted in these verses. It misses the familiar, “what the Spirit has written to the Churches,” of Rev. 2-3.

13:10 – “the saints” – Those saved during the Tribulation period.

- Galatians 6:7 – We all reap what we sow (of the same kind, more, and later.)
- “the patience and the faith of the saints” – The hope of all believers is for God to justly set this world straight, rewarding the good and punishing the evil.
- We are all called to “imitate those who through faith and patience inherit the promises.” (Heb. 6:12)

13:11 – “another beast” – The False Prophet. (Rev. 16:13; 19:20; 20:10)

- “another” – (Greek “allos”) Lit. “another of the same kind.”
 - The one world political system needs a one world religious unity as well. Many of the political problems in the world today result from religious differences.
- “out of the earth” – The Anti-Christ came “from the sea.” Is there any significant difference?
- “two horns” – Horns symbolize power throughout the Scriptures. These may speak of the two-pronged political-religious power.
 - The political power is coming in on the back of religious hypocrisy.
- “like a lamb” – The false prophet will come in deception as well – a wolf in sheep’s clothing. (Matt. 7:15)
- “as a dragon” – He speaks with the power, influence, and deception of Satan himself.
 - The devil comes disguised as an “angel of light.” (2 Cor. 11:14)

13:12 – “the authority of the first beast” – Garnering all the political power of the world.

- “authority” – (Greek “exousia”) Lit. “the power of a king.”
 - This religion is under the authority of a one-world political system.
 - ‘Exousia’ power is not given to the Church. (Acts 1:8 – ‘dynamous.’)
- “worship the first beast” – This is what Satan wanted all along. (Isa. 14:12-15)

13:13 – “makes fire come down” – Imitating Elijah’s (and the two witnesses of Rev. 11) miracles.

13:14 – “deceives...by those signs” – 2 Thess. 2:11 – “strong delusion that they should believe the lie,” by “all power, signs, and lying wonders.” (2 Thess. 2:9)

- The Church needs to be very careful at receiving a messenger because of signs and wonders, as Satan Himself comes as an “angel of light” granting his servants power to do signs. The Church needs to, instead, evaluate a messenger based on the message and how it lines up with the Scriptures.
- “For false christs and false prophets will rise and show great signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect.” (Matt. 24:24)
- “an image to the beast” – Called “the abomination of desolation” by Daniel (Dan. 9:27; 11:36), Jesus (Matt. 24:15); and Paul (2 Thess. 2:4).
- “the sword” – The short, knife-like sword.

- 13:15 – “breath” – (Greek “pneuma”) Idea is “spirit.” The False Prophet is enabled to impart a spirit to the image, but that spirit is one of Satan’s unclean spirits. The statue becomes demon-possessed.
- The False Prophet is able to bring an idol to life, in contrast to Habakkuk 2:19.
- 13:16 – “mark” – (Greek “charagma”) Used only one time apart from Revelation, in Acts 17:29 where it is translated “shaped.” In Revelation, it refers to the mark of the beast 8 times. It seems to imply that the mark is something like an etching, branding, or tattoo.
- “on” – (Greek “epi”) Lit. “upon.”
 - In the OT, God asked Israel to bind His Word on their foreheads and arms. (Exod. 13:9; Deut. 6:8) Here again, the Anti-Christ mimics God.
- 13:17 – “the mark or the name...or the number” – Are all three the same thing?
- The mark will go along with worshipping the idol and the beast. And this will take place 3½ years into the Tribulation.
 - “no man may buy or sell” – This would be eased by a move to a cashless society. 80% of the United States’ cash currency is completely unaccounted for.
 - In Gen. 4:15, Cain took a mark for self-preservation after the murder of Abel.
- 13:18 – “wisdom” – Not just knowing the scenarios or the information, but being able to apply this knowledge to practical situations of this and that time.
- “number of a man...number is 666” – No metaphorical language here.
 - “calculate” – The Hebrew, Greek, and Latin alphabets have a corresponding number system.
 - God asks us to be wise and to “calculate” (KJV “count”) the number of the beast. “Calculate” is to decide by weighing in the balances. We need to weigh it out and make an informed decision.
 - At this point, it is clearly God or Satan, Jesus or Anti-Christ, heaven or hell. Here the teams are set, the sheep and goats are divided, and eternity is determined.
 - The very things people reject about Jesus Christ (His birth, His death, His resurrection, His perfection, etc.) will be the very things those who take the mark of the beast will believe concerning the Anti-Christ.

Chapter 14:

Ch. 14 gives us the three different groups on earth at the start of the final 3½ year period.

- 14:1 – “144,000” – The Jews sealed from Rev. 7 or another group altogether (these are “sealed with the name of the Father” as opposed to the “the seal of the living God” – Rev. 7:2.)
- Same word for “seal” as for the believer in 1 Cor. 1:22 and Eph. 1:13,14. The seal of God stands in stark contrast to the “mark of the beast” from Rev. 13:17. The seal of God is effective in preserving His saints through this time of persecution.
 - Their main testimony is their preservation through this time.
 - “on Mount Zion” – The earthly city of Jerusalem or the “heavenly Jerusalem” (Heb. 12:22).
 - It seems that while the abomination of desolation stands in the Temple, Jesus and the 144,000 stand on the Mount in Jerusalem, like Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego walking with one like the Son of Man in the fiery furnace.
 - Ps. 2:6 – “Yet I have set My King on My holy hill of Zion.”

14:3 – “They” – This is referring to the 144,000 or the harpists.

- This seems to be referring to the harpists, but giving a picture of the hearts of the 144,000 still on the earth.
 - “learn” – Lit. “experimentally understand.” This is to know from experience.
- 14:4 – “virgins” – Either physically/sexually (but...“the marriage is honorable and the bed is undefiled” – Heb. 13:4) or spiritually/religiously (but...“Jesus said some are called to be eunuchs” – Mt. 19:12).
- No where in the Bible does it imply that women defile (1 Cor. 7:1,7). By this time period, the “mother of harlots” (Rev. 17:5) is already drawing others away in “her fornication” (v. 8). It seems the undefiled are those who stayed true to Christ in the midst of this period of adultery and idolatry.
- The key to separation is not what you are separated from, but whom you are separated to. The 144,000 “follow the Lamb wherever He goes” (v. 4).
 - In the Eastern wedding, the virgins/bridesmaids follow the wedding procession led by the bride and the groom. The Church is the bride of Christ and these are the virgins following.
- “firstfruits” – Lit. “the very finest.” This points to the fact that they are part of a larger harvest at this period of time.
- 14:5 – “no deceit” – (Greek “ou dolos”) They are sincere, having terrific character during a very difficult time.
- “without fault” – This does not mean that they have not sinned, but that their sins are covered in redemption. (Jude 24)
- 14:6 – “angel...everlasting gospel” – This is not a satellite. This is a heavenly angel audibly speaking to the people on earth from their atmosphere.
- Mt. 24:14 – “this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world as a witness to all the nations, and then the end will come.” God will complete the job Himself.
 - “gospel” – (Greek “euaggelion”) Lit. “the good news.”
 - This is the same gospel we have received. (Gal. 1:8-9)
- 14:7 – “worship Him who made heaven and earth” – This will be the final authoritative statement in the Creation-Evolution debate. God is the Creator!
- 14:8 – “Babylon is fallen” – We get the account of Babylon’s fall in Rev. 18.
- “Babylon...that great city” – Speaking of a particular city, not a nation or a conglomeration of nations.
 - Through Revelation “that city” refers to Babylon and “the city” refers to Jerusalem.
 - Babylon’s fall was prophesied in the OT – Jer. 51:7. (Rev. 17:2)
- 14:9-11 – “If anyone worships the beast and his image...He shall be tormented” – This angel makes the decision very clear-cut. It is either accept Jesus or take the mark and worship the beast. There is no middle ground here. Anyone who rejects Christ now does so knowingly and willingly.
- 14:10 – “cup of His indignation” – Jesus took this cup for us. (Mt. 26:36-42)
- References to the cup: Ps. 75:8; Isa. 51:17; Jer. 23 and 25:15; Rev. 17:2,4; 18:3,6.
 - To accept Babylon and the worldly system is to also receive the cup of God’s wrath.
 - “indignation” – This is the OT word for the Tribulation.

- 14:11 – “their torment...who worship the beast” – Worshipping the beast only results in torment.
- “forever and ever” – Not annihilationism.
 - “no rest” – Compare that with the promised “rest” for those “who die in the Lord” (v. 13).
- 14:12 – “patience” – (Greek “hupomone”) Lit. “endurance.”
- 14:13 – “in the Lord” – This is the difference.
- “that they may rest” – (Greek “hina”) Lit. “in order that they may rest.” The Greek seems to indicate that the resting is dependant on the dying.
 - “rest from their labors” – True rest comes after the dying.
 - “their works follow them” – In addition to rest, rewards are also given after death.
- 14:14-20 – These are the two harvests: the chaff and the wheat (Mt. 3:10-12). One reaped to life, the other to destruction. (Similar to the tares and the wheat – Mt. 13:36-43.)
- This section gives us the picture from heaven’s perspective that we will see transpire on the earth in Rev. 16-19.
- 14:14 – “Son of Man” – Jesus favorite title for Himself in the gospels (25 times in Matthew).
- The Son of Man: Dan. 3:25; 7:13; John 5:22, 27; and Rev. 1:13.
 - “crown” – (Greek “stephanos”) Lit. “the victor’s wreath.”
 - This section (vv. 14-20) is a preview of Christ’s victory.
 - “sickle” – The word is used more in this section than in the rest of the Bible combined.
- 14:15 – “crying” – The angel is crying or pleading with Christ to bring this to completion.
- “thrust in Your sickle” – Lit. “send forth Your sickle.” Possibly speaking of the judgment to come in the form of the vials seen in Rev. 16.
 - “ripe” – Lit. “dry and withered.”
 - The harvest was plentiful and white when Jesus was on earth (Mt. 9:37-38; John 4:34-38). It has been a long time since then.
 - God has been merciful to wait – 2 Pet. 3:9.
- 14:18 – “altar” – This seems to be the altar of incense. This angel seems to have charge over the fire on the incense altar. (Rev. 8:5)
- “fire” – This is clearly a picture of judgment.
 - “vine of the earth” – Speaks of the interconnectedness of the worldwide deception. (Gal. 1:4 speaks of “this present evil age.”)
 - In the OT, Israel was to be the vine and the vineyard of God (Isa. 5:1-7). But they didn’t fulfill their role as that vine. So Christ, in John 15, said He is the true vine and we are to abide in Him.
 - “clusters” – These are the great and powerful men of that vine.
 - “fully ripe” – Lit. “grapes almost bursting with juice.”
- 14:19 – “winepress of the wrath” – Trampled by Jesus Himself. (Rev. 19:15)
- Isa. 63:1-3 – “Who is this that comes from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah...I have trodden the winepress alone.”
 - Joel 3:11-17 – “Assemble and come, all you nations...come up to the Valley of Jehoshaphat...For the winepress is full.”
 - Zech. 14:1-5 – “gather all the nations to battle against Jerusalem...Then the Lord will go forth and fight against those nations...His feet will stand on the Mount of Olives.”

