

KINGDOM SPIRIT

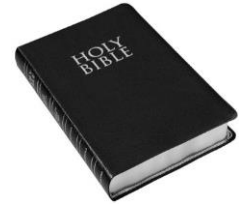
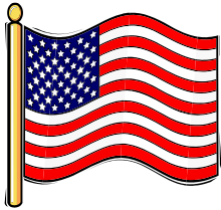
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"SEEK YE FIRST THE KINGDOM OF GOD"

Matthew 6:33



By: James R. Lambert

A STUDY OF THE BOOK OF REVELATION

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From: Newsletter Issue 1209

I have been asked by several people to publish our weekly Bible study on the book of Revelation that we held several months ago. I have been hesitant to do so as I don't want to pre-tend to put myself as the authority on this book. If you as our readers will please understand this, this might be a good beginning study of this important book. I plan to take our time to try to understand, as much as we can, all that is written. Most studies that I have seen approach the study of Revelation from the standpoint of criticizing it. I would rather that we try to see the story, or plan that is presented that we might better understand the whole plan and purpose of God for man.

In this day and time, there are two views of how Revelation should be interpreted. One is the Futurist Interpretation and the other is the Historicist Interpretation. I subscribe to the Historicist Interpretation, as I believe it to be the only true interpretation, for several reasons. The Futurist Interpretation is a relatively recent innovation since it was not popularized until the mid-1800's. It came into being at the hands of a Jesuit priest named Ribera in 1591 in an effort to take the heat off of the Papacy by people who were saying that the Papacy represented the anti-Christ. It did not begin to become a widespread doctrine until another Jesuit priest by the name of Manuel de Lacunzay Dias took it up in 1745 and added some to it and published it. A man by the name of John Darby in England picked it up, added to it and began to preach it in 1870. He came to the United States and met up with C.I. Scofield. Scofield, a man of dubious character, who awarded

himself the doctor's degree, without any higher education to back it up, picked up on it and devoted himself to popularizing this doctrine through an annotated Bible that he published, popularly known as the Scofield Bible. A side note I picked up from a study by Dr. Stephen Jones says, "In the early 1900's Scofield was backed financially by a Jewish lawyer named Samuel Untermyer, who was one of the framers of the Federal Reserve Act and was the president of the occult Lotus Club of New York. Untermyer provided Scofield with free housing for about twenty years while he wrote his notes for the Scofield Bible. His motive was undoubtedly political, laying the groundwork to convince Christians to blindly support the Jewish State, which was already being planned by certain powerful Zionist Jews. Their motives were anything but Christian."

Basically the futurists teach that the phrase, "**come up hither**" in Rev. 4:1 means a rapture of the church and then the rest of the book of Revelation takes place in a 7 year period following this rapture. There is much more to their doctrine and there are variations of it among different groups, but basically they are teaching that virtually all of the events discussed in the book are future events, events that Christians won't need to be concerned with since they won't be here.

Like the futurist view, the historicist view can take many variations as well, but in general, this view is of those who believe that most of the book of Revelation has already been fulfilled in the progress of history over the last 2000 years. While there are still some events yet to take place, it is fairly easy to place ourselves in the progression of events. A rapture as is envisioned by the futurist is not an event that is contemplated by the historicist.

Rev. 1:1 says, "**The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, to shew unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass.**" It does not indicate that there would be 2000 years, or any other time period, before any of these events would take place but rather "which must shortly come to pass."

As I have said in past lessons, the book of Revelation is closely tied to the book of Daniel in the Old Testament. While Daniel was given an overall look at God's plan for man, basically what Daniel saw in the visions that God gave him dealt with the time up to the birth, death and resurrection of our Lord. The book of Revelation, while it deals some with events prior to Christ's birth, death and resurrection, it deals primarily with the time from Christ's resurrection through the Great White Throne of Judgment and some beyond.

(Read Rev. 1:1-3) The Greek word translated "Revelation" is *apokalupsis*, which is the reason that Revelation is often referred to as the Apocalypse. It literally means the "unveiling." Partly due to the futurist view, Apocalypse is used to refer to some divinely-destructive event; because the book of Revelation has been taken by many to be synonymous with disastrous events that are said to destroy the world, particularly during "the tribulation."

In Gal. 1:12, Paul uses the word to refer to divine revelation, such as prophecy. "**For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation (*apokalupsis* unveiling) of (from) Jesus Christ.**" Until Paul became a Christian, this truth was hidden from him, but upon his conversion it was unveiled to him.

While *apokalupsis* does mean "to reveal" as in revelation, the more precise word picture is one of pulling aside a veil in order to reveal something hidden. In this case, is it not Jesus Christ that is to be unveiled rather than disasters, tribulation, or antichrist?

The revelation of Jesus Christ is more than just an unveiling of previously hidden truth. Real truth is a person. John 1:1, 14 tells us that Jesus Christ was the Word (logos) made flesh and John 17:17 says, "**Thy word is truth.**" Therefore the revelation of Jesus Christ is more than just a revelation of facts, or future events. It is the unveiling of Jesus Christ Himself and His glory. Romans 8:19 says, "**For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation (*apokalupsis*) of the sons of God.**" Colossians 1:26, 27

speaks of the mystery which hath been hidden from ages and generations which is “Christ in you, the hope of glory.” So I think we can say that the unveiling of Jesus Christ is the unveiling of Christ in the sons of God. This would mean that the glory of God becomes visible in or through them. The unveiling of Jesus Christ then is when His glory is made apparent to all. In His first advent, He was visible in the usual way of the world, except when the three disciples saw Him on the Mount of Transfiguration. His unveiling then is the time when His glory is made apparent to all and He becomes visible to the world.

I don’t think this necessarily means that all people will see Him face to face, at least initially.

If you recall the story of Moses, when he came down from Mt. Sinai after receiving the law, his face shone with the glory of God and the people, including Aaron, were afraid of him and he had to put a veil over his face to get them to come to him so he could tell them what God had told him. It may well be the same when Christ returns. It may not be as much a physical veil as a spiritual veil. The pattern of the tabernacle is an example of the veiling. In the tabernacle, there were three doors, or veils that one had to go through to the presence of God. The first was the door to the outer court. Only Israelite men were allowed to enter, or to remove this veil. Likewise, the first door that has to be entered spiritually is justification, or the Passover experience. The second door in the tabernacle was the door to the sanctuary. Only priests could enter here. Spiritually I believe we can say this door or veil is sanctification, or the Pentecostal experience. The third door or veil in the tabernacle was the veil that opened into the very presence of God Himself, or the Holy of Holies. Only the High Priest was allowed to enter here and this only once a year. If we are justified and sanctified, we are then a part of Christ, the High Priest after the order of Melchisedec, so we are then glorified, or are experiencing the Tabernacles experience. All three veils have been removed so that we may see Christ face to face in all His glory.

Rev. 1:7 says **“and every eye shall see him”** but this may be like Isa. 45:23 and Romans 14:11 which tells us “every knee shall bow to me”. There may be a time difference depending on one’s spiritual condition.

Let me quote from an article by Dr. Stephen Jones once more so that none of us misunderstand the purpose of the manifestation of the sons of God and of Christ. “The purpose of this manifestation is not to attract attention and glory, but to show the way so that all men can find the path into the full presence of God. The purpose of manifesting Christ to a lost and dying world is to find them and show them the way to life in the Holy of Holies. It is to set the example as pattern sons, so that all might know God as they do.”

Continuing on in verse 1 of Rev. 1, we’re told, **“The Revelation of Jesus Christ which God gave unto him, to shew unto His servants things which must shortly come to pass; and he sent and signified it by his angel unto His servant John.”** The word servant in this verse is from the Greek *doulos* which means slave, voluntary or involuntary. I think we would agree that if John was a slave to Christ, it was voluntary. Other translations use the term “bond servant” instead of just servant. There is a principle of law here that we need to be sure we understand. (Read Ex. 21:1-6) The principle we want to discuss is in verses 5, 6. A master can be the one who bought the servant or the one who redeems the servant. In our case, because of Adam’s sin, we were sold unto sin (i.e. were servants of sin Rom. 6:16 -18), but Jesus Christ has redeemed us from sin, so now we are servants of His. (Read Psa. 40: 6-

The phrase “mine ears hast thou opened” is a reference to boring or piercing one’s ears. God has “opened” our ears by “nailing” us to the door, Himself (John 10:9). The Hebrew word *shema* means both “to hear” and “to obey.” We might say “we gave ear to such and such” in the sense that we heard what we were told and did what we heard. This is the sense of **“mine ears hast thou opened.”** By the principle of law then, if we have told our master that we wish not to be set free, but to continue to serve him, he opens our ear (we give ear to what he says), and we are his servants for the rest of our lives. This is our situation with Jesus Christ. We are His bond servants, meaning we are united with Him voluntarily in a servant/master relationship. We now have His law writ-ten in our hearts and delight to do His will (obey His law). This was the position of John and it is to those in like position that are to be shown “things which must shortly come to pass.”

Some might argue that we are sons, not servants. To them I would refer them to Gal. 4:1-6.

The pathway to sonship is through that of a servant. Sonship is the reward of honest and diligent servant hood. The full placement of sons is also called the manifestation of the sons of God. These terms apply to the fully matured sons who go beyond Pentecost, or sanctification, into the experience of the Feast of Tabernacles or glorification.

The **“him”** and **“angel”** are the same personage. In Rev. 22:8, 9 John says of this angel, **“And I John saw these things, and heard them. And when I had heard and seen, I fell down to worship before the feet of the angel which shewed me these things. Then saith he unto me, See thou do it not: for I am thy fellow-servant, and of thy brethren the prophets, and of them which keep the sayings of the book: worship God.”** Then in verse 16 we’re told, **I Jesus have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things in the churches. I am the root and the offspring of David, and the bright and morning star.”**

Verse 3 tells us that he who hears and obeys what is written in this book is blessed. Then John says that the time is at hand, i.e. the things that are written in the book are ready to start taking place or are already in process.

(Read Rev. 1:4-6) John is writing this to the seven churches which are in Asia. While these churches did actually exist, we will see as we study further that it is generally accepted that these seven churches represented seven ages, or ages in which the congregation (those claiming to be Christian) would face. But John makes it clear that while he is writing the book, what is said is **“from Him which is, and which was, and which is to come.”** Jesus Christ was the God of the Old Testament, the Creator of all things. (Read John 1:1-3, Col. 1:16, 17) He is the one **“who is”** for He was raised from the dead and now lives. He is the one **“which is to come”** as He has a second work to complete to manifest Himself to the earth and to all men.

Quoting again from an article by Dr. Stephen Jones, **“This second work was begun on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2), but this was only the beginning, for Pentecost was a mere ‘earnest of the Spirit,’ designed to secure the inheritance UNTIL the time of the redemption (Eph. 1:14). The full redemption is the work of the feast of Tabernacles. Pentecost was the day that depicted ‘Christ in you, the hope of glory’ (Col. 1:27), for it was the day that the Holy Spirit was given to indwell the believers. On the other hand, the Feast of Tabernacles prophesies of the next step. It is the day that prophesies the unveiling of Christ. It is the time when the invisible becomes visible when the indwelling Christ is manifested outwardly to all men in the earth.”**

John also says that this message is from the seven Spirits which are before His throne. To understand this, we need to refer back to the tabernacle in the wilderness. Inside the Holy of Ho-lies was the Ark of the Covenant over which sat the Mercy Seat. This represented the throne of God. Just outside the veil in front of the Mercy Seat was the candlestick on which there were seven lamps. (Read Ex. 25:31-37) The seven lamps on the candlestick (menorah) are symbolic of the **“seven Spirits which are before his throne.”** We find the seven Spirits listed in a prophecy of Christ in Isa. 11:1, 2. (Read) The Spirit of the Lord is depicted by the center post of the candle-stick from which the other six lamps extended, three on each arm. 1. The Spirit of Wisdom; 2. The Spirit of Understanding; 3. The Spirit of Counsel; 4. The Spirit of Strength; 5. The Spirit of Knowledge; and 6. The Spirit of the Fear of the Lord.

This prophecy was directed to the stem of Jesse who was David’s father. Christ is called the son of David, so this prophecy is a messianic prophecy in that it was fulfilled by Christ. He possessed these seven Spirits, thus being the pat-tern and example God intends all men likewise to possess. The flame of the lamps represents God’s Spirit which He intends to pour out on all flesh so that our material bodies will manifest God’s Spirit in the earth in the last days. Habakkuk 2:14 says, **“For the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea.”**

Verse 5 of Rev. 1, says specifically that the message of this book is from **“Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness.”** According to John 5:19, Christ had been faithful to speak what He heard the Father speak and do what He had seen the Father do.

Verse 5 continues, **“and the first begot-ten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth.”** It was traditional that the first-born son would receive the birthright and would be given dominion over his father’s estate. Christ was the first begotten, or first-born of the dead into the glorified condition, in order that He would be given the birthright and the highest do-minion over the kings of the earth. (Read Col. 1:15-18) It is significant that we understand that Christ is to rule over the earth. It is normally taught that when Christians die, their “spirit” goes to heaven and stays there forever, or that the same happens at the resurrection. As we have said in the past, this teaching comes in large part from Greek mythology and their teaching of dualism, i.e. that man is made up of two parts, a body and a spirit. The body is mortal and the spirit is immortal. The spirit, which is good, is trapped in a material body, which is evil, and is freed when the body dies. If we go back to the creation, we find, **“And God saw everything that he had made, and, behold, it was very good.”** (Gen. 1:31) So all the matter that God created was very good in His eyes, not evil. The divine plan from the be-gin-ning was to glorify Himself in the earth. Pagan religions teach that man “fell” into a material creation. This is not true. **“And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul.”** (Gen. 2:7) This is the pattern of God’s plan, for His Spirit to indwell and manifest in the dust of the ground. There is no inherent war or contradiction between matter and spirit. We find throughout Scripture God coming toward man, not man going toward God. For ex-ample, **“And the LORD came down upon mount Sinai”** (Ex. 19:20); **“And the LORD descended in the cloud”** (Ex. 34:5); **“And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind”** (Acts 2:2 speaking of the coming of the Holy Spirit on the disciples assembled in the upper room at Pentecost) and **“The LORD is my strength and song, and he is become my salvation** (Yashua a Hebrew name ascribed to Jesus) (Ex. 15:2). Yashua, did come to earth and was incarnated in the earth through Mary.

In Gen. 1:26 we’re told, **“And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our like-ness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth.”** Then in Matt. 28:18 Jesus said, **“All power (or authority) is given unto me in heaven and in earth.”** As Creator, He had authority, or dominion in the heavens, but He had given do-minion over the earth to man. Therefore for Christ to take up dominion over the earth, He had to be born a man. At the time that He made the statement in Matt. 28:18, He had risen from the dead, being the first-born of the dead, He now had dominion over both heaven and earth. When He returns, He will take up this authority as King of Kings and Lord of Lords.

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We finished our last article with verse 5 of chapter 1 and were discussing the fact that Christ had authority in the heavens, but had given authority over the earth to man. For Christ to take up that authority, He had to be born a man which He was. He will take up that authority over the earth when He comes as King of Kings. Having this authority, John says in verse 6 that He hath made us kings and priests unto God and His Father. We will see later in chapter 20 that John is talking about those who have part in the first resurrection, the goal that we all want to strive for.

We have seen as we studied the New Testament that the New Testament writers very frequently quoted the Old Testament. This was their Bible, so we often find direct quotes, sometimes paraphrased quotes and sometimes just simply a reference to an Old Testament Scripture. Because the Old Testament Scriptures were read every week in the synagogues, the New Testament writers could quote the Old Testament writers and fully expect their audiences to know where they were coming from. Such is the case in a lot of John’s writings.

(Read Rev. 1:7) In the book we just studied, Jude quotes Enoch, who was Noah’s great grandfather, in verse 14, saying he prophesied,” **Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints.”** John is saying here in Rev. that Christ is coming with clouds and Enoch says He is coming with ten thousands of his saints.

After giving a list of the great men of the Old Testament in Heb. 11, the author of Hebrews says in Heb. 12:1, **“Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses.”** With this in mind, I believe that we could say that John and Enoch are speaking of the same thing.

“Every eye shall see him” is John’s next statement. We discussed this in our last lesson. Though every eye shall see Him, not everyone may see Him in the same way, or even possibly at the same time. The overcomers will see Him in all His glory while others may see him only in the physical sense or will see Him in His glory once they have been justified and sanctified.

The rest of verse 7 is paraphrased from Zechariah 12:10-14. (Read) Zechariah was one of two prophets that God sent to Jerusalem at the time that the Jews were supposed to be rebuilding the temple and the city after being released from 70 years of Babylonian captivity by King Darius, the Mede. Because of some trouble that was stirred up by some adversaries of the Jews, the Jews had left off with their building. God sent Zechariah and Haggai to tell the Jews to get back to work. Both prophets, in addition to telling the people to get back to work, prophesied, at least what was thought at the time to be, prophecies concerning Jerusalem and the temple.

To fully understand Zechariah’s prophecy, one needs to understand that there are two cities named Jerusalem. There is the old city which has, throughout history, been located in the old land of Palestine. But there is also another Jerusalem which in the New Testament is called the New Jerusalem. This has caused a lot of confusion among Christians who are trying to understand the divine plan. In the Old Testament, the writers do not distinguish between the two except by their descriptions of the city they are writing about. To understand some of the confusion, compare these two verses: (Isa. 62:7) **“And give him no rest, till he establish, and till he make Jerusalem a praise in the earth.”**; (Jer. 26:6) **“Then will I make this house like Shiloh, and will make this city (Jerusalem) a curse to all the nations of the earth.”**

The writers of the New Testament distinguish between the Old Jerusalem and the New Jerusalem (or “heavenly Jerusalem”, as it says in Hebrews 12:22). John speaks often of the New Jerusalem in the book of Revelation, quoting frequently from Isaiah and Zechariah. Often where Isaiah speaks of “Jerusalem”, John interprets it to mean the New Jerusalem, not the old city.

In the Old Testament, the old city of Jerusalem was the City of God. Solomon’s temple was the dwelling place of God. Mount Zion was the place of David’s throne. Because of the sin of the old city, and its refusal to repent, God forsook the temple and the old city just as he did with Shiloh centuries before. (Read Jer. 7:12-15) The glory of the Lord departed from Jerusalem. Because the Word in verse 14 cannot be broken, it is not possible for the glory of God to return to the old city of Jerusalem, as many Christians who subscribe to the futurist thinking expect.

This then made it necessary for God to build a new city in which to dwell. In order for the prophecies of “Jerusalem” to be fulfilled with-out breaking the Scriptures, He had to build a second Jerusalem, a New Jerusalem. This New Jerusalem is quite unlike the old city. In I Cor. 3:16, Paul asks, **“Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?”** and in I Cor. 6:19, **“What? Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? Rev. 3:12 says, “Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, which is new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God: and I will write upon him my new name.”**

These new individual “temples” are microcosms of a larger, corporate Temple, whose chief Corner Stone is Jesus Christ. (Read Eph. 2:20-22) There are people who are literally looking for God to lower a cube containing a city made of gold out of heaven because of their interpretation of Rev. 21. This is not the New Jerusalem that the Bible discusses, but rather the city and the temple are spiritual whose building blocks are people. Peter calls them “living stones” in I Peter 2:5 **“Ye also, as lively [living] stones, are built up a**

spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.”) as opposed to dead stones used in earthly construction projects.

To understand more fully that often when the Old Testament writers speak of “Jerusalem”, they are talking of the New Jerusalem several comparisons can be made of what they say and what John says of the New Jerusalem. For example, compare Isa. 62:4, 5 with Rev. 21:2, 9, 10; Isa. 60:19, 20 with Rev. 21:12, 21: and Isa. 52:1 with Rev. 21:27. Since the New Jerusalem is made of living stones, i.e. believers, one does not enter this city by walking or driving through a physical gate or by climbing a wall. Isa. 60:18 says, **“Violence shall no more be heard in thy land, wasting nor destruction within thy borders; but thou shall call thy walls Salvation, and thy gates Praise.”** One must be “saved” in order to enter this city— unlike the old city.

One more thing. There are two very different destinies assigned to the old and the New Jerusalem. If one does not know the difference, it can add to one’s confusion. In Jer. 19:10, 11, God is telling Jeremiah, who was to take a potter’s earthen bottle with him before the elders of the city and the priests to the valley of Hinnom, what he is to say concerning the old city of Jerusalem: **“Then shalt thou break the bottle in the sight of the men that go with thee, and shalt say unto them, Thus saith the Lord of hosts; Even so will I break this people and this city, as one breaketh a potter’s vessel, that cannot be made whole again: and they shall bury them in Tophet, till there be no place to bury.”** But the in- destructible position of the New Jerusalem is self-evident.

This is a long way around to say that when John quotes the prophet Zechariah, they are both talking about the same event, even though Zechariah’s vision appears to be limited to the “house of David” and the inhabitants of Jerusalem mourning and John includes **“all the tribes of the earth.”** This doesn’t make Zechariah wrong, he just saw less than John saw. Zechariah saw the promise in terms of its Old Testament patterns, while John recognized that the limited patterns of the Old Testament were designed to teach us the divine plan for the whole world.

(Read Rev. 1:8) Alpha is the first letter of the Greek alphabet, and Omega is the last letter. He is saying the God knows the end from the be-ginning. He IS the beginning and the end. This refers to the timeless nature of the spiritual realm. We on earth are bound by time and space. God is not bound in the same way. I don’t know that any of us can comprehend this because we see events of history occurring on a linear time line. God see history from a higher perspective. All history is to Him a momentary event.

The word “Almighty” is from the Greek *pantokrotor*. This is a compound Greek word that means “all-ruling or all-powerful.” The Septuagint (Greek) translation of the Old Testament used this word as the translation of the Hebrew term, “Lord of Hosts.” The “hosts” are the hosts of both heaven and earth. Ex. 12:41 refers to the children of Israel as **“all the hosts of the LORD.”**

Psalms 24, speaking of the coming of Christ, says in verses 7, 8, 10, **“Lift up your heads, O ye gates; and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors: and the King of glory shall come in. Who is this King of glory? The LORD strong and mighty, the LORD mighty in battle Who is this King of glory? The LORD of hosts, he is the King of glory.”** This identifies Jesus Christ as the God of the Old Testament, the Creator (John 1:1-3) and the One who gave the law to Moses.

So when Jesus identifies Himself as the Alpha and the Omega and “the Almighty,” He is referring to Himself as the Lord of hosts in the Old Testament. It means that He is Lord not only of the hosts of heaven, but also of the earth. This foreshadows one of the primary purposes of the book of Revelation, which presents Jesus Christ as “the Almighty” and as “King of kings and Lord of lords. It presents Christ as ruling His creation the earth and all that is in it. The future is good. Jesus Christ wins in the end. His dominion will be from sea to sea. His Kingdom will be un-ending and will never be destroyed.

How this goal is achieved is the subject of most of the book of Revelation.

(Read Rev. 1:9-11) The apostle John wrote the book of Revelation no later than 96 A.D. He had been

banished to the Isle of Patmos by Emperor Domitian sometime after 81 A.D. when Domitian came to power. He like Nero persecuted the Christian church and John was a victim of this persecution. Eusebius, the bishop of Caesarea in the fourth century, wrote in his Ecclesiastical History, I, ii, 20,

“After fifteen years of Domitian’s rule, Nerva succeeded to the throne. By vote of the Roman senate Domitian’s honours were re-moved, and those unjustly banished returned to their homes and had their property restored to them. This is noted by the chroniclers of the period. At that time too the apostle John, after his exile on the island, resumed residence at Ephesus, as early Christian tradition records.” Patmos is a small island about 8 miles-long and 4 miles wide off the southwest coast of Asia Minor about 35 miles.

John tells us he was a **“companion in tribulation.”** This is the first of five mentions of “tribulation” in the book of Revelation. In addition to this listing, we find the other four in Rev. 2:9, 10, 22 and in 7:14. In 1:9 here, John claims to be in tribulation already. In 2:9, 10 the church at Smyrna is in tribulation. In 2:22 God casts the church at Thyatira into “great tribulation” because of her “adultery.” As we will see as we study these churches, they represent ages within the overall Church Age, i.e. from the day of Pentecost through our time now. Whether we view the churches at Smyrna and Thyatira in the literal sense of John’s day, or see them representing church ages, neither view fits well with the modern futurist idea of “the great tribulation.”

In Rev. 7:14 John glimpses a future time when there are those who come forth from great tribulation, and he sees those who came forth perfected by it. There is no mention of timing as to when or how long this tribulation lasted. This is the reason that those who use this verse to pro-mote a future tribulation cannot agree among themselves as to when this supposed great tribulation takes place or the length of it. We’ll discuss this more later. For now, we need to understand that God’s purpose for tribulation is to test the Church (Christian congregation) to find out who truly has faith, and who has merely been persuaded by man to follow Christ.

John tells us he was on the Isle of Patmos for the word of God and for the testimony of Jesus Christ, i.e. because of his preaching and teaching. John says he was “in the spirit” on the “Lord’s day.” We might say today that he was in deep meditation, i.e. concentrating on his relation-ship with our Lord, whether in prayer or contemplation, so hard as to be unaware of his physical surroundings. This is said so that we understand that what John sees from here is a vision, it is not something that literally happened. He heard a great voice like the sound of a trumpet behind him. This voice was obviously the voice of God as it tells him again that He is the Alpha and Omega, the first and the last.

John is instructed by this voice to write down what he is about to be shown, which we now have in the book of Revelation. He is to send what he writes down to the seven churches which are in Asia, churches or congregations which were at Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamos, Thyatira, Sardis,

Philadelphia and Laodicea. As we have said be-fore, these were probably actual churches, or congregations. (The word church as used in the New Testament is from the Greek *ekklesia* which liter-ally means “that which is called out” or “congregation.” It does not mean organized churches or church buildings as we use the term today.) As we get into the next chapter, we will be looking at these churches as church ages which we will explain more fully then.

(Read Rev. 1:12-16) When John turned to see who was speaking, we’re told he saw seven golden candlesticks. Recall the discussion we had last lesson about the candlestick that was in the tabernacle. It had seven lamps which we correlated with the seven spirits of God. Its purpose was to shed light. John sees seven instead of just one. Solomon, when he built the temple in Jerusalem had ten such candlesticks. We’ll discuss the candlesticks further in a moment. The voice John heard came from **“one like unto the Son of man”** who was in the midst of the seven candlesticks. This, of course, is Christ in His capacity as a resurrected and glorified man on earth. Because He is referred to as the Son of man here, this tells us that this qualifies Him legally to have dominion over the earth, for we read in Genesis 1:26-28 when God created man, he was given the authority to rule and subdue the earth. It is important to pay attention to details of Scripture as

we read.

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From: Newsletter Issue 1211

In our last lesson, we had begun discussing Rev. 1:12-16 and were discussing the designation of Christ as the “Son of man.” We’ll pick up our discussion at that point.

The description of this **“Son of man”** is equally important. First we are told that He was clothed with a garment down to the foot, and wore a golden girdle about His breast. The garment would indicate a priestly garment as Jesus is our High Priest. The Greek word for “paps” is *mastos*. Strong’s Concordance says this means, “a (prop. female) breast.” The root word means, “to handle or squeeze or chew.” Thus the word primarily has to do with nursing a child. Gen. 1:27 says, **“So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him: male and female created he them.”** I think we can say that Adam was first created both male and female. Only later did God remove the female part of him to form a second person called Eve. But he was created in the image of God, who is complete within Himself. Thus we find that from Adam to Moses God revealed Himself to the patriarchs only in the feminine manifestation of El Shaddai, the breasted One. (Shad is Hebrew for a breast.) When Moses asked the name of the One who was sending him to deliver Israel and give them the law, God revealed Himself as Yahweh, the masculine side of God’s personality and being. El Shaddai is the nurturer and provider, Yahweh is the lawgiver, the disciplinarian, the tutor necessary to bring His children to maturity.

The golden girdle draws attention to His/Her breast and is meant to portray Christ’s feminine side as well as the masculine priesthood. Consider that the Passover Lamb was to be a male lamb and the red heifer, whose ashes were to be used to purify the people, was female. Christ fulfilled both of these prophetic laws.

Rev. 1:14 says, **“His head and his hairs were white like wool, as white as snow; and his eyes were as a flame of fire.”** The wool reminds us that He was the Lamb of God. In Dan. 7:9, 10 we have a depiction of the Ancient of Days sitting at the Great White Throne of Judgment that is also depicted in Rev. 20:11. (Read Dan. 7:9, 10) Again His vesture is white like snow and His hair like pure wool. In Lev. 19:32, we’re told, **“You shall rise up before the hoary head, and honour the face of the old man, and fear thy God: I am the LORD.”** “Hoary” means gray headed. This is prophetic of when the Ancient of Days is seated upon the throne for the purpose of the final judgment, the dead rise up before His gray or white hair.

In our studies, we have seen that God very often manifests Himself as fire. In our depiction here, the eyes are pictured as a flame of fire, because God’s Word is truth. Because in Him is all the fullness of God, He is fully endowed with the seven spirits of God, which make up the Spirit of Truth.

Rev. 1:15 says, **“And his feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace; and his voice as the sound of many waters.”** Because Christ is depicted here as the Son of man, He is pictured as the judge of the whole earth. Bronze is the metal that symbolizes judgment, hence, the brazen altar in the tabernacle of Moses depicted the judgment for sin laid upon the sacrifices, which were types of Christ. Thus He is pictured here with His feet as “fine brass.”

The voice sounding like many waters conveys the idea that it is not merely the Head speaking, but also the many individual overcomers who make up the body of Christ. All are speaking as one that is, in agreement with the head.

Rev. 1:16 says, **“And he had in his right hand seven stars: and out of his mouth went a sharp twoedged sword: and his countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength.”** In discussing the seven stars in His right hand, we need to first read the rest of the chapter. We’re told in verse 20 that the seven stars represent the angels of the seven churches.

“The seven stars” is a reference to the star constellation known as the Pleiades, “the seven sisters.” In Psalms 147:4, speaking of the Lord, we’re told, “He telleth the number of the stars; he calleth them all by their names.” Gen. 1:14-19 tells us that God created the stars (constellations) not only to be for light at night, but also to be

“for signs, and for seasons.” Thus they are prophetic signs of things to come. (Read Psalms 19:1-3) The constellations tell us the story of God’s Plan and Purpose. A brief summary of the twelve constellations and their depictions are as follows:

- | | |
|--|---------------------------------------|
| 1. Virgo-he sufferings of Christ | 2. Libra-The Redeemer’s atoning work |
| 3. Scorpio-The Redeemer’s conflict | 4. Sagittarius-The Redeemer’s triumph |
| 5. Capricorn-The results of His sufferings | 6. Aquarius-The blessings assured |
| 7. Pisces-The blessings in abeyance | 8. Aries-The blessings consummated |
| 9. Taurus-Messiah coming to rule | 10. Gemini-Messiah, Prince of Peace |
| 11. Canc-Messiah’s possession | 12. Leo-Messiah’s final triumph |

In Prof. E. Raymond Capt’s book, *The Glory of the Stars*, he writes on page 101, “In the neck of Taurus is another cluster of stars called the ‘Pleiades’ (the Seven Sisters). The word means ‘the congregation of the judges’ or ‘rulers’. The brightest star in this group is ‘Al Cyone’ (Arabic), which means ‘the center’. Some leading astronomers believe it is the center of the universe. Apparently that is what was implied when Job is asked of God, ‘Canst thou bind the sweet influences of the Pleiades?’ (Job 38:31).”

Identifying the Seven Churches with the Pleiades, as John does, shows that the Church (ekklesia) is called as “the congregation of the judges.”

Eph. 6:17 tells us, **“And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.”** Heb. 4:12 says, **“For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart.”** I believe these two verses explain the sharp twoedged sword that came from the mouth of the Son of man that John saw.

In seeing **“his countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength”**, John is seeing Christ unveiled, i.e. he is seeing Him in His glory. John had seen this once before. Speaking of the event on the mount of transfiguration, Matt. 17:2 says, **“And (Jesus) was transfigured before them: and his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light.”** This is how the overcomers will see Christ at the first resurrection.

When John saw Christ, he says he fell at his feet as dead, but Christ laid His right hand on him and told him to fear not, He was the first and the last. That He says, **“I am he that liveth, and was dead: and behold, I am alive for ever-more.”** signifies that one must die to live, i.e. one must die to self, that is one must submit to Jesus Christ and declare Him to be Lord. This is the meaning of baptism, where one identifies with Christ’s death and resurrection. **“Evermore”** means to the ages of the ages. Scripture tells us of two more ages, the age in which the overcomers will rule with Christ and the age following the Great White Throne of Judgment in which all men will be redeemed through judgment by the laws of redemption and Jubilee.

Jesus says He has the **“keys of death and hell.”** “Hell” is from the Greek *hades* which liter-ally means “the unseen world.” This usually refers to the grave. For example, Rev. 20:13 says, **“death and hell (*hades*) delivered up the dead which were in them.”** Jesus accomplished having the keys by His own life, death, and resurrection.

In verse 20, a distinction is made between the seven stars and the seven candlesticks. The stars are the angels (messengers) of the churches and the candlesticks are the churches, or congregations themselves. The angels would represent the ministers of the congregations at the time of John’s writing, or angels who support and empower the ministers through the church ages.

John is to write in a book what he sees and then send it to seven churches in Asia. The churches are at

Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamos, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, and Laodicea. These were cities in Asia Minor which is now Turkey. While these churches actually existed, it has been pretty well agreed that these churches represent different ages, based on what happened to Christianity in general, during the church age. It is also generally agreed that this “church age” began about the time of Christ’s crucifixion and resurrection and extends to our present day. Some scholars are more precise than others about the dates, but most are pretty close to each other. From my studies, I am going to say that the day of Pentecost following Christ’s ascension in 33A.D. is probably going to be the best start date from the standpoint that immediately following this date is when the disciples and apostles began to preach and teach the New Covenant.

There are a couple of types in the Old Testament that might help us understand these New Testament churches, or ages, better. The one that we might take note of is King Saul. If we look at his life, much of what he did is reflected in what Christianity has done. King Saul was crowned king on the day of Pentecost. He was a very fine young man, **“there was not among the children of Israel a goodlier person than he.”** (I Sam. 9:2) At first he was a good and righteous king. Gradually, however, he began to think more and more like man as his power over man increased. Eventually because of his refusal to repent and God’s refusal to speak to him, Saul consulted with the witch at Endor. I Sam. 15:23 says, **“For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft.”** Saul became rebellious against God. While we might wonder why God did not remove Saul from his kingship, consider that God used Saul’s rebellion to train David and teach him obedience by the things which he would suffer at the hands of Saul. Saul reigned for 40 years.

Saul, his sons and grandsons were guilty of persecuting the Gibeonites whom Joshua and the children of Israel had sworn protection during the conquering the land of Canaan. Apparently two of his sons and five of his grandsons had participated in this and were the ones who paid the penalty for Saul’s sin in this. They were all hanged by the Gibeonites with David’s permission. These 7 might be likened to the 7 churches and the Gibeonites to the overcomers.

Letter to the church at Ephesus: Ephesus means “Desirable.” Jesus Christ is the author and identifies Himself as, **“he that holdeth the seven stars in his right hand, who walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks.”**

(Read Rev. 2:1-7) This Ephesus age was relatively short, lasting from 33 A.D. to 64 A.D. This is the time of the apostles and other disciples all anxiously starting churches, or congregations in Judea, Asia Minor, Europe and beyond. In this they were like Saul at the beginning of his king-ship. They had received the earnest of the Spirit on the day of Pentecost and had a great zeal for God and Jesus acknowledges their works, labor, and patience, non-tolerance of false apostles, and their proving, or testing what they were taught. However, He says he has somewhat against them that they need to repent of. He says they have left their first love. If we reflect back on Paul’s writings along with other writers, we can understand what this is. While the new Christians are quite zealous when they are first converted, there seemed to be a steady stream of Jews in particular that were either outright antagonistic toward Christianity, or were converted themselves but still wanted to retain Old Covenant rituals and requirements and worked very hard to instill these doctrines in the minds of the new Christians. We see Paul, in particular, fighting against this, but the volume of this rhetoric had its effect of placing man between the people and God. This is what is meant by the **“deeds of the Nicolaitanes.”** Nicolaitanism means “conquering the laity (common people). Under the Old Covenant the people relied on the priesthood as their intermediary between them and God with the result that the priesthood became very corrupt and oppressive. With Christ’s sacrifice and resurrection, He became our intercessor, no longer was a priest needed in that role.

When God came down on the mount Sinai in the fire and smoke to speak to the people as they traveled from Egypt, all that He spoke to them was the Ten Commandments before they fell back out of fear and told Moses that they wanted him to hear God and then tell them what He said. This is somewhat the same situation. The people found it easier to have someone else hear God and then tell them what He said than it was for them to hear Him themselves. The problem was that this opened the door for false apostles and

false teachers. However, there were some who still were willing to listen to God, who had the capability through the Spirit to discern what was of God and what was not as they listened to the speaking of the apostles and others. These are those that **“overcometh”** in verse 7.

At the end of each letter to the various churches we find virtually the same words of verse 7 with a different reward each time. I would like for us to make a special note of what

each “church” had to overcome and what the re-ward is as the combination of what was to be overcome in each “church” is what we all need to overcome and the combination of the rewards listed for each “church” is the reward that all overcomers will receive.

Ephesus church: Obstacle to overcome refusing to hear God thus giving rise to Nicolaitism. Reward to eat of the tree of life (have age lasting life)

Letter to the church at Smyrna: Smyrna means “Bitter” or “Myrrh”. Here, Jesus identifies Himself as, **“the first and the last, which was dead, and is alive.”**

(Read Rev. 2:8-11) The Smyrna church represented the age from 64A.D. - 313 A.D., from the beginning of Nero’s persecutions in 64 A.D. to the Edict of Milan, when Constantine ended the persecutions in 313 A.D. Myrrh is an anointing oil and spice which was used to prepare the dead for burial. The more one crushed it, the sweeter the fragrance.

This was the way it was with the martyrs of this time period. They were crushed by the full fury of the Roman Empire, but the more they were killed, the more fragrant the aroma before God and men. Men marveled at their great courage and converted to Christ faster than Rome could kill them. Christ says he knows their works, tribulation and poverty, but He says they are rich in faith. He says He knows the blasphemy of them which say they are Jews and are not. Regardless of their genealogy, when they rejected Christ, they disqualified themselves as “true Jews.”

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From: Newsletter Issue 1212

We began looking at the letters to the seven churches in Rev. 2 in our last issue. We are continuing this look with the church at Smyrna this issue. Smyrna means “Bitter” or “Myrrh”. Here, Jesus identifies Himself as, **“the first and the last, which was dead, and is alive.”**

(Read Rev. 2:8-11) The Smyrna church represented the age from 64A.D. - 313 A.D., from the beginning of Nero’s persecutions in 64 A.D. to the Edict of Milan, when Constantine ended the persecutions in 313 A.D. Myrrh is an anointing oil and spice which was used to prepare the dead for burial. The more one crushed it, the sweeter the fragrance.

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In Numbers 16 we have the story of Korah, a great-grandson of Levi, and those conspiring with him rebelling against Moses and Aaron. Korah’s complaint in verse 3 is partly right but he did not understand the whole plan of God. He said, **“Ye take too much upon you, seeing all the congregation are holy, every one of them, and the LORD is among them.”** To this point, he is correct. But then he goes on, **“wherefore then lift ye up yourselves above the congregation of the LORD?”** Moses perceived Korah’s true motive in verse 9, **“Seemeth it but a small thing unto you, that the God of Israel hath separated you from the congregation of Israel, to bring you near to himself to do the service of the tabernacle of the**

LORD, and to stand before the congregation to minister unto them? And he hath brought thee near to him and thy brethren the sons of Levi with thee: and seek ye the priesthood also? Korah's true motive was to usurp the authority of Moses and Aaron and take on the position of high priest to himself, a job he had not been called of God to do. He did not understand that God calls certain ones to leadership to assist those who are yet too immature spiritually to hear from God for them-selves, that when God calls a person for this job, it is not the man himself that elevates himself to the position. Moses realized that God was going to destroy Korah and his followers for what they had done and tells the congregation in verse 28, **"Hereby ye shall know that the LORD hath sent me to do all these works; for I have not done them of mine own mind."**

The problem with the Jews in Revelation is that they had tried to usurp the authority of Christ by killing Him and stealing His inheritance. As such they had become the adversary of Christ. The word "Satan" is actually a transliterated Babylonian word meaning "adversary." It was not a proper name. So Jesus is saying that their synagogue was no longer the center of Spiritual activity among His people, but rather was the abode of the adversary.

Paul says in Rom. 2:28, 29, **"For he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh: But he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God."**

The word "devil" in verse 10 is from the Greek diabolos which means accuser. Christ tells those of this age to not fear the things that they will suffer but to be faithful even to death as He will give them a crown of life as a result, i.e. they will qualify as overcomers. They will be accused of all kind of things and thrown in prison that they might be tested but to be faithful.

The ten days of tribulation could refer to one of two things, or both. There were 10 Roman Emperors during this time period, all of which persecuted the Christians. They are as follows:

- | | |
|---------------------|----------------------|
| 1. Nero (64 A.D.) | 2. Domitian (95) |
| 3. Trajan (107) | 4. Hadrian (127) |
| 5. Aurelius (165) | 6. Severus (202) |
| 7. Maximus (235) | 8. Decius (249) |
| 9. Valerianus (257) | 10. Diocletian (303) |

The ten days could also refer to the last 10 years to 313 A.D. as Diocletian authorized the last and fiercest persecution of all. Smyrna church: Object to overcome tribulation Reward Escape the second death

(Read Rev. 2:12-17) Pergamos means height or elevation or married to power. To this congregation Jesus identifies Himself as, **"he which hath the sharp sword with two edges."**

The Pergamos church represents the age from 313 A.D. to 529 A.D. Jesus first says that He knows the works of the church and where they dwelt. He then identifies the location as

(Read Rev. 2:12-17) Pergamos means height or elevation or married to power. To this congregation Jesus identifies Himself as, **"he which hath the sharp sword with two edges."**

The Pergamos church represents the age from 313 A.D. to 529 A.D. Jesus first says that He knows the works of the church and where they dwelt. He then identifies the location as **"where Satan's seat is."** As we study the book of Revelation, I believe we will find that there are two opposing forces that of God and His system as opposed to the Babylonian system, or God's kingdom opposed to the Babylonian kingdom. Recall the metal image in Nebuchadnezzar's dream that represented the Babylonian succession of empires. When the Babylonian Empire itself fell, the Chaldean Mysteries transferred its seat from Babylon to Pergamos. It is from these Chaldean Mysteries that much of the pagan religions originated and children of Israel were nearing the end of their 40 year trek through the wilderness on their way from Egypt to the land of Canaan. The Moabites were very fearful of the Israelites and Balac tried to hire Balaam, who was

a prophet, to curse the Israelites. But when Balaam went to do this, he could not do it, but blessed the Israelites instead. Balaam was anxious for the reward that Balac had promised, but he couldn't do what Balac wanted. So Balaam taught Balac to have the Moabite women seduce the Israelite men and intermarry with them, though this was strictly forbidden by God. By intermarrying with them, they were able to introduce their Baal worship among the Israelites. I believe Balaam understood that God Himself would curse the Israelites for their disobedience and idolatry, so he accomplished what he couldn't do when Balac first tried to have him curse the Israelites. It is this same spirit of rebellion that God is condemning here among the congregation at Pergamos.

There were also those among the Pergamos congregation that held to the doctrine of the Nicolaitanes. As we have already mentioned, Nicolaitanism is "conquering or lording it over the laity (common people). Constantine became emperor of the whole Roman Empire in 313. He issued the "Edict of Milan" which stopped the persecution of Christians and returned all confiscated property to the Christians and the church. However, this did not turn out to be all good. Constantine was interested in unifying the empire, and since he had now given Christianity such a prominent place in the empire, it became important that Christianity also be unified. This gave place Church Councils which were called to discuss, argue, and attempt to come to a consensus of opinion that would standardize Biblical Truth for the Universal Church. All were then expected to conform to the opinions of the majority of bishops. Then instead of the individual being able to think for one's self, or to seek God for a revelation of truth, truth depended on what the bishops said it was. Unfortunately, as time progressed and as the bishops became more powerful and more political, more and more intrigue, blackmail, and other unethical forms of conduct were used to ensure that the Councils voted in certain ways. Career and wealth eventually overrode the conscience to a large degree. The doctrine of the Nicolaitanes came more and more to the forefront.

Pagan systems of worship began to be grafted into and become a part of Christianity and Christianity became the religion of the empire. False doctrines were injected into the life of the church with a corresponding loss in spirituality.

Anyone not agreeing with the Church Council was considered a heretic. At first, the Church was content to excommunicate the heretics, and then it became apparent that excommunication was not severe enough to deter men from the-se "heretical" doctrines. By the 13th century, men and women were tortured, mutilated, and some (if they were lucky) were merely killed for believing differently from the Church Council.

Jesus identified Himself to this church as He who hath the sharp sword with two edges, the Spirit and the Word, for it is only with the Spirit and the Word that men can rightly divide the word of truth.

Pergamos Church: Object to overcome doctrine of Nicolaitanism and doctrine of Balaam Reward hidden manna (spiritual food so needed), a white stone (symbol of Covenant relationship), and a new name (signifying a change in character and position). (Read Rev. 2:18-29) Thyatira means "a sweet savor, an acceptable offering" or "Castle of the Goddess." Jesus identifies Himself to this church as "the Son of God, who hath his eyes like unto a flame of fire, and his feet are like fine brass." Keep in mind that both fire and brass are indicative of judgment. This church age is from 529 A.D. to 1517 A.D

Jesus first acknowledges their love, service, faith, and patience and their works. He says their deeds at the last are more than at first. Then He says that He has a few things against them, the first of which is that they allow that woman Jezebel, who calls herself a prophetess, to teach and seduce His servants to commit fornication, and to eat things sacrificed unto idols. If you recall, Jezebel was the wife of King Ahab, king of Israel. Ahab was the son of Omri, who substituted his own law system for God's law system. In I Kings 16:30, we're told that Ahab was more evil than all the kings before him. At least part of the reason for this was his wife Jezebel. In verse 31, we're told that she was the daughter of Ethbaal, king of the Zidonians. Ethbaal may have been a title, rather than his name, indicating that he was both king of the Zidonians and the high priest of Baal, the sun-god worshipped by the Zidonians. Ahab, when he married Jezebel, then

went and served and worshipped Baal. So he actually submitted to his father-in-law who claimed to be anti-baal, i.e. in the place of Baal, or the vicar of Baal, and as a result, the majority of Israel also worshipped Baal. Tyre was the city where Ethbaal lived and ruled. The city of Tyre was a major seaport that was divided into two parts, part along the shore of the Mediterranean in what is now Lebanon and part on a small island located just offshore. King Nebuchadnezzar conquered the city about the same time he conquered Jerusalem. This was not easy as the wall protecting Tyre was 150 ft. high. The Hebrew name for Tyre is *Tsur* which literally means “rock,” probably referring to its heavy fortifications. Most of the people of Tyre escaped to the island however, and since the Babylonians didn’t have a navy and thus were unable to lay siege to the island, the people remained free.

Nearly 3 centuries later, Alexander the Great ran into the same problem, but his solution was to take the ruins of the old city on the shore and toss it into the sea to build a causeway out to the island. It took all the material available including scraping the dust from the rock upon which the old city was built to have enough to complete the causeway. He was successful in his efforts however, and conquered the city in 332 B.C. When he died in 323 B.C. his kingdom was divided among his four generals. One of the four, Seleucus, who had taken part in the conquest of Tyre, took control of Asia Minor and Babylon. Shortly before he died in 280 B.C. he founded the new city of Thyatira. It is evident that he wanted Thyatira to be a second Tyre. Both cities were known for their production of purple dye. The religion of both cities was the worship of a sun-god and a corresponding female goddess.

In the Thyatira church age, the state, like King Ahab, came under the authority of the one calling himself the “vicar of Christ.” While the popes gave lip service to Christ, in reality they followed the precepts of another god. This era began with the Law Code of Justinian, the emperor of the Eastern Roman Empire who ruled from Constantinople. Justinian revised the whole body of Roman law, calling it the *Codex Constitutionum* in 529 A.D. This nullified all Roman legislation and laws up that time. Four years later, after getting the opinions and responses from other Roman jurists, he revised the *Codex* and published it under the Latin title, *Pandectae*. What is important about this is that it enacted orthodox Christianity into law all ecclesiastical law, like all civil law, had to come from the throne of the emperor. Though Justinian and his wife were zealous orthodox Christians, there is no evidence that he studied Biblical law or considered it in the law revision that he made.

A few years later, in 536 A.D., a Church Council held in Constantinople issued an edict and demanded that the emperor Justinian enforce it. He did so, which, whether Justinian thought that far ahead or not, set a precedent of the state becoming the servant to the Church. Orthodox Christianity now became the real legislator in the Empire, while the Emperor became the enforcer of the law. It wasn’t long before Church leaders saw how they could increase their power by over-ruling God’s Law and taking the power of legislation upon themselves. Thus Church law and the traditions of men came to replace any vestiges of Biblical Law that did not suit them.

In 607 A.D., the emperor Phocas gave the headship over all the Churches of Christendom to Pope Boniface III. The consolidation of temporal power in the hand of the Roman popes continued to increase until 1073 when Pope Gregory VII formally established a theocracy, thus claiming to be above all the kings in the world. In the 6th century, Pope Pelagius defined a “heretic” as being anyone who does not submit to the Roman Church. Later Pope Damasus wrote: “It is permitted neither to think nor to speak differently from the Roman Church.”

When the Church began to come to power in the 4th century, if someone was considered a heretic, they were simply expelled from the Church. However, in the 12th century a resurgence of heresy among the Albigenses in southern France caused alarm in the Church that led to the establishment of the Inquisition by Pope Gregory IX in 1231 A.D. These Albigenses were dualists. They believed in two Gods. Jesus Christ was the good God and Satan was the evil god. The former being the God of the New Testament and the latter the god of the Old Testament. Unfortunately, we are still affected by this belief. While they were wrong, the murder and torture of the Inquisition was not the answer. The Inquisition, carried out directly under papal direction, was eventually extended to try to destroy all heresy. For the next 250 years plus

Europe was drenched with the blood of those guilty of thinking or speaking “differently from the Roman Church.” Millions of Christians were put to death.

Finally, at the fifth Lateran Church Council in 1516, A. Pucci, a Cardinal of the Church, told the pope, “The whole body of Christendom is now subject to one head, even to thee: no one now opposes, no one now objects.” After that council ended in 1517, Martin Luther sparked the Protestant Reformation by nailing his famous “95 Theses” to the Church door at Wittenberg, Bavaria.

Much more can be said of the condition of Christendom during this Thyatira church age, but this should give us at least some idea of what was happening during this time. If we read of the events of the time of Jezebel in the Old Testament, I think we can see the correlation with the church age of Thyatira.

Thyatira church: Object of overcome Jezebellion submission of state to Nicolaitanism. Reward Power over nations and the morning star (Jesus Christ Rev. 22:16)

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From: Newsletter Issue 1301

The next church we want to look at is Sardis. Sardis means “precious stone (i.e., the sardius stone), or remnant.” Since a precious stone is rare, it carries the idea of a remnant, something not commonly found. Jesus introduces Himself as **“He that hath the seven Spirits of God, and the seven stars.”**

(Read Rev. 3:1-6) This is the church of the Reformation period. Basically this age lasted from 1517 to 1776 A.D. At the beginning of this age, the church, which was basically the Roman Catholic church, dominated the then known world both ecclesiastically and temporally, so certainly it had the name that it was alive. Yet Christ says it was dead. It had reached the point that it was dead spiritually. Coercion was the dominant means of maintaining obedience, rather than love as taught by Christ. The church is told to be watchful, and strengthen the things which it still had that were ready to die.

In 1517 Martin Luther nailed his famous “95 theses” to the church door in Wittenberg, Bavaria. This action of his is considered by most to be the spark that ignited the Reformation movement. Verse 4 of Rev. 3 says, **“Thou hast a few names even in Sardis which have not defiled their garments; and they shall walk with me in white, for they are worthy.”** There were a few, at first, that had studied for themselves and heard the voice of God and dared to make that voice known to the world. Most of these first few paid dearly for voicing what they were learning. Martin Luther is a good example of these few who began to hear the true voice of God as they studied. The concept of imputed righteousness had virtually been totally lost over the centuries, but when discovered again by Luther, it became the heart of the Protestant Reformation. Following is a quote from a booklet titled “The Seven Churches” by Dr. Stephen Jones.

*Martin Luther had tried long and hard as a Roman monk to be righteous enough to know the assurance of justification before God. He had been taught that one was saved when one was perfected. The Church had taught him that Grace was a gift that God gave us to enable us to be perfect in all our works. In other words, once God imparts Grace to a man, then he was supposed to have the innate ability to come into perfection. Once perfected, then he would know that he was justified and saved. In searching his own heart, Luther was honest enough to know that **“the heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked”** (Jer. 17:19) He tried very hard to eradicate all impure thoughts from his mind and heart, for he had great faith in the idea that God had given him the Grace to be perfect. However, he found that he was a miserable failure. Finally, he discovered from Romans 4 that God imputes righteousness to the believer by faith.*

Luther discovered that his justification came through the righteousness of Christ not his own. He discovered that we are the righteousness of God in Christ (II Cor. 5:21), NOT in ourselves. Our righteousness is not really our own at all, but Christ’s, and His righteousness is applied to us as though it were our own. We are

imputed, or reckoned, righteous, not because we actually are so, but because Christ is righteous, We are in Christ, and therefore, God sees only Christ when He looks at us.

This revelation of the Word removed a huge load of guilt from Luther's heart and mind, for now he knew that his righteousness was not based upon his own perfection, but Christ's. Once he knew he was justified and could approach the throne of God boldly by faith, then he could pursue holiness from the grounds of forgiveness, not from the standpoint of a sinner attempting to become righteous by spending many years in prayer and fasting, buffeting the flesh, or hiding in a monastery away from the world and from women. This concept struck at the heart of the Roman idea of salvation by personal righteousness. A religion's doctrine of salvation is always the heart of the religion. So this is what actually sparked the Reformation, although many other issues were raised along with this central issue. If you haven't read Luther's "95 theses", I suggest that you take a look at it sometime. It is available on the internet. It has to do primarily with the selling of indulgences. As I understand it, if a person felt that he wasn't going to be able to become perfect before he died, or if he felt that a family member had died without becoming perfect, or totally righteous, he could buy pardons from the pope ahead of time in his own case, presumably the price was dependent on how bad one's sin was, or for the dead in the case of a family member that would take them out of Purgatory and into heaven. Luther apparently realized that the pope did not have the right to remit any penal-ties other than a penalty that he himself imposed. Remission of sin could only come from God.

Unfortunately, it did not take too long before Protestants, who had rejected the Romanist authority and many of their doctrines, began to embrace once again the Roman idea of salvation by perfection. Under the pretense of preaching holy living, they crossed the line into teaching justification by works. The difference between "justification should produce holy living" and "holy living should produce justification" seems to be hard to understand. Luther realized the former was the correct view, but many protestant denominations have adopted the latter, which puts them back into the Romanist view that they rejected.

I recall when I was in my early teens, we went to a Baptist church in my home town. Baptists are famous for holding revival meetings and our church was no different. One of the preachers that they often had hold a revival meeting in our church was a preacher from California, but who had grown up in our area. What I remember about those revival meetings was that every time he made an altar call, his wife was one of the first ones to answer the call. I now realize why. If one believes that one has to be totally righteous to be saved, any time an impure thought crossed one's mind, or something was done that was considered a sin, then that person would have to be saved all over again. This to me would be a miserable life. I think we can see how, with this type of thinking, that a preacher or priest could basically become in control of one's life if the person believed that the preacher or priest had the power to forgive both at present and in the future. Realizing that one's sins have already been forgiven by Christ in His sacrifice on the cross sets man free from a real load of guilt. This realization then should cause a person to strive to live in obedience to the One who gave His all for each of us.

It was people who had this realization that Jesus is speaking of when He says, **"Thou hast a few names even in Sardis which have not de-filed their garments."** That they would walk with Him in white indicates their attainment to the position of priest, i.e. they will be in the first resurrection. (Read Rev. 20:6)

Reward be clothed in white raiment (priestly garments) and assurance of name in book of life.

Sardis church: Object to overcome the deception of believing justification is by works.

(Read Rev. 3:7-13) Philadelphia means "brotherly love." This age was from 1776 until 1914. A great deal happened during this age, some good and some bad, but it is difficult to summarize everything without going into a lot of background necessary to understand it all, which is probably beyond the scope of this lesson. Some will need to be covered later in our studies, so we may leave some of it for then.

In the Greek, there are three words that are translated "love" in the English. They are actually three kinds of love. The Greek words are *eros*, *phileo*, and *agape*. *Eros* is the most selfish and immature form of love. It is best defined as NEED. Babies need their mothers, and their demands are based solely upon

those needs. People need to mature in love as they mature physically. If they don't then their relationships are based upon mere physical attraction and self-gratification. They care little or nothing for other people and will violate the rights of others whenever it suits them. *Phileo* is the kind of love a child learns in relating to their siblings. I have often referred to this type of love as heart love. It is more mature than *eros* but needs to mature into *agape* as one matures physically. As children grow and mature, they need to be taught to respect each other's property and space. They should be taught basic principles of justice and fairness as part of their maturing *phileo* type of love. It might be looked at as a judicial (legal) type of love. The natural love for one's siblings is there but it needs to, and is intended by God, to be trained that it might mature properly. By judicial decisions of the parents, the children learn to define basic human rights and responsibilities. I think we can see that the principles of maturing *phileo* type of love in children would apply in other cases as well.

When boys and girls are first afflicted with what we sometimes refer to as "puppy love", we are talking about *phileo* love. If this type of love is by-passed, with the necessary maturing, one would practice a lawless form of love, which, at his heart, would only be a free expression of his needs and desires. We see this today in what is called "free love" where sexual relationships are based upon love, rather than marriage. Homosexual love is a result of by-passing the *phileo* love stage of development.

Agape love is the unconditional love that characterizes mature people. I refer to this type of love as head love, it requires effort on our part. It is the term used most by John to describe the love of God toward us. When applied to people, it is a love that is unselfish, forgiving, understanding and unconditional. It is not free of discipline, as we are all, so long as we are living, still immature children. We never stop the process of maturing so long as we have only the earnest of the Spirit. When we are resurrected into the fullness of the Spirit, this is when we reach full maturity.

When the American founding fathers founded this nation, they referred to it as the American experiment. The factor that set this experiment apart from other nations was the belief in liberty in law. When Thomas Jefferson wrote in the Declaration of Independence that "all men are created equal", to him this was with the understanding that "equal" meant equal in or under the law.

It was their intent to bring the Church into a *phileo* relationship among its citizens and among the nations. Before the Protestant Reformation, the only example of rulers, both civil and religious, that most people ever knew, were men with selfish interests who had not learned the basic principles of *phileo* love. At the beginning of our nation, it was the American Dream to fulfill the prophecies regarding the House of Israel, that this new nation would be a light to the nations (Isa. 49:6), and that from the shores of this New World the Gospel of Jesus Christ would go forth into all the world. Our founders believed they were establishing the fifth kingdom of Daniel 2, the great Stone Kingdom cut out of the mountain without hands, that was to smash the image on its feet that is, the old corrupted world order in Europe that had been dominated by the Roman Church.

Jesus identifies Himself to this church as **"He that is holy, He that is true, He that hath the key of David, He that openeth, and no man shutteth; and shutteth, and no man openeth."** The "key of David" is a reference to Isa. 22:15-25 (Read). Hezekiah was king at the time and Shebna and Eliakim were both trusted officers in the king's cabinet. While we are only told in symbolic terms what Shebna did, it would appear that he had become quite corrupt and greedy. While this is also a Messianic prophecy, in this case the "key of the house of David" would probably be the equivalent today of being the President's chief of staff. Applying this to the Philadelphia Church, we see the Roman Catholic Shebna being replaced by the Protestant Eliakim. The keys to the Kingdom claimed by Rome are now being given to others whose motives are more consistent with "brotherly love" than the ones who conceived the Inquisition and the conquests of Cortez.

The open door that was set before the Philadelphia Church prophesied of the great missionary effort that was made, not only from the United States but several countries of Europe as well. Great missionary societies were established in the 1790's and into the 1800's. This began the great missionary movements of the next 200 years, which spread the Protestant brands of Christianity into all parts of the world. The Bible has now

been translated and printed in over one thousand languages. The One having the key of David opened a new door giving Christians of all de-nominations the opportunity to spread the Gospel to all parts of the world. Up to that time, only Ro-man Catholicism had had such opportunity, but they had spread their message primarily through conquest.

In King Hezekiah's day, he was spared from serious trial, or temptation twice that we have record of. First, when the Assyrians took the kingdom of Israel captive, their next target was the kingdom of Judah. King Sennacherib of Assyria successfully took all of the fenced cities of Judah with the exception of Jerusalem, but when he sent his generals against the city of Jerusalem, Hezekiah took his cause before God and God destroyed 185,000 of Sennacherib's soldiers in one night, thus ending this attempt to take Jerusalem. A little later Hezekiah became very sick, and again he prayed to God and God extended his life by 15 years. However, he made a serious mistake. When the king of Babylon sent a delegation to see him with a get well card, so to speak, he showed them all of the treasure of his house and of the temple and of the city. Isaiah, the prophet, then brought word to him that ultimately the Babylonians would take all of the treasure they had been shown. This happened, but not in Hezekiah's life time.

When the churches of this Philadelphia Church age began to really prosper, they began to build huge buildings focused on building large religious empires; this accumulation of wealth came to the attention of the servants of economic Babylon. These people could not resist trying to take control of this wealth. If you read history, particularly of the time of Thomas Jefferson and Alexander Hamilton, you will see that like Hezekiah, our nation escaped several major attempts to gain control of our whole economic system, primarily due to the machinations of Hamilton. However, they succeeded in taking control of the Church economy by taking over the seminaries and changing the Church's teachings to conform to Babylonian ideas. In so doing, they neutered the Church so as to accept the Babylonian captivity that took place in 1914.

In verse 14, Jesus says to those who have remained true to His Word, **"Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth."** I believe we are now facing this **"hour of temptation"**. Mistakes have been made, but to those who have **"kept the word of my patience"** they accomplished a great deal during the 19th and 20th centuries, often with very small numbers, but there has certainly been a remnant that has remained true to God. And if I am correct that this **"hour of temptation"** is upon us, it will be this remnant that, through God's hand, will be the stabilizers, so to speak. Object to overcome Holding fast to the Gospel.

(Read Rev. 3:14-22) Laodicea means "justice or judgment, or power of the laity." This age began in 1913-14. Some feel it lasts until the first resurrection. One writer in whom I have quite a bit of confidence says it ended in 1993 since this was the completion of 40 Jubilees, or 1960 years from Pentecost in 33 A.D. It is his belief that we are now in a transition period from 1993 until the first resurrection which would signal the beginning of the millennium of Rev. 20 that we have looked at briefly. Either way, this is the condition of the Church in our life time.

Jesus identifies Himself to this church as **"the Amen", the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God.** "Amen" means "firm, trustworthy, or steadfast." Jesus said that He could only do what He had seen the Father do, i.e. He was witness to what the Father did, thus He says he is the **"faithful and true wit-ness"** of God. John tells us in John 1:3, **"All things were made by him; and without him was not anything made that was made."**

He says that the Laodicean Church is neither hot nor cold and Christ says that He would that it were either hot or cold. Being lukewarm He says He will spue it out of His mouth. He then says that because the Church is increased in material goods, it says that it is rich, but Christ says that it is wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked. We have all seen the huge church buildings that one finds in virtually every city; have seen or heard of the fortunes that many of the televangelists have accumulated; and know of the huge land holdings of some of the denominations, so we can see how the Church in general might feel it is rich. The problem is exemplified by an experience Laverne and I had several years ago in Mexico City. We were on a tour of the city to see the things that were considered to be out-standing in the city. One of

the stops was to a large Catholic cathedral. It was a magnificent building to see, but inside much of the walls were covered with gold along with all kinds of very expensive altars, statues, etc. But on the steps of the cathedral as you entered the building were a number of older women dressed in black begging for money to exist on. The apostle James tells us in James 1:27, **“Pure religion and undefiled be-fore God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world.”** A large share of Protestant churches are no better than this Catholic church. Their congregations are rich in material goods, and even though many are generous so long as all they have to do is give money, they are very poor spiritually and in faith. The Bible is no longer taught. God’s law has been done away with supposedly. They do not wear the white raiment of righteousness. They are blind to God’s plan even though many of us may witness this age come to a close, there is no understanding of the times in which we live. We could give example after example of people who think that they are rich, who think they see, and who believe they are obedient yet are ignorant of God’s Word, have done away with the law, and have virtually no faith.

This age started with two things that have contributed to this problem greatly. World War I started in 1914. This changed family life dramatically only to be followed by World War II that really changed things taking women out of their traditional roles as wives and mothers who pretty much held the families together. Men became more independent of responsibility and because material goods have become easier to obtain, people in general have come to rely on this supposed riches, or their ability to obtain them, than they do on God.

The second thing that happened was the passage of the Federal Reserve Act in 1913-14. This in effect put us in captivity to the Babylonian system. Passed illegally, this act opened the door, not only to the pillaging of our economy, thus the world economy, by those responsible for the Act, but it opened the door to a credit society that is in direct opposition to God’s law. Man’s faith in God had deteriorated in direct proportion to man’s ability to obtain material goods in ways other than direct exchange of labor for goods. Only now are we realizing that we cannot continue to rely on debt and usury or interest. The wars and other things like our entertainment industry have kept us from seeing what has really happened to our economy.

It would take books to list all of the collateral effects of these events. But the primary effects have been our blindness to God’s plan, our repudiation of His laws, and our poverty of faith and Biblical understanding. Christ admonishes us, during this age, to buy of Him gold (faith) tried in the fire of tribulation that we might be rich, white raiment (righteousness) that we might be clothed and to anoint our eyes with eye salve (study to show thyself approved) that we might see. Expect to be chastened because God loves us. The problem is not God. He is ready to help us overcome our blindness, our poverty, and our nakedness, if we but ask Him.

Laodicean Church: Object to overcome—spiritual blindness, nakedness of unrighteous-ness, and poverty of faith. Reward To sit with Christ on His throne, i.e. to rule with Him.

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From: Newsletter Issue 1302

Having looked at the activity of the Church, or Christianity as a whole, from the ascension of our Lord to the first resurrection as portrayed to John in the letters to the seven churches of Asia, we now want to look at the activity of the other players in world history during the same time period. But before we do, John is projected, in the Spirit, into the future into the perfected Kingdom from where he is to witness this panorama of history. In our day and time, we have movies that fictionally project a person into the future to a certain status from which they can look back and see how their life sees the end from the beginning, but then is able to see how that end developed through history.

(Read Rev. 4) In verse 1, John sees a door opened in heaven and he is invited to come through the door to be

shown things that were yet to happen. Because the book of Revelation is, to a large extent, written in symbolic language and because of the scene that John sees when he enters the door, the *Heaven* referred to, has to be taken in its symbolic meaning. It is this meaning that I believe we can determine by examining Scriptures elsewhere in the Bible. We first need to know and understand God's intent in His plan for mankind. In Matt. 6:5-15, Jesus is teaching His disciples how to pray. In the model prayer that He gave, in verse 10, the first thing He prays for is, **"Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven."** His intent is for the Kingdom of God to come to the earth that His will be done on earth as it is in heaven. This was no frivolous request. It is God's plan that His Kingdom will be here on the earth, not in heaven as is usually taught. In Acts 3, after healing a man who had been unable to walk since birth, and the people gathering around Peter and John thinking that they themselves had this great power of healing, Peter addresses the crowd explaining that the same Jesus whom they had crucified, had been raised from the dead and it was through faith in His name that the man had been healed. He then went on to tell the people to repent and be converted that their sins would be blotted out when the times of refreshing (resurrection) shall come from the presence of Jesus Christ. He then says in verses 20, 21, **"And he (God) shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you: Whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began."** There will be a time that Peter refers to as the times of restitution of all things, when Jesus Christ shall come and establish His Kingdom on the earth. If we study His law, we know that His judgments, i.e. His penalties for crime, or sin, are restorative, whatever damage is done by the crime is to be restored, often times double, or triple depending on the circumstances.

Getting back to Rev. 4:1, the voice that invited John to come through the open door told him that what he was about to see was future, not the present. The first thing he saw is a throne and one that sat on the throne was **"to look upon like a jasper and a sardine stone: and there was a rainbow round about the throne, in sight like unto an emerald."** So the first thing he sees is a throne, indicating a kingdom, and one sitting on the throne appearing in great splendor. Around the throne are 24 seats upon which are seated 24 elders dressed in white raiment and wearing crowns of gold on their heads. In verses 6, 7 we're told that there were also 4 beasts around the throne. The first beast was like a lion, the second like a calf, the third had the face of a man, and the fourth was like a flying eagle. With this word picture in mind, we can now go to the Scriptures to help us fully identify what John was seeing.

When the children of Israel came up out of Egypt, they first traveled to Mt. Sinai in Arabia where God organized them into a nation, gave them His law, instructed them to build the tabernacle and numbered them. Numbering meant counting all of the males 20 years old and upward that were able to go to war. God had them numbered twice, first here at Mt. Sinai and then again just before they moved into the land of Canaan, or the promised land. When He numbered them, He also gave them an order of march and an order of encampment when they were stopped. Numbers 2 gives us this order. The tabernacle, which contained the Holy of Holies indicating the presence of God, was to sit in the middle of the encampment. On each side of the tabernacle, there were to be 3 tribes of the children of Israel. God chose one tribe on each side to be the dominant tribe on that side. (Read Numbers 2:2-8; 10-15; 18-23; 25 -30) Note in verse 2 that we're told that each man was to pitch his tent by his own standard, with the ensign of their father's house, i.e. by his own flag and each flag had a symbol on it that indicates their father's house.

Most of these symbols can be found in Scripture, but pay particular attention to the symbols on the flags of the four dominant tribes. In Genesis 49, Jacob is giving his final words to his sons. He says in verse 9, **"Judah is a lion's whelp: from the prey, my son, thou art gone up: he stooped down, he couched as a lion, and as an old lion; who shall rouse him up?"** I think we can say that Judah's primary emblem, or symbol, then is the lion. Most of the tribes had primary and one or more secondary symbols, but for our purpose in this study, we want to look primarily at the primary emblems.

In Gen. 49:3, Jacob says of Reuben, **"thou art my firstborn, my might, and the beginning of my strength, the excellency of dignity, and the excellency of power."** Everything here refers to man, so I think we could say that Reuben's primary emblem is the face of a man.

In Gen. 49:17 Jacob says of Dan, **“Dan shall be a serpent by the way, an adder in the path, that biteth the horse heels, so that his rider shall fall backward.”** Serpent would appear to be the primary emblem here with the horse as the secondary. For some reason, the primary emblem of the tribe of Dan was later changed to that of a flying eagle. This has been verified by early historians, but the reason for the change has not been made apparent.

When Jacob was near the end of his life, he instructed Joseph to bring his two sons, Manasseh and Ephraim, to him. He then officially adopted them as his own sons making them equal to his other eleven sons so far as inheritance is concerned. In blessing them he gave the greater blessing to the youngest, Ephraim. This gave Joseph, who had the birthright, a double inheritance, something that was traditional to the son having the birthright. So when the children of Israel moved into the land of Canaan, Ephraim and Manasseh each received an inheritance in the land as if they were actual sons of Jacob. Because Ephraim had the greater blessing, the tribe of Ephraim was the dominant tribe on the west side of the tabernacle as they marched and as they camped while in the wilderness. (I probably need to point out that this gave Jacob thirteen sons instead of twelve, but in the organization we have been discussing there are only twelve mentioned with three on each side of the tabernacle. The tribe that is left out is the tribe of Levi who had the responsibility for the tabernacle, so their camp was in the center of the encampment with the tabernacle. Numbers 2:17) In Gen. 49:22 we're told **“Joseph is a fruitful bough, even a fruitful bough by a well; whose branches run over the wall.”** Also in Deuteronomy 33 Moses is blessing the tribes of Israel just prior to his death and he says of Joseph in verse 17, **His glory is like the firstling of his bullock, and his horns are like the horns of unicorns: with them he shall push the people together to the ends of the earth: and they are the ten thousands of Ephraim, and they are the thousands of Manasseh.”** It turns out that Manasseh took the fruitful bough as their primary emblem and Ephraim took the bullock as their primary emblem.

In the vision that John is seeing in Rev. 4, we now have the basic elements of the kingdom of Israel as God organized them at Mt. Sinai, except we have twenty-four elders instead of twelve. In Revelation 21, John is shown the new Jerusalem, which I believe we will see is symbolic of the new government that will rule the world. Surrounding the “city” is a great wall. (Read Rev. 21:12-14) I think, then, we can consider the twenty-four elders in Rev. 4 to typify the 12 patriarchs and the 12 apostles.

I don't pretend to be an astronomer, but I find it interesting that much of what we find in the Bible can also be found in the stars as well by those who know how to read the stars and constellations. Following is an excerpt from a book by Howard B. Rand titled Study in Revelation. *All of God's revelation is in perfect harmony. It is not at all surprising, therefore, to find that while John is given a vision of glorified Israel, that vision is couched in astronomical symbolism. The Psalmist was right when he said, “The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handywork. Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night sheweth knowledge. There is no speech nor language, where their voice is not heard.” (Psa. 19:1-3)*

The great pictorial star groupings tell a wonderful story which is in complete harmony with the Bible record. It was there that the Wise Men saw the sign of His birth and took up their journey to that place in Palestine, the city of Bethlehem, where the astronomical pointer designated the place of birth.

These same pictorial star groupings give the pattern of Israel's encampment. For each tribe carried on its standard an emblem representing one of the twelve signs of the Zodiac. The clear glass-like crystal sea is the vast expanse of space, while the four creatures, described by John, are the cardinal constellations of the zodiac. These four are as follows: Leo, depicted as a Lion on the standard of Judah; Taurus, depicted as a Calf or Bull upon the standard of Ephraim; Aquarius, depicted as a Man upon the standard of Reuben; and Scorpio, anciently known as the Flying Eagle and thus depicted upon the standard of Dan. Each creature has six wings about him, the two above and the two below are the decans, or accompanying constellations; while the other two, the one to the right and the one to the left of each creature, are the adjacent and subordinate constellations of the zodiac.

In Genesis 9, we have the story of God giving the rainbow as a sign of the sureness of His promise to Noah that never again would the world be destroyed by a flood. In Rev. 4, I think we can again take it as a sign of

God's unfailing covenants that He has made with Israel. We have already discussed the seven lamps being the seven Spirits of God. The sea of glass like unto crystal symbolizes the purity and righteousness which permeates God's entire Kingdom. With this information, I think we can see that what John is seeing is basically the Kingdom of Israel as God first organized it at Mt. Sinai now at the end of the age fully perfected as the Kingdom of God on the earth with His cabinet of twenty-four elders. The beasts represent Israel, or the people, or the kingdom as they give glory, honour and thanks to God sitting on the throne. The elders then likewise give honour and worship to God saying, **"Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created."** It is from this vantage point that John then is to see how history of the world unfolds to reach the point in time where John, in the Spirit, is watching. When we find "heaven" used symbolically in Revelation, I think we can think of it as the Kingdom of God rather than a celestial location.

A question that might possibly be raised at this point in our study crossed my mind as I prepared this study; is the Kingdom and the Church not the same thing? So why are we emphasizing the Kingdom here at the possible expense of the Church? I don't want to muddy the waters of understanding here as we have discussed the difference between the two extensively in our past studies. But I feel we do need to mention the subject before we move on. The Kingdom is the governmental structure which is typified in the nation or kingdom of Israel throughout the Bible. It is a national entity through which Christ will rule the world. This is the promise that God made to Abraham. The new covenant is made with this entity. (Heb. 8:8-13) Though race and genealogy were certainly criteria of being a part of this kingdom in the beginning, Paul makes it clear in Gal. 3:29, **"And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise."** If you are among the ruler ship, you would also be a part of the Church.

The Church is the body of Christ. It is an ecclesiastical entity. It is a part of Christ. One can be a part of the church but not necessarily a part of the ruler ship. The two entities have separate destinies to fill. The only example that I can think of to try to explain the difference is our older kids were a part of the high school marching band. One of our daughters was a part of the flag team. If you were a part of the flag team you were a part of the band. But you could be a band member without being a part of the flag team. The overall goal of the band was to provide an entertaining show. While they worked together to present the show, the flag team had the job of providing visual entertainment and the rest of the band had the job of providing entertainment to the ear.

(Read Rev. 5:1-4) John is being taken back to before the crucifixion of Christ. Up to this time, no one was able to break the seals and open this book. The question of course is, what book are we talking about. In the book of Daniel, Daniel is told to seal a book, even to the time of the end. (Read Dan. 12:1-4) Daniel has been given prophetic information, and even though Daniel says he has heard in verse 8, but didn't understand, he is told to seal the book and it will be sealed until the time of the end. I believe that this might be the book that John sees in the hand of Him that say on the throne. The strong angel pro-claimed the question, **"Who is worthy to open the book, and to loose the seals thereof?"** acknowledges that no man was able to open the book. Even Christ apparently did not know what was in the book during His ministry. His disciples asked Him in Matt. 24:3, **"Tell us, when shall these things be? And what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?"** Though He gave them many things to watch for, He told them in verse 36 of the same chapter, **"But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only."** That no one was able to open the book saddened John to the point that he says that he wept much.