- Matt. 24:27 – “as lightening comes from the east and flashes to the west, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be.”

14:20 – “blood” – That is what comes out of this winepress.

- “horses’ bridles” – 3-4 ft high. This is blood flowing off the plain of Megiddo and flooding into the Kidron Valley.
 - Josephus said in 70 AD, the Romans killed so many of Israel that blood flowed up the steps into houses and put out fires on the hearth.
 - The horse’s bridle may be specifically referring to Jesus’ horse, as Jesus wades through the river of blood to cross the Kidron Valley and enter Jerusalem to set up His kingdom.
- “outside the city” – The Kidron Valley was where the blood of the Temple sacrifices was diverted, turning the entire valley black.
- “1,600 furlongs” – This is about 180 miles from Megiddo to Edom (Bozrah). This is the length of the eastern border of Israel.
 - Ps. 24:7-10 – “Lift up your heads all you gates...Who is the King of Glory...the King of Glory shall come in.” The 2000-year-old east gate below the modern east gate ready to lift up its head.

Chapter 15:

These final judgments are the perfection, or completion (v. 1), of the wrath of God. The number “seven” is used 8 times in these 8 verses.

15:1 – “sign” – (Greek “semeion”) Lit. “symbol of revelation.” It is a symbol, picture, or prophetic event that conveys some great truth or principle of God that He wants to convey to His people. (The word is used 77 times in the NT.)

- This is the third sign under the 7th trumpet. The previous signs came in Rev. 12:1, 3.
- The 7 vials are nested in the last trumpet. These vials are poured out on those who have received the mark of the beast. (Rev. 16:2)
- “great and marvelous” – This is opposed to the simply “great” signs of Rev. 12.
- “last plagues” – There are no more plagues to come. No doubt, in the heart of God, there is great pain and great joy in these final plagues. They are greatly devastating, but they also mark the end.
- “wrath...is complete” – Lit. “to bring to completion.” The wrath has been active for 3½ years (Rev. 6:17), but is here completed.
 - This phrase is used by Jesus in Matt. 23:32 – “Fill up, then, the measure of your fathers’ guilt.”

15:2 – “like a sea of glass” – Note the metaphorical language. It is not a sea of glass, but “like” a sea of glass. (Also mentioned in Rev. 4:6.)

- “those who have victory over the beast” – The victory over Satan and the Anti-Christ, at this point, comes through their death/martyrdom.

15:3 – “the song of Moses” – The other songs of Moses come in Exod. 15 and Deut. 32.

- “song of Moses...and the song of the Lamb” – Scholars are divided over whether these two songs are the same song or if they are separate songs (with neither, or only one, given in their entirety).
- “Great and marvelous” – Despite (or because of) all the struggles these individuals have been through in their lives, they praise God’s faithfulness and His justice.

- This song praises God for his final answer to the questions that most plague mankind: “Why is there so much pain?” “Why do the wicked prosper?” “Why doesn’t a good God step in and stop evil?” Here, as the martyrs look back over their lives and difficulties in light of the final judgments of God, all they can do is praise God for the way He has handled all of it.
- This song is also a recognition that God’s wrath is right and good. It is implied that there isn’t any more good to be salvaged out of this world, so as the judgment comes it only comes on the remaining human beings that have worshipped Satan and the Anti-Christ by taking the mark. And these judgments come upon all who have taken the mark, as opposed to the quarter (Rev. 6:8) and third (Rev. 9:18) killed at earlier points of the Tribulation.

15:4 – “You alone are holy” – The holiness of God is the separateness of God. God is holy and everyone else isn’t. He is completely separate, or “other,” than us.

15:5 – “temple” – (Greek “naos”) Lit. “the inner sanctuary, the Holy of Holies.” The temple is referred to 15 times in the Revelation.

- Moses was commanded to make the tabernacle according to the pattern shown to him on the mountain (Exod. 25:9). This is the actuality of what Moses had seen.
- “the testimony” – The Law is bearing testimony to the justice of the impending judgment.

15:6 – “out of the Temple” – This is coming directly from the presence of God.

- The judgment is coming straight from the Father. Father’s discipline their own. The responsibility will come upon no other...“no one able to enter” (v. 8).
- “clothed in pure bright linen” – The angels are dressed similarly to the OT priests.

15:7 – “one of the four living creatures” – This is a cherub. (Rev. 4:6-8)

- “bowls” – These are much like the bowls used in the OT sacrifices to catch and sprinkle blood.

15:8 – “smoke...no one was able to enter” – God is brooding. He does not take pleasure in the death of the wicked. (Ezek. 18:32; 33:11)

- Love without wrath is impotent. God backs up His Word with action.
- “the glory of God” – This is God’s “shekina” glory retreating into the tabernacle as the bowls are poured out.
- The next we hear from or of God are the words “It is done” being shouted from the throne after the seventh angel pours out the seventh bowl. (Rev. 16:17)
- “till the seven plagues...completed” – This is an important word. God wants to be alone during these judgments, but when they are finished He is quick to draw people to Himself.

Chapter 16:

Revelation is God’s “great” chapter of the Bible, with the Word “great” being used 11 times.

16:1 – “the bowls of the wrath” – The bowls seem to come in quick succession. They are no longer to turn the hearts of people to Himself. They come as punishment on a Christ-rejecting world.

- Mt. 24 – “except those days had been shortened, no flesh would be left alive.”
- “voice from the temple” – God has withdrawn to be by Himself in the heavenly temple as the bowls are poured out. (Rev. 15:5,8)
- The next time we see God (Rev. 16:17), He will be saying, “It is done!” as the final bowl is poured out.

- 16:2 – “the men” – These are specifically the Christ-rejecting people being judged. And not just 1/3 as was judged earlier; all unbelievers are being punished at this point.
- It seems those marked by God in Rev. 7:3 are coming through these judgments unscathed. God can make a difference in His judgment between the righteous and the wicked. (Gen. 18:23-25; 2 Pet. 2:9)
 - “men” – (Greek “anthropos”) Lit. “persons.” This is referring to men and women.
 - “foul” – Lit. “running or oozing”
 - “loathsome” – Lit. “painful.”
 - Deut. 28 declares that anyone who seemed to get away with sin would be supernaturally struck with the “incurable botch and hemorrhoids” (KJV). NKJV reads “tumors, the scab, & the itch.” God is sure to meet out justice where justice has been averted.
- 16:3 – “became blood” – This is real blood, as Moses did to the Nile. (See also Rev. 8:9.)
- “Chemically speaking, the composition of sea water is almost identical to that of blood, so that only a relatively small modification would be necessary” – Henry Morris.
 - “as of a dead man” – This seems to be describing the separation of the water and plasma of the blood itself.
 - “every living creature” – This must include plankton which is the source of 80% of the earth’s oxygen. This would result in the reduction of oxygen on earth to an unbearably low level.
- 16:4 – “rivers and springs” – The fresh water turns to blood as well. This would mean that there is little or no water to drink or clean the sores with.
- 16:5 – “the angel of the waters” – This is the only mention of such an angel in the Bible.
- 16:5-7 – “You are righteous, O Lord” – This is a testimony to God’s justice during these plagues.
- God upholds just balances in the long run. (Rev. 13:10)
- 16:6 – “their just due” – (Greek “axios”) Lit. “to weigh as much as, balanced.” This means that their punishment is in balance with their sins. The punishment fits the crime.
- 16:8 – “to him” – Lit. “to it,” referring to the sun.
- Malachi 4:1 – “the day is coming, burning like an oven.”
 - Isa. 30:26 – “the light of the sun will be sevenfold.”
- 16:9 – “great heat” – The heat would make people very thirsty, but there is no water.
- This heat would also melt the polar ice caps raising the sea level by about 200 ft. This would submerge NYC, LA, Tokyo, London, Rio de Janeiro, Buenos Aires, Amsterdam, Leningrad, Athens, Beirut, Calcutta, Shanghai, Hong Kong, Singapore, Rome...
 - If the salt water is still blood, these would be floods of blood and dead animals.
 - “men were scorched with great heat, and they blasphemed” – Men will be eternally condemned (in hell), because they will be eternally unrepentant.
 - “If men are not won by grace, they will never be won” – William Newell.
- 16:10 – “throne of the beast” – This is coming directly upon the capital of the Anti-Christ’s government; Babylon, Rome, or another city altogether.
- “darkness” – This is very similar to the 9th plague upon Egypt.
 - There are records of inexplicable darkness in the US in more modern times: May 19, 1780 in New England, March 19, 1886 in Wisconsin, and Dec of 1904 in Memphis.