(Read Rev. 5:5-10) As time moved forward, there was a major change on the earth. As John was weeping, one of the twenty-four elders told him to weep not, **"the Lion of the tribe of Juda, the Root of David, hath prevailed to open the book, and to loose the seven seals thereof."** As John watched, in the midst of the elders stood a Lamb as it had been slain. Jesus Christ had finished His ministry and had been crucified, buried and had arisen and now in the vision that John was seeing, He appears as a Lamb that had been slain. We're told that it had seven horns and seven eyes, which John tells us represents the seven Spirits of God sent forth into all the earth. If you recall, when we were studying chapter 1, we looked at the list of seven Spirits that the prophet Isaiah gave us as Spirits that would rest upon Jesus Christ. According to Isa. 11:1, they

were, the Spirit of the Lord, the Spirit of wisdom, the Spirit of understanding, the Spirit of counsel, the Spirit of might, The Spirit of knowledge, and the Spirit of the fear of the Lord.

The seven horns represent power and authority or ruler ship and I believe that here they represent the seven ages of the Church activity in the witnessing and work of His followers.

The Lamb took the book from the hand of He who sat on the throne, and when He did, the twenty-four elders and the four beasts fell down before Him and sang a new song saying, **“Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou was slain, and hast re-deemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; and hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth.”** It was not until Christ had completed His first work on the earth, i.e. been crucified, buried and resurrected that He was qualified to open the book. Now, no longer was the book to be sealed. All creation was waiting for this great work by our Savior. Now that it had happened, the activity that was planned of God for the whole world can now proceed. Not only have all people been redeemed, i.e. been purchased back from servitude to sin, but to those who had been overcomers, they are to become kings and priests and shall reign on the earth. None of this could happen until Christ was crucified, buried and resurrected.

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From: Newsletter Issue 1303

In our last issue, we studied up through Rev. 5:10. We are continuing starting with verse 11 this issue.

(Read Rev. 5:11-14) It is difficult for us to comprehend how John is seeing the end from the beginning, so to speak. He is seeing the crucified Christ with the power to open the book and then the next scene He is seeing Christ as King of Kings, events that are over 2000 years apart so far as we as humans are concerned. But in this scene millions are proclaiming Him as worthy to receive power, riches, wisdom, strength, honour, glory and blessing. Not only are humans and angels saying this, but every creature in heaven, on the earth and under the earth and in the sea.

Keep in mind John's vantage point as he watches history unfold, though prophetic at that time, it is history to us. Time is not a factor so far as God is concerned. He sees everything in one scene, something we cannot do because time is a factor to us. In a sense, it is like something we saw in a cute movie the other night. A little girl who seemed prone to always be in trouble had become sick at school and her father, who was temporarily out of work, came and picked her up. He was quite an artist and the little girl liked to draw with him. So to entertain her for the rest of the day, he told her they would draw the world's longest picture. He took a roll of white wrapping paper and unrolled it across the floor and the two of them got down on the floor and drew and painted the story of what had happened since the little girl was born with the house, and events that had happened. She then took the picture story to school for show and tell and unrolled it around the room and then told the story to her classmates, using the picture that she and her dad had drawn and painted. This is kind of the way God sees things, all in one picture. If we can keep this in mind as we continue our study, I think it will help us understand better.

As we continue, these seven seals will be broken one at a time and as each one is broken, a new phase of human history will appear. Each phase will be written in symbolic language, so what we will have to do is learn the language. The rest of the Bible will be our teacher.

We are going to be looking at several series of seven events each with each series dealing with a different major player in the course of the history of the last 2,000 years. The first of these series, as we discussed in our last lesson, is the breaking of the seven seals on the book that we first see in the hand of He who is sitting on the throne that John first sees. These seven seals deal with the history of the Roman Empire. I believe that most people who have the historicist view of Revelation agree on this, however, there are divergent

views as to the actual dates and sometimes the actual events that relate to the opening of the various seals. A deep study of the book of Revelation can, and often will, come down to fairly minute details. I enjoy studying these details, but I don't feel they are always appropriate to our current study, so I am going to approach this in a more general sense keeping in mind that as one studies deeper into Revelation and the history of the last 2000 years, one could develop opinions that might appear at variance with this general sense that I am going to try to follow. But I believe we can still get a reasonable view of what we need to learn from the Revelation.

(Read Rev. 6:1-8) These are the Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse, a term that we hear fairly often as it seems to be used pertaining to the order of events in every period of chaos and trouble. However, we need to remember that these four horses and their riders have a particular historical fulfillment in the activities of Imperial Rome as the opening of the seven seals has to do with the history of the Roman Empire and what is left of it today. Verse 2 tells us that when the first seal was opened, **“And I saw, and behold a white horse: and he that sat on him had a bow; and a crown was given unto him: and he went forth conquering, and to conquer.”** We have four factors to consider here, a white horse, a bow, a crown and going forth to conquer. There are numerous references in Scripture to the use of the horse in battle. Proverbs 21:31 says, **“The horse is prepared against the day of battle.”** Until just recently, in all wars of conquest, the horse played a very prominent roll. The fact that horses were used in these first four seals tells us that the government of this period relied on power and might of aggressive military strength to carry on and rule. The different colors tell us what type of government and kind of rule that was exercised over the Empire.

The white horse signifies justice. (When Christ comes to rule as King of Kings in Rev. 19, He is riding a white horse.) Though the nation was under military authority, the period of the white horse was one of peace and prosperity with-in the Empire. Does history verify this?

In 31 B.C. Octavius defeated Anthony and Cleopatra and their Egyptian army at the battle of Actium. Winning this battle pretty well established Rome as ruler of the world. In 27 B.C. the Roman Senate conferred upon Octavius the title of Augustus Caesar and Rome ceased as a Republic and became an Empire ruled by an Emperor. The word “crown” is from the Greek *stephanos* which is a wreath rather than a crown like a crown of gold. We have all seen pictures of the Roman Caesars wearing a laurel wreath rather than a crown. The bow indicated that the fighting would be some distance away. During the period from 31 B.C. until 64 A.D. peace and prosperity came to Rome like they had never seen it before. The Roman armies continued to push their conquests in all directions, but all of the fighting was on the perimeter of the Empire rather than within Empire.

It is during this period that Christ was born, grew up and conducted His ministry, was crucified, buried and resurrected. The Church was born on the day of Pentecost in 33 A.D. and spread across a large part of the Roman Empire in relative peace.

Some students of Revelation, that I studied, extend this period of the white horse to 180 A.D. in spite of the death of Nero in 68 A.D., during the Judean rebellion, and the upheaval in finding his successor. Gibbon, in the late 1700's, wrote in his The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire the following, “During a long period of two hundred and twenty years from the establishment of this artful system [27 B.C.] to the death of Commodus [180 A.D.], the dangers inherent to a military government were, in a great measure, suspended. But Nero involved the whole empire in his ruin [he committed suicide in 68 A.D.]. In the space of eighteen months four princes [emperors] perished by the sword; and the Roman world was shaken by the fury of the contending armies. Excepting this short, though violent, eruption of military license, the two centuries from Augustus to Commodus passed away unstained with civil blood, and undisturbed by revolutions.”

In verse 4, John says, **“And there went out another horse that was red and power was given to him that sat thereon to take peace from the earth, and that they should kill one another and there was given unto him a great sword.”** Red indicates tyranny, misrule and bloodshed. While the rider of the white horse had a bow indicating that war was at a distance, the rider of this red horse holds a sword indicating that the fighting would be close at hand. Several things happened, whether we consider this period to

start from 64 A.D. or 180 A.D. The Roman's tolerated the religious belief of every nation which they conquered, but they persecuted Christians alone. Christians opposed the national religion of the empire, refused to offer sacrifices to the gods of the empire, and refused to worship the emperors. For these reasons, from the time of Nero until 313 A.D. and the Edict of Milan, Christians were persecuted, tortured, and killed in great numbers, though their numbers continued to increase and strengthen and paganism weakened.

The morality of the emperors deteriorated greatly. Commodus was the worst of all the emperors. Gibbon says of him, "But every sentiment of virtue and humanity was extinct in the mind of Commodus...His hours were spent in a seraglio of three hundred beautiful women and as many boys of every rank and of every province; and wherever the arts of seduction proved ineffectual, the brutal lover had recourse to violence and he was the first of the Roman emperors totally devoid of taste for the pleasures of understanding. But Commodus, from his earliest infancy, discovered an aversion to whatever was rational or liberal."

Commodus finally murdered so many people that even his favorite concubine, Marcia, be-came afraid for her life. She then poisoned him, but before he could die, another man strangled him.

The Praetorian guards were gradually formed by Augustus, not only to protect his per-son, but to awe the Senate and to either prevent or crush the first indications of rebellion. At first they were dispersed in nearby towns with only a few in Rome itself. But when Augustus died in 14 A.D., his adopted son, Tiberius became emperor.

Under the pretense of relieving Italy of the heavy burden of military quarters, and of introducing stricter discipline among the guards, he brought them all into Rome in a permanent camp. Gibbons writes the following of them: "Such formidable servants are always necessary, but often fatal, to the throne of despotism. But thus introducing the Praetorian guards as it were into the palace and the senate, the emperors taught them to perceive their own strength, and the weakness of the civil government; to view the vices of their masters with familiar contempt, and to lay aside that reverential awe which distance only and mystery can preserve towards an imaginary power."

As the emperors were more and more corrupted by luxury and power, they were manipulated more and more by the worst of men. The Praetorian guards came to despise their masters more and more, but at the same time they came to understand their own military strength and potential. They began to realize their own power to decide who would be emperor. They began to insist that to become emperor, they first had to have their permission. They killed Pertinax, the successor of Commodus, and then auctioned off the position of emperor to Julian. This brought on civil war after civil war. Over the next 100 years from 193 A.D., Rome would have 32 emperors and 27 pretenders. It became very much a time of war and bloodshed within the Roman Empire.

The Goths, Germans, and Persians all began invading the empire from all directions causing considerable general confusion prompting many usurpers to spring up. It became a time of tyrants. Some have this period extending to 284 and others to 313 A.D.

In Rev. 6:5, 6, John tells us, "And when he had opened the third seal, I heard the third beast say, Come and see. And I beheld, and lo a black horse; and he that sat on him had a pair of balances in his hand. And I heard a voice in the midst of the four beasts say, A measure of wheat for a penny, and three measures of barley for a penny; and see thou hurt not the oil and the wine."

Dr. Bullinger, in his Companion Bible has a note regarding the color black of this horse. He says the black signifies famine. Indeed the events that we have discussed during the red horse period brought on a very great famine throughout the whole Roman Empire that was then followed by a furious plague. This took place over a fifteen year period from 250 – 265 A.D. Gibbon, in his Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire says that during a part of that period 5000 people per day died in Rome itself. He indicates that in a very few years of time war, pestilence, and famine consumed half of the human species.

With this in mind the rider with the scales could very well be seen as rationing food. This would have to be

looked at as judgments from God for the gross immorality that had engulfed the empire.

Viewing the opening of the third seal in this manner would put the period from about 250 to about 300 A.D.

There is at least one other way to view this third seal opening. If we consider that this seal was opened at the beginning of the reign of Constantine in 313 A.D., what looked like a very good thing to Christians, especially with his Edict of Milan, actually would turn out to be a very bad thing. As we discussed before, Constantine stopped the Christian persecution and returned land and property that had been confiscated by previous emperors, but in his effort to unify the empire once again, he began to convene Church councils in an effort to unify the various factions of Christianity. With each council through the years came edict after edict from the bishops at the councils telling the people what they could believe based on the consensus of opinion of the bishops, not necessarily that of the Scriptures. The more councils there were the less of the Scriptures that the people were supposedly allowed to believe, God's Word was replaced by creeds, thus we ultimately had a famine of the Word.

When Constantine came to power, he actually had no religious convictions. The empire had been sapped by the destruction of life and property and the confiscatory taxes and heavy tributes laid upon its citizens with the result that the people were in a real state of despair. Constantine weighed the situation. The Christians, though in a minority, had zeal and enthusiasm, but the Pagans had lost their fervor and excitement. So in weighing Christianity vs. Paganism, Constantine favored the Christians. However, as time progressed and the establishment, begun by Constantine and his sons, of creeds and doctrines, wheat and barley (that we might look at as the bread of life the Word of God and its teachings) were weighed and distributed in measure while false doctrines became truth and heresies orthodoxy. It became the will of the organized Church, in favor with the state, that the truth of the Scripture be given to the people only through them and in accordance with their creeds and doctrines. So as we near the end of this black horse period, we find a powerful ecclesiastical organization in the making.

However, the oil and wine, which I would regard as the Holy Spirit and the forgiveness through Christ's atonement, could neither be measured or harmed by organized Christianity. As we have talked before, there is always a remnant to keep the light burning. In this view, the time of the black horse would be from 313-396 A.D.

When the fourth seal was opened, again John was invited to look and he says in verse 8, **"And I looked, and behold a pale horse: and his name that sat on him was Death, and Hell followed with him. And power was given unto them over the fourth part of the earth, to kill with sword, and with hunger, and with death, and with the beasts of the earth."** Again, I would like to give you two views of the opening of this seal. Understand that in giving a couple of different views, this is not changing history, just a difference as to how it is viewed. The end result of history will ultimately be the same, regardless of how we view different events in the process.

Based on the view of the black horse era being one of pestilence, war, and famine, we could say that death is the inevitable result of famine. With roughly one-half of the people of the empire dying in a fifteen year period from 250 -265 A.D., one student of Revelation, that I put credence in, considers this as the beginning of the period of the pale horse.

Towards the end of this period the emperor Diocletian, after he came to power in 284, divided the Roman Empire into the East and the West in 285 A.D. giving the West to Maximian. This set the stage for its permanent division a century later. Later in 292, these joint emperors once more divided their power, each appointing a lesser general with the title of Caesar to help them defend the empire from invasions. These two Caesars were Galerius and Constantius.

Galerius later induced Diocletian to destroy the Church, but Constantius, who was responsible for the defense of Gaul, Spain, and Britain, favored the Christians.

The division of the empire into four parts meant that there were now four royal palaces and courts to maintain,

instead of just one. This meant a substantial increase in taxation as well in order to support the lavish courts of all four rulers, who seemed to compete with each other to portray greater pomp and luxury. Each had their own ministers as well, so this added taxation added to the problem of famine that already existed.

The other view is that the pale horse signifies the decadence of the Roman Empire and of its military power. Instead of an emperor riding the horse, we're told that Death is the rider and Hell is following and supporting him. In this view, it is thought to begin in 396 with the great barbaric invasions of the Roman Empire under Alaric the Goth, Attila the Hun and Genseric the Vandal. Keep in mind that barbarism referred to someone who did not speak Greek or Latin, not necessarily someone who is crude and uncivilized as we think of it today. This period went to the time when the Church Council at Constantinople in 536 A.D. compelled the state to execute its edicts. This laid the foundation for the establishment of a political-religious supremacy that made inevitable the terrible persecution of men and women whose souls John sees under that altar when the fifth seal is opened.

But the question that I think most of us have when reading of the opening of this seal is "who is the rider whose name is Death and who is his companion named Hell?" Who is the rider taking the place of the Roman emperors and exercising such authority and power? We discussed this some when we were discussing the seven churches of Rev. 2, 3. Quoting from our issue #1212 of the "Spirit" in discussing the Thyatira church age, we said:

In the Thyatira church age, the state, like King Ahab, came under the authority of the one calling himself the "vicar of Christ." While the popes gave lip service to Christ, in reality they followed the precepts of another god. This era began with the Law Code of Justinian, the emperor of the Eastern Roman Empire who ruled from Constantinople. Justinian revised the whole body of Roman law, calling it the Codex Constitutionum in 529 A.D. This nullified all Roman legislation and laws up that time. Four years later, after getting the opinions and responses from other Roman jurists, he revised the Codex and published it under the Latin title, Pandectae. What is important about this is that it enacted orthodox Christianity into law. All ecclesiastical law, like all civil law, had to come from the throne of the emperor. Though Justinian and his wife were zealous orthodox Christians, there is no evidence that he studied Biblical law or considered it in the law revision that he made.

A few years later, in 536 A.D., a Church Council held in Constantinople issued an edict and demanded that the emperor Justinian enforce it. He did so, which, whether Justinian thought that far ahead or not, set a precedent of the state becoming the servant to the Church. Orthodox Christianity now became the real legislator in the Empire, while the Emperor became the enforcer of the law. It wasn't long before Church leaders saw how they could increase their power by over-ruling God's Law and taking the power of legislation upon themselves. Thus Church law and the traditions of men came to replace any vestiges of Biblical Law that did not suit them.

This began the gradual rebuilding, upon the ruins of the ancient Imperial Roman Empire, a new and different type of Empire, which became all the more powerful because it claimed control not only over the lives of men, but over them in death as well by extending its dominion beyond this life into the grave. The development of Organized or Orthodox Christianity is assumed by many to be synonymous with the true growth of Christianity. A study of prophecy and of history proves this to be a false assumption. As we study further, and learn more about the political-religious power that had its infancy during this time period, I believe we will see why it is really the rider named Death on the pale horse.

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From: Newsletter Issue 1304

We had to make a break in our study of Revelation at an inconvenient place in our last issue. To help prevent this in the future we are switching out Revelation study to our first article with this issue.

We were discussing the opening of the fourth seal in Rev. 6 in our last study and were commenting on verse 8.

There are two deaths spoken of in Scripture. The first is mortal death in which we all will participate as a result of Adam's sin as we discussed when we studied Romans 5. The second is called the "second death" and is described in Rev. 20 as being "cast into the lake of fire." Anyone whose name is not in the book of life is cast into the lake of fire. Keep in mind that this is symbolic language and is not a literal lake of fire. We will discuss this at length when we study that chapter. The point that we need to understand now is organized Christianity, whether Catholic or Protestant, for the most part teach salvation by works. This is a false teaching and one believing this will not have his or her name written in the book of life. We will see as we continue our study that organized Christianity has, through the centuries, been responsible for millions of mortal deaths. Likewise it will be responsible for millions of "second deaths" as well. Keep in mind as we discuss organized Christianity that we are talking about a political and ecclesiastical system, not about individuals themselves. I am convinced that there are true believers within all denominations and always have been, but the power structure itself is what we are discussing.

The word "Hell" in verse 8 is from the Greek *hades* which simply means "unseen" and usually refers to the place of the dead. It is translated both "hell" and "grave" in the New Testament. By misrepresenting what this word means, the use of the doctrine of Purgatory by the Catholic Church extends the control of the Church over the individual into the grave. The living are enslaved with the promise of mitigating the suffering of loved ones who have passed on before them. So I think we can see why John says that Hell followed this rider named Death.

We will see as we continue our study how the **"power was given unto them over the fourth part of the earth, to kill with sword, and with hunger, and with death, and with the beasts of the earth"** applies to this political-religious power structure that we are seeing developed during this time period as millions are killed one way or another by this power structure, that because of its power over people beyond the grave became the most powerful governmental structure in history.

Though there is some difference of opinion as to the actual events and/or the exact span of time covered in the opening of the first four seals, there is general agreement among those who hold a historicist view of Revelation that the first four seals covered the time period of Rome being governed by emperors. The fifth seal period takes a different kind of look at what is going on in the Roman Empire and again there is room for different opinions as to the actual events symbolized by the text. (Read Rev. 6:9-11)

There were two periods of great persecution and blood shed, particularly of Christians in the Empire. The first was under the emperors which culminated with the edict published by the Emperor Diocletian in 303 A.D. in which every-one who refused to offer pagan sacrifices was to be burnt alive and the churches were to be destroyed and all property of the Church was confiscated. Though Diocletian resigned in 305, this edict remained in effect until Constantine became emperor in 313 A.D. I haven't seen any estimate of the number of Christians killed during this 10 year period, but the killing during this time was horrendous. Even Diocletian's best armies, the famed Gaulish Legions, were ordered to be executed by Maximian, who was co-emperor with Diocletian, because they were Christian. As we have discussed before, this great persecution ended with the Edict of Milan made by Constantine in 313. One view of the time of this fifth seal considers this to be the period of time in which this seal is opened. Based on this, the further killing of Christians mentioned in verse 11 could refer to the second period.

This second period, and the other view as I understand it, was under the Papal control of the Empire which had its beginning in 536 A.D. when a Church council assembled at Constantinople, issued an edict and forced the emperor to enforce it. This united the church with the state and began a 1260 year period of brutal persecution of anyone not agreeing with the creeds and doctrines of the Church. This takes us back to Daniel 7 where Daniel is describing four great beasts which we determined in our study referred to the leadership of the four great world empires that were to rule the world. In verse 8, after describing the fourth great beast and telling us that it had ten horns, he says, **"I considered the horns, and behold, there came up among them another little horn, before whom there were three of the first horns plucked up by the roots: and,**

behold, in this horn were eyes like the eyes of man, and a mouth speaking great things.” When Daniel questioned an angel what this meant, referring to the ten horns and this little horn, the angel told Daniel in verses 24 and 25, **“And the ten horns out of this kingdom are ten kings that shall arise: and another shall rise after them; and he shall be diverse from the first, and he shall subdue three kings. And he shall speak great words against the most High, and shall wear out the saints of the most High, and think to change times and laws: and they shall be given into his hand until a time and times and the dividing of time.”** A time is considered to be 360 days, weeks, or years, depending on the con-text. Times is 2×360 and a half time is $360 \div 2$ or 180. Adding $360 + 720 + 180 = 1260$. We will discuss this in more detail later, but I think we can consider this little horn to represent the Roman Catholic Church. 1260 years from 536 takes us to 1796 when Napoleon took command of the French armed forces operating against Italy. This was the beginning of the Church losing its temporal power on the world stage. During this 1260 years, it is estimated that just under 100 million people died violent deaths due to the persecution of the Church.

The words **“wear out”**, speaking of wearing out the saints, mean to wear down or diminish. This is certainly what happened during this period. Anyone who dared to defy the Church was persecuted and often killed so the saints, those who tried to learn the real truth of the Scriptures, were certainly diminished.

Whichever view one accepts as the time of the opening of the fifth seal, the number of Christian people killed would have been a very great number. Some people take these verses as indicating the state of the dead. Keep in mind that this is symbolic language. It is not talking about the state of the dead, but rather what was going on in the Roman Empire.

(Read Rev. 6:12-17) As you may have guessed in our discussion thus far concerning the opening of the seals, one of the views that we have looked at stays within the bounds of Imperial Rome while the other takes the view that the period of the opening of the seals includes both Imperial Rome and Papal Rome. In my mind both views could be legitimate though I have in most of my previous studies looked at both Imperial and Papal Rome as the subject of this series of events. If we continue to limit the time period to that of Imperial Rome, then the time of the opening of the sixth seal would probably have been approximately 310-395.

The earth quake would have been the major shake up of the government of the Roman Empire by Constantine. The Empire had become quite divided and there seemed to be continual war between rival divisions for more power and authority. Constantine was a great and able military commander and over a period of relatively few years, he defeated all of his rival Caesars and consolidated all of the Empire under his own leadership, stopped the Christian persecutions and re-turned their property to them that had been confiscated. His rise to emperor of the whole Empire could easily be likened to a great earthquake.

Symbolically, the sun, moon, and stars represent degrees of power or authority with the sun being the greatest. Knowing specifically who to liken the sun, moon and stars to is dependent on the context. In Constantine's time, I think he and the rulers of Rome that preceded him could be considered the sun. The Church would probably be the next highest authority and while Christians might be considered the stars, it may be even more specific than that in that the real Christians, the overcomers, might be likened to the stars. The sun god was the primary god for the Romans. Constantine, until he had a dream of Christ, considered himself under the protection of the sun god. But once he had the dream and consolidated his power, the pagan rulers fell from their positions of authority and were replaced by Christians. Constantine threw out the pagan standards of the Roman army and substituted the Cross for them. Pagan temples were closed and heathen sacrifices were banned. The great shaking of the Empire and the fall of paganism could well be likened to a great earthquake and the darkening of the sun.

In 325 A.D. the Church, at the direction of Constantine to try to establish unity within the Church, held its first Church Council at Nicea. From this was born the creeds and doctrines that eventually led to the great blood bath brought on by persecution by the Church against anyone who would not subscribe to the creeds and doctrines of the Church Councils. Just to get an idea of how insane, for lack of a better word, these Councils were, some men believed that Jesus Christ was of the same essence to the Father while some said He was of

like essence. Not agreeing over which word to use caused the spilling of blood. The more they argued over this kind of thing the more splintered they became. Why men think that with their finite minds they can define the infinite God, I don't know. But in thinking of the moon representing the soon to be blood thirsty Church, I think we can see how it turned red.

It was the overcomers who were the primary targets of Church in its effort to stamp out heretics as these people would not accept creeds made by men in opposition to the true Word of God. As a result many of them died an untimely death, or at an "unripe" age, or as verse 13 says, **"even as a fig tree casteth her untimely figs."** Isaiah prophesied of this in Isa. 34:4, **"And all the host of heaven shall be dissolved, and the heavens shall be rolled together as a scroll and all their host shall fall down, as the leaf falleth off from the vine and as a falling fig from the fig tree."** The **"heaven departed as a scroll when it is rolled together"** In Rev. 6:14 and **"the heavens shall be rolled together as a scroll"** in Isa. 34:4 can be likened to the closing of a book. Before 360 A.D. everything was written on scrolls, so the rolling together of the scroll would be the same as closing a book, in this case it was closing up of God's Word as men came to rely more and more on their own creeds and doctrines than on true Scripture. In 663-4, Pope Vitalian of Rome mandated that the Church liturgy itself be spoken only in Latin, which deprived more and more people of any real understanding other than that they remain subservient to the Church leaders. It wasn't until 1452 when Gutenberg invented and used the printing press to print the Bible as his first project that this began to change.

Mountains and islands refer to kingdoms and lesser governments in Scripture. Up to Constantine's time, the Roman Empire had become quite fractured with different men setting up their own kingdom, so to speak, within the Empire and then fighting each other to either hold on to what they had or to try to expand it. With Constantine's effort of unify the Empire, these all fell by the wayside, usually with the defeat of the armies of these different men.

The wealthy and powerful pagans began to fear for their wealth and their lives, their future. These individuals and the pagan politicians began to convert to the religion of the Emperor even though it was still legal to worship pagan gods. However, in 395 Theodosius banned all pagan animal sacrifices, closed the pagan temples, and prohibited pagan rites.

Another major change that was the result of this political earthquake was the transfer of the Empire's capital from Rome to Constantinople, a new city that Constantine built on the Black Sea at the border of Europe and Asia. Finally, in 395 Theodosius died and the Empire was split between his two sons, Honorius and Arcadius and the division of the Empire became permanent.

Looking at the events and timing of the opening of the sixth seal from another view, we said that the opening of the fifth seal concluded with Napoleon being put in charge of the French army as they invaded Italy in 1796. In the opening of the sixth seal, we have six physical disturbances listed that were to happen in conjunction with this opening. They are, 1. A great earth-quake, 2. The Sun darkened, 3. The Moon in color as blood, 4. Star showers, 5. Disturbances in the heavens, and 6. Great seismic upheavals. There were literal fulfillments as well as symbolic fulfillments of these. There was an earth quake that historians refer to as "the great earthquake" on November 1, 1755. Its center was at Lisbon, Portugal, but its effect was felt in entire territory of the ancient Roman Empire. It has been estimated that 4,000,000 square miles were disturbed.

On May 19, 1780 A.D., occurred the memorable dark day when the sun did not shine and the moon became the color of blood. The people were terrified and many thought the day of Judgment had come.

There was a spectacular meteoric shower on November 12 and 13, 1833. It is said that the stars fell like flakes of snow. It is estimated that there were 240,000 meteoric flashes in the space of nine hours. Apparently they all appeared to come from the same quarter of the heavens, from the vicinity of one of the stars in the constellation of Leo.

It is believed that there will be another great world shaking earthquake and manifestation of heavenly upheaval at the close of the sixth seal and beginning of the seventh seal which will be at the time of the first resurrection.

The French Revolution is often referred to as a great political earthquake. Though it was centered in Europe, the whole world became involved in some way. Napoleon invaded Italy in 1796 defeating the Papal troops. On Feb. 13, 1798, a French army entered Rome and the Pope was ordered to dismiss his Swiss guards and to dispossess himself of his temporal authority. He refused to do so. He was dragged from the altar of his Palace, his vaults were plundered and even the rings were torn from his fingers and he was taken a prisoner to Tuscany.

What the unexplained darkness was to the physical world on May 19, 1780, the French Revolution was to the religious world. Though primarily the atheistical France made war against the Roman Catholic Church, most other faiths felt the effect upon them as well. The enthronement of atheism, irreligion and infidelity brought complete darkness spiritually to the nation of France. The darkness was like that which covered ancient Egypt; for reason alone, void of wisdom and understanding, reigned supreme in France.

We are going to discuss the Roman Catholic Church in considerable detail later but there are a couple of things we need to note here, particularly as to its input into the Roman Empire, which is the primary player in the opening of the seals period. From the death of Pope Agapetus in 536 A.D. to 601 A.D. there were nine popes that succeeded him as the head of the Church and each were supported by the respective emperors in their order. The last of the nine popes was Boniface III and to him was given the power to exercise authority over both the Church and the State.

He was crowned as Universal Bishop. From this time until 1870, the popes alone ruled both the Church and the State and were ultimately crowned Universal Monarch. Thinking back to Daniel's prophecy concerning the "little horn", 1260 years from 536 A.D. Napoleon defeated the Papal troops in 1796 A.D. 1260 from 610 A.D. Pope Pius IX was declared infallible by the Ecumenical Council on July 16, 1870, but in September of that same year, Italian troops entered Rome for the purpose of making that long coveted city the capital of Italy, independent of Papal rule. In November, the Italian government passed a decree abolishing the political authority of the Holy See. Then to top it off, the first Protestant Church was opened in Rome on Jan. 12, 1871.

World War I then followed in 1914-18 and of course World War II followed just over 20 years later. All of this brought great social upheavals that follow as a result of military and economic changes. As the old order passed away there was a tremendous shaking of kingdoms and nations of men. I don't think it would take a great deal of imagination to see all of the events symbolically represented in the opening of this sixth seal.

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From: Newsletter Issue 1305

Chapter 7 of Revelation appears somewhat like a parenthetical statement in that for us to understand more of what is being shown John, we need to know a little more information. It is not a break in time or a break in the story of the opening of the seven seals, but rather the addition of some extra information that we need in order to proceed. However, to understand chapter 7, we need to be sure we know the history of the kingdom of Israel. On the chance that not everyone is familiar with this history, I want to take time to do a quick review to bring us up to date, so to speak.

Following the flood of Noah's time, Noah's three sons, Shem, Ham, and Japheth had the job of starting the repopulation of the earth. The Bible does not deal very much with Ham and Japheth at this point, but rather zeros in on Shem and his descendants. It further zeros in on one of these descendants, a man named Abram, later to be called Abraham, and for the most part deals primarily with Abraham and his descendants for the rest of the Bible. God made some unconditional promises to Abraham, including land, posterity, and purpose that would ultimately mean that Abraham's descendants would rule the world. God told him that these

promises would apply only to Abraham's only son from his wife Sarah, but this son, Isaac, was not born until Sarah was well past child bearing age making it a miracle birth. Isaac in turn had twin sons, Esau and Jacob. Though Jacob was born second, he obtained the birthright by catching his brother at a weak moment and traded him out of it. Understand that all of this is according to God's plan. We might think, why doesn't God just skip all of the intrigue and just go to the end result that He wants. There are probably several reasons that we could state, but consider that He wants man to develop to be what He wants so that man will ultimately want to be what God wants. Even though God is sovereign, and all things happen according to His plan, He wants man to desire or want to be as God desires him to be. This will bring pleasure to God. He doesn't want robots. It is kind of like being parents. Though things don't always go as we would like, we take pleasure in teaching, correcting, and developing our children to be what we would like for them to be with the hope that they will ultimately be what we want them to be because they want to be that way.

Getting back to Jacob, he had twelve sons. God changed Jacob's name to Israel, meaning God rules, or ruling with God, when Jacob had a genuine conversion experience. Later a famine forced Jacob and his sons to go into the land of Egypt for a couple of hundred years. God provided for them by sending one of Jacob's sons, Joseph, ahead to prepare for their coming. We're told that Jacob, just before he died, blessed Joseph giving him the birthright which entitled him to a double inheritance when they returned to their own land. This was achieved by Jacob adopting Joseph's two sons, Ephraim and Manasseh, as his own, and giving them his name, Israel. This now gave Jacob 13 sons. God ultimately provided a man by the name of Moses to lead them back out of Egypt to their own land which God had promised Abraham. As they traveled out of Egypt, they had become a very numerous people and God organized them into a nation giving them a codified set of laws, a worship system, and a conditional covenant that so long as they obeyed His laws He would bless them and they would be prosperous. However, He also promised the opposite if they did not obey. They continued to multiply and produce for a while, every once in a while becoming disobedient to God, resulting in their going into captivity to other nations, but being brought back into God's blessing when they repented. They were first ruled by judges in the land and this eventually gave way to a monarchy first with a man named Saul as their king, then a man after God's own heart, King David. So long as they were obedient to God they prospered greatly and they did so while David and his son Solomon were their kings. However, upon the death of Solomon, his son Rehoboam became greedy and overtaxed the people and 10 ½ tribes rebelled from Rehoboam, and the kingdom became divided. Descendants of David and Solomon continued as kings over the southern kingdom known as Judah. Judah, Benjamin and ½ the tribe of Levi made up this kingdom. Though Ephraim was the dominant tribe of the rest of Israel, and their kingdom retained the name of Israel. Their kings became kind of the survival of the fittest and they came from different tribes. Both kingdoms became quite wicked, especially in idolatrous worship with Israel being the worst. As a result, God caused the Assyrians to take all of Israel and a large part of Judah captive and moved them to the area south of and between the Caspian and Black Seas. At this point, we lose them from Bible history as the Bible does not mention them by name though we find that the New Covenant is made to both the kingdom of Israel and the kingdom of Judah and God had promised Israel that they would ultimately be re-stored, though not to the land they had previously occupied.

About 150 years later, for the same cause, God caused the Babylonians to take Jerusalem and what was left of Judah captive into the Babylonian Empire. However, He told them that their captivity would only be for 70 years after which time they could return to their own land. Israel, however, was not allowed to return to their land. In the meantime the Persians and the Medes conquered Babylon and took over the Babylonian Empire. At the end of the 70 years, Judah was released by the Persian king to return to Jerusalem to rebuild the city and the temple. Not everyone went, as many stayed where they were in what was now the Persian Empire. Those that went rebuilt the city of Jerusalem and the temple and for the most part, these were the people who occupied the land when Christ was born and ministered.

Eventually, those of the kingdom of Israel that had been placed between the Black and Caspian Seas began to escape out of captivity and began to move in groups by different names north and west across Asia Minor and into Europe and into the British Isles. This has been an extremely brief review, but this takes us to

where we are with Revelation 7.

I need to point out that in accordance with the prophecy God gave Daniel, the Babylonian Empire gave way to the Persians, and then the Persians eventually gave way to the Greeks and just prior to the New Testament time, the Greek Empire had given way to the Romans. All of these changes took time to accomplish with the exception of the fall of the Babylonian Empire. It fell in a single night. But through it all, the ex-Israelite people of the Assyrian captivity were slowly making their way west as they left the land of their captivity.

Something else that might help our understanding as we read chapter 7 is when we said, in our study of chapter 4, that heaven, as John saw it, represented the perfected kingdom of God. The opposite of heaven is the earth. The last of the world empires to whom God had given dominion of the world was the Roman Empire, represented by the legs of iron and the feet of iron and clay in the image that Nebuchadnezzar saw in his dream as recorded in Daniel 2. While we have been taught that it is the “devil” that is God’s enemy that He is always fighting, according to Scripture, the primary adversary to God is this Babylonian system represented by the complete image that Nebuchadnezzar saw. This is man’s system, a system designed by man who thinks he knows more than God, thus rejecting God. So if we look at this system, of which Rome is the representative during John’s time, as the opposite of God’s system, or God’s Kingdom, which we see represented as heaven in chapter 4, would it not be reasonable to consider that system as the earth when earth is used symbolically as the opposite of heaven, as it is in chapter 7?

(Read Rev. 7:1-8) For us to understand all of Revelation, we need to keep our eye on the ball, so to speak. The ball is the kingdom of God. Daniel tells us in Dan. 2, as he was telling King Nebuchadnezzar what his dream was that was bothering the king because he couldn’t remember the dream and he didn’t know what it meant, after describing the metal image, **“Thou sawest till that a stone was cut out without hands, which smote the image upon his feet that were of iron and clay, and brake them to pieces. Then was the iron, the clay, the brass, the silver, and the gold, broken in pieces together, and became like the chaff of the summer threshing floors; and the wind carried them away, that no place was found for them: and the stone that smote the image became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth.”** When he interpreted the dream, he told the king in verses 44, 45, **“And in the days of these kings (the kings of the nations making up the metal image) shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever. Forasmuch as thou sawest that the stone was cut out of the mountain without hands, and that it brake in pieces the iron, the brass, the clay, the silver, and the gold; the great God hath made known to the king what shall come to pass hereafter: and the dream is certain, and the interpretation thereof sure.”** In our discussion in our last lesson, we said that God began the creation of this kingdom with some unconditional promises to a man named Abraham. The unconditional promises are what is referred to herein Daniel as being “cut out without hands,” i.e. the fulfillment of these promises was not dependent on action required from Abraham, or any of his descendants. God was unilaterally responsible for their fulfillment. As we follow the development of this kingdom we find that when God formed the children of Israel into a nation at Mt. Sinai, He told them in Exodus 19:6, “And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests (rulers), and an holy (set apart) nation.” We have discussed how that as the kingdom progressed and ultimately came to be ruled by kings, the nation split into two nations or kingdoms, and because of their wickedness, particularly their worshipping idols, the northern kingdom, Israel, and a large part of the southern kingdom, Judah, was taken captive by the Assyrians and placed in the area south of and between the Black and Caspian seas and was not allowed by God to return to their own land in what we today call Palestine. Later the balance of the Judah was also taken captive and placed in the land of Babylon. This latter group was released after 70 years of captivity and though many stayed where they were in the then kingdom of Persia, a portion returned to Jerusalem, rebuilt the city and the temple, and remained in that area through Christ’s birth, ministry, death, and resurrection, and on until 70 A.D. when the city and the temple were again destroyed and the people killed or scattered by the Romans. This sounds like the kingdom is no more. Yet, when the angel told Mary that she was to have a son by a virgin birth, he said in Luke 1:31-33, “And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name JE-SUS. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him

the throne of his father David: And he shall reign over the house of Jacob forever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end.” So this kingdom is still very much alive, and as we study Revelation, we need to keep this in mind and as I said, keep our eye on the ball. These verses tell us that the throne of David is still in existence, that the house of Jacob is the kingdom, and there shall be no end to that kingdom.

In these 8 verses that we read in Revelation 7, John says that he saw 4 angels standing at the four corners of the earth. We discussed that “earth” when used symbolically stood for the Ro-man Empire. The angels are holding **“the four winds of the earth, that the wind should not blow on the earth, nor on the sea, nor on any tree.”** We have all heard the term, “the winds of war.” I believe this is what is referred to here as the wind. Rome seemed always to be either expanding their borders militarily or fighting internally in civil wars of one type or another. The sea, as used symbolically, usually refers to people as does vegetation (trees, grass, etc.)

To seal means to secure or protect. John sees another angel coming from the east having the seal of the living God and he calls to the four angels holding the four winds to not hurt the earth, nor the sea, nor the trees until **“we have sealed the servants of our God in their fore-heads.”** Then the angel proceeds to seal 12,000 of each of the tribes of Israel. The number “12” in Scripture denotes governmental perfection. The 12,000 doesn’t mean that there were just 12,000 of each tribe that were sealed, but rather denotes completeness. It just means that all were sealed, regardless of number. 12 x 12, i.e. 144, only emphasizes this governmental perfection, this completeness. Last lesson we said that the ex -Israelites that were escaping from the location of their captivity were moving north and west. Here we have the angel that is doing the sealing coming from the east. I submit that what John is seeing here is movement of these various groups of the Assyrian captivity Israelites moving west and the angel of God is sealing them, or protecting them from the Roman military as they continued to move west in accordance with what God told Da-vid in II Samuel 7:10, **“Moreover I will appoint a place for my people Israel, and will plant them, that they may dwell in a place of their own, and move no more.”** God did not allow them to go back to the land of Canaan, but rather appointed a new place for them as their original home was now not large enough for them. We will see later that some of these migrating tribes were ones who attacked Rome, such as the Germans, Vandals, Goths, etc. But until they complete their migrations into western Europe and to the British Isles, John is seeing symbolically God’s protection of them. Not only are these mi-grating Israelites to be protected but, the people of the Empire are likewise to be protected.

If you recall, when Jacob adopted Joseph’s sons, Ephraim and Manasseh, this gave him thirteen sons. In verse 8 we see Joseph listed, which would be the tribe of Ephraim and in verse 6, Manasseh is listed, so which tribe is missing? It is the tribe of Dan. It is important that we under-stand why this tribe is not listed as being sealed, or protected, here as this will give us further clues as to God’s overall plan. They are represented in the perfected kingdom by the fourth beast that was like a flying eagle and one of the twelve gates of the new Jerusalem would have had their name on it as Ezekiel saw it in Eze. 48, so Dan certainly does not disappear.

In the 4th chapter of Judges, we have the story of the Israelites being in captivity to Jabin, king of Canaan. When they repented, Deborah, a prophetess and a judge in Israel, and Barak were chosen by God to take the people back out of captivity. Sisera was Jabin’s captain of the host and when they met in battle with the Israelites, they were defeated and Sisera tried to run away but was tricked by a woman by the name of Jael who then killed Sisera. When the battle was over, Deborah and Barak sang a song, in chapter 5, praising God and detailing some of the things that went on. In verse 17, the question was asked in their song, **“why did Dan remain in ships?”** The tribe of Dan had not participated in the battle be-cause they were apparently involved in sea traffic. This helps us understand why Dan was not sealed with the Israelites as they moved across Asia Minor and Europe to re-establish themselves in their new location. They were already there, having traveled by ship earlier.

(Read Rev. 7:9-17) From the 12th chapter of Genesis through 22nd chapter of Revelation, the Bible is to, for, and about Israel and her King. This isn’t because they have done something special that has earned them

special rights above other people, but because God, in His sovereignty, has chosen them for a particular job on the earth. That job is to be witnesses of God to the rest of the world. As we look at their history, we might think that they have done a pretty poor job of this as they appear to be a very stubborn and stiff necked people. However, we need to keep in mind that God is sovereign and that everything that has happened is totally in accordance with His plan.

If we study God's law, we will find numerous reasons that people are to be cast out of the congregation. They could always be re-admitted if the repented and went through the ritual cleansing procedures, but if they did not do this, they were no longer considered to be a part of Israel. So, it was not just a punishment, but rather involved ones citizenship in the congregation. In the same breath, should a non-Israelite wish to become a citizen of the congregation, he or she could do so as long as they were obedient to God's law.

In the New Testament, or New Covenant, the same principle applies. Even if one is an Israelite by genealogy, to be considered to be an Israelite or a Jew so far as the Kingdom of God is concerned, one must believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God and commit their lives to Him. Galatians 3:29 says, **“And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.”** If one is not an Israelite or Jew by genealogy, the same thing applies.

What John is seeing here are people out of every nation who are not necessarily Israelite or Jews by genealogy, that have received their salvation through the grace of Jesus Christ, praising God for their salvation. In John's time, it was pretty much assumed that only those who were descended from Abraham could be saved, so when the elder asked him if he knew who these people were and where they came from, John didn't know. The elder had to explain to him who they were. Even though the apostles were sent to the gentiles, we need to remember that the word “gentile” simply means nations, and not just non-Jew as it is usually considered today. Most of these gentiles that the apostles first went to were of those migrating Israelites from the Assyrian captivity, as these were the people who would ultimately carry the gospel to the world. So I believe we have in chapter 7 information that both the Israelites are alive and well and that there are Christians from other families and races as well that will ultimately rule in the kingdom with Christ. As we go forward in our study, this is the kingdom of God that will be opposed to the kingdom of man, or the Babylonian system.

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From: Newsletter Issue 1306

In chapter 8 of Revelation, we take up with the opening of the seals again with the opening of the seventh seal. When this seal is opened, we are given a very different view from what we saw in the opening of the first six seals in that we are shown another series of seven events, or time periods, all of which are taken in during this time of the opening of this seventh seal. As we have said before, Revelation reveals what to us is now history of all that happens in the world relevant to God's Kingdom and Purpose, but it reveals one aspect at a time. We are going to look at another aspect, So if we were looking at the opening of the seals to be the history of the Ro-man Empire through both Imperial Rome and Pa-pal Rome, we are going to be taken back in history again to 395 A.D. If our view is that the opening of the first six seals is to apply historically only to Imperial Rome, then we pick up where we left off in 395 A.D., so for the period that we are going to look at now, both views that we have been looking at converge into one view for now.

(Read Rev. 8:1-6) The silence of the space of about a half hour probably was in response to the angel coming out of the east in Rev. 6:2 who cried to the four angels holding the four winds to not hurt the earth, the sea, or the trees until **“we have sealed the servants of our God in their foreheads”** which we determined to be the Israelites of the Assyrian captivity as they migrated and settled in Asia Minor and Europe.

A day in Scripture can be a 12 hour day, a 24 hour day, a year (prophetic year-360 days) or a thousand years. I believe the text will support this being a 12 hour day with each hour representing 30 years, thus a half hour

would be 15 years. Whatever the time, it was sufficient for those ex-Israelites within the Empire to settle.

The soundings of the seven trumpets that were given the seven angels are each going to signify another event or series of events that we will see as God's judgments on Christianized Rome. We saw His judgments on pagan Rome with the coming to power of Constantine. In our last lesson we pointed out that Theodosius banned all pagan sacrifices and rites, and closed all pagan temples, thus declaring the Empire to be Christian in 395 A.D. Yet, the Church was already placing their creeds and man-made doctrines superior to God's Word. Christianity had been turned from a way of life into a religion of empire. The virtues of Christ had been replaced with corruption, idolatry, and avarice. The people began to worship relics and saints, and superstition soon replaced the true worship of God. The incense altar reminds us of the incense altar in the tabernacle where the priest was to go in daily and burn incense before the Holy of Holies signifying the prayers of the people before God. That the angel cast fire from the altar into the earth, i.e. into the Roman Empire, signals to us that judgment is to come upon the Empire, even though it was supposed to be Christian.

(Read Rev. 8:7) Remember that the Empire was permanently split into the Eastern and Western Empires upon the death of Theodosius when he placed his two sons as Emperors. The series of judgments that we are going to see with the blowing of the trumpets are to fall primarily on the Western Empire until it is destroyed in 476 A.D.

We have already determined that earth refers to the Roman Empire. In Numbers 10:9, God gave Moses instructions concerning war and trumpets, **"And if ye go to war in your land against the enemy that oppresses you, then ye shall blow an alarm with the trumpets; and ye shall be remembered before the LORD your God, and ye shall be saved from your enemies."** I think we can consider the blowing of the trumpets here in Rev. 8 to indicate war. Job 38:22, 23 tells us that hail is one of God's weapons of war. **"Hast thou entered into the treasures of the snow? Or hast thou seen the treasures of the hail, which I have reserved against the time of trouble, against the day of battle and war?"** In Deut. 20:19, God forbids the cutting down of trees for use in laying siege against a city **"(for the tree of the field is man's life)"** and in Mark 8:24 Jesus is healing a man's blindness and the first thing the man saw he says was, **"I see men as trees, walking."** Isaiah 40:6 likens grass to man. **"All flesh is grass, and all the goodliness thereof is as the flower of the field."**

With the blowing of the first trumpet, these judgments began with Alaric, the Goth, who sacked Rome in 410 A.D. Gibbons wrote concerning this attack, "During a period of six hundred and nineteen years the seat of empire had never been violated by the presence of a foreign enemy." Alaric was a barbarian leader with a Roman military training. He had sought elevation to a great military position by Rome, but was denied such a position, so he went back to his own country and his people proclaimed him king. He first attacked Constantinople, but was unable to penetrate its strong defense, so he turned west invading Greece. His first attempt to invade Italy ended in defeat. But this attempt had interesting results. It compelled Rome to withdraw her legions from Britain, opening the way for the conquest of the island by the Anglo-Saxons. Rome had to also withdraw troops from the provinces of the Rhine with the result that Gaul was devastated. In his second attempt on Rome, he first encompassed the city and then waited for famine to open the gates. He finally agreed to accept a ransom and withdrew, but as soon as he did the leaders in the city acted in bad faith, so he re-turned the next year and again surrounded the city. He refused ransom this time and insisted that a leader of his own choice be placed at the head of the government in Rome. This was done, but later that same year, the man he had chosen had to flee for his life. So Alaric returned and took the city in August of 410 A.D. His army pillaged the town for 12 days and then they marched south, pillaging town after town, but with the ultimate intent of invading Sicily. In Rome, Alaric's army removed all the gold, silver, and gems that they could find. In a week's time, the great and wealthy city of Rome was reduced to abject poverty. The same applied to most of the rest of Italy. Alaric's army ate the food they needed and destroyed the rest. So all the "grass" was burned, in that this literally affected every-one. There was much starvation as a result of the godly "hail" upon the land. Though not literal hail, it took the form of the Goths themselves.

The Christians had come to believe that since Rome had become a Christian city, it was an eternal city and that

God would never allow it to be overthrown. This sounds very much like the people of Jerusalem before Nebuchadnezzar took and destroyed that city. But both were destroyed for the same reason. Christianity had become so infested with man's ways that God was bringing judgment upon them because they refused to repent and turn back to God's ways.

Though Alaric intended to invade Sicily, and then use it as a stepping stone into Africa, Gibbons writes the following as to what happened. "Yet as soon as the first division of the Goths had embarked, a sudden tempest arose, which sunk or scattered many of the transports; their courage was daunted by the terrors of a new element; and the whole design was defeated by the premature death of Alaric, which fixed, after a short illness, the fatal term of his conquests."

In His mercy, God unleashed only the first round of judgments upon the Roman Empire and then stopped it abruptly. The Church did not re-pent, so more followed.

(Read Rev. 8:8,9) The sounding of the first trumpet applied to events that were to take place on land. The sounding of this second trumpet seems to apply to events on the sea. "Mountain" is symbolic for kingdom. As we began our study of Revelation, we first looked at the second chapter of Daniel. If you recall, the stone that was cut out without hands, in Nebuchadnezzar's dream, became a great mountain we were told in verse 35. Then in verse 44, when Daniel interprets the dream, he considers this "great mountain" to be the kingdom of God. There are other examples as well of the term "mountain" being used to mean "kingdom," such as Isa. 2:2, 3.

The sounding of this second trumpet then indicates the overthrow of a great kingdom. While we have looked at the Roman Empire being divided into 2 parts, the east and the west, there was actually another significant division. The Mediterranean Sea divided the western part of the Empire into two parts, by separating North Africa from Europe and the rest of the Western Empire. Revelation seems to consider the Empire as three parts. There were seven Roman provinces in North Africa and though they were quite wealthy, this wealth was concentrated in the hands of a few wealthy land owners, with the majority of the people being either slaves or serfs with little more than that of a slave.

Honorius, one of the two sons of Theodosius, was given the Western Empire when his father died. Honorius dies in 423. His sister, Placidia, actually took over ruling the Empire and ruled for 25 years. But there were two generals that controlled the army, Aetius and Boniface. Boniface was in charge of the North Africa provinces.

The Vandals, which incidentally were another one of the groups of Israelites that had escaped and moved west from the Assyrian captivity, and had become paganized, had moved across Gaul (France) and crossed the Pyrenees and settled in southern Spain. Boniface rashly proposed to ally with the Vandals of Spain and sent them an invitation to settle peacefully in North Africa. The Vandals accepted the proposal and under the rule of Genseric, who had become the Vandal king in 428, about 80,000 Vandals moved to North Africa in 429. They were accepted by the general population without any problem, but Boniface changed his mind and he then resisted the Vandals moving. This apparently was a mistake, for he was unable to stop them. They took control of the North African portion of the Empire. They then turned their attention to conquest of the Roman fleets in the Mediterranean Sea. They soon became masters of the sea, and in 455 they pillaged Rome.

The Emperor from 457-461 was Marjorian. He attempted to reform the decaying Roman Empire, but his reign was too short and the Empire too far gone. He realized that without a maritime fleet, he could not achieve conquest of Africa, so for three years he built a great fleet of 300 ships, along with other transport vessels, with the intent to attack Carthage and its Vandal king. But in 460, the whole fleet was unguarded in the harbor at Carthage, in Spain and the Vandals, apparently through secret intelligence they had, knew they were there. They surprised the un-guarded fleet in the bay and sunk, took, or burned the whole fleet, destroying in one day what had taken 3 years to build. The great mountain of Rome, already burning, as it were, by the fire of internal corruption and external adversaries, saw its final demise in the sea. It was only a matter of

time until the Western Roman Empire, Christian in name, but worse than pagan in its immorality and injustice, came to its final end in 476 A.D.

We have looked at the events that were portrayed symbolically by the sounding of the first two trumpets. These events, the invasion of the Western Roman Empire by first the Goths and then the Vandals were limited primarily to the Western Empire with the invasion and ultimate destruction of the Empire's sea power by the Vandals pretty much spelling the demise of the Western Empire. A few years after the sounding of the second trumpet depicting the Vandal invasion, the Eastern Empire began to suffer problems as well. These came at the hand of Attila the Hun. This, I believe, is what is depicted by the symbolism of the sounding of the third trumpet.

(Read Rev. 8:10, 11) Verse 11 is the only place in the New Testament that "wormwood" is mentioned. However, it is mentioned several times in the Old Testament, in both Testaments being considered very bitter, or poisonous. In the Old Testament it is mentioned in association with "gall", which Strong's Concordance says is probably the poppy plant with the wormwood being the juice. This would account for Christ being offered vinegar, or sour wine, mingled with gall while He hung on the cross as this would have given Him some relief through the drug opium, which is derived from the juice of gall, or worm-wood.

In verse 10, the star is not to be understood to be a literal star, or meteor falling from heaven that pollutes a third of the rivers on the earth. Rather, it is a way of saying in symbolism that a very destructive army has fallen upon a third of the rivers (or tributaries) of Roman territory (earth), causing hardship and great bitterness. As drugs destroy men's lives in the natural world, God's wormwood-like judgment destroys whole nations. I believe that this is to be considered a judgment of God just as God uses "wormwood" as a judgment in the Old Testament. (Read Jer. 23:15) Keep in mind that Christianity, by this time, had become thoroughly polluted by the creeds and doctrines of men in place of true Biblical doctrine, i.e. they had become idolatrous worshipping the works of their own hands. It is for this reason that we see God executing judgment on the Roman Empire that had taken on the title of a Christian nation. Force and money had become the preferred methods to try to take the Kingdom of God. This reminds us of Esau who had neither patience nor faith and wanted to take the kingdom by force and violence and Simon Magnus in Acts 8:18-23 who tried to buy the Holy Spirit from the apostles. Attila the Hun, coming from the area north of the Caspian Sea had ravaged and destroyed the whole area between the Black Sea and the Mediterranean all the way to the Danube River. No one seems quite sure where the Huns came from except most seem to believe that they were of Mongolian descent, which would mean they were descended from Japheth, son of Noah. He controlled the whole northern border of the Roman Empire, and then decided to attack the Empire itself. He ravaged his way to Constantinople, but because it was so well fortified, was unable to take it. He then declared war on the Western Empire, invading Gaul and sacking most of the towns of France as far south as Orleans. General Aetius, the defacto ruler of the eastern part of the Western Empire following the death of Theodosius, united with the Franks and the Visigoths and met and defeated him in battle at Chalons in 451 in which over 150,000 men were killed on both sides. This ended his attempt, but in his retreat, the cruelties he exercised gained him the reputation as "the scourge of God," a title he seemed proud of. Gibbons writes, "It is a saying worthy of the ferocious pride of Attila that the grass never grew on the spot where his horse had trod."

However, this did not end his invasions. According to H. G. Wells, "This disaster by no means exhausted Attila's resources. He turned his attention southward, and overran North Italy. He burnt Aquileia and Padua, and looted Milan, but he made peace at the entreaty of Pope Leo I." Gibbons says the following of Pope Leo's intercession, "Leo, bishop of Rome, consented to ex-pose his life for the safety of his flock. The barbarian monarch listened with favorable, and even respectful, attention; and the deliverance of Italy was purchased by the immense ransom, which was apparently the dowry of the princess Honoria." Some historians think that the princess herself was part of the bribe while others deny this.

Attila died in 453 and within a year his empire had crumbled. But he did not die before he had inflicted bitter punishment upon the outlying provinces of Rome (rivers or tributaries) amply justifying the description of "a

great star from heaven, burning as it were a lamp, and it fell upon the third part of the rivers, and upon the fountains of waters” His turning all those whom he came in contact with to great bitterness makes the name Wormwood, given to him in this prophecy, most appropriate.

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From: Newsletter Issue 1307

(Read Rev. 8:12) In the first three soundings of the trumpets, we have seen God’s judgment poured out on the people and citizens of particularly the Western Roman Empire, the isles and shores of the Mediterranean, and the outlying northern provinces. The sun, moon and stars depicted in this fourth sounding represent the leaders, the emperor, the senate, and other lesser leaders of the empire. By 470 A.D. the Western Roman Empire was basically divided into three parts, the Ostrogothic Kingdom in Italy itself, the Visigothic Kingdom in Spain and the Vandal Kingdom in North Africa. Puppet emperors came and went with the last emperor of the Western Empire, a six year old boy named Romulus Augustulus, being named as emperor in 476. The same year, Odoacer, king of a group of Teutonic tribes, conquered Augustulus ending the rule of emperors in the Western empire. Following is what the Britannica encyclopedia had to say about Odoacer.

Odoacer was a German warrior, the son of Idico (Edeco) and probably a member of the Sciri tribe. About 470 he entered Italy with the Sciri; he joined the Roman army and rose to a position of command. After the overthrow of the Western emperor Julius Nepos by the Roman general Orestes (475), Odoacer led his tribesmen in a revolt against Orestes, who had reneged on his promise to give the tribal leaders land in Italy. On Aug. 23, 476, Odoacer was proclaimed king by his troops, and five days later Orestes was captured and executed in Placentia (now Piacenza), Italy. Odoacer then deposed and exiled Orestes’ young son, the emperor Romulus Augustulus.

Odoacer’s aim was to keep the administration of Italy in his own hands while recognizing the overlordship of the Eastern emperor, Zeno. Zeno granted him the rank of patrician, but Odoacer styled himself “King.” He refused to acknowledge Julius Nepos, Zeno’s candidate, as Western emperor.

Odoacer introduced few important changes into the administrative system of Italy. He had the support of the Senate at Rome and, apparently without serious opposition from the Romans, was able to distribute land to his followers. Unrest among the German tribesmen led to violence in 477-478, but evidently no such disturbances occurred during the later period of his reign. Although Odoacer was an Arian Christian, he rarely intervened in the affairs of the Roman Catholic Church.

In 480 Odoacer invaded Dalmatia (in present Croatia) and within two years conquered the region. When Illus, master of soldiers of the Eastern Empire, begged Odoacer’s help (484) in his struggle to depose Zeno, Odoacer attacked Zeno’s westernmost provinces. The emperor responded by inciting the Rugi (of present Austria) to attack Italy. During the winter of 487-488 Odoacer crossed the Danube and defeated the Rugi in their own territory. Although he lost some land to the Visigothic king Euric, who overran north-west Italy, Odoacer recovered Sicily (apart from Lilybaeum) from the Vandals. Nevertheless, he proved to be no match for the Ostrogothic king Theodoric, who was appointed king of Italy by Zeno in 488 in order to prevent the Ostrogoths from raiding in the Eastern Empire. Theodoric invaded Italy in 489 and by August 490 had captured almost the entire peninsula, forcing Odoacer to take refuge in Ravenna. The city surrendered on March 5, 493; Theodoric invited Odoacer to a banquet and there killed him.

The darkening of the third part of the sun, moon, and stars, as John tells us symbolically has to do with the destruction of the ruling families of the Western Roman Empire. The generally accepted date of this final destruction is with the conquest of Odoacer in 476. Quoting from “A Study of the Book of Revelation” by Dr. Stephen Jones, It is possible, though not provable, that the population of the Western Roman Empire had been reduced by a third, because of the wars, famine, and pestilence of that century alone the time of the first four trumpets. In the following century, an eighteen-year war with the Goths completed the destruction of Italy.

By the time the war ended in 553, Rome's population had been reduced from a million to a mere 40,000 with half of them supported by papal alms. Milan had been destroyed with its entire population. Farms were abandoned, and in the region of Picenum alone, 50,000 died of starvation. Will Durant tells us in *The Age of Faith*, page 111, *"The aristocracy was shattered; so many of its members had been slain in battle, pillage or flight that too few survived to continue the Senate in Rome; after 579 we hear of it no more."* It was only natural, then, that the bishop of Rome would assume power. He was the only one who could keep any kind of order as anarchy reigned in Italy. Durant says on page 94, *"Amid this chaos education barely survived. By 600 literacy had become a luxury of the clergy. Science was almost extinct."*

(Read Rev. 8:13) This verse gives us kind of an interlude between the first four trumpet soundings and the last three telling us that these last three are called "woes." This interlude might indicate that had the Church repented, God might have ceased in His judgments. Though I believe that everything that happens, happens as part of God's plan for mankind. However, we often find such an interlude as this in which man has the chance to be obedient to God with the implied promise that he will be rewarded for doing so. Such was the case when God told Israel to enter the promised land, but because the spies that Moses had sent ahead to spy out the land came back and convinced the people that because there were giants in the land that they could not take it. As a result they spent another 39 years wandering in the wilderness before they were allowed to enter. This may have been the case here. Had the Church repented and turned to God, the ruling of the world under Christ could have begun at that point. Instead, the Church determined they would rule the world, but do it by conquest. We are still paying the price for that sin.

Due to the fall of the Western empire, the vacuum thus created was filled by the Church, which had changed from a simple way of life that focused upon manifesting the love of God in the way that Jesus did, to a full-blown religious empire that ruled over the minds and bodies of men and treated members as subjects.

This interlude lasted from 476 to 606 A.D. and during this time the prophetic events we find described symbolically begin to shift toward the Eastern Empire. Keep in mind that the Eastern Empire is still a vibrant empire and has not been severely affected by the events leading to the fall of the Western Empire. During this interlude, the overhaul of the Roman law code by Justinian, which laid the groundwork for the papacy assuming temporal power, took place. We will discuss this in more detail in Rev. 13. As this temporal power increased, instead of calling the ruler a king, religious titles such as "Bishop of Rome" and "Pope" came to be used. Speaking of the ide-as that promoted this temporal power, H. G. Wells wrote, *"In later years these ideas developed into a definite political theory and policy. As the barbarian races settled and became Christian, the Pope began to claim an over lordship of their kings. In a few centuries the Pope had become in theory, and to a certain extent in practice, the high priest, censor, judge, and divine monarch of Christendom... For more than a thousand years this idea of the unity of Christendom...dominated Europe. The history of Europe from the fifth century onward to the fifteenth is very largely the history of the failure of the great idea of a divine world government to realize itself in practice."* Quoting Dr. Stephen Jones, *"In fact, the reason that the Church failed to realize its dream of a "divine world government" was because God raised up the religion of Islam to oppose and weaken it. To understand God's purpose for Is-lam is one of the keys to understanding the pupose of God, even in our own time."*

It is this rise of Islam, and from God's perspective, this Islamic judgment on the Church, that we are going to be dealing with in the three woes, or sounding of the last three trumpets. In 606 A.D. Pope Boniface III laid exclusive claim to the title of "Universal Bishop." Pope Gregory I, Boniface's predecessor had insisted that the Church was headed equally by the bishops of Alexandria, Constantinople, and Rome. He wrote a letter in 596 in which he declared "Whosoever calls himself universal priest or desire to be called so, was the forerunner of AntiChrist." So it is remarkable that Boniface laid claim to this title so soon after his predecessor had condemned such an action. So, 606 marks the time when the Roman Bishop assumed full authority over the entire Church. Others had done this before him, which set some precedent, but their successors had denied this power. But it became a permanent fixture in the Church religious system from 606.

To understand a little better the bigger picture, we need to go back to the book of Daniel for a little bit. Recall

that in Daniel 2 we had the story of Nebuchadnezzar's dream of the great metal image that, when interpreted, showed that there would be four successive empires that would dominate the western world. In Daniel 7, in a vision Daniel had, we see the leadership of these four empires represented by four beasts. The last of these beasts which would represent the leadership of the fourth empire, the Roman Empire, was not named by Daniel but rather described in verse 7.

(Read) In verse 8 Daniel is contemplating about the horns of this beast. (Read vs. 8) Daniel didn't know the meaning of this little horn, so he asked one who stood by what the meaning of this little horn was. (Read Daniel 7:19-25). We now know that the Emperor Justinian represented the rising of this little horn. One of his first acts was to basically annul the whole of Roman law and write a new law system which he put into effect in 529 A.D. Then after revising it four years later (533 A.D.), he published it under the title "Pandectae." There were two major problems with this law as I see it. First, it incorporated orthodox Christianity into this law. All ecclesiastical, like all civil, law, was to emanate from the throne. Second, it ignored divine law, relying primarily upon the Church's lawless view of right and wrong. These dates of 529 and 533 are important as they appear to be the starting dates of a time, times and the dividing of time. In Revelation 13:5 this was interpreted as 42 months. In Bible prophecy, 42 months is computed as 42×30 days, or 1260 days in short term prophecy or 1260 years in long term prophecy. A time would be one 360 day year, times would be two 360 day years and the dividing of time would be $\frac{1}{2}$ of a 360 day year, or $3 \frac{1}{2}$ years. Again 1260 years in long term prophecy. 1260 years added to 529 is 1789 and to 533 is 1793, the beginning and end of the French Revolution, which was the beginning of the end of Papal supremacy over Western nations. France had become the main bulwark of Roman Catholicism up to that time.

Though the Western Empire fell in 476, the Papacy rose out of its ashes, and actually gained more power than the original emperors. As we have pointed out before, 529 was the beginning of the Papacy having temporal powers. It came to full bloom in 606 then when Boniface III claimed exclusive title to the title "Universal Bishop." As Daniel said of this little horn, it had "a mouth speaking great things." Rev. 13:5 interprets this as "a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies." This claim to the title of "Universal Bishop" was the beginning of such blasphemy. Even Boniface's predecessor said that to make such a claim was "blasphemous antichristian assumption." As we will see in further studies, the Roman Popes were to claim the authority to overrule Christ and His apostles.

The sounding of the last three trumpets, authority to overrule Christ and His apostles called the three woes, begins with the rise of Mohammed and the religion of Islam. Just six years after Boniface made his blasphemous claim, we see the beginning of the rise of Islam as Mohammed began preaching his doctrine in 612 A.D. It is God's way of bringing judgment on an unrepentant and idolatrous Church and is the story in symbolic language we have in chapter 9.

The following is a brief history of Mohammed from Wikipedia: Born in 570 in the city of Mecca,[8] he was orphaned at an early age and brought up under the care of his uncle Abu Talib. He later worked mostly as a merchant, as well as a shepherd, and was first married by age 25. Discontented with life in Mecca, he retreated to a cave in the surrounding mountains for meditation and reflection. According to Islamic beliefs it was here, at age 40, in the month of Ramadan, where he received his first revelation from God. Three years after this event Muhammad started preaching these revelations publicly, proclaiming that "God is One", that complete "surrender" to Him (lit. Islam) is the only way acceptable to God, and that he himself was a prophet and messenger of God, in the same vein as other Islamic prophets.

Muhammad gained few followers early on, and was met with hostility from some Meccan tribes; he and his followers were treated harshly. To escape persecution, Muhammad sent some of his followers to Abyssinia before he and his remaining followers in Mecca migrated to Medina (then known as Yathrib) in the year 622. This event, the Hijra, marks the beginning of the Islamic calendar, which is also known as the Hijri Calendar. In Medina, Muhammad united the conflicting tribes, and after eight years of fighting with the Meccan tribes, his followers, who by then had grown to 10,000, conquered Mecca. In 632, a few months after returning to Medina from his Farewell pilgrimage, Muhammad fell ill and died. By the time of his death, most of the Arabian Peninsula had converted to Islam; and he had united the tribes of Arabia into a single Muslim religious

polity. It is recorded also that his mother died when he was six months old and his father died when he was two.

When he first married at age 25, he married a well to do 40 year old widow. It was she who encouraged him when he started having revelations, or whatever he had, from which he began writing what we now know as the Qur'an. He was fearful that it was an evil spirit that was influencing him, but she convinced him that he was a prophet and encouraged his preaching. This marriage was a happy one and lasted 25 years, after which he either married or took another 12 women as wives or concubines.

(Read Rev. 9:1-12) We are going to be using the term "Saracen" as we proceed. At first, the Romans used this term to apply to Arabs. It then came to be applied to Muslim Arabs and eventually to all Muslims. As we have said above, the rise of Islam began its rise in 612 with Mohammad preaching the revelations that he had received. In a relatively short time, the whole of the Arabic world had been converted to Islam. At first Islam was headquartered at Medina, then Mecca, then moved to Damascus, Syria. The rise probably reached its peak in 762-63 with the moving of the Islam capital from Damascus to Baghdad. This pretty well ended their expansionist moves. This being 150 years from the beginning with Mohammad preaching it in 612 could be what verse 5 is speaking of when it says **"that they should be tormented five months."** Five thirty day months would be 150 days, or in long term prophecy, 150 years. The Islam policy was to conquer and convert people to Islam. If they did not convert, they either had to pay a special tax, or die.

The "bottomless pit" is symbolic, but I am not sure what of. Smoke came out which darkened the sun and the air. This could mean that Biblical understanding was darkened as it certainly was during this period. Locust also came out of the smoke. Locust come out of the soil, or in the case of the Saracens, they come from the land of locusts. The description of these locusts corresponds with the appearance of these Saracens of that day. In verse 7 we're told that they were like horses prepared unto battle. The Saracens were among the best, if not the best, horsemen of the world at that time. They fought on horseback. They had crowns like gold on their heads. The word "crown" is from the Greek "stephanos", the same word used to describe the wreaths worn by the Roman Emperors or Roman heros. However, here they were like gold. The Saracens wore colored turbans, which would be like the wreath, only colored, usually yellow. Their faces were like men's faces. The Saracens were usually fully bearded, so the faces, to be identified as like men would be bearded. The Saracens kept their hair long under their turban, so their hair would be like women. Their teeth were not like lions, but the set of their face when going into battle might have been like a lion attacking a prey. The Saracens wore breastplates of iron that rattled as they rode which probably accounted for the sound of chariots of many horses running to battle.

Abu Bakr was the immediate successor of Mohammad when he died in 632, but Bakr then died in 634. Omar I of the Omayyad family came to power in 634 and the Omayyad family then remained in power until it was overthrown by the Abbasid family in 750. It was al-Mansur of the Abbasid that established the new capital city of Baghdad in 762. He gathered together the greatest intellectuals of the world and while Europe was in the dark ages, learning flourished in Baghdad. The center of gravity for culture and civilization itself had shifted from the Christian West to the Muslim East. H.G. Wells said of this period, *"Arabic continued to spread until presently it had replaced Greek and become the language of educated men throughout the whole Moslem world."*

The Saracens took Jerusalem in 638 (which ultimately brought on the Crusades) and built the mosque of Omar on the site of King Solomon's temple. They subdued Egypt in 641, conquered Algiers in 700, had taken all of North Africa by 707, so that by 715 the Moslem Empire ex-tended from the border of China to the Pyrenees, including nearly all of Spain. They ravaged southern France from 720-732 until finally defeated decisively at the Battle of Tours and the Battle of Poitiers in 732 by Charles Martel. They sent a large fleet of ships to attack Constantinople in 718, but the attack failed and the fleet was destroyed. They lost another fleet in 748 during an attack on Cyprus. In 755, the Caliphate at Cordova, Spain was founded by Abd-al-Rahman and in 760 a Tartar tribe founded a Turkish Empire in Armenia, which proved to be the seed of the next phase of prophetic fulfillment starting in Rev. 9:13.

In verse 4, we're told that **"it was commanded them that they should not hurt the grass of the earth,**

neither any green thing, neither any tree; but only those men which have not the seal of God in their foreheads.” Islam’s sacred color is green, and Qur’an law forbids harming trees and all green things. In chapter 7, we said that vegetation, grass and trees, was symbolic of the people of the Western Empire. It is interesting that in all of the conquest by the Saracens, Italy was spared and never attacked.

Verse 5 tells us, **“And to them it was given that they should not kill them, but that they should be tormented five months: and their torment was as the torment of a scorpion, when he striketh a man.”** When the Jerusalem surrendered to Omar in 638 (without resistance), H.G. Wells informs us that “the Christians were to be tolerated, paying only a poll tax; and all the churches and all the relics were left in their possession.”

Instead of being killed, the Saracen’s “sting” was painful to the Church, but it was not normally fatal. This presented the Christians with a bit of a problem. The people themselves believed that martyrdom would bestow sainthood upon them, quoting Dr. Stephen Jones, “they were afflicted with a strange love-hate relation-ship with death. They wanted to die as martyrs, but were denied that by the official Islamic policy. Hence, we read in Rev. 9:6, ‘And in those days shall men seek death, and shall not find it; and shall desire to die, and death shall flee from them.’ Christians were not happy about being ruled by Islamic people. The sting of Islam was quite painful to them. The Muslims called them dogs and infidels and had great contempt for what they saw as idolatrous people who had images everywhere and worshipped three gods in a sort of divine triumvirate, with Mary being a fourth with ever increasing influence upon the Christian gods.”

The Saracens were never able to take the city of Constantinople, but for 300 years tormented the Eastern Roman Empire, its territory, and outlying districts following the rise of Omar. Finally the Greeks were able to overcome the Saracens and recover some of the territory they had taken until finally the Crusades came, creating a new state of affairs. Thus the Saracens were unable to destroy, or kill, but were able only to harass their Empire.

Verse 11 says, **“And they had a king over them, which is the angel of the bottomless pit, whose name in the Hebrew tongue is Abad-don, but in the Greek tongue hath his name Apollyon.”** The name “Abaddon” appears in the Old Testament six times and is always translated “destruction.” It is nearly always associated with *sheol*, or the grave. So I think we can think of this king over the locusts as being destruction, or death.

The Christians viewed the Moslems as a threat to their religion, which it was, because God had raised them up precisely for that reason. It was designed to judge the religious system that had forsaken God and had substituted the rule of man for the rule of Christ. This, however, they never really understood, and so the lawless apostasy continued unabated, increasing as time progressed.

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From: Newsletter Issue 1308

In Revelation 8:13 we were told, “And I beheld, and heard an angel flying through the midst of heaven, saying with a loud voice, Woe, woe, woe, to the inhabitors of the earth by reason of the other voices of the trumpet of the three angels, which are yet to sound! In our last issue we covered the first “woe” or the blowing of the fifth trumpet. We want to continue with the second “woe” or the blowing of the sixth trumpet in this issue.

To understand better the events depicted in the second woe, or the sounding of the sixth trumpet, we need to know some of the history that had taken place. Dr. Stephen Jones has written a summary of the history of that time that I would like to quote from to give us at least a little better understanding of the things that happened that brought about the sounding of the sixth trumpet.

During this time, Islam ridiculed the Christian West for their veneration of statues and images, calling them idol worship. The Christian response was that they did not worship them, but merely venerated them.

However, the same argument might have been made by the ancient idol worshippers, who also venerated their statues, for they represented and pictured the gods that they worshipped.

Yet the Christian religion had become so impersonal that the people themselves clung to their statues as a way to make the religion more personal. Even so, under pressure from Islam, in 726 Leo, the Emperor of the Eastern Roman Empire, issued a proclamation ordering the destruction of all statues, prohibiting the use of images in the Church.

Leo III was the Roman Emperor, although the capital of the Empire was no longer in Rome, but in Byzantium, known also as Constantinople, the “City of Constantine.” You recall that the original emperor, Constantine, had built his “New Rome” on the Black Sea in what is now Turkey. The seat of empire thus moved East. Italy and the Western part of the Roman Empire soon came under attack by wave after wave of “barbarians” from the north, but received little or no help from the Emperor at Byzantium.

Even so, the Byzantine Emperor was still nominally the recognized emperor even of the West, although the power vacuum left by his absence was more and more filled by the power of the papacy. At first the papal power was purely spiritual in nature. In 606 Pope Boniface III laid exclusive claim to the title of “Universal Bishop,” but did not claim political power. In later years, however, as Islam continued to erode the political power of the emperor in the East, the Roman bishops began to seek or assume political power as well. This became a source of endless trouble for them and for all of Europe for many centuries.

In 717-18 the Saracens laid siege to Constantinople (for the second time). They were unsuccessful, but Leo felt the pressure. At the same time he was disgusted with the image trade and the superstitious claims being made to sell their products.

As we said, in 726 the Emperor Leo issued an edict ordering the destruction of all images in both the East and the West. This edict proved to be the beginning of the end of his rule in the West. Pope Gregory in Rome opposed Leo's edict and became the spokesman for the passionate voices of the people in the West which honored the images.