- 16:11 – “blasphemed the God...did not repent” – Judgments serve to make people better or bitter, depending on the pre-existing direction of their hearts. There is no place in the Bible where lives are changed solely by experiencing miracles or seeing the supernatural. Lives are ultimately only changed by accepting God’s love and grace.
- God hasn’t set out to scare people into the kingdom with hell-fire. It is God’s kindness that leads to repentance (Rom. 2:4).
 - David wrote, “It is your gentleness that has made me great.” (Ps. 18:35)
 - “and their sores” – The man who were afflicted with sores when the first bowl was poured out are still suffering with the same sores after the fifth bowl.
- 16:12 – “dried up” – Russia has built a dam on the Euphrates. But here it is said that the Euphrates is “dried up,” not “dammed up.”
- “Euphrates...dried up” – The Euphrates’ source is the glacier caps on the mountains of Ararat in Turkey. If they dry up, that would leave Noah’s ark uncovered and (possibly) intact.
 - The Euphrates has always been a dividing line for civilizations, separating east from west.
 - The Euphrates is mentioned earlier in Rev. 9:13-15.
 - The Euphrates will most likely be the water supply for the new Babylon. This would be another judgment directly upon the Anti-Christ and his throne.
 - “the kings from the east” – Lit. “the kings from the rising sun.” There is a massive Oriental confederacy, likely including Japan, China, Korea, Vietnam, Indonesia, Malaysia, and others.
- 16:13-16 – “unclean spirits...to gather them to the battle of that great day” – This is a last ditch effort by Satan and his servants to defeat Jesus. It seems initially that they gather to fight each other, but as Christ comes through the sky, they turn on Him together.
- Dan. 11:40-45 – “news from the east and the north will trouble him; therefore he shall go out with great fury.”
- 16:15 – “Behold” – This is a cry from God’s own heart for all who will repent, applying to the pre-rapture church as well as to the saints converted during the Tribulation.
- God doesn’t want His Church, His Bride, to go through this. (Matt. 22:1-14; 24:42-44; Luke 12:35-40; 1 Thess. 5:2-4; 2 Pet. 3:10; Rev. 3:3)
 - “watches, and keeps his garments” – This is a reference to the Roman guards that were stationed in groups of 16. If the one on duty fell asleep, they would kill all 16. Therefore, if another in the group saw the one on duty beginning to fall asleep, they would burn their kilt to awaken and warn them.
- 16:16 – “Armageddon” – Lit. means “Hill of Megiddo” or “City of Megiddo.” The plain is an area of about 14 miles wide and 20 miles long.
- This location is also referred to in the Bible as the Valley of Jehoshaphat (Joel 3:12-14), the Valley Jezreel (Hosea 1:5), and historically as the Plain of Esdraelon.
 - Napoleon Bonaparte referred to the Plain of Armageddon by saying, “If ever there was a place where the last battle of the earth was to be fought, it is here.”
 - “gather them together to...Armageddon” – Biblical prophecy tells of the united rush of the nations into Palestine just before the Great Day of Wrath of Rev. 19:11-15. For example, Joel 3:9-14; Zeph. 3:8; Zech. 12:3,9; Isa. 24:1,2,8; and Obadiah 15.
- 16:17 – “the air” – This is the same word for Satan being the “prince of the power of the air.” (Eph. 2:2) Even the spiritual/Satanic atmosphere is judged.

16:19 – “the great city” – This is a reference to Jerusalem.

- Ps. 48:2 – “Jerusalem...how beautiful for elevations (literally).”
- Isa. 24:20 – The earth shall reel to and fro like a drunkard.
- “the great city was divided” – All is changing here: Satan’s influence, human power, and even the geological landmasses are changing.
- “the cities of the nations fell” – This is the most devastating earthquake imaginable.
- “great Babylon” – This is laid out in more detail in Rev. 17-18.

16:20 – “every island fled away” – Lit. “every island sunk.”

16:21 – “men” – Lit. “the men.” The Greek language rule refers back to the men at Armageddon.

- “talent” – Either a Greek talent at 96 pounds or a Hebrew talent at 114 pounds.
 - On April 26, 1803 10 lb. hailstones fell at Normandy.
 - Job 38:22-23 – “the storehouses of snow and hail...reserved for the last days.”
- “blasphemed God” – The OT sentence for blasphemy was stoning. (Lev. 24:16)

Chapter 17:

Revelation 17 and 18 come after the judgments of the wrath of God have been poured out on the earth and earth dwellers. It then sets the stage for the final battle as Jesus Christ will return to set up His kingdom. Chapter 17 details God’s judgment on spiritual Babylon. Chapter 18 details God’s judgment on economic-political Babylon.

- Revelation 17 and 18 take a close look at Babylon, this one-world political system centered with its capital in Babylon, Iraq, ruled by the anti-Christ, and yet having its roots in antiquity. But Ch. 17 also introduces us to (and focuses on) an accompanying personage, “the great harlot,” a worldwide religious system stemming from Nimrod, Semiramus, and Tammuz and then becoming the “MOTHER” or “fountainhead” of all counterfeit religions (posing great similarities with God, Mary and Jesus but worshipped very distinctly).
- Revelation 17 is God’s judgment on religion and, particularly, on religion that has nothing to do with a relationship with God through Jesus Christ.

17:1 – “Come” – John is first called to “come” in Rev. 4:1 and will be called again in Rev. 21:9.

- “judgment of the great harlot” – This is the theme of this chapter. (Rev. 17:16-17)
- “harlot” – (Greek “porne”) Lit. “fornicator.” This word does not only refer to women who sell their bodies, but to any who commit fornication.
- “the great harlot” – Also called “the woman” (v. 4), “Babylon the great” (v. 5), “the mother of all harlots” (v. 5), and “that great city” (v. 18). To get the scope of what we are looking at in Revelation 17, we must go back to Genesis 10:8-12; 11:4. There we see Nimrod (whose name means “we rebel”) was the dictator of a one-world political system centered in Babylon. Along with the political/economic system was introduced a worldwide religious system (that had no need for God) that was a result of the mythological story of Nimrod marrying Semiramus (otherwise known as Ishtar or Ashtart) who supposedly gave birth to Tammuz by means of a virgin conception. Tammuz was said to have been killed by a wild beast and afterward brought back to life. This religious system has extended through each succeeding empire in various forms including: Isis and her son Osiris in Egypt, Aphrodite and Zeus (son Eros) in Greece, Venus and Jupiter (son Cupid) in Rome, Isee and her son Iswara in India, Subelly and her son Deoius in China, and Ashtoreth and Baal in Chaldea.
 - For an excellent explanation of the Nimrod-Semiramus-Tammuz myth, see John Walvoord’s Revelation commentary called “The Revelation of Jesus Christ” (P. 247-248).

- Micah refers to the “land of Nimrod” (Micah 5:5-6). It could be that the final world dictator will in some sense be a return of Nimrod.
- Throughout history these personalities have led to two adjacent yet distinct modes of worship. One (from Semiramus) was a mode of worship that was very sexual and licentious – “honoring” fertility and the reproductive process, through temple prostitutes and free sex. The other (from Tammuz) was a mode that required great sacrifice from the worshipper – “honoring” the sacrifice of Tammuz, through crop, animal, human, and infant sacrifices. Both, the enjoyment of life in complete freedom and the sacrifice of life to one’s detriment are distortions and misunderstandings of God’s true substitutionary atonement in Jesus, as Satan loves to cloud the truth with something very similar, yet very distinct.
- The Babylonian religious system has one thing in common throughout the world and throughout history – it requires something of humans to earn or work their way up to pleasing or appeasing God. And it differs from God’s system as is spelled out in the Scriptures which requires humans to admit they cannot make it on their own (no matter how religious) and to accept God’s own provision on their behalf.

17:2 – “drunk with the wine of her fornication” – Throughout the Bible, religious systems that oppose the true and living God are called adulterous and intoxicating. (Rev. 14:8)

- “fornication” – Biblically, idolatry is adultery against God.

17:3 – “into the wilderness” – Lit. “into wilderness.” This is not a particular wilderness.

- Some conjectures on this wilderness include the barrenness left after the flood or the demonic-spiritual world where demons reside when cast out of an individual.
- “scarlet beast” – The Anti-Christ. (Rev. 13)
- “scarlet...blasphemy...seven heads and ten horns” – This imagery has been used to speak of Satan earlier in Revelation 12:3-6. It seems to indicate that Satan is empowering and leading this religious system (with the accompanying political system).
- “a woman sitting on a scarlet beast” – Although Satan seems to be behind both entities, the woman and the beast, they are clearly separate.

17:4 – “arrayed in purple and scarlet...cup full of abominations” – Despite being full of idolatry and spiritual wickedness, the woman is beautifully arrayed in her outward appearance.

- The name “Babel” has two meanings. The first for “Bab-el” means “the gate of God, heaven’s gate.” The second for “babel” means “confusion.” This contradiction seems to hold in reference to Babylon all through the Bible.

17:5 – “Babylon” – The name is mentioned 6 times in Revelation.

- One of the overarching themes of the Bible is the Tale of Two Cities contrasting Jerusalem and Babylon.
- Zech. 5:8-11 – “This is Wickedness...in the land of Shinar.”
- There are passages in both Isaiah and Jeremiah that clearly describe a destruction of Babylon that has never happened...yet. Many Bible commentaries and helps are in error on this point: one must not confuse the fall of Babylon to the Persians in 539 BC with the destruction of Babylon detailed in the Bible. It is quite significant that Saddam Hussein had made significant efforts to rebuild Babylon and has used the rebuilt Nebuchadnezzar’s palace for state occasions. It appears that the cataclysmic destruction described by Isaiah and Jeremiah (“like Sodom and Gomorrah” – Isa. 13:19) is still in the future.
- “MOTHER” – This can also be translated “Fountainhead.”