The Emperor sent an army to put down the revolt, but they were defeated in bloody battles at Ravenna. After the open warfare abated, the emperor still remained the nominal head of the West. Gregory did not intend to usurp any political power, but he set a precedent that later popes were to follow. In 731, just five years after Leo's edict, a synod in Rome excommunicated all those who would attack the images of the saints. Though the emperor was not mentioned by name, it was clear to all that he and his theologians in the East had been excommunicated by the one who called himself “Universal Bishop.”

It was inevitable, then, that the power vacuum would be filled by the Pope. This was the beginning of the great division, not only of the political empire, but also of the Church itself. The division over images, however, proved to be only temporary, for Leo's axe had chopped down the tree, but could not destroy the root of image-worship among the people and the monks. And so this crisis passed and the split was postponed until a later time.

Even so, the decline of Byzantine power in Italy was matched by the rising power of the Lombards, who took many cities in Italy and soon threatened Rome itself. This, in 755, caused Pope Stephen to seek help from Pepin, King of the Franks in the north. Their arrangement was that Pepin would help the Pope retake those cities, but instead of giving them back to the nominal rule of the Emperor in the East, they would be given as Papal States to the Roman Bishop.

Thus, Pope Stephen obtained political power over about 20 cities, including Ravenna, Ancona, Bologna, Ferrara, Lesi, and Gubbio, giving him a good-sized wedge of territory along the Adriatic coast of Italy. This made the Pope a feudal lord and gave the papacy the right to collect taxes from those cities.

From this point on, the papacy became a prize, not only for the spiritually ambitious, but also for those who desired political power and the wealth that could be made from it. As E. R. Chamberlin wrote in his 1969 book, The Bad Popes, page 17,

“But now that the bishop of Rome held not only the keys of heaven but also the keys of more than a score of cities, each with its revenues, the attraction of the office was considerably magnified.

“The first of the papal riots arising from the donation (the papal states to the papacy) occurred in 767, when, on the death of the reigning pope, one of the numerous local lordlings recognized the opportunity and hastening to Rome, proposed his own brother as successor. The fact that the brother was disqualified because he was a layman was easily overcome, for he was ordained cleric, sub deacon, deacon, and priest and then consecrated as bishop and pope on the same day. Rival factions immediately arose and two more popes appeared. The first contestant had his eyes dug out and was left for dead. The second was murdered outright and it was only when the third appealed to the hated Lombards for protection that some sort of order was re-stored.”

Those who have not studied the history of the papacy might be shocked that such things could happen. But this is only the tiniest tip of the iceberg. The moral character of the popes was so carnal and even downright criminal that the people in Italy soon became immune to it. They came to expect such behavior. Most did not question the divine right of the popes to rule men, but they did regret that God had given them such a right. In the centuries that followed, nearly all of the popes had multiple mistresses, who bore them many illegitimate children many of whom became cardinals and popes after them.

But in this short study, we cannot spend more time on this. We mention it only as another reason for God's judgment upon the Church. It is part of the reason why God raised up Islam to judge the Church.

The final split in the Church occurred in 1054. It appears that what finally brought this about between the Greek Orthodox Church and the Vatican had to do with the Latin word “*filoque*.” In the original Nicene Creed in 325 A.D., the bishops determined that the Holy Spirit “proceeds from the Father.” In the 6th century, the Church in Spain added to this, saying that the Holy Spirit “proceeds from the Father and the Son (*filoque*). This custom spread west, however, Rome itself did not officially adopt the alteration until 936. Then because the Eastern Churches did not use it, the Vatican accused these Eastern Churches of heresy. Finally, in 1054, Cardinal Humbert excommunicated Michael Cerularius, Patriarch of Constantinople. The Patriarch responded in kind. The Church has been split ever since.

Revelation 9:13-21 records the portrayal symbolically of the events brought about by the sounding of the sixth trumpet, the second woe. (Read) Remember we said earlier that the Roman Empire was divided into three parts, Europe, North Africa, and the area controlled by Constantinople, including Greece, the Balkans, Asia Minor, and Syria-Palestine. It is this latter third of the Empire that the judgment is upon that is to be rendered by the four angels that have been bound in the great river Euphrates.

Verse 15 gives a timing, it says, for the four angels to slay the third part of men. Looking at this timing in a long term prophetic sense, a year would be 360 days, or in the long term 360 years. Likewise a month would be 30 days, or 30 years and a day would be 1 year. An hour would be 2 weeks. If we add the years together, $360+30+1=391$ years. Among the writers that I have studied, all agree that the year that the verses 13-21 applies to is 1453 A.D. However, some hold that this 391 years applies to the time leading up to 1453 while others hold that it applies to the time following 1453. I believe we need to look at both as there is credibility to both. In 1055, Tughril Beg, who was head of the Seljuk Turkish empire conquered Baghdad. He died in 1063 and his nephew, Alp Arslan succeeded him. Alp first conquered Georgia and Armenia from the Byzantines, or the Eastern Roman Empire. As he was preparing to conquer Egypt, a new Byzantine army marched against him which he crushed catastrophically. Thus his efforts were the beginning of a 391 year period in which the Turks worked toward their ultimate goal, the overthrow of Constantinople. The Islamic Arabs had lost their “fire” and this new force, the Turks came into play.

By 1150, gunpowder had been discovered in China. Its first use in battle was to frighten the horses. However, in the 13th century the Mongols came west terrorizing people from Russia to Arabia. They captured and plundered Baghdad in 1258. As a result, many of the Baghdad residents fled to Anatolia in Western Turkey, which added substantially to the number of the Osmani Turks, who, led by their own chieftain named Osman, were forming a new empire of their own. These Osman (or Ottoman) Turks, who came to power after the Mongols left, had learned about gunpowder and in time developed its use in cannons.

Their first great use of gunpowder came in their siege of Constantinople in 1453, where their cannons breached the walls of the city on May 29, 1453, the 391st year from Alp Arsian's first battles against the Eastern Empire.

This helps us understand verses 17-19. **“And thus I saw the horses in the vision, and them that sat on them, having breastplates of fire, and of jacinth, and brimstone: and the heads of the horses were as the heads of lions; and out of their mouths issued fire and smoke and brimstone. By these three was the third part of men killed, by the fire, and by the smoke, and by the brimstone, which issued out of their mouths. For their power is in their mouth, and in their tails: for their tails were like unto serpents, and had heads, and with them they do hurt.”**

Mr. Howard Rand wrote in his book “A Study in Revelation”, page 98, “While walking along the embankment near the Tower of London some few years ago I came across many cannons captured by the British in past wars. It is always interesting to note the evolution in style and design of such weapons until we reach the modern breech loader and rapid-fire cannon in use to-day. My attention was attracted to an old cannon among this collection, cast in the form of an animal sitting upon its haunches. Immediately the passage cited above came to mind as I exclaimed, ‘There, that is what John saw.’ He further elaborated in another book, “Marvels of Prophecy,” page 81-82 saying, “Anything with four legs used in war, John would designate as a horse. He beheld men astride these iron horses. He watched them ramming in the powder and the shot. He observed the burning of the old-fashioned fuse, serpent-like, with its sputtering flame of fire at the tail, or touchhole, of the cannon. This was followed by the fire, smoke and brimstone issuing out of the mouths of these iron horses with lion's heads, for the cannon used in the siege of Constantinople were cast in the form of lions.”

The fall of Constantinople cost the Eastern Orthodox Church its main power base in 1453. Many Greek-speaking theologians of the Church fled into Europe, bringing with them Greek manuscripts of the Scriptures. Men could now translate the Bible into English directly from the Greek text instead of relying upon the Latin Vulgate. At the same time, Johannes Gutenberg of Mainz, Germany was beginning to print the Bible on his newly invented printing press.

The post 1453 theory is that 391 years later takes us to 1844. Though the Ottoman Turkish Empire did not come to an official end until 1918, by 1844 it was known as the “sick man of Europe.” There were other events in 1844 that we will discuss later that, though not directly related to the Ottoman Empire, did help in its ultimate demise.

Yet, as Rev. 9:20, 21 tell us the Church still refused to repent but continued with the same debauchery that they had been doing for centuries. However, a change was coming in what we call the Reformation as we will see as we continue into Revelation 10.

(Read Revelation 10:1-2). John had seen several angels during this revelation that he was being given, but this is the first time we have the word “mighty” describing one. The description of this “mighty angel” sounds very much like that of the one sitting on the throne in Rev. 4, so I think we can assume the two to be the same. The little book is the Bible that had been made little by the printing press. The Bibles of that time were very large hand written books that were usually chained to the altar at the front of the cathedrals, and usually written in Latin so that people neither had access to them nor could they read them if they did. Now, this mighty angel has the Bible in a little book and it is open, signifying that it was available and readable to all. We are talking about the time of the Reformation. I think it important that we know at least the general historical order of events of the time to be able to understand the real significance of what we are reading here in Revelation 10.

I am going to quote from a couple of sources to give us this history. I am first quoting from the Study In Revelation by Howard B. Rand published by Destiny Publishers.

There never was a time, even during the long period known as the Dark Ages, when there was not manifested, in the very strongholds of Papal power, insurrection, and rebellion. No sooner had the solidity of the Ro-man Church been effected than she began to advance her claims to absolute dominion over the human mind, and men

then began to resist her claims and assert their right to freedom.

Like the Renaissance, which preceded it, and the French Revolution, which followed it, the Protestant Reformation was one of the three great revolutionary issues which changed the course of history. Society of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries was agitated to its profoundest depths by this great religious insurrection. It convulsed nations with warfare and incidentally was a contributing factor in the colonization of America. It was a revolt against the authority of the Church of Rome as reason asserted itself and men strove for freedom of thought and worship. With the advent of the Mighty Angel from heaven, however, Rome was face to face with a power that she could not intimidate. Wherever the Reformation raised its voice there were men and women of the stock of Israel, by the power of the Spirit, proclaiming the truth in spite of opposition, persecution, and death. Rome possessed no weapon with which she could overthrow these overcomers!

JOHN WYCLIFFE in England, during the 14th century, John Wycliffe taught and wrote. He assailed the false teachings of the Church and the dogma of transubstantiation. There was no complete English translation of the Bible and he was responsible for an English version. The influence of his teaching was widespread and in England made him the champion of national rights as against foreign aggression. The Bulls issued against him by Pope Gregory XI in 1377 A.D. were not enforced.

JOHN HUSS John Huss was a Bohemian reformer who became dean of the Philosophical Society of the University of Prague. He was greatly influenced by the writings of Wycliffe and because of his teachings he was excommunicated.

The Council of Constance was evoked and one of its principal objectives was to reform the Church. After years of wrangling and vain debates this council adjourned without a decision on a single question except that Huss and Jerome of Prague should be burned as heretics. Huss had previously been provided with safe conduct to and from the council after he had been summoned to appear before it, but now he was seized and burned at the stake. Huss believed and taught that in the things pertaining to salvation God is to be obeyed rather than man. When at the stake he was urged to recant, he replied: "God is my witness that I have never taught or preached that which false witnesses have testified against me. He knows that the great object of all my preaching and writing was to convert men from sin. In the truth of that gospel which hitherto I have written, taught and preached, I now joyfully die." This martyr has the honor of having been the intermediary in handing on from Wycliffe to Luther the torch which kindled the Reformation. He was one of the bravest of martyrs who died in the cause of freedom and truth.

I would like to continue this history by quoting from a study on the book of Revelation by Dr. Stephen Jones, of God's Kingdom Ministries, who in turn quotes from a couple of historians of that period.

At the same time in history, the printing press came into use in Europe, turning the Bible into a LITTLE book. Up to that time, the Bibles were huge, hand-written volumes that were often chained at the front of the cathedrals. Furthermore, they were written in Latin, and few of the common people could read, even in their own tongue. Asimov's *Chronology of the World*, edited by Peter Stearns (2001) p. 206, says, "Printing utterly changed the world and it (along with the fall of Constantinople, the end of the Hundred Years War, and the discovery of the American continents all of which took place in this period) marks the transition from medieval to modern times. Printing, one must surely suspect, was the most fundamental of these changes." The Chinese were printing on paper since the 8th century. Using wood blocks for each page, they produced a complete 130-volume set of classics in the 10th century. They also invented the art of movable type printing as early as 1041 A.D., but they had used clay rather than wood or metal. Furthermore, because the Chinese did not have an alphabet, the printing press was not so practical for them, because they had to make a separate mould for every word in their language.

According to Asimov's *Chronology of the World*, page 206, it says this about the printing invention: "The Chinese had this notion before the Europeans did, and the news of it may have reached Europe in Mongolian times. The point is, though, that even if the concept was not original with the Europeans, it was more widely employed by them. This was not because the Europeans were more intelligent or ingenious than the Chinese but

because the Europeans had the alphabet and the Chinese did not.”

The Mongol invasion of the Middle East in the 1200's most likely brought this idea to the West along with the use of gunpowder. No one knows exactly how Johannes Gutenberg came upon the idea of carving letters that could be put together into words in order to stamp them upon paper. It seems too coincidental that he would think of this within two centuries of the Mongol conquest of Baghdad.

The Muslims themselves knew about the art of printing, but they banned its use in 1493. The Encyclopedia of WorldHistory, says on page 127, “A Muslim ban on printing in Arabic and Turkish remained in effect until the 18th century and kept the new technology from spreading to the Muslim population earlier.”

This ban on printing caused the Ottoman Empire to lose its technological advantage in the world. They have never recovered from this self-inflicted wound. In Europe printing allowed scientific works to be shared among other scientists quickly, and this dramatically increased the pace of scientific thought and invention.

Revelation 10:2 speaks of a little book that was open. We will continue with this history written by Dr. Stephen Jones in which the little book was opened in our next issue.

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From: Newsletter Issue 1309

In our last issue, we were quoting from a paper on the history of the time of the Protestant Reformation that was written by Dr. Stephen Jones. We had just begun in our study with Revelation 10 where in verse 2 it spoke of a “little book that was open.” I want to continue with the history of the time in this issue.

[Rev. 10:2 says that this little book was OPEN. This is a reference to the Bible being opened to the common people through the printed page and through the efforts of men who began to translate the Bible into the common language of the people. These two factors changed history.

Johannes Gutenberg of Mainz, Germany, began building the first wooden press in 1436 using metal movable type. It was completed in 1440. In 1450 he printed the Constance Mass Book. He then began working on the Bible itself. The Gutenberg Bible was being printed from 1452 to 1455 even as Constantinople was being besieged by the Ottoman Turks in 1453.

The fall of Constantinople brought thousands of refugees into Europe. Many of them were Greek-speaking theologians, carrying with them Greek copies of the Scriptures. Suddenly, the Latin Vulgate had competition. Men could now translate the Bible into English directly from the Greek text instead of relying upon the Latin version.

In 1462 the attack on Mainz by soldiers of the Archbishop of Nassau, forced printers to flee that city. In this manner their printing skills became spread over Europe. By the year 1500 there were over 1000 printing presses in 250 cities of Europe, including 60 in Germany. By the year 1500 over 9 million copies of 30,000 different books had been printed.

In 1466 William Tyndale translated the New Testament directly from the Greek text now available to him. He also translated the Old Testament directly from the original Hebrew into English, and his complete translation was published as The Coverdale Bible in 1536, just after Tyndale and his assistant, Rogers, finished the translation of the Old Testament.

Tyndale had said, “I will cause a boy that driveth a plow to know more of the Scriptures than the pope.” Again he asked, “By what right doth the pope forbid God to speak in the English tongue? Why should not the Sermons of the Apostles, preached no doubt in the mother-tongue of those who heard them, be now written in the mother-tongue of those who read them?”

Tyndale was finally burned at the stake. We read in the book, History of the Reformation in the Time of Calvin, by J. H. Merle d'Aubigne,

In August 1536 Tyndale appeared before the ecclesiastical court. "You are charged," said his judges, "with having infringed the imperial decree which forbids any one to teach that faith alone justifies." The accusation was not without truth. Tyndale's Unjust Mammon had just appeared in London under the title: "Treatise of Justification by Faith Only." Every man could read in it the crime with which he was charged."

On October 6, 1536 Tyndale died joyfully as a martyr for the Word of God. J. H. Merle d' Aubigne continues,

"The joy of hope filled his heart; yet one painful idea took possession of him. Dying far from his country, abandoned by his king, he felt saddened at the thought of that prince, who had already persecuted so many of God's servants, and who remained obstinately rebellious against that divine light which everywhere shone around him. Tyndale would not have that soul perish through carelessness. His charity buried all the faults of the monarch; he prayed that those sins might be blotted out from before the face of God; he would have saved Henry VIII at any cost. While the executioner was fastening him to the post, the reformer exclaimed in a loud and suppliant voice, 'Lord, open the king of England's eyes!' They were his last words. Instantly afterwards he was strangled, and flames consumed the martyr's body."

The Bible rapidly became an open book. It was no longer merely a priestly book that was closed to the laity. All of this was a direct result of the "strong angel" sent by God to change the course of history.

As we said earlier, The Coverdale Bible in 1536 was Tyndale's translation. It was presented to King Henry VIII to get permission to distribute it in England. Continuing, "Henry ran over the book: Tyndale's name was not in it, and the dedication to his Majesty was very well written. The king regarding (and not without reason) Holy Scripture as the most powerful engine to destroy the papal system, and believing that this translation would help him to emancipate England from the Romish domination, came to an unexpected resolution: he authorized the sale and the reading of the Bible throughout the kingdom. Inconsistent and whimsical prince! At one and the same time he published and imposed all over his realm the doctrines of Romanism, and circulated without obstacle the Divine Word that overthrew them! We may well say that the blood of a martyr, precious in the eyes of the Supreme King, opened the gates of England to the Holy Scriptures.

"For centuries the English people had been waiting for such permission, even from before the time of Wycliffe; and accordingly, the Bible circulated rapidly. This great event, more important than divorces, treaties, and wars, was the conquest of England by the Reformation... Whoever possessed the means bought the book and read it or had it read to him by others. Aged persons learnt their letters in order to study the Holy Scriptures of God. In many places there were meetings for reading; poor people dubbed their savings together and purchased a Bible, and then in some remote corner of the church, they modestly formed a circle and read the Holy Book between them. A crowd of men, women, and young folks, disgusted with the barren pomp of the altars, and with the worship of dumb images, would gather round them to taste the precious promises of the Gospel. God Himself spoke under the arched roofs of those old chapels or time-worn cathedrals, where for generations nothing had been heard but masses and litanies. The people wished, instead of the noisy chants of the priests, to hear the voice of Jesus Christ, of Paul and of John, of Peter and of James. The Christianity of the Apostles reappeared in the Church."

Martin Luther's Protestant Reformation

While there were important background events that brought about the Protestant Reformation, including the degeneracy of the Roman Popes themselves, the Reformation really began in 1517. Asimov's Chronology of the World, pp. 209-210 says,

"Wycliffe and Hus had inveighed against the corruption, venality, and luxury of the Church, and they had been silenced; however, as long as abuses continued, other reformers were sure to arise.

"To raise money, the Church was now selling 'indulgences;' that is, documents assuring that dead souls in purgatory would be released if living relatives would only pay the prices set for such indulgences.

"An Augustinian monk, Martin Luther (1483-1546), was offended by this rank conversion of spirituality into a money-making device and by various other flaws that he saw in Church administration and behavior. On October 31, 1517, he nailed 95 theses to the church door at Wittenberg in Saxony the usual way of challenging others to debate with him over the various points of view he was expressing.

“Luther had going for him what previous reformers had had nationalism. Wycliffe had appealed to English nationalists who objected to money forever flowing into the Italian coffers of the Pope. Similarly, Hus appealed to Bohemian nationalism, and now Luther appealed to German nationalism.

“However, Luther had, in addition, some-thing Wycliffe and Hus had not had. Luther had the printing press. Wycliffe’s and Hus’s views were only broadcast with difficulty, so that a great many people knew little detail about their arguments. Luther, however, had the gift of vigorous and powerful prose that appeared as printed pamphlets. These spread the length and breadth of Germany much faster than they could be suppressed. In no time, everyone was aware of, and debating, the new views.”

Thus, we see how important the printing press was to the success of the Protestant Reformation. On page 213 of the same book, we read about Pope Leo X, who was the Roman Pope during this period of history:

“Leo apparently had no comprehension of the seriousness of the situation and was satisfied with excommunicating Luther. He dismissed the whole thing as just another argument among monks, not understanding the vast change that the printing press had brought to such arguments.”

Leo X excommunicated Martin Luther in 1520. Luther in turn burned the papal “bull,” as it was called. The next year King Henry VIII of England wrote a book refuting Martin Luther’s views. For this, Leo X awarded him the title, “Defender of the Faith.”

But events in England soon led to a break from Roman Catholicism and the establishment of Protestantism in that nation. Henry VIII wanted a male heir to the throne, but his wife, Catherine of Aragon had given him only one daughter named Mary. He claimed that his lack of a male heir was God’s judgment upon him for marrying his brother’s widow. Thus, in 1527 he applied to the Pope for a divorce.

It was a case of very bad timing. There had been a dispute between the Emperor Charles V and King Francis I of Spain. The pope unwisely made an alliance with the French king during a time when Charles V was in control of Italy. The commander of the French forces (Charles, duke of Bourbon) fell out of favor with his own king and so turned traitor and joined forces with the Emperor Charles V. He then led his French army (mostly Catholics) into Italy and sacked the city of Rome, taking the pope prisoner. Charles of Bourbon himself was killed in the first battle, but his troops sacked Rome without him. Asimov’s Chronology of the World says on page 213,

“Rome received far worse treatment at the hand of Christian soldiers (some were Lutherans, but most were Catholics) than ever it had received at the hands of Goths and Vandals 11 centuries before.

“The sack of Rome is considered to mark the end of the Italian Renaissance.”

Thus, Henry VIII appealed for a divorce from Catherine at the time when Pope Clement VII was the prisoner of the Emperor Charles V. Thus, the Pope was in no position to grant Henry’s request to divorce Catherine.

Furthermore, Catherine was the aunt of Charles V, so he was in no mood to allow the pope to grant the divorce.

These events meant that the pope was pre-occupied with his very survival at the very time that trouble was brewing in England. Because Henry was not granted the divorce, he divorced her without papal permission and married Anne Boleyn in 1533. She gave birth to a daughter, Elizabeth, later in 1533.

In 1534 the English Parliament passed the Act of Supremacy, appointing the king and his successors Protector and only Supreme Head of the Church and the Clergy of England. This was the beginning of the Protestant Reformation in England. It was more of an act of state, rather than a true reformation of spiritual ideals.

Nonetheless, for all of its faults, it provided a relatively safe haven for Protestants to develop their ideas and to spread them into the rest of Europe.

There were two main historical events that protected the Gospel and allowed the Scriptures to continue to spread among the common people. In Rev. 10:2 we read, and he [the angel] had in his hand a little book which was open. And he placed his right foot on the sea and his left foot on the land.

Martin Luther’s 95 Theses (1517) and England’s Act of Supremacy (1534) were the evidence of the angelic

foot being planted upon the land first on the European mainland and then in England. These events established the Protestant Reformation by which the little book was opened to the common people.

Yet these events did not go uncontested by the Roman Church. For all his trouble, going through six wives, Henry VIII of England ended up with just one son, Edward VI, who ruled almost seven years (1547-1553). He died at the age of 16 and was then succeeded by Mary, his older sister whose mother was Catherine of Aragon.

Mary was a Roman Catholic, and in 1554 she married Philip of Spain, who was also Catholic. Mary attempted to bring England back under the Roman yoke. The Encyclopedia of World History, page 285 says,

“About 300 are said to have been burned during this persecution.” Queen Elizabeth I then came to the throne of England in 1558, and she secured England as a Protestant country by repealing all the Catholic laws that Mary had enacted. Yet there would be one more attempt to bring England back under the Roman yoke.

In 1587 Philip II of Spain began to build a huge armada of ships in order to invade England and force it back under the yoke of Rome. This Spanish Armada of 130 ships set sail for England on July 12, 1588. More than half of these ships were destroyed by the English and by storms in the North Sea. The strong angel had put his foot down on the sea. This changed the course of history and kept the Bible an open book that has blessed the lives of millions among the hungry people during the famine of hearing the Word.

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From: Newsletter Issue 1310

In our last issue we dealt with the history of the world during the time of the Protestant Reformation. We are ready this issue to proceed with Revelation 10 starting with verse 3.

(Read Rev. 10:3-7) John is told to seal up what the seven thunders said and not write them. Most of the writers that I have studied have their own idea of what was said by the seven thunders and they all differ from each other. I am not going to try to speculate myself. I believe that when the time comes for us to know, God will make it plain to us. Most translations that I have each render the last of verse 6 a little differently. The margin of my King James substitutes the word “delay” for the word “time,” which is the general theme of the other translations.

When the seventh angel shall sound his trumpet, verse 7 tells us that the mystery of God will be finished. Even though each of the 7 event series, such as the 7 seals and the 7 trumpets, deal with different times, at least in their beginning, they all seem to culminate in one event, which I believe is the return of Jesus Christ to rule on the earth. Because, as we have studied these events thus far, we are on the verge of, or have already begun the seventh event, it is very important for us to strive to understand all that God has planned that we might face these things with confidence and not fear.

(Read Rev. 10:8-11) John is a stand-in, so to speak, for all Christians. His eating of the little book is symbolic of us reading, studying and seeking understanding of this book. As the saying goes, “we are what we eat.” If we have “eaten” the book, we will be like what we have “eaten.” John is told that even though it will be sweet as honey in his mouth, it would be bitter in his belly. This is true of learning God’s Word. It is very sweet to begin with, but as we learn what God expects of us, saying and doing it in a world that hates God becomes very bitter. Nevertheless, we must “eat” His Word because, like John, we have a responsibility to God. Keep in mind that God is sovereign, He chooses whom He will and uses us as He wills. This is certainly not without great reward, but in this life, it can be quite difficult. So no matter where you are in your understanding of God and His ways, you are there at this point because God has put you there, no matter what we might have thought we decided on our own. Because God has put us in the position we are in, we have a certain degree of responsibility that goes with that position. Our reward comes in proportion to how well we handle that responsibility.

Revelation 11 is one of the more controversial chapters in Revelation as different people have different ideas as to who the two witnesses are. (Read Rev. 11:1-14) It is important, as we try to identify these two witnesses, to be sure that all of the criteria listed in these verses is met. But let’s first deal with the first two verses.

Measuring, like is commanded in these verses, usually has to do with building. As we said in our last lesson, John is a type of the Israel people to whom the Bible is written. The Israel people, in their job as witnesses of and for God, are, in effect, building the Kingdom of God. Ex. 19:5,6 tells us, "Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people: for all the earth is mine: And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation." This was the essence of the Old Covenant with His voice and covenant being His law. (Read Heb. 8:8-12) This is the New Covenant. We need to understand that God's intent in His plans for Israel do not change between these two covenants. Only the condition, the "if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant" has changed to "I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts; and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people: and they shall not teach every man his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying know the Lord: for all shall know me, from the least to the greatest." In other words, the change is from "if ye will obey" to "ye will obey." Of course the difference is that Christ has come and sacrificed Himself on the cross for our sins that God will see Christ in us, instead of the real us, when we appear before Him. The point I want us to understand is that the rest of the Old Covenant is now part of the New Covenant, "ye (meaning all Israel that has remained true to Him and those non- Israelites who have joined themselves to the Kingdom through Jesus Christ) shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people (denoting exclusive ownership by God): for all the earth is mine: And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests (rulers), and an holy (set apart) nation." Israel has been given a job to do which they are responsible for until the return of the King of Kings to rule on the earth and the restoration of all things, that is to build that kingdom.

The temple represented God's dwelling place among men. When the tabernacle was completed in the wilderness, The Glory of the Lord filled the tent. When Solomon dedicated the temple in Jerusalem, the Glory of the Lord filled the House. What the tabernacle and the temple in the midst of Israel was to the nation, the nation Israel is to become unto all nations around them, a holy people and sanctuary. This is what Isaiah is saying to Israel in Isa. 60:1-3 (read).

There are those who will argue that be-cause of Israel's sin God abandoned Israel. Ezekiel does tell us that the Glory of the Lord did de-part from the Temple. (Read Ez. 11:22, 23) How-ever, Isaiah assures us that God will not forsake Israel. (Read Isa. 44:21, 22) What needs to be understood is that all that happened to Israel is part of God's plan and purpose. We need to read Ez. 43:1-7 for God's assurance of this.

We appear to have drifted off subject, but we needed this to proceed. As we said, Solomon's Temple represented God's dwelling place among men. It is God's plan to dwell among men. The Tabernacle and Solomon's Temple were a shadow of the true Temple, the Temple made up of people. (Read I Cor. 3:16, 17) There were basically the Holy of Holies and three courts in the Tabernacle and Solomon's Temple. The inner court was the priests court, the middle court was for the Israelites in good standing, and any-one could enter the outer court, or in this case the court of the gentiles. The governmental structure of the Temple referred to herein Revelation is similar. There will be the Holy of Holies, or the throne of the King of Kings, the priests or cabinet of the King (the overcomers), the people of the Kingdom, and then the non- Israelite, or non-Christian. John is looking at the entire order of the Kingdom, so in this case the outer court would represent the Gentile activity, i.e. the activity of the non-Israelite nations of the world. In this in-stance, I believe the Gentiles being referred to here are the nations that are or have been a part of the Babylonian succession of empires. God had given them a specific time to rule, so until that time was up, they could not be in the sphere of influence of Israel, or the Kingdom of God. (Read Daniel 2:36-39) This period of time, we're told, was 42 months, or in long term prophecy, $30 \times 42 = 1260$ years. I don't want to get bogged down in time periods as I am not thoroughly educated on them. But I think we can get pretty close. The total time of the Gentiles is generally considered to be 7 times, or 2520 years. The time that John is writing about here is 1260 years, or half of 2520. Depending on when one figures the first capture of Jerusalem, 1260 years from that time takes us to about 657 A.D. It was in this year that Pope Vitalian became Pope and it was he who commanded the universal use of the Latin language in divine services. So the language of the Scriptures was taken from the people of Israel that occupied a good part of the lands of the Ro-man Empire and replaced with the language of the last of the Babylonian succession of empires. At that time, the people of Israel that had migrated from the land of the Assyrian captivity were, for the most part, either under the rule of the Moslems or the Romans. 1260 years later, 1917 General Allenby drove the Turks out of Jerusalem and the British had already driven them out of Egypt, and the power of the Papacy, or Holy Roman Empire had been very dramatically reduced, so that the Israel people were, for the most part, back in control of themselves. It is from this point that building the Temple really took an earnest turn for the positive with

major missionary efforts worldwide.

Now, let's see if we can identify the two witnesses discussed in verse 3. We're told in verse 4 that "These are the two olive trees, and the two candlesticks standing before the God of the earth." Let's deal with the two olive trees first. There is an interesting passage in the book of Zechariah that relates to this. (Read Zech. 4:1-4) The answer that the angel gave Zechariah didn't answer his question, so he asked it again in verse 11 being more specific about the olive trees. (Read Zech 4:11-14) This gave him a little more information, but it is still not specific. The word "anointed" comes from a combination of Hebrew words that mean "sons of oil," which Strong's indicates means giving light, i.e. oil for lamps. This still does not give us a definitive answer, but before we look further at the olive trees, let's look at the two candlesticks. In Rev. 1, John saw the Son of man in the midst of seven candlesticks. We see in Zech. 4 that there was one candlestick, but with seven lamps that presumably were fed their oil from the two olive trees. In Rev. 1:20, Jesus told John that "the seven candlesticks which thou sawest are the seven churches." From this, I believe that the seven candlesticks represented the church as a whole. Two candle sticks would represent only a part of the whole church.

Let's jump ahead to verse 6 of Rev. 11 for a moment as I think this will help us in our identification of these two witnesses. John says, **"These have power to shut heaven, that it rain not in the days of their prophecy and have power over waters to turn them to blood, and to smite the earth with all plagues, as often as they will."** If we think back to the Old Testament as to who shut the heaven that it didn't rain, we find in I Kings 17:1, **"And Elijah the Tishbite, who was of the inhabitants of Gilead, said unto Ahab, As the LORD God of Israel liveth, before whom I stand, there shall not be dew nor rain these years but according to my word."** In Exodus 7:17, Moses told the Pharaoh, "I will smite with the rod that is in mine hand upon the waters which are in the river, and they shall be turned to blood." So symbolically I think we can say that Moses and Elijah represent the two candle sticks and the two olive trees. Also symbolically, Moses represents the law and Elijah represents the prophets, so we might say that the law and the prophets represent the candle sticks and the olive trees. I believe we can say that the law represents government, or the kingdom, and the prophets represent the ecclesiastical element of society, or the church. Would it not be reason-able then to say that the kingdom and the church represent the two candle sticks and the two olive trees?

In Ex. 27:20 we find a statute that the children of Israel, as a whole, were responsible to provide "pure oil olive beaten for the light" for the candlestick that was to burn continually in the tabernacle of the congregation without the vail. I believe that we can, from this, again assume that the two olive trees represent the Kingdom of Israel and the church within that kingdom. I believe that the two have to be considered separate from each other because they have different jobs to do, though so far as the individual is concerned, he or she may be a part of both. The kingdom here would be the overcomers, those who will be called to rule with Christ, to have part in the first resurrection. Anyone in this group would of necessity be a part of the Church, or Congregation as well, but not all those who are a part of the Church, in my mind, will be a part of the rulers. Rev. 20:4 makes this evident.

So, have these two elements fulfilled the rest of the description in Rev. 11? We're told in verse 5, "And if any man will hurt them, fire proceedeth out of their mouth, and devoureth their enemies: and if any man will hurt them, he must in this manner be killed." In Heb. 4:12 we're told, "For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword." Eph. 6:17 speaks of the "sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God" and Rev. 1:16 tells us the description of the one John saw sitting on the throne and says, "and out of his mouth went a sharp twoedged sword." Deut. 33:2 refers to God's law as a "fiery law" and He-brews 12:29 tells us "For our God is a consuming fire." As witnesses of God, I believe that this is what is meant by fire proceeding out of their mouth. The last of Rev. 11:5 goes on to say, "And if any man will hurt them, he must in this manner be killed." This refers to the fact that by the words from the mouth of these Wit-nesses would their enemies be finally judged, and by the condemnation of that Word they must die.

We determined that the rivers were symbolic of the tributaries of Rome, those areas away from the central part of the Empire from which tribute was required. The earth was that of the Western Empire, particularly the area adjacent to Rome itself. We have already seen that the testimony of the Witnesses in the tributary territory subject to Rome caused some of the bloodiest wars and massacres known to history. They had power to turn these "tributary waters" into blood through their witnessing.

Because of the testimony of these witnesses, the ecclesiastical center of Rome was smitten as with a plague. In 1886 Pope Leo XIII told his cardinals, "With deep regret and profound anguish we behold the impunity with which Protestants freely propagate their heretical doctrines and attack the most august and sacred doctrines of our holy religion, even here in Rome, the center of the faith and zeal of the universal and infallible teachers of the Church."

Going back to verse 3, **"they shall prophesy a thousand two hundred and threescore days, clothed in sackcloth."** One problem I see with many of the prophecy teachers that I have read after is that instead of determining an event being a starting point and then adding the time given Scripturally to it, they choose some date either in history or in the future and work back-wards. I am probably guilty of this to a degree, though it is unintentional. I do not want to think that way. In this case in this verse, I don't know when this has ended or will end, so I am not going to go back and choose a date and look for an event. But with all of the bloodshed we have seen in history, usually due to religious agitation, or religious orders, I think we can see why the witnesses are clothed in sackcloth, a sign of mourning.

Keep in mind that chapter 10 presented the history of the Reformation and the opening of the Bible to the common man. It is God's intent to build His corporate temple, i.e. the temple we all are a part of, and bring about its earthly manifestation. Opening the little book was part of His intent. The witnessing of the two witnesses is a continuation of that intent.

(Re-read Rev. 11:7-14) There is no literal bottomless pit, so it has to represent something else. I believe it represents symbolically the abode of darkness and evil, the opposite of heaven, our source of light and power. It is out of this pit that something, described as a beast, comes that is able to accomplish something that Papal Rome was never able to do. Though Rome made war against these witnesses, it was never able to overcome them, only to force them to carry on in mourning. However, this beast is able to make war against these witnesses and ultimately kill them.

We have no further description of this beast by which to identify it, we are only told what it does. The beast obviously attacks these witnesses with a different strategy than has been used before. The sword was used against Christians for centuries resulting in millions being martyred for the Word of God. But the sword is help-less against a doctrine. Sword must meet sword and doctrine must meet doctrine. This beast did not have the power of the sword, but rather the power of a doctrine. If one doctrine can overcome another, ultimately the doctrine that is over-come is no longer heard and for all intents and purposes becomes dead. I believe this is what is being referred to here. The "little book" was open and could not be closed, so the strategy used by this "beast" has been to bring the Scriptures into disrepute. We have seen this happen in many ways. Atheists have made great headway in our court system to remove any mention of God, Jesus Christ, or the Bible out of public view. Unfortunately, many Christians, because of the many denominational divisions, have agreed with the purport of the atheists for fear that another de-nomination might gain something over their own. Modernistic teachings have poured forth from our seminaries such as denying the virgin birth, the resurrection, the divine nature of Christ as well as convincing people that most, if not all, of the Bible stories are nothing more than myths. Churches have become nothing more than social clubs with virtually no teaching of God's Holy Word. People have become fearful of expressing any-thing that might associate them with Christianity for fear that they might be politically incorrect. People are afraid of names that might be applied to them if they actually lived like a Christian. At what point we might say that the witnesses are dead or have died, I am not sure, but it is the inevitable result of such thinking.

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From: Newsletter Issue 1311

In our last issue we were discussing the death of the two witnesses as presented in Revelation 11:7. We had identified them as the church, meaning the true Christians, and the kingdom, referring primarily to the overcomers who will reign and rule with Christ when He returns. To continue our discussion of the death of these two witnesses, I would like to include the following quote by Professor C. A. L. Totten, M.A., that he wrote in 1890 as he saw modernistic criticism and atheistical teaching being introduced into our schools and seminaries.

Most religious people are literally afraid to investigate the Bible, and well they may be if the Canons of the “Higher Criticism” are to guide their study. Most of the laity considers it to be beyond their sphere, and so far as “Moses and the Prophets” are concerned, even the clergy almost entirely neglect them.

We readily grant that Sin, Repentance, and the Gospel of a Saviour are the vital “end” of apostolic work. Nevertheless we hold that Christ and the Resurrection cannot be successfully preached in this age upon the undermined foundation left by the Higher Critics. It well for them if they can hold their own souls within the fold: we question it; but be this as it may, it is the rest of men that are the ones whom Christ desires to save, and they have logic left, and cannot be savingly reached by any other means than a logical exegesis of the whole Bible, and a satisfactory explanation of its inspiration as such, upon the basis that it is “the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth.” For, not though one rose from the dead will men believe, unless they likewise are taught to believe implicitly, and made to understand, “Moses and the Prophets.”

It is the Bible that Atheists and Infidels attack the Old Testament chiefly for they are logical, and perceive that if the foundation goes, the superstructure cannot stand, no matter how eloquently it can be clothed in Agnostic sermons. Hence this Old Testament is our one and only bulwark of defense.

It will not do to preach Christ and deny Moses. It will not do to doubt the universality of the Flood, and ask men to accept a Saviour who alludes to it! It will not do to doubt Joshua’s Long Day, with sun and moon poised in mid-heaven while he fought, and yet stultify our hearts with hopes of a Longer Day when even sun and moon will not be needed! If the story of Eden and the Deluge, of Jericho and Joshua, are myths, or fables, and not literal facts, then to the still rational mind, all that follows them is equally so, and faith, lost in those who foretold His advent, can never be savingly and logically found again in Christ and His apostles.

I am not sure of the timing of the death of these witnesses, though when one looks at our situation today, it certainly makes one wonder. At any rate, verse 8 tells us that “their dead bodies shall lie in the street of the great city which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified.” Because this city is “spiritually” called Sodom and Egypt tells us that this is not actually a city, but I believe it speaks of a world order just as the New Jerusalem speaks of a new world order. The names Sodom and Egypt define the order. It is immoral as Sodom and thrives on oppressing people in bondage as in Egypt. These characteristics, immorality, oppression, and bondage, are hallmarks of our present world order. These exemplified the character of those who crucified Jesus literally and those who have done it spiritually ever since. We’ll see in chapter 14:8 that John here calls that great city, Babylon.

We will see how both names are very appropriate.

If we watch any of the news in our day, we see how many people in different cultures celebrate their successes over their enemies by dis-playing the dead bodies of their enemies. I think we can see today that there are those who do not want that which represents Christianity to disappear as they want it on display so that they can gloat over the “death” of those representations. We have more churches today than there ever has been, yet the effectiveness of these churches is virtually nil.

We may not be fully aware of when the death of the witnesses occurs, but I don’t believe it will be the same with their resurrection. It was not the death and suffering of Christ that con-firmed all that He taught. It was the resurrection of Jesus Christ that very firmly confirmed all that He taught about Himself and what the prophets taught. It will be likewise with these witnesses. The event, I believe, will be the first resurrection spoken of in Rev. 20:4, 5 (Read). The call from heaven in verse 12 doesn’t necessarily mean a call to the celestial heavens, but rather, as we saw when we studied Rev. 4, it can be, and I believe will be, a call into the Kingdom to those who will rule the Kingdom with Jesus Christ. When Christ arose from the dead, there was a great literal earthquake. We could have the same at this resurrection, but the shake up among the peoples of the earth will be much greater than a literal earth- quake. When this happens, we’re told in verse 14 of Rev. 11 that **“the second woe is past; and be-hold, the third woe cometh quickly.”**

(Read Rev. 11:15-19) When the seventh angel sounds his trumpet, John heard great voices in the Kingdom (heaven) saying, “The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ; and He shall reign for ever and ever.” Because Christianity has accepted the mythological teachings of the Greeks to be Christian teaching, that being that when a person dies, he or she will either go to heaven or hell, we are missing one of the greatest teachings of God’s Word. **The Bible does not teach this. Rather it teaches that Christ will come to us, not the other way around, and will rule**

here on the earth. When this happens, at least initially, it will be great joy for some, but will be great bitterness for the rest. No one knows exactly what will happen, but I think we can at least get some idea by putting some of the teachings together. Keep in mind what Paul tells us in Romans 8:28, "And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose."

Though we have discussed this before, let me review a little of what we have discussed. We have learned that there are three steps to our full salvation. The first is "justification." This was done for us by Christ on the cross. Paul tells us in Romans 6:23, "For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord." Let me first point out that the Bible speaks of two deaths. The first is mortal death. Unless we happen to be alive when Christ returns, we all will suffer this death. Paul tells us in Romans 5:12 that we die this death because Adam sinned. Because Adam sinned, i.e. he disobeyed God, his penalty was death. This death, or mortality, has passed on to all of mankind. This is not the death Paul is talking about in Rom. 6:23. He is speaking of the second death. Rev. 20:14, 15 tells us, "And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire." That this death is not the same as mortal death is exemplified by the fact that death and hell (grave) are cast into this death. It represents God's judgment, which we will discuss in detail when we study Rev. 20, but keep in mind that God's judgments are restorative in nature. Paul is telling us in Rom. 6:23 that all of us, in addition to being subject to mortal death, are also subject to the second death, except that God has given us the gift of having our names written in the book of life, if we but accept the gift. "Eternal" means age lasting. If we have our names written in the book of life, we have age lasting life. This is not to say that we don't have perpetual life, for we do, but we also have the extra bonus of having life during the age, or ages as the case may be. Justification is free, it has already been done for us, we cannot earn it, buy it, or steal it. We just have to accept it.

The second step is "sanctification." Sanctification means "setting apart." We can just settle for justification, i.e. remain babes in Christ all of our life. But Jesus urges us to learn His righteousness and pattern our lives after His. This requires effort on our part. We are set apart from the world through this as it teaches us responsibility toward our fellow man. How we handle this responsibility determines our rewards as I believe the rewards are degrees of responsibility in the Kingdom.

The third step is "glorification." This is the resurrection, the rewards for sanctification. This is what Rev. 11:18 is speaking of when it says that the dead should be judged, **"and that thou shouldest give reward unto thy servants the prophets, and to the saints, and them that fear thy name, small and great."**

When the first resurrection takes place, those who have been both justified and sanctified will be resurrected to rule and reign with Christ. We have the pattern of that reign in the job that God gave to the Levites in the Old Testament. They were basically the bureaucrats of their day. They took care of the affairs of government such as teaching, judging, administering, etc. But unlike the bureaucrats of today, their work was to be a work of love, not oppression. Likewise, that will be the responsibility of those called to be rulers with Christ. This, to me, should be the goal of every Christian. It should never be enough to just settle for justification, or for a just getting by attitude toward sanctification.

As we can see by what John saw, while those who looked for this resurrection praised God, verse 18 tells us "the nations were angry, and thy wrath is come, and then at the end of the verse, "and shouldest destroy them which destroy the earth." When God's law is imposed, there are certainly going to be those who oppose that law as they will no longer be able to oppress, steal, or cheat people. This has been their way of life and it will not be easy for them to change. It will take time for all the world to adopt to doing things out of love rather than by oppression. This may be a somewhat simplification of what we can expect when this resurrection takes place, but I think it does give us a general idea. Deeper study into the Scriptures will give us greater detail.

It will be a great day and all the world will know it. Verse 19 expresses this I believe. In the first eleven chapters of Revelation, we have dealt primarily with the history of the Church (keep in mind that when I use the term Church, I am not referring to the Roman Catholic Church as "the Church," but rather Christianity as a whole. The Roman Catholic Church certainly played a part in this history as it evolved from the apostles, to the early church fathers, to a more loosely organized organization with its "councils," to the highly organized church/state entity, to the highly organized organization we are familiar with today). We have seen the effects that the Roman Empire had, that the migrating ex-Israelites had, and how great wars affected it and where the Church stands today. Chapter 12 leads us into a more direct look at Jesus Christ and the Babylonian system,

the Kingdom of God as op-posed to the Babylonian succession of empires.

(Read Rev. 12) Verse 1 begins, “And there appeared a great wonder in heaven.” Keep in mind that we determined in chapter 4 that “heaven” referred to the Kingdom of God, not necessarily location. “A woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and up-on her head a crown of twelve stars.” We might guess that this is talking about Israel, but for confirmation read Genesis 37:9, 10. Joseph, at about the age of 17 had this dream. His father, Jacob, or Israel, recognized that the dream was about him and his 12 sons, Joseph being the 12th. All of the elements of Rev. 12:1 is here, the sun, Jacob; the moon, Joseph’s mother, and the 12 stars, Joseph and his eleven brothers. I believe that we can say that Rev. 12:1 then represents corporate Israel.

Verse 2 continues, “And she being with child cried, travailing in birth, and pained to be delivered.” The prophets have made it clear that it was the corporate responsibility of Israel to bring forth the “man-child,” more specifically it was Judah’s responsibility through the house of David. This responsibility was manifested in the Virgin Mary, a descendant of King David. There is probably a secondary fulfillment of this scenario at the second coming of our Lord, but the responsibility then switches to Joseph, something we will talk more about later. For now, we will follow the birth of the child to the Virgin Mary.

In verse 3 we have another player enter the scene, “a great red dragon, having seven heads and ten horns, and seven crowns upon his heads.” To understand the identity of this dragon, we need to turn back to the book of Daniel. (Read Daniel 7:2-7; 15-19) When we looked at this Scripture before, we determined that these beasts, whom the angel says are four kings, represented the leadership of the four empires depicted in the metal image of Nebuchadnezzar’s dream in Dan.

2. Where the various types of metal represented the empires, gold-Babylon; silver-Medea-Persia; brass-Greece; and the iron and the clay mixed with the iron=Rome, in the depiction of the animals in chapter 7, the lion represented the leader-ship of Babylon; the bear represented the leader-ship of Persia; and the leopard represented the leadership of Greece. However, notice that Daniel does not compare the fourth beast to any particular animal, but rather just describes its actions and the animal as being **“dreadful and terrible, and strong exceedingly; and it had great iron teeth; it devoured and brake in pieces and stamped the residue with the feet of it, and it was diverse from all the beasts that were be-fore it; and it had ten horns.”** He had apparently never seen an animal to compare to. Whether John had seen such an animal that he refers to as a dragon, I don’t know, but at least this is the name that he gives to this animal. (As a side note, I recently watched a video of a gentleman who claims to be an expert on dinosaurs who felt that there were still dinosaurs in Christ’s day, in fact he claims they still exist today in very remote places on the earth, and that the people of that day called them dragons.) What John saw was very similar to what Daniel saw in this fourth beast. Both were very strong, had great iron teeth, and ten horns. I don’t think it would take a great deal of imagination to see that both beasts were the same, i.e. the leadership of the fourth metal kingdom, Rome. In the description that John gives, we have a few more details. I might point out that we will see this same beast again as we continue our study, but there will be a few changes such as the crowns, the color, etc. In this beast, John tells us it is red. We’re told that this beast also appeared in heaven. Again we need to consider “heaven” symbolically to mean the Kingdom of God. As we have discussed as we have studied, the majority of the Israelites of the Assyrian captivity had migrated to Asia Minor and Europe, territory of the Roman Empire, so in effect, the Roman Empire at that time was in the kingdom, or the kingdom in Rome, however one might want to look at it. We’re also told that it had seven heads. There are a couple of ways of interpreting this. The city of Rome is located on seven hills. These hills are called:

Capitolinus

Aventinus

Viminalis

Caelius

Palatinus

Quirinalis

Esquilinus

The Imperial Roman Empire through his-tory went through seven distinct forms of government:

Kings

Consuls

Dictators

Decemvirs

Military Tribunes
Military Emperors
Christian Emperors

I believe the seven crowns indicate the ruling authority of each of these forms of government. Each head represented one of these forms of government and the crown represented that particular form's ruling authority while it was in power.

The prophecy that the beast's "tail drew the third part of the stars of heaven; and did cast them to the earth:" probably refers to the last half of the time of the Roman Empire when it was dominated by the Papacy in which a large number of the ex-Israelite population were won over to support this revived Roman Empire in its ecclesiastical manifestation. Thus, from their high estate, as God's people, they are cast down to earth as they follow after the dragon and worship its power.

Verse 5, referring to the woman (Israel) says she "brought forth a man child, who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron: and her child was caught up unto God and to his throne." We know this "man child" to be Jesus Christ. When He was born, King Herod, the manifestation of this red beast at the moment, was waiting for Him to be born. Herod was half Edomite and Edom means "red." When the wise men came from the east to see the child, Herod told them that the priests were saying that He would be in Bethlehem and when they found Him, Herod asked that they come tell him where He was so that he too could go worship him. The wise men, instead, went home by another route and did not tell Herod where He was, so he commanded that all baby boys in the area up to the age of 2 years old be killed in an effort to kill the Saviour. Of course he failed as Joseph had been warned by an angel to take Jesus into Egypt until King Herod died. Jesus grew up, started His ministry on earth, was crucified and then was resurrected on the 3rd day and 40 days later ascended to His Father's throne in the heavens.

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From: Newsletter Issue 1401

In our last issue, we had started a look at Revelation 12 and had worked our way through verse 5.

We're told in verse 6 that the woman fled into the wilderness where God had prepared a place for her. Tradition has it that the virgin Mary was among a group including Joseph of Arimathaea who were set adrift in the Mediterranean Sea without sail or paddle, with the intent that they would starve to death, but who ended up on the coast of France and then went to the British Isles where she lived out her life in missionary work with Joseph of Arimathaea. She again would be the manifestation of Israel. Like her, Israel as a whole likewise moved west into the Isles and on to North America, South Africa, Australia, and other "wilderness" areas of the world.

Verse 7 has led to a great deal of misunderstanding in the Christian world. To a great many people, Satan is an angel that was cast out of heaven and this belief is pretty much based on this verse. I believe this is due to a total misunderstanding of the Babylonian succession of empires and how God has worked through them. Verse 9 tells us that this dragon, the dragon that we have been talking about that is the fourth beast of Daniel's vision and now John's, is "that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world." We need first to understand that the Babylonian succession of empires is man's system of government, regardless of what form of government it takes. It is the very opposite of God's system of government. The Babylonian system is based on oppression. It is the only way man knows to rule, or be ruled. The only people who have enjoyed God's system were the Israelites who lived between the death of Joshua and the crowning of King Saul. They were free to do whatever they wanted within God's law system. This system is designed to be beneficial to man and to protect man from himself and those around him and likewise protect those around him from him. The only freedom they did not have was to take someone else's freedom from them in some way. But this system requires personal responsibility, something that man does not like to do. For this reason, those Israelites first tried to lay some of this responsibility onto gods that they would make up, or that the neighboring countries already had. This always ended in failure and the people would find themselves subject to another people or nation. When they repented, God would bring them back,

yet they never seemed to understand that they had to be responsible for their own actions. Finally, they said they had to have a king, thinking that they could lay some of their responsibility on him. A king takes that responsibility, but at a price. Regardless of the price, freedom is always a victim.

Getting back to the Devil and Satan, we need to be sure that we understand the words. The word “Devil” is from the Greek word “diabolos” meaning “accuser or calumniator.” With access that we have today to world news, it is quite easy to see how this works, especially in what is going on in the Middle East. Virtually every time a leader of a country, including our own, becomes more oppressive in his or her efforts to deal with a problem, you will always hear them accusing someone or something for causing them to do what they are getting ready to do. It is always someone else’s fault.

The word “Satan” is a transliterated Babylonian word, i.e. it is a Babylonian word that has passed through other languages intact without being translated as it passes through. If you look it up in your concordance, you will see that unlike most other words, it is the same in the Hebrew and in the Greek. It literally means “adversary.” Most certainly, the Babylonian succession of empires has been adversarial to God and His system. Very often, we see through history that some of the various leaders of these four empires have known God, but they have never stopped the pagan idol worship, the oppressive government administration, or the theft of their economic system. All of these are the very opposite of God’s system. Jesus said in Matt. 12:30, “He that is not with me is against me.” There are no fence riders. James says in James 4:4, “Whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God.” As the serpent deceived Eve, so this succession of empires has throughout history deceived the world, whether we are talking about Nebuchadnezzar’s time or Papal Rome’s time.

There is no place for this system in the Kingdom of God. It cannot be a part of it. The work of the apostles and early Church fathers, the remnant overcomers throughout history, the Re-formers of the Reformation, and the faithful of today and recent history have fought against this dragon to cast it out of the Kingdom. It is unfortunate that it has become a part of the Kingdom, but God will be glorified as it is totally cast out and no longer a part of it as the Kingdom is perfected with the return of Christ.

The important thing is that this Satan, this dragon did not stop the birth, and ultimate ascension of the Child of the Woman. God’s plan is working to perfection. But this does not stop the workings of the dragon. The time of the Gentiles, or the time that God apparently allotted to this succession of empires actually began with the first deportation of the three tribes located on the east side of the Jordan River to Assyria by Tiglath Pileser III in 745 B.C. That time was to be 2520 years which ended in 1776 A.D. It is the last half of this time, i.e. 1260 years that the woman was to find the place prepared by God for her. God made an unconditional promise to David in II Sam. 7:10 in which He said, **“Moreover I will appoint a place for my people Israel, and will plant them, that they may dwell in a place of their own, and move no more; neither shall the children of wickedness afflict them any more, as beforetime.”** This promise and the fleeing of the woman into the wilderness are both talking about the same thing I think. In Rev. 12:14, we’re told **“And to the woman were given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness, into her place, where she is nourished for a time, and times, and half a time, from the face of the serpent.”** One other time in Scripture, we see God carrying His people Israel on eagle’s wings. When the Israelites arrived at Mt. Sinai in their Exodus from Egypt, as God prepared to make the Old Covenant with them, He said, **“Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and how I bare you on eagles’ wings, and brought you unto myself.”** I don’t think it is by accident that our great seal has the eagle with the outstretched wings.

However, as we read Rev. 12:10-13, we need to recall the history that we have been discussing of the Christians that were tortured and killed by the Roman government, then those who were tortured and killed by order of the Church Councils and the Papacy as it came to power, and then the Reformation and the thousands who died martyrs as a result. Yet, not only was the Reformation a success, but new lands, the wilderness and the desolate heritages, were opened up to the people of the “woman” as they fled from the beast, that old serpent, the Devil and Satan. Certainly, if we know our own American history, we know that our nation was peopled and formed as a result of the persecution that existed from Papal Rome in Europe.

Verse 15 says, “And the serpent cast out of his mouth water as a flood after the woman, that he might cause her to be carried away of the flood.” Very often, water is symbolic of people. We have seen in our studies so far that great armies have been employed to carry out campaigns that, whether directed directly at God’s Kingdom peoples or not, should have had the effect of stopping and/or destroying these people, yet, these Kingdom people have, in the big picture, continued to grow and expand. As we continue to study, I think we will continue to see this happen. However, as verse 17 states, “And the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ.” Though we often don’t know all of the facts that have brought on most wars, at least until long after the war is over, when the facts are known, we usually find that the Christian nations are on one side while the non-Christian nations are on the opposite, or at least the leaders of those nations are non-Christian and actively condemn Christianity.

Before we go on into chapter 13, we need to go back to some of Daniel’s prophecy that we have either skipped, or gone over very lightly, so that we might better understand the next few chapters. We read Daniel 7:2-7 and 15-19 earlier in this lesson. I would like for us to go back and read Daniel 7 again paying particular attention to verse 8 and from verse 20 to the end of the chapter. In verse 8 we’re told, “I considered the horns, and behold, there came up among them another little horn, before whom there were three of the first horns plucked up by the roots: and behold, in this horn were eyes like the eyes of man, and a mouth speaking great things.” The angel interpreted this to Daniel starting in verse 24, “And the ten horns out of this kingdom are ten kings that shall arise: and another shall rise after them; and he shall be diverse from the first, and he shall subdue three kings. And he shall speak great words against the most High, and shall wear out the saints of the most High, and think to change times and laws: and they shall be given into his hand until a time and times and the dividing of time.”

I think it is generally recognized that this little horn refers to the Roman Emperor Justinian. He began his rule as Emperor in 529 A.D. and ruled from Constantinople. In 533 he re-conquered Africa that had been lost since the Vandals invaded a century earlier. By 540, his army had defeated the Ostrogoths who had established a kingdom in Italy and the Alemannian Kingdom north of Italy.

As we have discussed before, he produced the Codex in 529 and the Pandectae in 530 and finally a revision was published in 534 as the Corpus Juris Civilis. In these he completely annulled the Roman Law at that time and completely re-wrote a new law system. The Catholic Encyclopedia says of this new law system, “It would be difficult to exaggerate the importance of this “Corpus.” It is the basis of all canon law (*ecclesia vivet romana*) and the basis of civil law in every civilized country.”

Even much of our American law was based upon Justinian’s Law Code. This is why all legal terms are expressed in Latin, even as all medical terms are expressed in Greek. The entire legal system of European nations during the Middle Ages was based upon Roman Law as re-vised and condensed by Justinian and his Christian legal advisors.

Quoting from “Study of the Book of Revelation” by Dr. Stephen Jones, “Whether we say that the Church law became the law of the Roman Empire or vice versa, one fact is clear: the Church of both halves of the Roman Empire was greatly influenced by the Roman legal system, instead of taking Hebrew Biblical law as their foundation. To Roman law they added a few features of Biblical law, but its foundation is Roman. In other words, it is based upon the Roman idea that the primary purpose of law is to mete out punishment in order to deter crime. The Hebrew concept makes that a secondary goal, for the purpose of Biblical law was to mete out justice to restore the lawful order.

“This shows that the Roman Catholic Church became the legal extension of the fallen Roman Empire. Since Rome was the fourth (iron) beast of Daniel, the Roman Church became the “little horn” that was its extension.”

As the civil power of the Roman Emperors declined and the ecclesiastical power and civil power of the Church increased and the power of both the church and the empire was ultimately conferred on the Pope,

the Popes began to “speak great things,” or as the margin of my Bible says, “pompous words.” Rev. 13:6, speaking of this same thing, says, “And he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme his name, and his tabernacle, and them that dwell in heaven.” We will look at some of these words as we continue our study.

The point that we need to understand is that this “little horn” became the Roman Catholic Church which, when Imperial Rome fell, took up the mantle of this fourth beast that Daniel saw and is the beast that John sees with seven heads and ten horns, and itself became this beast. While it was the intent of those first bishops to establish

God’s Kingdom on Earth, they went about it as men which doomed their efforts to failure. God is the only one who can establish His Kingdom in righteousness, which He will do, but man simply cannot do so on his own.

As we begin our study of Revelation 13, keep in mind what we looked at in Daniel 7. We said that the “little horn” that came up and re-placed 3 horns on the beast that Daniel saw represented the Roman Catholic Church which revived the Roman Empire, when Imperial Rome failed, and actually became more powerful than Imperial Rome was at its height. John is talking about the same thing here in Rev. 13 as I believe we will see as we study.

Verse 3 tells us, “I saw one of his heads as it were wounded to death; and his deadly wound was healed: and all the world wondered after the beast.” We’re not given a time in which this happened. There are at least two times that we could look at that might meet this description. The first is when Imperial Rome fell, or died. It was revived by Papal Rome, which as we have said, became more powerful than Imperial Rome. Originally, this was my thoughts as I studied this. However, as I have studied this further, there is another time in the late 1700’s and early 1800’s that might fit this description of events more accurately. We’ll discuss this more fully in a little bit. When Imperial Rome fell, Papal Rome was already there more or less picking up the pieces, so there technically was not a death in one sense, yet in another, since Imperial Rome fell, it died. Papal Rome was an extension of Imperial Rome, having developed within Imperial Rome beginning with the reign of Emperor Justinian, as we have already discussed.

But note that the beast that John sees here now incorporates all of the empires, or at least the thinking and developments of all of the empires into this one beast. This corresponds with the metal image remaining intact until the last of the empires that it represented had come into being, even though each empire was conquered by the empire that succeeded it until we get to the Ro-man Empire. The metal image was not to be destroyed until it was complete, though the empires themselves were destroyed. Their individual influence in developing a man-made governmental system was retained by each of the succeeding empires until all of their influences came together to develop the Roman system. Keep in mind that with any system of government, there has to be a land, a religious system, an economic system and a political system. While each empire contributed individually along with the influence that it felt from the previous empire or empires, the end result has been an accumulated influence of all of the empires. Understanding this is critical to understanding what John talks of later that he refers to as Babylon.

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From: Newsletter Issue 1402

We started studying Revelation 13 in our last issue, continuing with chapt. 13 we note, it has been the desire of man at least as far back as Nimrod, the builder of Babel, to rule the world. What might surprise us is that, in effect, man has wanted to rule in the place of God, to be God. We might take a minute to look at what Christ was like after His resurrection, as what He was, is what man has sought to know and be through the ages. If you watch science fiction movies or read science fiction books, the hero is always trying to figure out how to do the things that Christ did after His resurrection. Time and space were no longer boundaries to Him. He could be here one minute and somewhere else the next. He did not have to have a door to enter or leave a

room. He could change His appearance to match the necessity of the moment. He had the freedom of a spirit, but ate solid food with His friends and could be touched as if in the flesh. These have been characteristics that man has desired from Nimrod's time at least. The building of the tower of Babel was not to try to build it high enough to reach heaven physically, but rather to try to discover these secrets, the mysteries of the religions of the various kingdoms since all profess to be searching for the answers to these same secrets. Often, through the ages, men have professed to have discovered some of these secrets which then attracted more men to these various religions and orders. But note that it has always been secrets and mysteries. No one has actually found out these secrets, yet, even today we have men still striving to unlock these secrets apart from God. They believe that they just have to gain sufficient knowledge to be able to unlock these secrets. To-day we call this "Gnosticism," gnosis meaning knowledge. There were people in Scripture who thought this knowledge could be obtained without going through Jesus Christ. Acts 8 relates the story of a man named Simon who had been a sorcerer and had established quite a reputation for his greatness. Simon, after listening to Philip preach became converted and was baptized. When he saw Peter and John lay their hands on others that had been baptized and they received the Holy Spirit, he offered them money that whosoever he laid hands on might also receive the Holy Spirit. Of course, he was quickly told that this power was not something to be bought or sold. He is given the distinction of being one of the founders of Gnosticism.

Getting back to Rev. 13, the Roman Catholic Church is not just the ecclesiastical authority but was the civil authority as well. In verse 4, while the dragon, i.e. the Roman Empire, was worshipped, we're told that it was this dragon that gave power to the beast. Because of the power of the dragon, the question was, who was able to make war with the beast? Obviously, very few, as the military power of this beast was not seriously challenged for several centuries.

(Read Rev. 13:5-10) In addition to being powerful militarily, we're told that "there was given unto him a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies; and power was given unto him to continue forty and two months." We have discussed briefly in the past the attitude that developed among many of the Popes. Perhaps a statement made by Pope Boniface VIII in his *Unum Sanctum* in 1302 will exemplify this attitude. Note that he uses examples of what Popes before him have done to justify what he is doing.

"Wherefore, no marvel if it be in my power to change times and times, to alter and abrogate laws, to dispense with all things, yea, with the precepts of Christ; for where Christ biddeth Peter put up his sword, and admonishes His disciples not to use any outward force in revenging themselves, do not I, Pope Nicolas, writing to the bishops of France, exhort them to draw out their material swords? And whereas Christ was present Himself at the marriage in Cana of Galilee, do not I, Pope Martin, in my distinction, inhibit the spiritual clergy to be present at marriage feasts, and also to marry? Moreover, where Christ biddeth us lend without hope of gain, do not I, Pope Martin, give dispensation to do the same? What should I speak of murder, making it to be no murder or homicide to slay them that be excommunicated?"

"Likewise against the law of nature, item against the apostles, also against the canons of the apostles, I can and do dispense."

I think we can see that Pope Boniface VIII made it quite clear that he and other Popes before him had the absolute right to alter or abrogate the law of Christ and the apostles. The problem comes when men claim to be vicars (in the place) of Christ, but then think that God has empowered them to overstep their bounds. To claim the right to overrule Christ is the way of a rebel leader, not a mere vicar. The Pope thus staged a revolt against Jesus Christ. This was what John meant when he said that this beast (or the little horn of Daniel 7) had a mouth speaking arrogant blasphemies.

I might note that the Pope that immediately preceded Boniface VIII was an elderly man who was a true spiritual leader and loved by the people. However, before being named Pope, he was known as Peter the Hermit and lived in a cave on a mountain top. He was probably as surprised as anyone at being named Pope and was probably the most miserable Pope in history. He hated the luxury of the Vatican. As Pope he was known as Celestine V. He only lasted as Pope for 107 days before he resigned, much to the dismay of the people. Ten days later the conclave of Cardinals met and within 24 hours had elected Benedict Gaetani as Pope who then took on the name of Boniface VIII. The new Pope soon realized that he could never be as popular with the

people as their beloved Peter the Hermit. Considering Peter as a potential threat to his pontificate, he gave orders that the old man be arrested and brought back to Rome, by force if necessary. However, Peter got word of this and started moving through the mountains and the soldiers could not find him. Knowing that he had to leave Italy to avoid capture, he boarded a ship headed for Greece, but the ship was blown back by a storm and wrecked on the Italian shore. Peter survived the shipwreck, but his enthusiastic admirers recognized him and soon proclaimed him to be the true Pope. The troops found him and arrested him. He was sent to a prison in the isolated fortress of Fumone. He rejoiced when he saw the tiny cell prepared for him as it resembled his cave on the mountain. However, he died some ten months later to the expected rumors of murder, most of which implicated Boniface.

People today who are looking for a future Anti-Christ are neither reading the Scriptures correctly, or remembering or learning their history. There have already been many who have been as wicked as any that are being dreamed up by the futurists that are saying that everything in Revelation is yet to happen.

The power to speak these blasphemies and great things was to last 42 months, or 1260 days or years. There are several 1260 day, or year, time frames discussed, so it is difficult sometimes to determine just what time period we are talking about. In this case, the beginning of the Papal rise to power started with Emperor Justinian and his rewriting of the Roman law. As we have mentioned before, he rewrote the law in 529 and re-revised and published it as the Corpus Juris Civilis in 534 A.D. 1260 years from these dates takes us to 1789 to 1794, the dates of the French Revolution. We'll discuss this more in a little bit.

Rev. 13:7, 8 tells us, "And it was given unto him (the beast) to make war with the saints, and to overcome them: and power was given him over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations. And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world." In Daniel 7:21-22, Daniel, speaking of the "little horn," said, "I be held, and the same horn made war with the saints, and prevailed against them; until the Ancient of days came, and judgment was given to the saints of the most High; and the time came that the saints possessed the kingdom." So the time given to this beast, or the "little horn," is a rather long time, until Christ returns and sets up His kingdom on the earth, i.e. until the first resurrection. I believe that we are very near that time now.

I have spent a good part of this last week studying the influence that the Roman Catholic Church has had in our past wars. I can assure you that it has been substantial and it would probably come as quite a surprise to many of us as to whose side they were on, or at least started out on.

From our Revolutionary War, Civil War, WWI and II down to our present day conflicts, the Vatican is involved in virtually every war in a fairly major way, usually to gain power, dominion, and/or wealth for the Church.

Following is quoted from a Bible study, The Book of Revelation by Dr. Stephen Jones. "The extended Roman Empire began to be challenged by a new power in 1789-1794 with the French Revolution. The French Revolution was carried out by men who were well schooled in the occult today we call it 'New Age' teaching. The man at the top who planned it (or at least who put the plan into execution) was a former Jesuit professor at Ingelstadt University in Bavaria. His name was Adam Weishaupt. He used his Jesuit training to shape what he called the 'Illuminati,' which was Latin for 'enlightened ones, or illuminated ones.'

"The Jesuit order was founded by Ignatius Loyola in 1540. They functioned really as a military order to defend the Papacy. The order was built around absolute obedience and submission to the Pope and, of course, to the General of the order. However, the fall of the city of Constantinople in 1453 had brought Greek culture to the West as streams of Greek-speaking refugees had been forced to flee that city. With them came manuscripts and a new knowledge of ancient Greece and Greek philosophy.

"The idea of Democracy had been developed in ancient Athens, and this idea began to circulate in Europe. It was directly opposed to the idea that monarchs enjoyed a 'divine right' to rule others. These democratic views also directly opposed the idea of a Papal right to rule others. Freedom of religion, then, began to be popularized.

"And because the Scriptures were being published by the new printing presses throughout Europe, more and

more people saw the discrepancies between the Bible and Roman Catholic teaching. A great many sincere Christians had believed that the Church was God's organization on earth regardless of its corruption. They regretted the corruption, but they merely regretted that God had chosen corrupt Popes and wealthy Cardinals to rule in the Church. Most did not question the Pope's 'divine right' to rule. "But all of these events were leading to a massive change in the Christian world. This change affected people in either of two ways. Some, like the Protestants, tried to set up a better, more democratic form of Christianity, ruled not by one man, but by elders or by the congregations themselves. Others, however, sought an alternative to Christianity itself, seeking 'lost knowledge' from the distant past that might empower them to overthrow the Pope and Christ Himself. This second path became the foundation of the modern occult, the new power of the second beast in Revelation 13.

In verse 3 of Rev. 13, we were told that the one of the heads of the beast was wounded fatally, at least it appeared that way. This is said before we're told in verse 5 that power was given to the beast 1260 days, or years. We just read in Daniel 7 that the "little horn," or the beast here in Rev. 13, would prevail over the saints of the most high until Ancient of days would come, which we interpreted to mean the first resurrection. It appears logical to me, after doing more study, that rather than the beast being killed and revived before the 1260 years began, it would be at the end of the 1260 years, and then when revived, it continues to prevail against the saints of the most high until the second coming of Christ. If I am correct, then, this fatal wound would have to come at the end of the 1260 years which takes us to the French Revolution. Prior to the revolution, France was probably the strongest Catholic nation on earth, both from the standpoint of military strength and of adherents' zeal for the Church. The reason for this fatal wound is given in Rev. 13:10. The Catholic Church had certainly been guilty of forcing its adherents into captivity to the Church through the element of fear. Untold thousands, or even millions, had been killed for their failure to agree with the Church. This fatal wound is God's judgment of the Church for these sins. The Church had to suffer the same that it had caused to be done to the people.

Before we take a look at the second beast portrayed in chapt. 13, we need to take a little closer look at some other things that were happening prior to the French Revolution. It has long been man's goal to be God like and to rule over other men. Part of the deception by the serpent over Eve was that he told her, "**For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil.**" (Gen. 3:5) This was part of the enticement to get her to eat of the for-bidden fruit and to give it to her husband as well. As we have already discussed concerning Nimrod, we're told in Gen. 11:4, "**And they said, Go to, let us build us a city and a tower, whose top may reach unto heaven; and let us make us a name, lest we be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth.**" The Hebrew word for "name" is "Shem." "Shem", the son of Noah, happened to be the person who had authority from God to be ruling at that time. Nimrod was rebelling against Shem and yet was wanting to establish himself in the same position. Had they been able to carry out their plan, things would have been very different for God said in verse 6, "**and this they begin to do: and now nothing will be restrained from them, which they have imagined to do.**" Nimrod apparently was close to learning secrets that God has withheld from man to this point and God is saying that if he was allowed to attain to the goal that he had set out to reach, nothing would then be restrained from him, thus God confounded their language and whatever secrets that Nimrod and his people were close to discovering remains a secret yet today.

At the time prior to the French Revolution, there were several organizations in addition to the Roman Catholic Church that were set on man bringing the Kingdom of God to the earth that they might rule it. Some were somewhat secret, other were not. Of course, most notable among them was the Roman Catholic Church which openly taught that God had given it authority to rule the world. The Church based its claim on a supposed "apostolic succession" from Peter.

One of the challengers to this rule was what was and is called the Dragon Court. The members of this Court were European royal families who claimed a "messianic-bloodline," based on a supposed physical descent from Jesus through Mary Magdalene. We don't always see names of this type of organization, but we can and do see their works. In recent years we have seen movies and stories, such as those about Nostradamus, that are really mind conditioning propaganda pieces sponsored by such organizations. By mixing a little bit of truth with a lot of fiction, this group believes that they are descended directly from Jesus

and his brother James who is supposed to be Joseph of Arimathea. We know from history that Joseph was exiled in Britain and that his descendants married into the line of the kings of Europe which is truth, but that James and Joseph were the same is not. Another falsehood is that Jesus did not die on the cross, but rather married Mary Magdalene and had two sons, one of which was also named Jesus, who later received the Davidic Crown Prince's title of 'Justus.' There are 33 "Holy Grail" bloodline Royal Houses of Europe who lay claim to this divine right to rule. It is hoped by this group that their story outdoes the Vatican's claim of apostolic succession from Peter, since it makes no claim of direct bloodline descent from Peter.

Another powerful challenger organization is the Masonic Order. They wield great power in world affairs and are best known for sponsoring the French Revolution in 1789-1793. Most of us are somewhat familiar with local Masonic lodges, but are totally unfamiliar with the organization as a whole and their goal of world rule. While you won't necessarily find this in the lower order of Masonism, in the higher orders gnosticism plays a very large part in their beliefs.

Though there are several smaller organizations, the last major player we will list is Jewish Messianism. These people believe that they are chosen to rule the world. Their power in past centuries was largely limited by the Roman Church, but certain wealthy Jews attained great power over the various European monarchs by means of monetary loans. This power eventually frightened the monarchs, and one by one the nations of Europe expelled all Jews, the majority having to pay for the deeds of the few. In the 1800's, largely through the influence of a new Jewish banking house of the House of Rothschild, Jews were given freedom as citizens. From then on, their proportion of power has increased steadily to the point where they are today the dominant though not the only power. Jewish messianism has received huge support from the Protestant evangelical movements.

The one spirit that permeates all of the above to one degree or another, which gives all these messianic movements a common thread, is their obsession with the occult. We could spend a great amount of time just skimming the surface of what these organizations have done, are doing, and have planned, but it is not for the faint heart-ed. We will explain a little more as to why we have brought these subjects up in our next lesson as we continue in Rev. 13, but I think that even this much will help us understand better a lot of the propaganda in the form of "entertainment," in movies, books, TV shows, etc. that we are being deluged with right now. "Harry Potter," "National Treasure," "The Da Vinci Code," and the Nostrodamus movies are all examples of this type of mind control. Many of the Disney movies that are continually promoting magic have their effect. I'm not telling anyone what they can or cannot watch, read, or listen to, but we need to be aware that there is an agenda behind all of this and why.

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From: Newsletter Issue 1403

We want to continue our study of Revelation 13 in this issue. We studied the first 10 verses last issue in which John saw a beast with seven heads and ten horns, with crowns upon its horns and the name of blasphemy upon its heads, come up out of the sea. We interpreted this beast to be the Roman Empire as extended through the "little horn" of Daniel 7, or the Roman Catholic Church. This beast had all of the characteristics of all four of the beasts that Daniel saw in Dan. 7 which we interpreted to be the leadership of the four empires in the Babylonian succession of empires. We're told that the last beast, or the Roman Empire, which John calls a dragon, is providing the power for this beast. Further descriptions of this beast and its activities clearly identifies it with the Roman Catholic Church. Again, this is not an indictment against individual Catholics, as many are good Christian people, but rather it is an indictment of the corporate entity, or organizational structure, that refuses to be in submission to Christ. The time of this beast is divided into two phases, the first being the 1260 years from Emperor Justinian, who rewrote all of Roman law that allowed the rise in power, both civil and ecclesiastical, of the Church, to the French Revolution. The second phase then runs from the French Revolution until the return of Christ. I believe it was during, or immediately following, the French Revolution that the beast received its fatal wound and then was revived. This takes us to our study this lesson.