- “Mother of all Harlots” – Babylon has a global influence over “peoples, multitudes, nations, and tongues.” (V. 15)
- 17:6 – “drunk” – Lit. “drinking.”
- John is seeing a religious system drunk of the blood of believers, even though the system itself carries many of the symbols of true Christianity.
 - “marveled” – This also could be translated “wondered or admired.” John is stunned at the sight.
- 17:7 – “marvel” – This is the same word as “marveled” in v. 6. The angel seems surprised that John would be so stunned by this sight.
- “I will tell you” – The angel himself will explain this vision.
- 17:8 – “beast that was, and is not, and yet is” – This speaks of the Anti-Christ (v. 11) and his political system (v. 10). The Anti-Christ being killed and coming back to life, as the Roman Empire (possibly along with or centered in Babylon) passed off the scene only to come back as a world power.
- “bottomless pit” – The beast is referring to the Anti-Christ who is under the control or in the possession of Satan himself. (Rev. 11:7; 13:4)
- 17:9 – “seven heads” – The heads are of the beast, not of the harlot. If this refers to Rome, it is in the context of the Anti-Christ and not speaking specifically of the religious system or the Roman Catholic Church.
- “seven mountains” – Rome is the “city of seven hills.”
 - “Mountain” and “hill” are different Greek words. Biblically, mountains represent kingdoms.
- 17:10 – “seven kings” – This refers to specific individuals, but it also refers to the kingdoms they oversee.
- “five are fallen” – This seems to point to the five past kingdoms of Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, Medo-Persia, and Greece. (Dan. 2)
 - “one is” – This is Rome which was in existence in John’s day.
 - “other” – (Greek “allos”) Lit. “another of the same kind.”
 - “not yet come” – This speaks of the kingdom of the Anti-Christ.
- 17:11 – “the beast...going to perdition” – This hints at Satan who has some sort of control over the Anti-Christ.
- 17:12 – “ten kings” – The ten toes of Daniel’s vision. (Dan. 2; 7:7,24)
- 17:14 – “those who are with Him” – This is the Church. “The armies in heaven...followed Him.” (Rev. 19:14)
- “Lord of lords and King of kings” – Rev. 19:16.
- 17:16 – “hate the harlot” – This is how the judgment of God on this religious system will take place. God will use the nations of the Anti-Christ to judge the harlot, turning on this religious system to destroy it so that they can give the authority and resources to the worship of the Anti-Christ.
- Up to the mid-point of the Tribulation there is an ecumenical movement through religious Babylon. But at the 3½ year point the Anti-Christ will dissolve the ecumenical system by declaring himself to be god. (Rev. 13:4, 12, 15)

17:17 – “fulfill His purpose” – God will use the ungodly rulers and kingdoms under the authority of the Anti-Christ to fulfill His will on this adulterous religious system.

- “The Most High [God] rules in the kingdoms of men, and gives it to whomever He chooses.” (Dan. 4:17, 25, 32)
- God can use anybody...it is so much better to be wanted by God than to be used by God! (Mark 3:13)

17:18 – “which reigns” – The Greek is in the present tense. Lit. “is reigning.”

Chapter 18:

The ultimate judgment of all that is anti-God and anti-Christ; here, especially, on the political and economic systems of this world. This judgment contains the final plea of God to His mankind to “come out of her, My people.” (Rev. 18:4)

- The Babylon of Rev. 18 is closely related to the religious Babylon of Rev. 17 which was destroyed by the Anti-Christ and the ten king alliance (17:16). Here, the political Babylon will be destroyed by God Himself (18:21; 19:11-16).

18:1 – “After these things” – (Greek “meta tauta”) Rev. 1:19 and 4:1. This phrase always marks out a sequence in the book of Revelation.

- “illuminated” – Babylon has been in darkness from the vial judgments (16:10). Here, a single angel lights up the earth at his arrival.
- Zech. 5:5-11 – “This is Wickedness...land of Shinar.”

18:2 – “fallen” – The Greek is in the aorist tense, which indicates a sudden event viewed as completed.

- “a prison for every foul spirit” – We have seen demons bound at the Euphrates in Rev. 9:14.

18:3 – “abundance” – (Greek “dunamis”) Lit. “power.”

- “luxury” – (Greek “strenos”) Lit. “strainings.”
- “abundance of her luxury” – Lit. “power of her strenuous attaining.” The pursuit of wealth and abundance can be a power that dominates one’s life. God is speaking against the mentality of attaining peace, happiness, and security through physical possessions.
- Jesus taught that the cares (mirimna – pulling apart) of this world and the deceitfulness of riches can choke (press in to squish) the Word in us and make us unfruitful. (Mt. 13)
- “Godliness with contentment is great gain...having food and clothing, with these we shall be content.” (1 Tim. 6:6)
- “Your gold and silver is cankered; and the rust of them shall be witness against you, and shall eat your flesh as it were fire. You have heaped treasure together for the last days.” (James 5:3)
- God is the one who gives the power to attain wealth. (Deut. 8:18)

18:4 – “Come out of her” – The key to separation is not what we are separated from but who we are separated unto. With the Lord, we do not give up anything compared to what we get in relationship with Him.

- “my people” – God is crying and pleading for His people.

18:5 – “reached” – Lit. “glued together in a stack to heaven.” This is an interesting play on words pointing to Babel in Gen. 11:1-9.

- God measures time morally, not chronologically.

- “remembered her iniquities” – The judgment will be fitting for the iniquities.
 - For those of us who are in Christ, our sins and iniquities are remembered no more. (Heb. 8:12; 10:17)

18:7 – “lived luxuriously” – (Greek “*ester niasen*”) Lit. “to be wanton or revel,” but from the root meaning “hardheaded or strong.” The idea is “stubbornly oblivious.”

- “torment” – The Greek word speaks of physical pain. This could also be translated “torture.”
- “not see sorrow” – This is the deception of worldly wealth and it is a lie. It is not that there isn’t sorrow; it is just that Babylon refuses to see and acknowledge it.
 - Being wealthy is not a sin (neither is being poor). Abraham, Joseph, David, and many other saints of the Old and New Testaments had worldly wealth.

18:8 – “in one day” – Isa. 13:19 – “Babylon...will be as when God overthrew Sodom.”

- “death and mourning and famine” – The description of the punishment of Babylon being “utterly burned with fire” leads some to believe this is a nuclear attack. Whatever the judgment, it is so fearful that the powers of the earth are in awe. (v. 9, 11, 17)
- Isa. 13:19 – “Babylon...will be as when God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah.”

18:9 – “weep and lament” – Lit. “uncontrollable sobbing and beating the breast in anguish.”

18:10 – “Alas” – or “woe.”

- “in one hour your judgment has come” – After all those years of political maneuvering to set up the one-world government.

18:11 – “the merchants of the earth” – The one-world economic system has crumbled. This is all of the world’s wealth coming to nothing in a moment’s time.

- “weep and mourn” – They are weeping, not for the many who die and suffer or even for their own sins that have contributed to the fall, but for losing their ability to make money there.
 - They know remorse and sorrow rather than repentance and conviction.

18:12 – “merchandise” – These are luxuries, not necessities. These are the trappings of the Babylon system; cars, clothes, houses, perfumes, fine dining, etc.

- What do the people of the world sell themselves for? What is a soul worth?
- We must be careful to measure our lives off of what we have been given rather than off of what we do not have.

18:13 – “horses and chariots” – This seems to speak of military armaments and vehicles.

- “bodies and souls of men” – There were an estimated 60 million slaves in the Roman Empire.

18:16 – “clothed in fine linen” – This seems to be a reference to the Great Harlot or more specifically to the apparel taken from the Harlot when the 10 kings destroyed her. (Rev. 17:4, 16)

18:17 – “in one hour such great riches come to nothing” – They always do. At the moment of our deaths, these earthly riches mean nothing.

- “shipmaster” – The shipping business has come to a screeching halt.

18:20 – “Rejoice over her” – This command stands in such stark contrast to the weeping and mourning of the world’s powerful people as they watch Babylon crumble.

- “God has avenged you” – The world’s priorities and system that has been so antagonistic against God and His people through the ages is now reaping what it has sown.

18:21 – “Babylon shall be thrown down” – Future tense.

- Mt. 18:6; Mark 9:42 – “If anyone causes one of these little ones to stumble...it would be better for a millstone to be hung from his neck and thrown into the sea.” This seems to be the literal judgment and sentence placed on Babylon by God Himself.

18:22 – “harpists, musicians, flutists, and trumpeters” – The entertainment industry is eliminated.

- “Give me bread and give me the arena” was the cry of Rome prior to its destruction.
- Ezek. 16:49 – Sin of Sodom was idle time, a full belly, the pride of life, and forgetting the poor.
- Amusement (literally amuse means “not to think”) and entertainment are big business in our country.

18:23 – “for” – This is the reason for their destruction.

- “sorcery” – (Greek “pharmacia”) Whatever intoxicates: whether drugs, alcohol, money, sex, gossip, hatred, wealth, power, excitement or anything else.

18:24 – “blood of prophets and saints” – Statistics say there have been an average of 250,000 Christians martyred/year from 1900-1990’s.

Chapter 19:

This chapter could be titled “The Return of the King.”

- Rev. 19 is a contrasting presentation of feasts: the marriage feast of the Lamb in celebration (v. 9) and the feast of the great God in punishment (v. 17).

19:1 – “after these things” – (Greek “meta tauta”) This is after the cup of God’s wrath has been poured out, after the Great Tribulation, and after everything that followed the fall of mankind in Genesis 3. Finally, in Revelation 19 the light is once again fully lit in mankind (v. 8).

- “great multitude” – This is probably far more than we could ever imagine.
 - This may be the same group as in Rev. 7:9 (also translated “a great multitude”). Though the general references may be to all people in heaven, the allusion seems to be the martyred dead of the great Tribulation.
- “Alleluia” – This English word appears 4 times in 6 verses. These are the only 4 times this word is used in the English translation of the NT.
 - The Greek word, “hallelujah,” appears 24 times in the NT, but is translated literally from the Hebrew as Praise the Lord.”
 - This is the culmination of all humanity and the fulfillment of the promised day of God.
- “Salvation and glory and honor and power” – Lit. “the salvation and the glory and the honor and the power.” In the Greek, there are definite articles before each item.

19:2 – “For” – The first (of 3) reason they are rejoicing in heaven: God’s righteous and true judgments.

- “true and righteous” – They are praising God for His judgments as on earth and its ungodly systems. We don’t always see God’s judgments in this light currently.

- From the heavenly perspective, everything is right and all the earthly trials fade away. This is the only place where it all makes sense. “Set your mind on things above...” “Store up treasures in heaven where...” “We are strangers and aliens...”
 - “the blood of His servants” – This Babylon system has always worked to draw the heart of men and women away from God. (Babylon wants to keep us from the heavenly, eternal view in favor of the physical, temporal stuff it offers.)
- 19:3 – “Her smoke” – This all that remains of the seductive Babylonian system and her merchandise.
- 19:4 – “worshiped” – Lit. “to bow before a king.” There is a progression here from praise to worship.
- 19:5 – “servants and those who fear Him” – Proper service has a proper fear of God.
- “fear Him” – This entails reverence and awe, but is also very literally a fear.
 - This is not the fear of punishment that causes torment (1 John 4:18), but the proper fear that results from standing in the presence of the almighty God of the universe.
 - Jer. 2:19 – “Your backslidings will rebuke you...it is an evil thing...the fear of Me is not in you.”
- 19:6 – “as it were” – There is metaphorical language in this description.
- “For” – The second (of 3) reason they are rejoicing in heaven: God is taking up His reign.
 - “reigns” – In Greek idea is “finally reigns and has taken up His throne.”
- 19:7 – “for” – The third (and final) reason for their rejoicing: The marriage of the Lamb is come.
- “marriage of the Lamb” – The customs of John’s day regarded the marriage and the marriage supper (v. 9) as essentially the same thing.
 - We’ll sing “here comes the groom” at that wedding. The Lamb is the main attraction.
 - In glory no one gives the bride away, Jesus will present the bride to Himself.
 - “wife” – The Church is the bride of Christ. (Eph. 5:22-33; Rom. 7:4; 2 Cor. 11:2; James 4:4)
 - “made herself ready” – This almost seems works oriented, but it goes along with the reception of the imparted garments of v. 8.
- 19:8 – “granted” – This is a gift of God. Righteousness is imputed, not earned.
- “fine linen” – Isa. 61:10 says that we are “robed in righteousness.”
 - Garments are woven little by little, and thus were the materials for her, the Bride of Christ.
 - “clean and bright” – This also implies “bright and glistening.”
 - Saints seem to be arrayed in light in heaven as Jesus was on the Mt. of Transfiguration.
 - This was possibly was Adam’s state in the Eden. That might explain why he noticed his nakedness and felt he had to cover up after eating of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil (Gen. 3:6-7).
 - “righteous acts” – Lit. “righteousnesses (plural) of the saints.”
 - Translated “righteous acts” in NKJV because of its plurality in the Greek. But, “righteous acts” implies that this apparel is a reward based on works. However, “righteous acts” comes from a Greek root meaning “to declare, to make, or to demonstrate as justified” which clearly makes this a granted or imputed righteousness.
 - Rev. 7:14 says that the saints “have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.”
 - Jesus said the work of God was to believe on the one He sent. (John 6:29)
 - Matt. 22:1-14 gives the story of one who came to the wedding with a proper garment, and was subsequently removed.

- “Righteous acts” could be pointing to both the righteousness of Christ that has been imputed to us and the righteous deeds that will be rewarded upon our arrival into heaven.
- “saints” – These are the redeemed believers.

19:9 – “those who are called” – This seems to refer to the wedding guests, likely pointing to the redeemed Jews.

19:10 – “fellow servant” – (Greek “syndoulos”) Lit. “fellow slave.”

- “worship God” – People have the tendency to worship the instrument that God uses to communicate with us or through whom He does something for us, rather than worshipping Him alone.
- “testimony” – (Greek “marturia”) Also translated “witness.”
- “testimony of Jesus” – All the Scriptures testify of Jesus (John 6:39). And Revelation, in particular, is an unveiling of Jesus Christ (Rev. 1:1).
 - Revelation unveils Jesus in His “natural” state as Almighty God. The first time He came, He humbled Himself and veiled Himself in human flesh. This time He will come in “power and great glory” (Matt. 24:30).

19:11 – “heaven opened” – Christ breaks through from another dimension. Heaven is much closer than we understand it to be.

- This day is an answer to all of the prayers of “Your kingdom come, Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.” In that kingdom, there will finally be truth, equity, health, fellowship, liberty and justice for all.
- This is the “Return of the King.”
- “white horse” – This horse is the first thing John notes in this scene.
 - Merrill C. Tenney in his book “The Book of Revelation” describes the revelation of Christ in His second coming as following “the pattern of a Roman triumphal procession. When a general returned from a successful campaign, he and his legions were granted the right to parade up the Via Sacra, the main street of Rome that led from the Forum to the Temple of Jupiter on the Capitoline Hill. Mounted on a white horse, the general rode at the head of his troops, followed by the wagonloads of booty that he had taken from the conquered nation, and by the chained captives that were to be executed or sold in the slave markets of the city. The chief captives or rebels were remanded to the Mamertine Prison, where they were usually executed, while sacrifices of thanksgiving were offered in the temple.”
 - Elisha saw angels on horses saying “more are with us than with them.” (2 Kings 6:16-17)
- “Faithful and True” – He is genuine and dependable. (Rev. 1:5)
- “judges and makes war” - The Greek tenses are timeless. Lit. “eternally judging and making war.”

19:12 – “like a flame of fire” – This is metaphorical language. His eyes aren’t actually on fire.

- “crowns” – (Greek “diademos”) Lit. “kingly crowns.” These are not the “stephanos,” victor’s wreaths, of the anti-Christ (6:1).
 - Rev. 6 and 19 are different scenes. The Anti-Christ, in his attempt to imitate and replace Christ, comes in a similar manner but for a different purpose.
- “no one knew except Himself” - Even in heaven, there will be new things to learn of Christ for eternity. He will never wear out; there will always be something, a name at least, that we will never fully know or understand.

19:13 – “robe dipped in blood” – This is the blood of His enemies, not merely the blood of the cross or the blood of the martyrs. Isa. 63:1-4 – “dyed garments from Bozrah.”

- Matt. 24:30 – “the Son of Man coming on the clouds with great power and glory.”
- Titus 2:13 – “the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God.”
- Zech. 14:3-9 – “His feet will stand on the Mount of Olives.”
- 1 Thess. 3:13 – “with all his saints.”
- “the Word of God” – Jesus is the Word in the flesh. He is the God of the Word of God.
 - Some study the Bible as a set of promises, a set of principles, or a set of doctrines. But, ultimately, the Word became flesh. Therefore, the living Word (the “logos” of John 1:1) is synonymous with the written Word (the “logos” of Heb. 4:12).
 - The lens to read the Bible through is the lens of Jesus. He is in every part of the Word because He is the Word. Rich Mullins said “The Bible was not written so that we can be right, the Bible was written so that we can know God.” We need to read it for that end.

19:14 – “armies” – These are probably both the saints and the angels.

- The Greek indicates great order and majesty in the armies coming “rank upon rank.”
- “white and clean” – Jesus’ vesture is dipped in blood, ours is white and clean. Only Jesus is doing the killing.
 - Rev. 19:21 – “rest were killed with the sword which proceeded from the mouth of Him.”
 - Isa. 63:3 – “I have trodden the grapes alone.”

19:15 – “sword” – (Greek “hromphaia”) Lit. “the long Thracian sword or one longer than most.” The same word is sometimes used to describe a javelin, a sword sufficiently light and long to be thrown as a spear.

- “strike” – Lit. “strike down.”
- “rule” – or “shepherd.” (Psalm 2:8,9)
- “rod” – or “scepter.”
- “fierceness and wrath” – Jesus is expressing the fury of His hatred toward sin and rebellion. This is fierceness as has never before been seen.

19:16 – “on His thigh” – This is written on the skin of His thigh.

- This must be a big thigh!
- “KING...LORD” – All English translations write this in all capital letters.
 - In the OT, when the translation was LORD in all capital letters, it spoke of Yahweh.

19:17 – “standing in the sun” – This seems to imply that the angel is blocking the sun. But it may be that he is actually blocking the sun while standing on it.

- The victory is sure. The angel is inviting the birds to the celebration party.

19:18 – “flesh” – The word is used 5 times in this verse.

- Jesus said that if He didn’t come when He did, then there would be no flesh left alive. (Matt. 24:22)

19:19 – “the beast, the kings...and their armies, gathered together” – This is the battle of Armageddon spoken of in Rev. 16:13-16.

- Hailstones will be falling on those gathered at Armageddon. Carrion birds will be gathering and feasting. The sun and moon will go dark. The only visible thing in the sky at that time will be Jesus. (Mt. 24:29,30)

- “their armies, gathered together” – Humans finally agree on something. Here they will turn from fighting one another to fighting Almighty God together.
- They are armies of men fighting horses flying out of the sky.

19:20 – “beast was captured” – 2 Thess. 2:8 says Jesus will destroy with “the breath of His mouth and the brightness of His coming.” Apparently, then, angels carry the souls of those men straight to the lake of fire.

- “lake of fire” – This seems to be referring to what Jesus called Gehenna.
 - Jesus referred to Gehenna often – Mt. 5:22, 29, 30; 10:28; 18:9; 23:15, 33; Mark 9:43, 45, 47; and Luke 12:5.

Chapter 20:

20:1 – “Then” – The thought is continuing from Ch. 19. This is a literal succession of future historical events in the Revelation record.