However, we might need to mention one other organization that played a major part in the Revolution, though not so much in the public eye. This is the “Society of Jesus,” or the Jesuits. As we said in our last lesson, this organization was formed by Ignatius Loyola in 1540. In his book, *The Jesuits*, p. 162, Malachi Martin, himself a Jesuit, wrote the following: “And so was born what can be rightly called Jesuitism, the complete subjugation of all a man is, thinks, feels, and does to a practical ideal achievable in the world around him, in absolute obedience and submission to the mind and decisions of the Roman Pope, the Vicar of Christ.”

Ultimately there was only one sin to a Jesuit to disobey an order. Martin again writes on p.196, “Every Superior was to be obeyed as the representative of Christ. Obeying this representative, you were obeying Christ; you were doing the will of Christ.” There were three grades in the Jesuit Order under the Father-General. They were the Lay Brothers, the Spiritual Coadjutors, and the Professed Fathers. To advance in rank one had to be found “worthy,” that is, he had to prove that he was really under the mind-control of his masters in the upper grades. They were required to take certain vows as they rose in rank in the Order. The fourth vow was taken only by the Professed Fathers. This vow has been made a part of the Congressional Record of Feb. 15, 1913. I want to quote a portion to give you an idea of why it played a part in the French Revolution. It is quoted from the book, *the suppressed Truth about the Assassination of Abraham Lincoln* by Burke McCarty. “I do further promise and declare that I will, when opportunity presents, make and wage relentless war, secretly or openly, against all heretics, Protestants, and Liberals, as I am directed to do to extirpate and exterminate them from the face of the whole earth, and that I will spare neither sex, age nor condition, and that I will hang, waste, boil, flay, strangle and bury alive these infamous heretics; rip up the stomachs and wombs of their women and crush their infants’ heads against the wall, in order to annihilate forever their execrable race. “That when the same cannot be done openly, I will secretly use the poison cup, the strangulation cord, the steel of the poniard, or the leaden bullet, regardless of the honor, rank, dignity or authority of the person or persons whatsoever may be their condition in life, either public or private, as I at any time may be directed so to do by any agent of the Pope or Superior of the Brotherhood of the Holy Faith of the Society of Jesus.”

Obviously, this terrible vow made the monarchs of Europe nervous, when they realized that they could be assassinated by the Jesuits if they did not remain loyal to the Papacy. They were a very powerful tool in the hand of the Papacy as they sought to retain power over these monarchs. So one by one, in the 1700’s, the nations of Europe began to expel the Jesuits. Portugal was first, then France did so in 1762. Spain was next in 1767 followed by Naples, Parma, and Austria.

A new Pope had to be selected in 1769. The Bourbon family, or the monarchical family of France, made it clear that they would not accept a new pope, unless he agreed to disband his army, the Jesuit Order. England had broken from the Papacy in 1534 and for fear that more states might do the same, agreement was made. The Church had lost a huge power struggle. The new Pope reluctantly abolished the Jesuits on July 21, 1773. This, of course, made the Jesuits very angry with the Pope and the Pope angry with the French. Then the French Revolution (from 1789-1793) overthrew the Roman Church in France. I believe this then to be the fatal wound received by the beast in Rev. 13:3.

To try to put everything in order we need to read the rest of Rev. 13 (11-18). This second beast comes out of the earth, i.e. out of the Roman Empire. It has two horns like a lamb but speaks as a dragon, i.e. it is a dragon in lamb’s clothing so to speak. We’re told in verse 12 that this beast exercised all the power of the first beast, but then caused the earth to worship the first beast whose deadly wound was healed. We need to look at some more history to understand this. We said in our last issue that a man by the name of Adam Weishaupt, a Jesuit trained professor of cannon law, headed up the plan for the French Revolution. He founded the Illuminati organization in 1776. He became a Freemason shortly after in 1777. At the Congress of Willhelmsbad in 1782, where representatives of all the secret societies were represented, “the alliance between Illuminism and Freemasonry was finally sealed” according to Nesta Webster in her book, *World Revolution*. How Weishaupt’s plans were discovered in 1785 is told by Nesta Webster in her book, *Secret Societies and Subversive Movements*, p. 235. “An evangelist preacher and Illuminatus named Lanze had been sent in July 1785 as an emissary of the Illuminati in Silesia, but on his journey he was struck down by lightning. The instructions of the Order were found on him, and as a result its intrigues were conclusively revealed to the Government of Bavaria. A searching enquiry followed, the houses of Zwack and Bassus were raided, and it was then that the documents and other incriminating evidence were seized and made public

under the name of The Original Writings of the Order of the Illuminati (1787.”

The Order was officially suppressed, but it merely went underground and the French Revolution continued, as planned, a few years later.

The question arises as to who funded the Revolution? According to Canadian Naval Commander William Guy Carr in his book, *Pawns in the Game*, Weishaupt was funded by Moses Mendelssohn, a very wealthy Jewish banker in his acquaintance. There seems to be no doubt the Jewish bankers would have benefited from the over-throw of the Church in France as well as giving them financial control over Freemasonry in Europe. Quoting from Dr. Stephen Jones, The Jewish Encyclopedia's article on Freemasonry says, “Jews have been most conspicuous in connection with Freemasonry in France since the Revolution.” Anyone who has studied Albert Pike's *Morals and Dogma* can see plainly that the upper degrees of the Scottish Rite (from the 26th to the 32nd degree) teach directly out of the Cabbala, the mystical Jewish writings. In other words the plain goal of Masonry is to Judaize non-Jews.

During the 1700's it was evident that the European royalty moved quickly to place them-selves at the head of Masonry in their respective nations in order to use its power in their favor and prevent it from being subversive to their own position. The exception to this was in France. The chief rival to the throne in France was Louis Philippe Joseph, Duc D' Orleans and it was he who was the head of the Grand Orient Lodge of France. He was used by higher powers to legitimize the execution of his relative, King Louis XVI on Jan. 21, 1793. However, these same higher powers had the Duc executed later in the same year.

The suppression of the Jesuits in 1773 did not mean that they ceased to exist, rather they were just driven underground. The Pope that suppressed them was poisoned a year later. Two non-Catholic sovereigns, Frederick the Great of Prussia and Catherine of Russia took the Jesuits in and protected them. This suppression had a profound impact on the Roman Church. It represented a major defeat, it felt, by monarchs influenced by the Masonic Order. Also significant, in addition to the army of Jesuits being gone from the Church, this army of Ex-Jesuits now had to do something to survive as an underground Order. They apparently allied themselves with Weishaupt and Freemasonry in an effort to exact their revenge upon the Roman Church.

To get some idea as to how all of these individuals and organizations came together in the French Revolution, I am quoting Dr. Stephen Jones, “Frederick of Prussia benefitted by disrupting France, which was his enemy. The Jesuits and the Vatican benefitted by punishing the French King for his role in forcing the suppression of the Jesuits. They also poisoned the Pope and later led the French revolutionists to confiscate all Church property in France and execute 30,000 Roman priests. Such is the Jesuit revenge. The Jewish bankers, who helped to finance the effort, found it in their interest to weaken both the monarchs and the Church in order to enhance their own power and influence. The Freemasons themselves were attracted to the plot because they too wanted to destroy the power of the Church and the Monarchs.” Napoleon Bonaparte was the best military general to come out of the French Revolution in the early 1790's. At the time, Pope Pius VI was furious when the French overthrew the Church in that country and he retaliated by massacring as many French people in Italy as possible, along with many Italians who likewise wanted to be free of papal dominion. King Louis XVI attempted to protect papal power in France, but he was executed. The Pope in turn excommunicated the entire nation and continued to kill French people in Italy. The French then prepared to invade Italy. The job fell to Napoleon. The French army advanced on Rome. The Pope, fearful of losing everything, signed a treaty. This amounted to a complete overthrow of the Pope's rule. This Pope was one of the worst so far as his debauchery was concerned and his two sons whom he had by his sister robbed the Church and the Pope, but the people took all of it back once they had formed a constitutional government. But all of this cast the Pope into a despondency, which amounted almost to idiocy. Finally the governor of Rome informed him officially that the people had taken back their rights and that he was no longer anything in the government. He was taken captive and driven to Tuscany. An earthquake destroyed the convent where he was being held, so he was moved again. However, he continued to intrigue against France to regain his power. It appeared for a while he might succeed, but the French prevailed and he was sent into exile at Valens, in Dauphiny. He died there in 1799, being robbed one last time by one of his illegitimate sons.

Once Napoleon had conquered Rome and reduced the Pope to a prisoner of war, he decided that he still needed a Pope to crown him as Emperor. Cardinal Barnabas Louis Chiaramonti became the next Pope on March 4, 1800, taking the name of Pius VII. Napoleon allowed this new Pope to return to Rome and signed a concordat with him in 1801. In this concordat, the Pope gave the French government rights to make the

priests take an oath of loyalty to the Emperor, but it also gave the Pope the right to appoint bishops in France. This latter clause was used to resurrect the papacy and overthrow France once again.

The Pope instigated French bishops then to weaken the restrictions of the concordat, and even reasserting the rights of the Bourbon line to return to the throne of France. Napoleon's response was simply to ask the Pope to come to France to consecrate him as Emperor. This coronation took place in 1804 in Paris.

In 1810 the Pope began to transfer the Papal home from Rome to Paris. About 3000 boxes from the Vatican archives were moved to Paris and carefully cataloged by the occultic Mason, Charles Nodier. The Pope himself moved to Fontainebleau in France in 1812.

One of Napoleon's primary motives in this was not merely to gain power over the papacy, but to find records of the whereabouts of the treasure that the Goths had plundered from Rome in 410 A.D. This included the treasure that Rome had taken from Jerusalem in 70 A.D. The Goths had taken the treasure to the southern part of France near the Pyrenees Mountains, where it had been concealed somewhere in the silver mines of the region. Napoleon wanted that treasure, even as Nazi Germany wanted it 140 years later during World War II. But only a portion of it has surfaced over the years.

Napoleon then invaded Russia, where his army was destroyed. In 1814 he fell from power. The Papacy, traumatized by their near death experience, reinstated the Jesuits as their papal army. Then the Congress of Vienna met to redraw the map of Europe. In 1815 they restored the crown to the French Kings (Louis XVIII), and the Italian Papal States to the Pope. The Pope again assumed civil power. The papacy with its Jesuit army came back to life. Thus, the "fatal wound" was healed (Rev. 13:3)

The second beast then, the dragon in sheep's clothing, is not a singular corporate entity, or organization, like the first beast was, but rather is this spirit of messianism, mixed with the occult, inherit in several organizations each intent on their ruling the world. This group is referred to by historians as "The Holy Alliance." While the elements of this group all first joined together to try to destroy the Roman Church, they all did so with the thought or hope that they might destroy each other as well. However, when the revolution was over this "Alliance" restored the Papacy to power, even returning some the papal states to the Papacy so that it once again had at least some temporal power and authority. As time passed, the Roman Church again lost these states to the new Kingdom of Italy in 1860 and never recovered them again. It had to be content with ruling nations by the power of religion. Still, this "Alliance" caused men to worship the first beast as before.

The biggest winner, or perhaps the only winner, in all this was the Jewish bankers that financed it all. N. M. Rothschild, founded in 1798 by Nathan Rothschild, quadrupled his fortune in the fall of Napoleon, promoting him to become a major monetary power-house.

(Re-read Rev. 13:13, 14) Verse 13 is symbolic, but an event occurred that gives us a literal fulfillment as well. I personally was not really aware of this until I became friends with a Catholic priest several years ago. Even though he belongs to a group that believes that the current Papacy is fraudulent and that the real Pope is another man, he sends me material quite often that without exception dwells to a certain extent on this event. In 1917 in Fatima, Portugal the most important sign of the century was said to have been seen by 70,000 people. The whole story can be read online at www.fatima.org. This started with three children who began having apparitions of Mary on May 13 with a message for mankind. The culmination happened on Oct. 13 quite literally with a great sign of fire coming down out of heaven. According to the website, "On October 13th, 1917, in the presence of 70,000 eye witnesses, a miracle was worked in the sky above Fatima at the exact moment and in the precise spot that the children had announced earlier. Witnesses recounted that the sun appeared to actually 'dance' in the sky and seemed to fall to the ground before resuming its normal place in the heavens." Unquestionably, something happened. It would be hard to fool 70,000 people. However, the astronomers noticed nothing unusual. The sun continued its journey as it always had in ages past. It could have been a mass vision, but it was not an astronomical event. The heart of the message that was received by these children was in the form of three "secrets." The third secret has not been revealed as of yet, but the first secret was, "a horrifying vision of hell." This is in accordance with Roman Catholic doctrine. The second was "Russia's consecration and the conversion of 'that poor nation' to the Catholic Faith." This is consistent with Roman Catholic political policy.

To understand this we need to know that the Russian church is Orthodox and the Orthodox Church had split from Rome over the word filioque back in 1054 A.D. Since that time Rome has continually attempted to

assert its authority over the Orthodox Church. When Constantinople fell in 1453, the headquarters of the Orthodox Church moved to Moscow. When Russia fell to the forces of Lenin in 1917, the headquarters moved to Kosovo in Serbia. Rome has consistently made war on the Orthodox Church, killing millions of them in Croatia during World War II, all with the blessing of the Pope and the bishops. This, I'm sure, had much to do with our bombing of Kosovo in the 1990's, something I never understood until studying for this lesson.

However, out of all this has come one more "image" The Pilgrim Virgin Statue of Our Lady of Fatima, blessed by the Pope in 1967. The Pope is still trying to "consecrate" Russia. This means that the Roman Church is still trying to destroy the Russian Orthodox Church there and re-place it with the Roman Catholic Church, simply a typical power struggle.

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From: Newsletter Issue 1404

We want to continue our lesson in Revelation 13 starting with verse 15, "And he had power to give life unto the image of the beast that the image of the beast should both speak, and cause that as many as would not worship the image of the beast should be killed." Whether we see a literal fulfillment of this remains yet to be seen. However, we do know that this image, the Cult of Fatima, has been given life by the Roman Church. The "life" of this image has already been a major force behind the papal anti-communist effort of the 20th century. In the name of anti-communism, Pope Pius XI signed the Lateran Treaty with Mussolini and the Concordat with Hitler in 1933. He felt that they Hitler in particular might successfully overthrow communism in Russia, giving their ally the Roman Church authority to rule behind the scenes.

In Avro Manhattan's book, Vatican Imperialism in the Twentieth Century, p. 68, we read, "In June, 1941, Hitler invaded soviet Russia. The Virgin's prophecy was being fulfilled to the letter. Catholic volunteers joined the Nazi armies from Italy, France, Ireland, Belgium, Holland, Latin America, the U.S.A., and Portugal. Spain sent her Blue Division. Many of the volunteers went to fight the soviets, prompted by ideological hatred, but most by their desire to become the chosen instruments for the fulfillment of the Fatima prophecy. "In October, 1941, while the Nazi army rolled toward Moscow, Pius XII, speaking to Portugal, urged Catholics to pray for the speedy realization of the Lady of Fatima's promises. The following year, 1942, after a speech by Hitler in which the Fuehrer had declared that Soviet Russia had definitely been defeated, Pope Pius XII, in a Jubilee message over the radio, fulfilled the first injunction of the Virgin, and 'consecrated the whole world' to the Immaculate Heart of Mary." Of course, we know that the German army lost in Russia, much the same way that Napoleon's army lost. When it became clear toward the end of World War II that the Pope's allies were going to lose the war, Pope Pius XII stepped up his efforts to make friends with the winning side.

Getting back to Rev. 13, we mentioned that the winner of the Revolution brought on by the second beast was the Jewish bankers, the financiers of the Holy Alliance in 1815, specifically the House of Rothschild. The Rothschilds can be credited with inventing our modern international banking system. (Re-read verses 16, 17) This portrays the beast in its economic mode. Today we have people looking for laws requiring tattoos and more recently with the rise of computer technology, some insist that computer chips will be implanted in the forehead or hand, without which no one can buy or sell anything.

I think we can find the answer to this in Scripture. The mark of the beast is no more a literal mark than the mark of God in our foreheads. (Read Deut. 6W5-8) This is the original "sign" in the law, indicating that the law was to be written on our hearts. More specifically, the law was to govern what we do with our hand and how we think in our minds (foreheads). The opposite of this is the mark of the beast, i.e. lawlessness, but more specifically "the love of money." Paul tells us in I Tim. 6W1M this is "the root of all evil." It is not a physical mark, but rather the condition of the heart. It is not money itself, but the "love of money."

The currencies of the world today are owned by central banks and represent debt notes from those who have borrowed the money into circulation. Money is not new, but the monetary system that has developed

since the Holy Alliance through the Rothschilds is the mark. It really was not until this alliance formed that central banks enlisted that had the control of all currency that they do today. No one today is allowed to buy or sell without using their money. Since money is a bank note which they create, it is specifically their mark. If anyone attempts to create or use another currency, it is called counterfeiting.

(Read verse 18) The number 666 is mentioned twice in Scripture. (Read II Chron. 9:13) Quoting from Dr. Stephen Jones, "It is plain that in II Chron. 9:13 the number 666 is associated with gold, which is also used as money. Certainly, this statement has an economic color to it, even as we see in John's reference. Thus, when we look at John's statement in its natural flow of the revelation of history, it is remarkable that it would coincide precisely with the rise of the international banking system as invented and developed by the family of Rothschilds. It happened at the same time that the beast was healed of its deadly wound in 1815 after the downfall of Napoleon. If there is one thing that stands out in a study of Church history, it is that the Roman Church loves money. Its entire system of penance, indulgences, and payment for masses for the dead, is based upon the love of money. Cardinals' hats were regularly sold to raise money for the papal coffers. Popes themselves regularly bribed their way into office. Catholic authors have written extensively of this. But Rome is not the only beast that loves money. The "Holy Alliance" is an alliance between two beasts who love money and who rule by its power. Each has its "turf." It is not so much the USE of money, but the LOVE of money that determines if one has the mark of the beast. When everything one does is for the sake of money, it is a "mark of the beast" upon one's hand. When one constantly schemes how to make more money, it is a "mark of the beast" upon one's forehead. It does not matter if men justify their greed by saying that it is for the advancement of the Christian faith or the Kingdom of God. It is still a mark of the beast and the opposite of God's law, which tells us to love God and our neighbor as ourselves. After thinking about our last issue, I feel that I did not make it clear what the image of Rev. 13:14 really was. We discussed "Holy Alliance" which included the Roman Catholic Church, the Masonic Order, the Dragon Court, the Jewish bankers, and others and discussed the fact that they all had a great love of money. However, I did not make it clear that money is really the image that verse 14 speaks of. As we continue our study, this image will be mentioned again and I need for us remember what it is and that the mark of the beast is the love of money. We have all heard the term, "money talks" and it is the "love of money" that made all of these organizations ally with each other though each sought the destruction of the other.

I have said that most of Revelation up to chapter 18 has already happened. Chapter 14 is an exception to this. This chapter speaks of the manifestation of the overcomers, or the sons of God. This manifestation is what will ultimately bring about the destruction of the Babylonian world system. Daniel spoke of it as the stone cut out without hands striking the metal image of Nebuchadnezzar's dream and totally destroying the image.

(Read Rev. 14:1-5) In verse 1, the original texts say, "having His name and His Father's name written in their foreheads." This 144,000 represent the overcomers, not the church in general. I believe the number to be symbolic meaning that it represents all of the overcomers. The number "12" represents governmental perfection, so to me 12 x 12,000 represents the complete, or perfect number of overcomers, not literally 144,000. We have discussed in the past the difference between the Bride of Christ and the church. Though it is commonly taught that the church is the bride, nowhere in Scripture is this taught. The bride is Israel as stated in Hosea 2. Also we have discussed that being part of Israel does not mean that only those who are genetically of the tribes are Israel. Only "if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise," (Gal. 3:29) and in the context that this is written, it applies whether one is genetically a part of Israel or not. We need to understand that the inheritance is, as Paul says in Rom. 4:13, "For the promise (speaking of the cumulative effect of all the promises to Abraham), that he (Abraham and his seed) should be the heir of the world." Then when we look at the promises of ruler ship to the overcomers in Rev. 2 and 3, and the promise in Rev. 20:4 that the over-comers who have part in the first resurrection will be the ones to rule and reign with Christ for 1,000 years, and put everything together, I think we have to conclude that it is the overcomers that are Israel that is to be the Bride of Christ.

With that in mind, it is interesting to me that the 144,000 here are spoken of in the feminine sense. In verse 4, the word "with" in the statement, "These are they which were not defiled with women" seems to indicate that it might be men that were not defiled by women. However, "with" is from the Greek word meta which

means “among, or in common with” indicating that these are ones that have been redeemed from the earth among women who have not been de-filed, for they are virgins. Men are not talked of as virgins in Scripture, so it appears to me that John is seeing these people in a feminine sense which goes along with them being the Bride of Christ. Whether we are men or women, we are a part of the Bride, the one called on to bring the Manchild to birth. Yet we are also called to rule with Christ in His throne as part of His Body. In that role, we are all male, whether we are men or women physically. Gal. 3:28 says, “There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus.”

Verse 4 of Rev. 14 tells us “These were redeemed from among men, being the firstfruits unto God and to the Lamb.” In the first two harvest feasts that God commanded Israel to observe, Passover and Pentecost, the people were not allowed to harvest their crops until they had first brought the firstfruits of their harvest to God. At Passover, it was the barley harvest, and they were to bring the first fruits, or the first ripe grain to the priest and the priest was to offer it as a wave offering to God. After this, the harvest could begin in earnest. The same thing was required of the wheat harvest at Pentecost, except that instead of waving the bare grain, the wheat offering was to be ground into flour and baked with leaven into loaves of bread and these were to be offered as a wave offering. These firstfruits in verse 4 are the first of the crop of man, so to speak. Later in the chapter, John sees what he refers to as reaping the earth. These firstfruits are offered without leaven, vs. 5 says “in their mouth was found no guile, for they are without fault before the throne of God.” These are the overcomers, those who participate in the first resurrection.

(Read Rev. 14:6, 7) Gospel means “good news.” Judgment, too many, does not sound like good news as most people associate “judgment” with torment and pain. That is not the picture we see here. Isa. 26:9 tells us, “For when thy judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness.” For those who love God, this is a day to look forward to. It will be good news when God’s judgments are in the earth. (Read Psa. 67) This is the reason to worship God, out of love, not because we are forced to under threat of death, or torture.

(Read Rev. 14:8) This is the first time we find Babylon called by name in the book of Revelation. Remember that we have discussed that Babylon is man’s system with economic, political and religious arms. It is to each of these that the judgments of God are directed. Babylon will fall through the preaching of these manifested over-comers to the world.

(Read Rev. 14:9-12) However, there will still be those who refuse to worship the true God. To those, we are given the message of the third angel. If man continues to worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark on their forehead, or in their hand, then the message is that they shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God. If we understand that there are two resurrections, we understand that this message is for those who are alive at the end of this age at the time of the first resurrection. It is not for those who have lived and died in ages past, for their judgment comes at the time of their resurrection.

It is hard to imagine that anyone who has seen the wonders of God at the return of Christ, including the resurrection of the overcomers, would still worship the Babylonian beast and worship money or material things. This is the same thing as worshipping the golden calf that the Israelites did while they waited for Moses to meet God on Mt. Sinai. History has taught us however, that there are people who, in spite of experiencing wondrous miracles, refuse to believe and become obedient to God. We can expect the same following the first resurrection.

I have stated in the past that there are basically only two religions in the world. One worships self always craving money and material things. Everything its adherents do is to either curry favor to protect them from their fears or to enhance their material possessions. The other loves Jesus Christ above all else. Everything its adherents do is out of love for the Saviour.

It will be interesting to see those manifest as overcomers as they manifest the glory and bear witness of the mind and character of Christ through their own mind and character. People will see Christ in them as the disciples saw the Father in Christ and came to know Him. (Read John 14:8-14) Isaiah prophesied of that time. (Read Isa. 2:2, 3)

Getting back to Rev. 14, the third angel says that those who still worship the beast and its image will have to drink of the wine of the wrath of God. This is symbolic. These won't have to drink wine. They will have to take, or experience the wrath of God. However, God is not like we humans. He is sovereign, so does not suffer temper tantrums or fits of frustrations. His wrath is a judicial wrath, not an emotional wrath. Keep in mind that God's judgments are restorative in nature, not destructive. The angel says that this wine will be poured into His cup of indignation without dilution. This is another way of saying that a person still worshipping the beast and its image will receive the full judgment of God.

The angel then says that that person will be tormented with fire and brimstone. Instead of that person being roasted with fire and burning sulfur, the Bible speaks of fire as a cleansing agent and sulfur is likewise known as a cleansing agent. Before the advent of antibiotics, sulfur was used to cleanse wounds and kill bacteria. Refer-ring to God's law, Moses, in Deut. 33:2, 3, says, "from his (God's) right hand went a fiery law for them. Yea, he loved the people; all his saints are in thy hand." God's law is a fire. In Deut. 4:24 we're told "The LORD thy God is a consuming fire." So rather than the torment being something doing physical harm to a person, it is really judgment by God's law, which we have said, is restorative in nature. Deut. 33:2, 3 then pictures the fire of God coming from His right hand, the place of ruler ship, and all of His saints are in His hand. It pictures the overcomers as the manifested sons of God administering the divine law to the world according to the mind of Christ. This is the meaning of the "fire" as God intended it from the beginning.

As we continue in Rev. 14:10, we're told that these individuals will be tormented "in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb." It is amazing to me that some people take this literally believing that God takes pleasure in watching people being tormented in fire. And yet they profess that God is a loving God. Nowhere in God's law is there a judgment requiring torment. This verse simply means that these unrepentant people will be tormented by the very presence of the holy angels and the Lamb. Angels are not necessarily spirit beings, but are messengers which can be man. These overcomers are to be sent as messengers, so it could be that they are the angels spoken of here. They are to manifest Christ in them. Matt. 8:29 and Mark 5:7 are examples of evil spirits being tormented by the presence of Christ. There are two Greek words in the New Testament that refer to Christ as a Lamb. One is amnos and is only used to refer to Christ. John 1:29 and 36 are examples of this. The other word is arnion which can refer to Christ alone or the body of Christ. It is found in John 21:15 where Christ tells Peter to "feed my lambs." It is the only word used in the book of Revelation and we find it used both to refer to Christ alone (Rev. 5:6) and also to the body of Christ which could apply here in Rev. 14:10.

These unrepentant sinners cannot enter into God's rest that is promised to those who trust in Him, therefore they have no rest day or night.

Verse 12 says, "Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus." To be among these overcomers in the first resurrection is the purpose of the saints who have endured hardship and tribulation "that they might obtain a better resurrection." (Heb. 11:35) They are the first to be raised from the dead and the first to be manifested as sons of God.

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From: Newsletter Issue 1405

In our last lesson, we were studying Rev. 14 and had gone through vs. 12. (Read Rev. 14:13) It is often taught that there is just one resurrection and when that resurrection happens, there will be no more death. I believe this is false teachings as Revelation makes it clear that there are two resurrections as do several other Scriptures. We're told in I Cor. 15:26, "**The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death.**" Rev. 20:4, 5 tells us that the age between the resurrections is 1000 years. So there will be people dying during this thousand years. However, Isaiah, prophesying of this tells us in Isa. 65:20, "**There shall be no more thence an infant of days, nor an old man that hath not filled his days: for the child shall die an hundred years old; but**

the sinner being an hundred years old shall be accursed.” So the life span during this period will be extended considerably. With this said, verse 13 tells us **“Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth,”** i.e. those who die during this 1000 year period. I take this to mean that between the first and second resurrections, there will be no changes like will be witnessed at the first resurrection until the second resurrection. Incidentally, when Paul described this change in I Cor. 15:51, 52, I found his description quite interesting. **“Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.”** The word “moment” is from the Greek word *atomo*. The Greeks invented the word “atom” to describe the smallest particle of matter. So Paul is saying that all, the dead that are resurrected and the living that will be changed, will be changed in their atoms.

Those who die in the Lord during that time will rest from their labors and their works do follow them, i.e. they will be rewarded for their good works when they are resurrected.

(Read Rev. 14:14-16) This is an obvious reference to Jesus Christ, but it could also have a secondary meaning referring to the body of Christ. As we have discussed before, the order of a harvest is to harvest the first fruits first which are offered to God. Then the general harvest follows. The parable of the tares in Matt. 13:24-30 (Read) tells us that the tares are not to be taken out before the harvest, but then the tares are to be removed first and bundled to be burned. The tares referred to here is a plant that resembles wheat, in fact it is very difficult to tell it from the wheat until the wheat is ripe. The wheat head will get heavy and drop over whereas the tare, which has a small black poisonous grain will remain upright. I don't think we should necessarily think of the non-Christians as tares, but rather the doctrine of true Christians and these tares are very similar, but the doctrine of the tare is a dangerous poisonous doctrine that will fool many people until it is mature.

In explaining the parable of the tares to His disciples, Christ said in Matt. 13:39 that the harvest would be at the end of the age. Many people, like me, get impatient and question why is God not returning to earth sooner. If we look at the parable of the tares, we're told that God planted the good seed. The harvest can't happen until all of that seed has had a chance to ripen. We don't know who or where all that good seed is, so we just need to be patient and wait for it all to rip-en. When it is ripe, we're told here in Rev. 14:16 that Christ will reap the harvest.

(Read Rev. 14:17-20) As we have discussed before, the three feasts that God commanded the Israelite men to keep were harvest feasts. Though there is much more meaning attached to each of these feasts than harvest, they are still essentially harvest feasts. Passover or the feast of unleavened bread was the first feast of the year and took place when the barley was ready to harvest. The feast of weeks, later to be known as Pentecost, took place 50 days later at the beginning of the wheat harvest. The feast of in-gathering, or the feast of tabernacles, then took place in the 7th month in which the grapes and anything else that still needed harvesting was harvested. To help us understand Rev. 14 better, we can look at these crops as the different classes (for lack of a better word) of people in their relation to our God. The barley would represent the over-comers, the people who will be first to experience immortality, i.e. the first resurrection. At the feast of un-leavened bread, nothing leavened was allowed to be eaten for seven days. Leaven is often represented as sin. As Rev. 14 speaks first of the manifestation of the sons of God, or the firstfruits unto God, this barley company are the first to be harvested in God's overall harvest. Please understand with me that these people are people who have earned this privilege. We are not talking about justification, normally referred to as salvation. Nobody can earn justification. It is free for the taking through the sacrifice Christ made on the cross. The reward for the overcomer is responsibility in the Kingdom of God plus being among the first to be resurrected. The wheat represents the nominal Christian. One's name is written in the book of life through the gift of justification, but that person has not taken the responsibility of Christ like life seriously. The offering of this harvest is loaves of bread made from wheat but with leaven added. As you know, once leaven, or yeast, is introduced into bread dough it works until it is in all the dough and cannot be separated out. The only thing that stops its action is fire, or the baking of the bread. Sin works the same way in a person's life and the only thing that will stop it is God's fire, or His law. We see this in Rev. 14 as the third angel warns against worshipping the beast and its image. God's judgment, fire (law) and brimstone (cleansing) are the result.

The grapes represent the non-Christian individuals and nations. The primary use of the grapes was to make wine from them, thus not only did they need to be harvested, but they need to be pressed to separate the juice from the pulp. Because the mind of Christ is very often misunderstood, many people look at these last 4 verses of Rev. 14 as portraying extreme violence. We need first to understand that it is God's intent that all men will ultimately be a part of the Kingdom of God. This final harvest is no different from the first two harvests in that the wine is a part of God's communion table just as is the bread. In these verses, the vines represent the various non-Christian nations. Unlike the grain harvests, the sickle is not the usual harvesting instrument for harvesting grapes. But here we find it to be the instrument of harvest. If you recall in the dream that King Nebuchadnezzar had of the metal image, when the stone cut out without hands struck the image, it continued to grind up the image so that it was only dust that the wind blew away and the stone grew and filled the whole earth. In this harvesting of the grapes with the sickle, the vines are destroyed in the process, i.e. the nations, or vines, are destroyed as all come under the jurisdiction of the King of Kings. The grapes are cast into the winepress of the wrath of God to produce the wine. As we have already mentioned, God's wrath is not like man's wrath. It is not an emotional response to mental or physical trauma. God's wrath is judicial wrath, i.e. is God's judgment based on His law, which we have repeatedly pointed out is restorative in nature. So while one will feel the pressure of the pressing, the wine that results will be good wine.

Verse 20 says, "And the winepress was trodden without the city, and blood came out of the winepress, even unto the horse bridles, by the space of a thousand and six hundred furlongs." This is not talking about literal blood at a depth up to the horse bridle, but rather is symbolic of the wine that comes from the harvest of the nations, i.e. the people of these nations that enter into the Kingdom of God ultimately. Lev. 17:11 says, "For the life of the flesh is in the blood." The word translated "life" here is some-times translated "soul." It is speaking of the person himself, all that makes up that person. So the blood here can be said to represent the souls or lives of men. In Scripture, the number "16" is the number associated with LOVE. The number "100" signifies FULLNESS. So we can say that the number "1600" signifies "the fullness of love." I think we could say that blood, or lives or souls of men comes from the winepress in the fullness of love. This, I believe, is understanding the mind of Christ and His love.

Revelation 15 takes us to another series of judgments that is brought on the Babylonian system. All of the judgments, the seven seals, the seven trumpets and the seven thunders have all been directed toward this system, or succession of empires, but it was not actually named until the last chapter we studied, chapter 14. We have determined that though it began with the kingdom of Babylon and then going through 4 successive empires, it at our time in history represents man's oppressive system of government, though we may see it in different forms, and has a political arm, a religious arm, and an economic arm. Each of these arms are affected by the various judgments we see brought upon it by God. God's way is to be manifested in the overcomers, or the sons of God, and we saw the beginning of this manifestation in chapter 14. Chapter 14 also gave us a prelude to the final judgments and Rev. 15 transitions us into this next series of judgments, the pouring out of the seven last plagues.

(Read Rev. 15) In verse 1, we're told that each of these plagues is filled up with the wrath of God. Remember that we have said that God's wrath is different from man's wrath in that sudden trauma, mental or physical, is not what brings it on. It is not emotional but rather is judicial. It is designed to correct and restore what man is doing to God's ultimate plan for all mankind. Man's ways represent disobedience to God. Thus what God does is represented as His wrath.

We then have a picture of the overcomers. We're told that they had gotten victory over the beast, and over his image and over his mark and over the number of his name. The sea of glass is, I believe, an expansion of the laver in the tabernacle, and of the sea in Solomon's temple. We need to go back and see the purpose of these to understand what is being pictured here. When God instructed Moses to construct the tabernacle, He gave him specific instruction on the construction of the various elements within the tabernacle. (Read Ex. 40:30-32) The purpose of the laver then was for the priests to ceremonially wash themselves before they ministered to God. When Solomon built the temple, he followed the pattern of the tabernacle, but on a much larger scale. (Read I Kings 7:23-39) A bath is approximately 8 gallons, so this begins to give us an idea of the size of this "sea" as it would hold about 16,000 gallons of water. Of course this was not a practical place

for the priests to wash, so he constructed 10 lavers, each holding about 320 gallons of water.

I believe that Rev. 15 is picturing the over-comers, the priests as Rev. 20 calls them, preparing to minister to God. The “sea of glass” means there was no waves, nothing disturbing the water. Waves indicate turmoil. These overcomers are no longer bothered by the turmoil of the worldly ways. “Mingled with fire” indicate cleansing as well. Keep in mind that what John is seeing is through the door that has opened in heaven which we determined in chapter 4 to be the Kingdom of God, so he is seeing all of this from the perspective of the Kingdom.

Moses sang two songs that we have recorded in Scripture. The first was after the Egyptians, who were pursuing them as they left Egypt, were drowned in the Red Sea. (Ex. 15) The second is just before Moses died after leading the children of Israel for 40 years. (Deut. 31) Both are songs of praise of God. John condenses these songs here with these overcomers questioning how anyone could not fear God and glorify His name. Then he says that all nations will come and worship before God, for, he says, “thy judgments are made manifest.” Once the nations know the full judgments of God, John says the overcomers sing with the full assurance that all nations will come before Him and worship Him.

The fact that he is seeing this and he is al-so seeing the seven last plagues at the same time indicates to me that the two are occurring pretty close to the same time. Having said that, there is not unanimous agreement among the commentators, that I study after, as to the timing itself. However, as we get to the latter plagues, they seem to come together into more agreement. Some feel these plagues start with the French Revolution while others feel it starts near the end of the twentieth century or possibly even later. In verse 6, John sees the 7 angels come out of the temple having the seven last plagues and he describes them as being clothed with pure and white linen and having their breasts girded with golden girdles. This indicates that they were ministering as this was the dress of the priests when they were doing ministry work in the tabernacle. The fact that they are ministering and that there are seven angels coming forth indicates a feast which in this case would be symbolic of the Feast of Tabernacles. Following is quotation from *The Temple* by Alfred Edersheim concerning the garments worn:

The priest’s “coat” was woven of one piece, like the seamless robe of the Saviour. As it was close-fitting, the girdle could not, strictly speaking, have been necessary. Hence, its object must chiefly have been symbolical. In point of fact, it may be regarded as the most distinctive priestly vestment, since it was only put on during actual ministration, and put off immediately after-wards. Accordingly, when in Rev. 1:13 the Saviour is seen “in the midst of the golden candle-sticks”, “girt about the paps with a golden girdle,” we are to understand by it that our heavenly High-Priest is there engaged in actual ministry for us. Similarly, the girdle is described as “about the paps,” or (as in Rev. 15:6) about the “breasts,” as both the girdle of the ordinary priest and that on the ephod which the high-priest wore were girded there, and not round the loins. Lastly, the expression “golden girdle” may bear reference to the circumstance that the dress peculiar of the high-priest was called his “golden vestments,” in contradistinction to the “linen vestments,” which he wore on the Day of Atonement.

The offerings that were to be made during the Feast of Tabernacles is given in Numbers 29. The first day 13 bulls were to be offered, 12 on the next day, 11 on the third day and continuing to decrease by 1 each day of the 7 days which makes a total of 70 bulls that were to be offered. Again quoting from Edersheim’s book, these sacrifices were offered, not for Israel, but for the nations of the world. There were seventy bullocks, to correspond to the number of the seventy nations in the world. Quoting from Dr. Stephen Jones *Study of Revelation*, Numbers 29 also shows that the priest offered a drink offering on each of the seven days of Tabernacles. The seven bowls of wine poured out by the seven angels in Rev. 16 fulfill this type and shadow. The seventy bullocks at the same time show the purpose of Tabernacles to be a time of intercession for the nations of the world—not their destruction, as God’s “wrath” is commonly interpreted. The fact that no man was able to enter the temple (vs. 8) until the seven last plagues of the seven angels were fulfilled speaks of the over-comers not being able to access the throne of God directly as Christ was able to do following His resurrection. The Bible speaks of approaching the throne of grace boldly in prayer, and Jesus did this often during His ministry. But once He was resurrected, He went directly into the presence of the Father. Once

resurrected, the overcomers will be able to do the same, but we're told here that this cannot happen until the seven plagues have been fulfilled.