- The Greek word “kai,” translated “and” or “then” is used to begin a verse 17 times in 21 verses in Ch. 19 and 13 times in 15 verses in Ch. 20.
- “an angel” – This is one unnamed angel, sent from God at the appropriate time, who binds Satan for a 1,000 years. And the text doesn’t seem to indicate there was much of a struggle.
 - Spiritual warfare is a reality:
 - o 1 Pet. 5:8 – Satan roams the earth as a roaring lion.
 - o Eph. 6:11-17 – Struggle not against flesh and blood.
 - There are at least two common mistakes in warfare:
 - 1) Fighting Satan on our own.
 - Luke 8 – Jesus with the demoniac at Gadara.
 - Jude 9 – Michael the archangel reviled not...“the Lord rebuke you.”
 - Acts 19 – The seven sons of Sceva got beat up.
 - Evan, as my son, has my authority; but it is not his to wield w/o me.
 - 2) Using the sword of His Word improperly.
 - Matt. 4 – Jesus obeyed God’s Word, not just quoted it.
 - James 4:7 – “Submit to God, resist the devil, and he will flee from you.”
- “bottomless pit” – (Greek “abussos”) This is the abyss. (The abyss is also mentioned in 9:2.)
 - For this to be a time of peace, Satan must be bound and set aside. Without that, there is not true rest.
- “chain” – This is a literal chain, but it may not be physical. It seems to be a literal, but spiritual reality.
 - 2 Pet. 2:4 – “God did not spare the angels...but delivered them into chains of darkness.”

20:2 – “Devil” – Lit. “accuser or slanderer.”

- “Satan” – Lit. “adversary.” He is currently the “prince of the power of the air.” (Eph. 2:2)
 - In Matt. 4, Satan offered Jesus all the kingdoms of this world. But in Rev. 5, Jesus took the title deed to planet earth that had temporarily been forfeited to Satan.
- “thousand years” – (Greek “chilia;” Latin “millennium”) This word is used 6 times in the next 6 verses and none of them are metaphorical.
- “years” – While Scripture at times uses the term “day” in other than a literal sense, never in the Bible is a month or a year used in other than a literal sense.

- 20:3 – “seal” – This is the same word as the believer being “sealed” in Eph. 1:13 and the 144,000 sealed through the Tribulation in Rev. 7:2. Satan cannot break the seal on the bottomless pit to get out, and therefore, he cannot break the seal to get at the believer to “touch him” (1 John 5:18).
- This is one angel binding and imprisoning Satan for 1,000 years.
- 20:4 – “judgment was committed to them” – This is most likely referring to the Church being given the right to judge the earth and the angels. (1 Cor. 6:1-3; Jude 14-15)
- “beheaded for the witness to Jesus” – These are those who were martyred during the Tribulation period. Will heads and bodies be reattaching as these bodies are resurrected?
 - It seems that the raptured Church will enter the millennial kingdom in their new bodies. The Church will have been caught up and clothed with the perfection to replace the corruption. (1 Cor. 15:51-53)
 - “they lived” – This means they revived, came to life, or returned to life like their former one.
- 20:5 – “the rest of the dead” – They are held in Hades until their final judgment and punishment in the lake of fire. (Rev. 20:13-15)
- “first resurrection” – The orthodox Jew of Jesus’ day believed in a general resurrection (Job 19, Dan. 12). But Jesus taught of the “ecnecron,” the “coming out from among the dead,” (which is used 49 times in the NT). The two resurrections, therefore, aren’t chronological events as much as one of two categories that all people will fall into.
 - The first resurrection is the resurrection of the redeemed beginning with Jesus, “the firstfruits of those who sleep” (1 Cor. 15), including the OT saints that resurrected after Jesus’ resurrection and the two prophets outside Jerusalem, and culminating with the Church returning with Christ to rule and reign at this time.
 - The second resurrection, being the remainder of the general resurrection, is the resurrection of the damned to stand before the White Throne judgment seat.
- 20:6 – “second death” – This is spoken of more in v. 14.
- The first death is the physical death we will all endure (except those who are raptured). The second death is an eternal, spiritual death that is reserved only for believers.
 - “power” – (Greek “exousia”) This is domineering power or kingly right.
- 20:7 – “thousand years have expired” – Revelation covers 1,000 years in 6 verses.
- The Bible speaks often of the millennial kingdom: Job 19:25-27; Jer. 30:7-10; Ezek. 34:23; 40-47; Hosea 3:5; Isa. 2:2-4; 11; 35; 65:20; Zech. 14; Psalm 72; 1 Cor. 6:2; Dan. 7:22; Matt. 19:28.
 - In Acts 1:6, the disciples asked Jesus if God was going to, at this time, restore the kingdom to Israel. In the next verse, Jesus answers “it is not for you to know times and seasons which the Father has put in His own authority.” (Acts 1:7) Jesus did not deny that God will one day restore the kingdom to Israel. He just refused to set the date at which that would happen.
 - Eschatology influences practice. Who you are and what you do is all built off what you truly believe.

- There are three main Christian views concerning the millennium:
 1. Amillennialism – The view that Rev. 20 is an allegorical reference to the Church age.
 - This view causes believers to leave the earth as is socially and spiritually.
 2. Postmillennialism – The view that believes the Church will usher in the millennium and speed Christ’s return with its righteousness and service.
 - This view causes the Church to work for a social and/or cultural redemption.
 3. Premillennialism – The view that states that God will judge the earth for 7 years and then set up the literal thousand-year reign of Jesus.
 - This view causes the Church to expect the cultural deterioration of society and focus on spiritual redemption.

20:8 – “deceive the nations” – People will be deceived even after this 1,000 year period with Jesus physically reigning on earth.

- This event gives humans the ultimate testimony of God’s righteousness in judging, as this is evidence that sin is not a result of education or environment, but of the heart. (Jer. 17:9)
- Ezek. 40:48 describes the sacrificial system as people will still have to trust in Christ to be saved – looking back to His work on the cross. It seems that at the end of the millennium, there are some who have not accepted Christ and are therefore capable of being deceived.

20:10 – “forever and ever” – The Bible does not speak of hell as annihilation.

- Hell, including both Hades and Gehenna, is not a place of parties with debauchery and sex where Satan parades around with a pitchfork and rules over all the others. Hell is the place prepared for the eternal punishment of the devil and his angels (Matt. 25:41) where there is outer darkness and the weeping and gnashing of teeth (Matt. 22:13) and where their worm dies not and the fire is not quenched (Mark 9:44).

20:11 – “great white throne” – Jesus called this the “resurrection of damnation.” (John 5:29)

- Believers do not appear before the “great white throne,” they appear before the “bema” throne which is the judgment seat of Christ where rewards are handed out for works of faithfulness. (Rom. 14:10; 2 Cor. 5:8,10)
- Heb. 2:15 says that unbelievers live their lives in the bondage of the fear of death as they await this judgment.
- “great white” – This picture speaks of the magnitude, purity, and power of the judgment of God.
 - There is no mention of angels, worship, or anything else apart from God in this scene. There is no mention of believers singing, speaking, or even appearing at this scene. The awesomeness of this picture is overwhelming as a condemned humanity stands before the One “from whose face the earth and the heaven fade away.”

20:12 – “according to their works” – Unbelievers are judged by their works.

- To reject the sacrifice and righteousness of Christ is to decide to stand before God in your own righteousness. But Isa. 64:6 says “all our righteousness is as filthy rags.”
- In John 6:29, Jesus said the work of God is for us to believe in Jesus.
 - Sin doesn’t send people to hell; rejecting Jesus sends people to hell. Jesus Christ came to save sinners.
- “by the things which were written” – There are no loopholes or missed evidence in this judgment. There is also not a second-chance, post-death opportunity to be saved.
- “books” – God is an amazing record keeper, judging down to every thought, intention, and motive of the heart.

20:14-15 – “second death...lake of fire” – This is Gehenna, the place of eternal death.

- “anyone not found written in the Book of Life” – Either one’s name is written in that book or it is not. There is not a sliding scale or a heavenly balance to weigh good and bad deeds.
- “lake of fire” – The holy city and the lake of fire stand in such opposition to one another. The holy city has foundations that cannot be moved, whereas the lake of fire is a bottomless place of eternal falling. The holy city is a place of intimate fellowship with God, whereas the lake of fire is a place of eternal loneliness. The holy city has a river of life that flows from the throne of God, whereas the lake of fire is a place of unquenched thirst. The holy city has one King, whereas the lake of fire has no ruler and no order. The holy city is filled with light, whereas the lake of fire is filled with darkness.

Chapter 21:

Rev. 21 and 22 are the clearest pictures of heaven that we have in the Bible. But it is what the truth of this picture ministers to our hearts by the Holy Spirit that is most significant, for “eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor have entered into the heart of man the things which God has prepared for those who love Him...But God has revealed them to us through His Spirit.” (1 Cor. 2:9-10)

- God keeps heaven before us. The word “heaven” is used over 580 times in the Bible and the word “heavens” is used over 130 times. In the NT, we are instructed to “set your mind on things above, not on things of the earth.” (Col. 3:2) We are told that “though our outward man is perishing, yet the inward man is being renewed day by day...while we do not look at the things which are seen, but at the things which are unseen. For the things which are seen are temporary, but the things which are not seen are eternal.” (2 Cor. 4:16-18)
- Heaven is the only place we will truly fit. This earth is not our home. But heaven will satisfy all we were made for. All the colors, temperatures, sounds, and smells will agree with our being. Heaven is home.

21:1 – “passed away” – This is the final restoration of heaven and earth. This is not just renovating the present set, but completely starting over.

- Col. 1:16-17 – “For by [Jesus] all things were created...and in Him all things consist.”
- 2 Pet. 3:7-12 – “elements will melt (dissolve) with a fervent heat...”
- Isa. 65:17; 66:22 – God creates (“barra”) the new heavens and earth from nothing.
 - There are no evolutionists in heaven. All will see God create an earth once again.
- “no more sea” – But there will be rivers. (Rev. 22:1)
 - Currently, 70% of the earth’s surface, or 330 million cubical miles, is water. On earth, 1.5 trillion tons of rain falls to the earth every day. The new earth doesn’t seem to be driven with a hydro-system as the current one is.

21:2 – “the holy city” – This city, at 1,500 miles cubed, is nearly the size of our current moon.

- If the moon would be placed in this proximity to an earth of this size, this earth would spin off its axis. It could be that the new earth will be much larger.
- Current cities are far from holy. It seems that the more people you cram into a smaller space the more problems, crime and corruption that you have. But in the holy city, the Lamb is in the middle of it and there are no problems with crime and corruption there.
- “coming down” – This is the final union of heaven and earth and the ultimate union of God and man.

- “prepared as a bride adorned” – John 14:3 – “If I go to prepare a place for you...” Heb. 11:16 – “He has prepared a city for them...” 1 Cor. 2:9 – “...God has prepared for those who love Him.”
 - Please note who the “you” and the “them” are that Jesus is preparing this city for. They are the disciples who are strangers on earth loving God while seeking a homeland and desiring a better country.

21:3 – “loud voice” – This is the last great voice of Revelation.

- “Behold” – Literally “consider this.”
- “tabernacle...dwell...” – Both English words come from the same Greek root (“skene”). God and Jesus are the temple. (Rev. 21:22)
 - John 1:14 says the word became flesh and dwelt (or tabernacled) among us.
 - In the incarnation, Jesus took on a body that He keeps for eternity. (Phil. 2:6-8; Rev. 5:6)
- “He will dwell with them” – To true Christians, heaven is not just a place where all things are new, but a place where they can enjoy unbroken fellowship with God.
- “with men...with them...with them...” – This is Immanuel in all His fullness. (Matt. 1:23)
 - Heaven is not just a place where all things are new, but a place where we can enjoy unbroken fellowship with God. He is what makes heaven “home.”
 - 1 Cor. 13:12 – “Now I know in part, but then I shall know just as I also am known.”
 - 1 John 3:2 – “...we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is.”

21:4 – “no more death, nor sorrow...” – Heaven is here described by what it is not.

- “God will wipe” – First thing mentioned. Before the bowing and worshipping, God wipes away tears. This is the hand of Almighty God touching our cheeks.
 - This is the final restoration of humanity, as God takes us through a process of cleansing and healing. From this point on, there is no more pain.
 - It seems that, until this point at least, there had been tears in heaven.
 - God has been collecting all our tears up to that point in a bottle. (Ps. 56:8)

21:5 – “He who sat on the throne said” – John is getting these orders straight from the throne and God Himself. God wants His heart clearly revealed as He wraps up the Bible.

- God seems at least as homesick as we are. He died to be with us and is eager to bring that into the fullness of reality. The thing that God wants most from you, is you.
- “true and faithful” – This phrase carries the idea of “dependable.” We can build our lives on these things.
 - Matt. 6:20 – “lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven...”
 - Luke 12:31 – “seek the kingdom of God, and all these things shall be added to you.”

21:6 – “It is done” – Lit. “it is brought to completion, it stands accomplished.” This is done, because on the cross, it was finished. (John 19:30)

- “freely” – Lit. “undeservedly.” (Rev. 22:17)
 - Nobody who thinks they deserve it can drink. We only come to Him without deserving.
- “water of life...to him who thirsts” – This is the completed satisfaction of humanity. He Himself will meet every thirst.

- 21:7 – “overcomes” – We overcome only “by the blood of the Lamb and the Word of their testimony.” (Rev. 12:11)
- 1 John 5:4 – “And this is the victory that has overcome the world – our faith.”
 - “inherit” – This implies that we will have responsibilities as well as enjoyment.
- 21:8 – “cowardly” – This is not just being afraid, but being afraid to trust Jesus. (Mark 4:40; John 14:27; 2 Tim. 1:7,8)
- These are sins that mark one’s lifestyle. There is a difference between being afraid (on occasion) and being fearful (continually).
 - “abominable” – This word is translated “abhors” in Rom. 2:22. The idea is “hateful, or polluted” and refers to those who indulge in sin and were thus polluted in mind, spirit, and body. (See also 2 Cor. 7:1.)
 - “sexually immoral” – (Greek “ pornos”) Lit. “fornicators.” In the context here, it refers to any who practice or promote sexual activity outside the context of marriage.
 - 1 Cor. 6:9-11 – “Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God...such were some of you. But you were washed...”
 - “shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire” – Heaven isn’t for everybody. Anyone who refuses to change their position and lifestyle to agree with God is refusing God and His heavenly dwelling place in favor of their lifestyle.
 - Jesus instructs us to “enter by the narrow gate; for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it.” (Matt. 7:13)
- 21:9 – “one of the seven angels” – John recognizes this angel from before.
- “the bride, the Lamb’s wife” – Nobody is married to a city, but the bride and the city are so connected that to have one is to have the other.
 - “Lamb” – The word Lamb is used in connection with the New Jerusalem 7 times throughout the rest of the book. (Rev. 21:9,14,22,23,27; 22:1,3)
- 21:10 – “carried me away” – John’s vantage point changes as we go through this scene. John will see it from a great distance first to see the whole thing, then swoops around to see the twelve gates, and then eventually comes close enough to measure the walls and the city.
- “in the Spirit” – This is the last vision of the Bible. God saves the best for last.
 - The best this world has to offer is only a cheap imitation of the city to come.
 - “the holy Jerusalem” – The Holy Spirit here is telling us about that city that the Lord promised to prepare for His disciples in John 14:2. Now that prepared city is coming to the earth, and its inhabitants are the members of the Bride.
- 21:11 – “her light” – Lit. “illumination.” The city is light bearing.
- John is struggling to describe this, repeatedly using “like” and “as.”
- 21:12 – “a great and high wall” – This is a real wall made of jasper, which is clear as crystal.
- 21:12-14 – “names of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel...names of the twelve apostles” – The names of sinners are inscribed all around this city. Names like Reuben, Simeon, Judah...Peter, Paul, and John himself.
- 21:14 – “foundations” – These are solid and secure foundations, unlike the foundations people try to build on for much of their lives.

21:16 – “12,000 furlongs” – This is either 1,380 miles (based on a Greek furlong) or 1,500 miles (based on a Roman furlong).

- Superimposed on the earth, this city would reach from Canada to the Gulf of Mexico and from Atlantic City to Denver, with the same height.
- Henry Morris estimates that there have been 100 billion people that have ever lived on the face of the planet. If 1/5 of them get saved, the 20 billion people in heaven would each have a 75-acre cube in the new city.

21:17 – “measured its wall” – The measurement is 216 ft (about 75 yards). This is measuring either the height or the thickness of the wall.

- Some believe that the holy city is cubed (and it could be from the information given here). But the Holy of Holies in the OT tabernacle was cubed and this holy city is the reality that the OT tabernacle was pointing to.

21:18 – “wall was of jasper” – These are walls of crystal sitting on foundations of glistening jewels.

- These are only descriptions of the exterior. We haven’t really come to the substance of the city yet.
- An LA university Gemologist has said that the human eye would have to be radically different to handle this.
- “pure gold” – The gold is so pure that you can see through it. That would also make it very soft.
 - If gold is asphalt in heaven, why do we value it so much here?

21:19 – “foundations” – There are either 3 foundations per wall evenly spaced from each other and evenly spaced between the gates or twelve different layers of foundations within the wall.

- “jasper” – The color of this would be clear as a diamond.
- “sapphire” – The color of this would be blue.
- “chalcedony” – The color of this would be sky blue with yellow streaks.
- “emerald” – The color of this would be green.

21:20 – “sardonyx” – The color of this would be white with blood red veins.

- “sardius” – The color of this would be ruby red.
- “chrysolite” – The color of this would be blue, green, and gold.
- “beryl” – The color of this would be yellow-green to turquoise.
- “topaz” – The color of this would be golden.
- “chrysoprase” – The color of this would be blue, green, and yellow.
- “jacinth” – The color of this would be violet and blue.
- “amethyst” – The color of this would be purple.

21:21 – “each...of one pearl” – If the walls are 216 ft. thick and if the gate runs the length of the opening, then the pearl would be over 200 feet long.

21:22 – “temple” – (Greek “naous”) lit. “the holy of holies.” The city is one big sanctuary.

21:23 – “glory of God illuminated it” – In Acts 9, Paul saw the brightness of God as brighter than the noonday sun. 1 Tim. 6:16 says that Jesus dwells in “unapproachable light.” Isa. 60:18-22 says that “the Lord will be to you an everlasting light.” And 1 John 1:5 says that “God is light; in Him there is no darkness at all.”

- The city and the jewels it is made of are all made of material that reflects and refracts light. Seen from the new earth, this city would emanate a permanent rainbow of sorts.
- Dan. 12:3 and Matt. 13:43 tell us that the redeemed will shine forth like the stars of heaven forever and ever.

21:24 – “nations” – (Greek “ethne”) This is the word for Gentiles; non-Jewish people.

- “nations of those who are saved” – Perhaps they are identical with the redeemed residents of the city, but that, in addition to their homes in the city, they will also be given national boundaries in the new earth, within which they can still function as distinct nations.

21:25 – “gates shall not be shut at all” – The angels at the gates aren’t guarding, they are greeting.

21:27 – “no means enter it anything that defiles” – Rev. 21:8 and 22:15 provide more detailed lists of those who will not be granted access to heaven and the holy city.

- This has an application for the believer too. It means we cannot mess it up.

Chapter 22:

22:1 – “water of life” – It is not just that the water gives life, but the water itself is life.

- The water is flowing down the street, seemingly, without concrete or natural river banks. It is also possible that the river is floating.
- Jesus promised that rivers of living water would flow out of the lives that chose to believe on Him in faith. (John 7:38)
- “proceeding from the throne” – Life comes from Jesus’ authority as the King of Kings.
 - The authority you walk in corresponds to the throne you bow your knee to.
- “the throne of God and of the Lamb” – It is astonishing, and yet it should not be so, that there is no mention after Rev. 21 of the cherubim. They were brought between God and men to guard and prevent the way to God after mankind’s sin. Now that sin is done away with, they no longer stand between God and His creation.

22:2 – “the tree” – The word is singular. This either means that there is only one species of tree or that there is only one tree with vines or branches growing out of it that are producing fruit.

- “tree of life” – The symbolism of this tree pervades the Scriptures. (Gen. 2:9; 3:22; Prov. 3:18; 13:12)
- “twelve fruits” – There is one distinct type of fruit for each month.
- “fruits” – There is food and eating in heaven. Abraham fed the Lord and angels in his tent in Mamre (Gen. 18:8). Jesus ate in His glorified body (Luke 24:42).
- “every month” – This seems to indicate chronology, although we cannot be sure how time will be calculated in heaven.
- “healing” – (Greek “therapuei”) Used only 4 times in the NT, this word carries the idea of “health.”
 - This Greek word was used in the OT Septuagint translated as “healing” and referred to those serving in the tabernacle to keep it clean and in order.
 - There is therapy this river continually applies forever.
- “nations” – The plurality of this word seems to imply that diversity of some sort will continue to exist in heaven.

22:3-5 – “there shall be” – And “there shall be no more curse” – perfect restoration. But “the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it” – perfect administration. There “His servants shall serve Him” – perfect subordination. And “they shall see His face” – perfect transformation. And “His name shall be on their foreheads” – perfect identification. And “there shall be no night there: They need no lamp nor light of the sun, for the Lord God gives them light” – perfect illumination. And “they shall reign forever and ever” – perfect exultation.

22:3 – “the throne of God and the Lamb” – There is one singular throne for God and Jesus.

- “serve” – (Greek “latreou”) Lit. “priestly service, spiritual worship.” There will be work and responsibility of some sort in heaven.
- Rom. 12:1 – “present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service (“latreou”). (See also Heb. 9:1, Phil. 3:3, and Rev. 7:15)

22:4 – “shall see His face” – We will be with the Lord Himself, doing exactly what we were made to do, and we’ll never have to be separate from Him.

- Here we will find the full restoration of the fellowship Adam and Eve experienced with God in Eden.
- 1 John 3:2 says “we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is.”
- The thing God most wants from us is us. He simply wants to be with us and to have us be able to see His face and live. (Exod. 33:20 – “no man shall see Me, and live.”)

22:5 – “light” – This is no doubt much more than physical light.

- In Gen. 1:3, God created light without yet having light-bearers to sustain the light.
- “they shall reign forever” – This is speaking of us.
- In God’s eyes, this is how we were created to be; covered with glory, reflecting God Himself.

22:6 – “faithful” – Lit. “dependable.”

- “true” – Lit. “genuine.” This word is also translated “without fiction.”
- “the Lord God of the holy prophets sent His angel” – In v. 16, it says Jesus is the One to send the angel. That means that Jesus is the Lord God.
- “show His servants...shortly take place” – This is the same phrase as in Rev. 1:1.
- “shortly” – (Greek “en taxeo”) Lit. “in quick succession.” The idea is quickly or suddenly. That means that when this process starts, it will come to pass in a short amount of time.

22:7 – “Behold, I am coming quickly” – This is said three times in Rev. 22 (v. 7, 12, 20)

- “Behold” – Lit. “Consider this.”
- “I am coming quickly” – The phrase here is used as a promise. The only other place in Revelation this phrase is used as a promise rather than a threat is Rev. 3:11 in the letter to the church of Philadelphia.
- “Blessed is he who keeps” – The blessing of Rev. 1:3 was for he who read, those who heard, and them who keep the words of the book. But here the reading and hearing are finished. Only the keeping is left.
- “keeps” – A military term meaning “guards.”

- “this book” – (Greek “biblos”) This word is used 7 times in Rev. 22 (vv. 7, 9, 10, 18[x 2], and 19[x 2])
 - The exhortation in the rest of this chapter centers on the Scriptures.
 - This book (Revelation in particular and the Bible on the whole) has life changing implications. The forecast should effect our lives as our future is written in here.

- 22:8 – “I, John, saw and heard” – Lit. “I, John, am seeing and hearing these things.”
 - “I fell down to worship” – This is the same thing John did in Rev. 19:10.
 - Satan’s response was to receive and take worship to himself in place of God. (Isa. 14)

- 22:9 – “fellow servant” – (Greek “syndoulos”) Lit. “fellow slave.”
 - “of those who keep the words of this book” – The angels are like us in that they too keep or guard the Word of God.
 - “Worship God” – This ought to be our response after reading this book. In light of all that we have seen in this book, we should worship, surrender, and bow in the dust before God.
 - In heaven, we will never regret anything we have ever given to God for His glory.

- 22:10 – “Do not seal” – Revelation is an open book. Yet how many treat it as a sealed book? Apocalypse means “unveiling.” Revelation was meant to reveal, not conceal.
 - Daniel was told to seal up the words of the prophecy of his writings “until the time of the end.” (Dan. 12:4-10)

- 22:11 – “unjust...filthy still” – Lit. “more and more unjust...filthy.”
 - “righteous...holy still” – Lit. “more and more righteous...holy.”
 - This doesn’t mean that people should remain unchanged by these prophecies, but that if these prophecies are rejected, there is no other message that will work.
 - Under the same sun, some objects are softened (like ice) and some are hardened (like clay). It all depends on the nature of the substance.
 - This is a solemn warning that decision determines character, and character determines destiny.
 - Our job is not to change or convert people, but to seal not (or speak out) the Word. We cannot convince a heart. We can only share the Truth.

- 22:12 – “reward...work” – These are rewards in addition to salvation.
 - Jesus said that the work of God is that we would believe on the One that He sent. (John 6:29)

- 22:13 – “the Alpha and the Omega” – Jesus has been there. He knows.
 - This speaks of the deity of Christ, being the first and the last. (Isa. 44:6; 48:12)

- 22:14 – “do His commandments” – (NIV “wash His robes”) – The NKJV and NIV translations are interchangeable.
 - The commandments of God are that we love God and love others. (Mark 12:29-31)
 - “enter through the gates” – Jesus said that “narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life.” (Matt. 7:14)

22:15 – “But” – Again, there is a contrast drawn here. (Rev. 21:8,27)

- “outside” – These are those who will not and, therefore, cannot pass through the gates to this city.
- “dogs” – This word is used throughout Scripture to speak of those with false or feigned religious practice, generally leading to a very immoral lifestyle including, but not limited to, deviant sexual practice. (Deut. 23:17-19, Phil. 3:2)
- “sorcerers” – (Greek “pharmaceia”) This is the use of illegal, consciousness-altering drugs.
- “sexually immoral” – (Greek “porne”) Lit. “fornicators.” This refers to those engaged in a lifestyle that includes any sexual contact outside of the context of marriage.
- “lie” – This is the last sin listed in the Bible and refers to anything that prevents our trust in the substitutionary atonement of God’s Son on our behalf as means to salvation.
 - Loves and practices a lie seems to sum up all the other sins in this list.
 - The lie was the first sin in the Bible as the serpent deceived Eve. (Gen. 3:4)

22:16 – “I, Jesus” – Jesus Himself is testifying to these things and verifying the truth of the entire message. (Rev. 22:20)

- “testify” – (Greek “martureo”) Lit. “to be a witness, to be a martyr.”
- “in the churches” – Rev. 22:15 describes those outside the church.
- “churches” – This Greek word “ecclesia” has not been used since Revelation 3.
- “the Root and Offspring of David” – Due to God’s creation, Jesus is the root from which David came. Due to His incarnation, Jesus is then the descendant of that same David.
- “Offspring of David” – This is the Jewish, Old Testament Jesus.
 - This is not David Koresh, Lord Matraya, or Hare Krishna.
- “Morningstar” – (Greek “orthrinos”) This is the only time this word is used this way in the NT.
 - This is the last self-description of Jesus in the Bible and it is the picture of the star that promises the start of a new day.
 - In Isa. 14:12, Satan is called the “son of the morning” in a picture of his self-willed promise and hope.

22:17 – “the bride” – This is the Church. It is the Spirit and the Church currently making the appeal of the Gospel apparent to the world.

- “Whoever desires” – The invitation is open to all, including those listed earlier in v. 15.
- “freely” – Lit. “undeservedly.” Nobody will deserve eternal life in glory.

22:18 – “the prophecy of this book” – If this refers specifically to the book of Revelation, then in v. 19 “the book of this prophecy” refers to the Bible as a whole.

22:19 – “book” – (Greek “biblos”) This is the word from which we get our English word “Bible.”

22:18-19 – “If anyone adds...takes away” – There is much instruction throughout the Bible to not add to the Scriptures, nor take away from it.

- Eve and Satan in Eden – Eve added to it, Satan took away from it. (Gen. 3:1-6)
- Deut. 4:2; 12:32 – Referring to the Law. (Malachi 4:4)
- Prov. 30:5-6 – Wisdom warns of adding to or taking from His Word.
- Jesus did not come to abolish the Law, but to fulfill it. (Matt. 5:17)
- Jesus warned His disciples of the leaven of the Pharisees and the Sadducees in Matt. 16:6 (referring to their rotting and decaying teaching). The Pharisees added to the Scriptures (over 600 laws from 10). The Sadducees took away from Scripture (only accepting the 5 books of Moses – and messing that up too).

- We must be careful to maintain the difference between Church doctrine and personal conviction. Personal conviction can be based on any passage of Scripture and be applicable to the individual. But if it is not found to be taught by Jesus, modeled by the Church in Acts, and expounded on in Scripture then it cannot be applied to others.
 - When we apply our own personal convictions on others it is legalism.
 - When the Church refuses to teach and/or enforce solid, Biblical instruction then it is guilty of taking away from the Word and in danger of losing life.

22:20 – “Surely, I am coming quickly” – These are the last words of God to man.

- “Even so, come, Lord Jesus” – These are the last words of man to God.
 - These words are very different from the first words of man to God which were “I was afraid because I was naked, so I hid.” (Gen. 3:10)

22:21 – “grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all” – This is the last exhortation of the Bible.

- God’s story ends in grace. It starts in sin and rebellion, but ends in grace.
- “Amen” – The OT ends with the word “curse.” The NT ends with the “amen” to the grace of God in Jesus Christ.
 - The redemptive plan of God throughout human history has worked. It is finished!