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From: Newsletter Issue 1406

We are ready in our study for Rev. 16. (Read Rev. 16:1, 2) Note that the seven angels were instructed to pour out their vials of the wrath of God upon the earth. Going back to what we learned in Rev. 4, this would mean that it was to be poured out on the non-Israel nations, the nations represented by the 4th beast, or the Roman empire. At this point in my study, I am tending to go with the line of thought that the timing of these seven last plagues probably started with the French Revolution, so this will be the direction that I will pursue. First, however, let's look at where each of the angels with the plagues pour out their vial, or bowls of the wine of the wrath of God. Following is the list:

upon the earth verse 2;

upon the sea verse 3

upon the rivers and fountains of waters verse 4

4. upon the sun verse 8

5. upon the seat of the beast verse 10

6. upon the great river Euphrates verse 12

7. into the air verse 17

If you recall, these locations will sound familiar since some are the same places where the judgments fell at the sounding of the seven trumpets. Following are those locations:

upon the earth Rev. 8:7

upon the sea Rev. 8:8

upon the rivers and fountains of waters Rev. 8:10

upon the sun, the moon and the stars Rev. 8:12

upon the bottomless pit Rev. 8:2

upon the great river Euphrates Rev. 9:14

Though there is a similarity of locations, the results are different. In Rev. 16:2, we're told that when the angel poured out his vial there fell a very grievous sore on those which had the mark of the beast and who worshipped his image. When we discussed the French Revolution in previous lessons, we dealt primarily with the organizations who were at war with each other and how they used the Revolution to promote themselves and to try to destroy the others, primarily the Roman Catholic Church. We did not discuss much about what happened to the majority of the people.

The importance of the 26 million people of France in the eyes of their rulers consisted in supplying the physical and financial needs of the king, nobility and the clergy. Three-fifths of the real estate of the kingdom, the richest in France, were in the hands of the privileged orders. These orders were exempt from taxes and though a tremendous revenue flowed into their coffers, the tax burden fell in increasing numbers on the French people. They were expected to accept forever the condition of intellectual and bodily bondage to which the Middle Ages had assigned them. As we mentioned before, the organizations that promoted and used the Revolution to advance them-selves and destroy each other were steeped in the occult and they had used superstition and dark-ness to control the people. This darkness and superstition began to be dispelled among the people which brought on the emancipation of people from their serfdom.

When Louis XVI ascended to the throne after his father's death in 1774, financial difficulties were the first to surface of the problems he faced. The treasury was empty, the state was in debt and the tax burden was already intolerable. The nobility, who were so used to reckless spending, could not be reformed. Though the king made efforts to curb the spending and to reform the financial system, the nobility simply would not accept his efforts. The king finally appointed Alexandre de Calonne to office and he immediately set out to borrow more money for the state and when those loans came due, he only borrowed more, until in 1786 they could go no more. The resulting revolution destroyed the King, the nobility and the privileged classes, who

had the mark of the beast and who worshiped his image, living in luxury at the expense of the masses.

However, reason went mad and the excesses that were committed in the name of freedom would certainly justify the statement in verse 2 that **“there fell a noisome and grievous sore upon the men which had the mark of the beast and upon them which worshipped his image.”** We might look at this in a little different light. A sore, though to us is a problem, in reality it is part of the solution. A sore usually breaks out to help the rest of the body organs get rid of toxins that have built up in the body. Once those toxins have been released, the sore will heal up. This is basically what happened with the French Revolution. The toxins, or the unrest had built up in France to the point that it broke out into a grievous sore, or revolution. Though it eventually healed, it picked up infection from outside sources and we are still contending with this today. I’m talking about the world bankers. But even here, it is still part of the solution in the sense that the actions that these bankers have taken since have only prepared the way for their total destruction as part of the fall of Babylon.

(Read Rev. 16:3) As we have discussed before, out of this revolution came Napoleon Bonaparte. In the blowing of the second trumpet, Genseric, with his Mediterranean fleet destroyed the Roman fleet which in large part destroyed the power of Rome. With Napoleon, thinking he was pretty much invincible because of his series of victories, he started making elaborate plans for the invasion of Great Britain. Apparently his plan was to first conquer all of Britain’s colonial possessions. Egypt and the Near East became his first objectives. He was successful in taking over the Isle of Malta, then the city of Alexandria in North Africa, and then Cairo in Egypt. However, Admiral Nelson was on his way to the Mediterranean with the English fleet. They caught up with the French fleet in the Bay of Aboukir in August of 1799 where the battle of the Nile was fought with the English being completely victorious.

This did not stop Napoleon however. He returned to France and then had to put off attacking England once again as he first had to fight and defeat the Austrians. But then in 1805 in a joint effort with Spain, the combined French and Spanish fleets were soundly defeated again by Admiral Nelson in a great naval battle off Cape Trafalgar. Ultimately, the combined armies of Europe defeated Napoleon at Waterloo. With this defeat, the greatness of France was gone and her glory became lifeless and faded away. The symbolism of the sea (people of France) becoming as the blood of a dead man and every living soul dying in the sea seems appropriate as the blood congealed and France became lifeless.

(Read Rev. 16:4-7) In our study of the sounding of the seven trumpets, at the sounding of the third trumpet, judgment fell upon the northern territory of Italy into which Attila descended after crossing the Alps. It would appear that the same area is affected by the pouring out of the 3rd vial. The following is a quote from A Study in Revelation by Howard B. Rand: After the close of the Napoleonic wars the International Commissioners sitting at Vienna proceeded with their work as though the status quo would now continue indefinitely in Europe. The congress of Vienna proceeded to dismember Italy and prepared the ground for future revolts.

The first popular outbreak against the restored order occurred in 1820-21 A.D. Naples and Sardinia were the scenes of revolutionary movements. The representatives from the leading states of Europe declared it to be the duty of their respective countries to exterminate the patriotic revolts that occurred in many countries as a result of the French Revolution. The work of carrying out this edict insofar as Italy was concerned was assigned to Austria.

The period from 1812 to 1830 A.D. was occupied, for the most part, in the punishment of political offenders or in the suppression of insurrections. The history of this period was a sad one for Italy. A revolt at Milan was put down by sheer terror. In the Papal States every symptom of popular liberty was put down by Pope Leo XII. The severity of the tyrannical rule was leading to conditions that were preparing for a general revolution.

The revolt in Vienna and in Hungary in 1848 A.D. furnished the long coveted occasion for the Italians to attack the hated Austrian rule. The Austrians were successful in defeating the Italians and were once more in power. By the end of the summer of 1849 A.D. the Austrian authority was restored, and was exercised with redoubled severity in Venice and Milan and the will of Austria was law in the greater part of Italy. The dream

of an Italian confederation was dissipated by the great defeat of Charles Albert by Radelsky at Novara.

Austria not only swept down and over Italy as a result of the revolt against her rule, but also during the following year scenes of woe and horror was inflicted upon the Italians. Sicily was swept as with a billow of blood. In verses 5 and 7 we have a double witness from two angelic witnesses that this judgment was righteous and correct. Verse 6 gives us the reason, "For they have shed the blood of saints and prophets." We have discussed how under both Imperial Rome and Papal Rome in the midst of these people, and at the dictate of their rulers millions were condemned and tortured to death because they were followers of our Lord.

(Read Rev. 16:8, 9) When the fourth trumpet sounded, judgment fell on the rulers of Imperial Rome bringing to an end the emperors of the Western Roman Empire. I believe that the pouring out of the fourth vial of God's wrath again brings judgment on the rulers the Roman Empire, this time Papal Rome as the Pope was now the ruler not only of the church but also had temporal authority over several Italian states. Victor Emanuel II, son of Charles Albert, became king of Sardinia, having inherited the throne from his father. Sardinia is a large island off the west coast of Italy. Sardinia and Piedmont, a state in northern Italy on the border with Switzerland, were formed into one kingdom and it was here that the Risorgimento (a movement for the unification of all of the Italian states into one nation) with the support of Victor Emanuel II really became a moving force. He teamed up with a political genius, Camillo di Cavour, naming him Prime Minister, and a great soldier named Garibaldi, who when he had conquered Sicily and a number of the independent states of Italy, ceded all of his conquered territory to Emanuel, and united all of Italy with the exception of Rome itself. The Pope excommunicated Emanuel because he had taken the Papal states as well. Rome was protected by French troops, which kept the Italians at bay, but Germany advanced on France causing the need of every French soldier to be in France. The last of the French troops withdrew from Italy on August 21st of 1870. Twelve days later the French Empire collapsed. The Italian army then entered Rome and took possession of the city on Sept. 20th. Rome was declared to be the new capital of the Kingdom of Italy in December of 1870 and Victor Emanuel took up residence there.

The Pope was greatly insulted by his losing temporal authority of the Papal states and the occupation of Rome by these Italian troops. He denounced Victor Emmanuel as the "Subalpine Usurper," whom he said had by violence and crime despoiled the patrimony of St. Peter, and had brought the Church to open shame. Just prior to this termination of all temporal authority of the Pope, Pope Pius IX had summoned the Bishops of the Catholic World to convene in Rome in an Ecumenical Council. The question that was to be determined was, "Is the Holy Father, or is he not, without error when speaking for the great body of which he is the authorized head?" The decision reached was that when on a subject of faith and morals, he issued a decree, as the highest organ of Christendom, the Pope was infallible. I think we can see, with this obvious blasphemy of God, the application of verse 9 as it applies to the Pope from that time on. The Papacy was certainly burned by this move by Victor Emanuel and his followers, and instead of repentance, they blasphemed God and refused to give Him glory. This was the end of temporal authority of the Papacy with the exception of the authority he has over Vatican City within Rome itself. The only authority the Pope was left with was what spiritual authority he exercises over the Church.

We are ready now for the pouring out of the fifth vial, or bowl. (Read Rev. 16:10, 11) Keep in mind that they are pouring out their vials on the earth, or the Roman world, or that which is opposite of the Kingdom of God as per our studies in Rev. 4. In our last lesson we saw that there appears to be similarities between the judgments of the blowing of the seven trumpets and the pouring out the seven vials. When the 5th trumpet was blown, we saw the rise of Islam with most of the Eastern Roman Empire coming under the Moslem influence including Jerusalem and all of Palestine as the Saracens subdued North Africa, the mid-east, Asia minor, and a large portion of Europe. However, Italy escaped their conquests.

The Roman Empire is the fourth and final Empire in the succession of Empires that we saw represented in the book of Daniel and Rome has been the capital city. Since the Roman Empire is represented by the beast, it being then the seat of the beast, it is upon Rome that the fifth angel poured out his vial. The loss of temporal power and authority has been a very difficult pill for the Papacy, the head of the Empire at this time, to swallow. No sooner was the government of United Italy formed and seated than the Church tried to recover

their privileges through an act of Parliament. In May of 1872, an attempt was made to pass a bill granting important privileges to the old religious corporations in Rome. This bill failed. It was thought by many in the Papal organization that the Jesuits were behind the failure of the bill and the Jesuits were expelled from the Roman college.

With the political liberation of Italy came also the advancement in arts and science in Italy. Also came an opening to organized Protestant movements in Italy, even to the point of distribution of Bibles in areas that were formerly Papal dominions only, including within Rome itself. To see how bad this pained the Church, following is a quote by Pope Leo XIII to his Cardinals in 1886: With deep regret and profound anguish we behold the impiety with which Protestants freely and with impunity propagate their heretical doctrines, and attack the most august and sacred doctrines of our holy religion, even here in Rome, the center of the faith and zeal of the universal and infallible teachers of the Church. This declaration of infallibility of the Roman pontiffs and this lamentation of the Pope fulfills the statement in verses 10 and 11, “And they gnawed their tongues for pain, and blasphemed the God of heaven because of their pains and sores, and repented not of their deeds.”

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From: Newsletter Issue 1407

We have reached a point in our study that we need to know and understand some history before we continue. When we studied Rev. 16 in our weekly Bible study, I prepared a supplement with some historical study by Dr. Stephen Jones of God’s Kingdom Ministries and we also used some of his historical studies as we continued our study in Rev. 16. I want to use these same studies in our study here. I am going to begin by including the supplement that I prepared. Following is that supplement.

Drying up the River Euphrates Rev. 16:12 says, 12 And the sixth angel poured out his bowl upon the great river, the Euphrates; and its water was dried up, that the way might be prepared for the kings from the east.

The sixth seal prepares the way for the events of the seventh seal the battle of Armageddon and the fall of Babylon. In that way, the two are closely linked, and the one becomes the direct cause of the other. While this may not be clear by reading Revelation 16, it is certainly very clear when we see the historical precedent on which this prophecy is based.

That precedent is the fall of Babylon during the days of Daniel, when the kings of the east (King Cyrus of Persia and King Darius of Media) diverted the water from the River Euphrates to conquer Babylon.

Thus, the drying up of the River Euphrates was the final prophetic act that led to the conquest of Babylon. So also is this being repeated on a higher level in Rev. 16. One cannot truly understand the events of the sixth and seventh seals in Rev. 16 without knowing some of the history of ancient Babylon and how it fell in Daniel 5.

Isaiah 44:24 to 45:1 says, ²⁴ **Thus says Yahweh, your Redeemer...**²⁵ **causing the omens of boasters to fail, making fools out of diviners, causing wise men to draw back, and turning their knowledge into foolishness,** ²⁶ **confirming the word of His Servant, and performing the purpose of His messengers,** “It is I who says of Jerusalem, ‘She shall be in-habited!’ and of the cities of Judah, ‘They shall be built.’ And I will raise up her ruins again,” ²⁷ **It is I who says to the depth of the sea, ‘Be dried up!’ And I will make your rivers dry.** ²⁸ **It is I who says of Cyrus, ‘He is My shepherd! And he will perform all My desire.’ And he declares of Jerusalem, ‘She will be built,’ and of the temple, ‘Your foundation will be laid.’**

¹ **Thus says the Lord to Cyrus** [Heb. Koresh, “the Furnace-Fire” (i.e., The Sun)] **His anointed** [Heb. Messiaich, “Messiah”], **Whom I have taken by the right hand to subdue nations before him.**

This passage makes it clear that King Cyrus of Persia was God’s servant and anointed one (“Messiah”). That is, he is a type of Christ insofar as He was the conqueror of Babylon. Though Cyrus was not a believer in Yahweh, he did what God called him to do, saying to Jerusalem, “She will be built,” and giving orders to lay the foundations of the second temple (Is. 44:28).

Isaiah 44:27 also says, “And I will make your rivers dry.” This was fulfilled when the River Euphrates was dried up in order to allow the invading army to capture Babylon.

Cyrus’ Throne in Shushan, Elam

The name “Cyrus” is from the Hebrew word Koresh, which means “Furnace Fire.” Smith’s Bible Dictionary says (p. 67),

“Cyrus. The Persian name for the sun (Heb. Koresh), and the same as the Egyptian name Phrah.” Phrah is the root of the word Pharaoh.

In the Hebrew word, Koresh, kor = “furnace” and esh = “fire.” Thus, it was a title that referred to the Sun. Yahweh Himself is symbolized by the Sun in Mal. 4:2, 2. **But for you who fear My name [Heb. shem] the sun [Heb. shemesh] of righteous-ness will rise with healing in its wings.**

The Hebrew word for “sun” is shemesh, literally, the “name of the fire.” The sun was a symbol of God Himself, who is pictured as a consuming fire (Deut. 4:24). Pagan kings, who believed they were God’s representatives on earth, took titles appropriate to that belief. Hence, the king of Persia adopted the name Koresh (Cyrus), the Persian name for the sun. As such, he was a type of Christ, the One who gave the Law to Moses from the midst of the fire. God also speaks prophetically in Jer. 49:38,

Then I shall set My throne in Elam, and I shall destroy out of it kings and princes, declares the Lord.

Cyrus’ throne was in Susa, a city in Elam. Cyrus’ father, grandfather, and great-grandfather had been lesser kings of Ansan in eastern Elam under the dominion of the Median Empire. The territory of ancient Elam forms much of today’s nation of Iran.

Susa is the Shushan of Neh. 1:1 and Esther 1:2, from which place the Persian kings ruled. Thus, when God identified Elam as being the place for His throne, He was identifying with Cyrus to identify him again as a type of Christ. The Hebrew word Shoshannim, “lilies,” is the plural of Shushan, “lily.” At the end of Psalms 44 and 68 it says, “To the chief Musician upon Shoshannim.” This should be read as a post-script at the end of Psalm

44 and 68, though many Bible translations mistakenly place this statement as a title at the beginning of Psalms 45 and 69.

The reference to Shoshannim here means that these psalms were read at the time of the wave -sheaf offering and were prophetic of Christ’s resurrection. This is the Hebrew origin of the so called “Easter lily.”

All of this lays a prophetic foundation of Old Testament types of Christ ruling from Shoshannim (i.e., by the power of His resurrection life), even as Cyrus, the Messiah, ruled from Shushan, or Susa. The fact that Shoshannim is a plural word indicates that there are two Shushans first the physical city of Cyrus, and secondly, the spiritual city of resurrection life from which Christ rules.

Shoshannim is plural for the same reason that Jerusalem is plural in Hebrew. Yerushalayim (Jerusalem) is plural also because there are two Jerusalem’s old and new. In each case, the old is a type of the new. The old was never meant to be the final place of the throne of God. It was a carnal type of a city not made with hands.

These biblical types often go unrecognized, because the Bible does not see fit to explain them to us. We only see them when we study a little history. In fact, the story of King Cyrus’ birth is a fascinating study of biblical types and shadows. The parallel between his birth and that of Jesus six centuries later is absolutely remarkable, but because the Bible only gives us a few hints, most people miss this completely.

Of course, I have no intention of allowing you to miss it, because I do not think one can truly appreciate this prophetic king and the present-day drying up of the River Euphrates without some understanding of Cyrus’ life.

The Story of King Cyrus

Alyattes, king of Lydia, ruled what is now the western half of Turkey from the capital city of Sardis. Lydia was attacked by Cyaxartes of Media, and ultimately, the conflict ended with a treaty that was cemented by marriage. The Lydian princess, Aryenis, was given in marriage to Prince Astyages of Media, uniting the nations.

Cyaxartes of Media ultimately made an alliance with Nabopolassar, king of Babylon, and these two overthrew Nineveh, the capital of Assyria, in 607 B.C. The Medes conquered Persia and extended their conquests to the borders of Lydia (in the middle of modern Turkey). Meanwhile, the Babylonians extended their empire into Judea and Egypt. They conquered Jerusalem in 604 B.C. and finally destroyed the city in 586 B.C.

Cyaxartes died the next year, and his son, Astyages came to the throne (585-550 B.C.). Re-call that his wife was Aryenis of Lydia. These were the maternal grand-parents of Cyrus the Great of Persia.

The story is picked up by Herodotus, the “Father of History” who lived from about 490 B.C. to 425 B.C. In his book, *The Histories*, Book I, beginning with par. 108,

“Astyages had a daughter called Mandane, and he dreamed one night that she made water in such enormous quantities that it filled his city and swamped the whole of Asia. He told his dream to the Magi, whose business it was to interpret such things, and was much alarmed by what they said it meant. Consequently, when Mandane was old enough to marry, he did not give her to some Mede of suitable rank, but was induced by his fear of the dream’s significance to marry her to a Persian named Cambyses, a man he knew to be of good family and quiet habits though he considered him much below a Mede even of middle rank.

“Before Mandane and Cambyses had been married a year, Astyages had another dream. This time it was that a vine grew from his daughter’s private parts and spread over Asia. As before, he told the interpreters about this dream, and then sent for his daughter, who was now pregnant. When she arrived, he kept her under strict watch, intending to make away with her child; for the fact was that the Magi had interpreted the dream to mean that his daughter’s son would usurp his throne.”

Keep in mind that the child in question here was destined to become King Cyrus of Persia, who would defeat the Medes and make them his subjects. This is why many years later, it was Cyrus the Persian and Darius the Mede who conquered Babylon.

Take note also that there was a plot to kill Cyrus as soon as he was born, even as King Herod later tried to kill Jesus shortly after He was born. In both cases, it was the revelation of the Magi that prompted these actions.

Revelation 12 attributes it to the inspiration of the Red Dragon. In the case of Cyrus, the Red Dragon was manifested in the person of King Astyages of Media, and later in the birth of Jesus, it manifested in King Herod of Judea, the half-Edomite. (Edom means “red.”) King Astyages then attempted to kill his grandson as soon as he was born. Herodotus’ history continues:

“To guard against this, Astyages, when Cyrus was born, sent for his kinsman Harpagus, the steward of his property, whom he trusted more than anyone, and said to him: ‘I have some instructions for you, Harpagus, and mind you pay attention to them, whatever they may be. My safety depends upon you. If you neglect it and prefer to serve others, the day will come when you will be caught in your own trap. Get hold of Mandane’s child take it home and kill it. Then bury it how you please.’

Harpagus protested, but was duty-bound to obey the king. However, because he was also a kinsman of the king, this made him likewise a kinsman of the baby. So he decided not to do the deed himself. “He promptly sent a messenger to one of the king’s herdsmen, who he knew had a stretch of pasture amongst mountains ranged by wild beasts, and therefore most suitable to the purpose in hand. The fellow’s name was Mitradates, and he lived with another of the king’s slaves, a woman whose name in Greek would be Cyno, or Bitch: (the Median form of it was Spaco ‘spaca’ being the Median for bitch).

“The herdsman made haste to answer the summons, and Harpagus said to him: ‘The king’s orders are that you must expose this infant in the wildest spot you know of amongst the hills, where it may soonest die. I am to tell

you, moreover, that if you disobey and find some means of saving the child, the king will have you put to death in a way not pleasant to think of. I am commanded to see for myself that the child has been exposed.'

"Mitrdates picked up the baby and, returning by the way he had come, took it back to the shack where he lived. Fate had decreed that his wife, who had been daily expecting a child of her own, was on that very day brought to bed, while her husband was away in the city."

"Mitrdates returned with the child and told his wife his new assignment. He then said to his wife, "Well, what do you think? It's the child of Mandane, the king's daughter, and Cambyses the son of Cyrus, and the king has given orders to make away with it. Look here it is.'

"As he said this, the herdsman uncovered the baby and showed it to his wife, who, seeing that it was a fine strong child, burst out crying, and put her arms round her husband's knees, imploring him to do anything rather than ex-pose it.

"My own child,' she said, 'was born today and it was born dead. Take the body and expose it, and let us bring up Mandane's son as our own. If we do this, no one will find out that you have disobeyed your masters. Moreover, we shall have managed pretty well for ourselves too; our dead baby will have a royal burial, and this live one will not be killed.'

"Mitrdates was pleased with his wife's proposal, and at once proceeded to act upon it and so came about that the herdsman's wife, when her own son was buried, brought up the child that was one day to be Cyrus, though she, of course, did not call him by that name." I find it interesting that Cyrus' supposed mother was named Cyro, "Bitch," which, of course, would make Cyrus the son of Bitch. Likewise, in Jewish teaching, Jesus' mother was a prostitute, and His father was a Roman soldier named Pandira.

Cyrus was raised by a herdsman that is, a shepherd. And so, Isaiah 44:28 says, "It is I who says of Cyrus, 'He is My shepherd!'" When Cyrus was ten years old, he and the neighbor boys were playing "Kings," a game where they would elect one of them to be king, and the rest his followers. Cyrus was elected king. One of the players, the son of a noble-man, refused to obey Cyrus, so he grabbed a whip and beat him severely. He ran home and complained to his father, who took it to King

Astyages. Cyrus was called to give account for himself, and when Astyages saw him, he noticed the family resemblance and took note that he had acted out the part of "King" as if he were truly royalty.

Upon questioning his steward, he found that the baby had been entrusted to a herdsman to kill, so he questioned the herdsman and discovered that his grandson still lived, and it was Cyrus. Instead of being angry, King Astyages decided to celebrate his grandson's deliverance with a feast. He then turned to Harpagus, the steward, and told him,

"I want you to send your own son to visit the young newcomer; and come to dinner with me yourself, as I intend to celebrate my grandson's deliverance by a sacrifice to the gods to whom such rites belong."

When Harpagus' son arrived at the palace, Astyages had him butchered, cut up into joints and cooked, roasting some, boiling the rest, and having the whole properly prepared for the table. To Harpagus was served the flesh of his son. "When Harpagus thought he had eaten as much as he wanted, Astyages asked him if he had enjoyed his dinner. He answered that he had enjoyed it very much indeed, whereupon those whose business it was to do so brought in the boy's head, hands, and feet in the covered dish, stood by Harpagus' chair and told him to lift the lid and take what he fancied. Harpagus removed the cover and saw the fragments of his son's body. As he kept control of himself and did not lose his head at the dreadful sight, Astyages asked him if he knew what animal it was whose flesh he had eaten. 'I know, my lord,' was Harpagus' reply; 'and for my part may the king's will be done.' He said no other word, but took up what remained of the flesh and went home, intending, I suppose to bury all of it together. And that was how Harpagus was punished."

Since Cyrus had been elected king by the boys, the Magi advised the king that his dream had already been fulfilled in a harmless manner. So he did not order Cyrus' immediate execution. Instead, he sent Cyrus away

to his real biological father, Cambyses of Persia. So both Cyrus and Jesus left the country for their protection Cyrus to Persia, and years later, Jesus was taken to Egypt.

Meanwhile, Harpagus the steward was burning for revenge upon Astyages. He kept in touch with Cyrus in Persia as he grew to manhood, while at the same time “persuading some of the Median nobles that it would be to their advantage, in view of the harshness of Astyages’ rule, to dethrone him in favour of Cyrus.”

Harpagus finally sent word to Cyrus, setting a specific date to begin the revolt. When the Persians did revolt, King Astyages foolishly put Harpagus in charge of the Median army. Harpagus had suppressed his anger well enough to make the king think he would submit to his treatment with no animosity. Absolute monarchs make this mistake when they are blinded by their own belief that they have the right to mistreat their subjects at will.

“The result was that when they took the field and engaged the Persian army, a few who were not in the plot did their duty, but of the remainder some deserted to the Persians and the greater number deliberately shirked fighting and took to their heels.”

Astyages had ruled 35 years before being defeated and dethroned by Cyrus in 550 B.C. “Cyrus treated Astyages with great consideration and kept him at his court until he died.”

Astyages’ son, Darius, was Cyrus’ uncle and later became his father-in-law. It was this Dari-us the Mede who actually took Babylon at the age of 62 (Dan. 5:31). He was subject to his nephew, Cyrus, the Persian, who was 40 at the time they jointly conquered Babylon. The Bible says little about Darius, but Cyrus is a type of Christ. The Bible thus also credits Christ with conquering Mystery Babylon.

In our last issue we interrupted our study of Revelation 16 to insert some history that I feel will help us understand Revelation better. We’ll get back to our study of Revelation 16 in this issue beginning with verse 12. (Read)

When the sixth angel sounded his trumpet, we saw that the Turks, who had conquered Bag-dad, begin to exercise their power over the area of the Eastern Roman Empire whose capital was Constantinople. Ultimately, the Ottoman Turks, through the use of gun powder and the newly discovered use of cannons were able to breach the walls of Constantinople and take over the Eastern Empire. Their rise to power gave them control over all of the mideast, a good portion of Europe, North Africa, and Asia Minor. Verse 12 speaks of drying up of the Euphrates. I believe this speaks of the reversal of what we saw with the blowing of the sixth trumpet. In 1844 Britain compelled Turkey to grant religious rights to minorities. Arabia was in constant revolt, with trouble in Macedonia. Foreign capital was gaining control of Turkish industry. The Young Turk movement triumphed in 1908. Italy declared war against Turkey in 1911 to be joined the following year by Bulgaria, Greece, Serbia and Montenegro resulting in the loss of all European territory by Turkey, except Constantinople and a small amount of land on the west side of the Bosphorus. In WWI the young Turks allied themselves with the Central Powers which ultimately resulted in the Allies declaring war on her. The British overran southern Palestine and captured Jerusalem and conquered Mesopotamia. Turkey’s military power was broken, she could do no more. The Treaty of Sevres on August 10, 1920 reduced the possessions of Turkey to but a shadow of her former holdings. A republic was declared on Oct. 29, 1923 and the Turkish Caliphate was abolished on March 6, 1924. Turkey ceased to have a state religion in 1928. The old Turkish Empire had dried up and was no more.

Dr. Jones, in his study of the Book of Revelation makes an interesting observation that might help us better understand the purpose of these bowls or vials that are being poured out. He points out that the last four bowls are patterned historically after the original history of the Persian conquest of Babylon. This original conquest of Babylon could well be a shadow, or pattern of the final conquest of Babylon, understanding that the first conquest was of the city of Babylon and the final conquests is of a system that involves many nations and peoples. In seeing this pattern, I think it will help in our overall understanding. He points out that these last four bowls, or vials, are poured out on the sun, the throne of the beast, the Euphrates River, and the air. I am giving you an extra handout that was prepared by Dr. Jones that explains why he is relating the sun to

Cyrus, King of Persia. Following is from Dr. Jones study: First, Cyrus came to power in 550 B.C., as the rising of the “The Sun.” Next, he overthrew the thrones of Medes and Lydia (546 B.C.). (the throne of the beast) Next, his army diverted the river Euphrates in order to enter the city of Babylon through the river (537 B.C.). Last, this led to the conquest of Babylon, ruled spiritually by “the prince of the power of the air” (Eph. 2:2).

Diverting the River Euphrates

Queen Nitocris was the mother of the biblical Belshazzar (Dan. 5:1). On the night Babylon fell, when the hand wrote on the palace wall, it was this queen who remembered Daniel and pulled him out of retirement to interpret the dream (Dan. 5:10-12).

Years earlier, Queen Nitocris wanted to build a bridge over the Euphrates to connect the two halves of Babylon. Up to that time, the people had to use boats to ferry the people across the river. So first she had her workmen dig a huge basin 47 miles in circumference just north of the city. At the same time she prepared large stones for the bridge. When all was ready, a canal was dug from the river to the basin, and the water was diverted. This allowed them to set the stones in the dry river bed to build the bridge over the Euphrates.

Babylon itself was a city foursquare with each side nearly 14 miles in length and a total circumference of 56 miles. The wall itself was 85 feet thick and 300 feet high. Herodotus tells us in Book 1 of The Histories, *“On the top of the wall they constructed, along each edge, a row of one-roomed buildings facing inwards with enough space between for a four-horse chariot to pass. There are a hundred gates in the circuit of the wall, all of bronze and bronze uprights and lintels.”*

When Cyrus and Darius came to conquer Babylon, they met with little success at first. Herodotus tells us, *“The siege dragged on, no progress was made, and Cyrus was beginning to despair of success. Then somebody suggested or he himself thought up the following plan: he stationed part of his force at the point where the Euphrates flows into the city and another contingent at the opposite end where it flows out, with orders to both to force an entrance along the river-bed as soon as they saw that the water was shallow enough. Then taking with him all his non-combatant troops, he withdrew to the spot where Nitocris had excavated the lake (which was then a marsh) and in this way (reopening the canal) so greatly reduced the depth of water in the actual bed of the river that it became fordable, and the Persian army, which had been left at Babylon for the purpose, entered the river, now only deep enough to reach about the middle of a man’s thigh, and, making their way along it, got into the town”* The Babylonians themselves say that owing to the great size of the city the outskirts were captured without the people in the centre knowing anything about it; there was a festival going on, and they continued to dance and enjoy themselves, until they learned the news the hard way. That, then, is the story of the first capture of Babylon.

We’re told in Rev. 16:12 that the purpose of all this, in God’s planning, is so **“that the way of the kings of the east might be prepared.”** I believe that we today are at the point that the kings of the east are preparing to move. The objective is the total destruction of the city of Jerusalem and of course, the Zionist state of Israeli. It remains yet to be seen just who all will be among the kings of the east, but certainly, at this point Iran (the Persia of Daniel’s day) appears to be at the head of list. We have reached the point in our studies that we are looking at future events. We need to be careful from here on, so far as future events are concerned, to distinguish between prophecy, i.e. thus saith the Lord, and personal opinion. I just stated my opinion. Even though I believe it is backed up by prophecy, it is still my opinion. But as we look at prophecy, we can be assured of certain things that will happen. For example, Jeremiah tells us in Jer. 19:11 after God had instructed him to take a potters earthen bottle and break it in the sight of the elders and priests, **“And shalt say unto them, Thus saith the Lord of hosts; Even so will I break this people and this city, as one breaketh a potter’s vessel, that cannot be made whole again: and they shall bury them in Tophet, till there be no place to bury.”** We know that the city of Jerusalem, the city Jeremiah is speaking of, has been destroyed several times only to be rebuilt again. But this prophecy tells us there will be a final destruction after which it cannot be rebuilt.

(Read Rev. 16:13-16) John doesn’t specify exactly when he saw the unclean spirits like frogs, he just tells us

that he saw them come out of the mouth of the dragon, out of the mouth of the beast and out of the mouth of the false prophet. In verse 14, we're told that these spirits are **"spirits of devils, working miracles, which go forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty."** In Dr. Jones' study, he presents in some detail just what these frog spirits are and how they are working. I would like to quote his information:

The Three Frogs

In comparing the sixth trumpet with the sixth bowl, we also should be aware of another parallel. During the time of the sixth trumpet, the Mighty Angel of Rev. 10 was presented to the world, and with it the "little book" (due to the printing press), the Reformation, and the "everlasting gospel" being preached in the great missionary movement of the 1800's. But in the sixth bowl we have a similar but opposite counter-part in the three frogs sent to gather the nations to Armageddon.

These frogs come out of the mouths of the dragon, beast, and false prophet. The frogs should be seen as the unclean counterpart to the sword that comes from the mouth of the Lamb (Rev. 19:15). The frogs essentially represent unclean words a false and violent gospel that convince nations to go to their destruction.

13 And I saw coming out of the mouth of the dragon and out of the mouth of the beast and out of the mouth of the false prophet, three unclean spirits like frogs. 14 for they are spirits of demons, performing signs, which go out to the kings of the whole world, to gather them together for the war of the great day of God, the Almighty... 16 And they gathered them together to the place which in Hebrew is called HarMagedon ["Armageddon"].

The dragon represents the highest power on earth that is hidden behind the scenes Witchcraft with all its occult manifestations who teach "order from chaos." They are the planners, who create chaos and destruction in order to build upon its ruins their New World Order. They call themselves Luciferians.

The beast represents the power of the organizational Christian Church System that allowed men to usurp the rule of Christ. This in turn allowed violent men to take control of the Church System in order to lead them into chaos, disillusionment, and finally into destruction.

The false prophet represents the power behind Islam. The powers of the "dragon" knew that they could easily motivate many Muslims into angry and violent reaction by creating a Zionist "State of Israel" and then demanding justice for the theft of their land. The powers behind all of these religious movements induce their sincere followers to fight over the city of Jerusalem. Their purpose and goal is to destroy Judaism, Christianity, and Islam in one final blow and to replace them with Luciferianism as the one-world religion.

Luciferianism Moves to America: 1801 A.D.

The Bible makes no real distinction between Satanism, Luciferianism, Wicca, and other forms of the occult, but lumps them all together under the name "Witchcraft." So for our purposes, this is how we will define Witchcraft.

A Luciferian group known as the Order of the Palladium (or Sovereign Council of Wisdom) was founded in Paris in 1737. Palladism had been brought to Greece from Egypt by Pythagoras in the fifth century before Christ. This cult was introduced to the inner circle of the Masonic lodges. It was aligned with the Palladium of the Templars, who brought it into Masonry.

In 1801, Isaac Long, a Jew, is said to have brought a statue of Baphomet to Charleston, South Carolina, where he helped to establish the Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite. Baphomet represents Masonic wisdom and is, in effect, their god, whether recognized as such or not. Isaac Long apparently chose Charleston because it was geographically located on the 33rd parallel of latitude.

There are many low-level Freemasons who think that their Order is or was closed to both Jews and Roman Catholics. This misconception probably arose after 1869 when Grand Commander Albert Pike became the head of the Ku Klux Klan. However, out of the original eleven founders of the Lodge in Charleston, S.C., no less

than four were Jews: Israel de Lieben, Abraham Alexander, Emanuel de la Motta, and Moses Clava Levy. At least four more were Roman Catholics from Ireland and France: Thomas Bartholomew Bowen, John Mitchell, Jean Baptiste Delahogue, and Comte de Grasse.

There were at least two Protestants: Isaac Auld and Frederick Dalcho (1770-1836)

The final one, James Moultrie, was a member of St. Philip's Church in Charleston and was buried there, but I do not know if this was a Catholic or Protestant Church. All of this information was published in 1964 by the Supreme Council, 33°, in Washington D.C. under the title: History of the Supreme Council, 33°, Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite of Freemasonry Southern Jurisdiction, U.S.A. 1801-1861, by Ray Baker Harris, 33°.

Albert Pike was Isaac Long's successor, and he changed the name of the Order to the New and Reformed Palladian Rite (or Reformed Palladium).

Albert Pike: The Illuminist Luciferian

Pike also worked closely with Gusseppe Mazzini of Italy (1805-1872) who was a 33° Mason, who became head of the Illuminati in 1834, and who founded the Mafia in 1860. Mazzini was a high-level planner for the Italian revolution in 1848. Together with Mazzini, Lord Henry Palmerston of England (1784-1865), and Otto von Bismarck of Germany (1815-1898) all 33° Masons Albert Pike used the Palladian Rite to bind all Masonic groups under one umbrella.

Mazzini recruited Pike into the Illuminati in order to create an American branch of Illuminists that would operate inside American Freemasonry as a most secret society within a secret society.

Mazzini wrote a letter to Pike dated January 22, 1870, instructing him on how use Freemasonry as an instrument of Luciferian Illuminism: "We must allow all the federations to continue just as they are, with their systems, their central authorities and their diverse modes of correspondence between high grades of the same rite, organized as they are at the present, but we must create a super rite, which will remain unknown, to which we will call those Masons of high degree whom we shall select. With regard to our brothers in Masonry, these men must be pledged to the strictest secrecy. Through this supreme rite, we will govern all Freemasonry which will become the one international center, the more powerful because its direction will be unknown."

This explains Pike's meteoric rise in Masonry. Until 1853 he had never even heard of the Scottish Rite (p. 244 of Ray Harris' book, History of the Supreme Council). On page 254 Harris says that Pike was elected to receive the 33° on April 25, 1857. Pike became an "active member" of the Supreme Council on March 20, 1858 (p. 257). He was elected Grand Commander on Jan. 2, 1859.

Pike's Plan for the New World Order

Canadian Naval Commander William Guy Carr (1895-1959) wrote on page 224-225 of his book, The Red Fog Over America.

"One reader put me in touch with the Rev. Father Eustace Eilers, of the Passionist Missions, Birmingham, Alabama. After an exchange of credentials Father Eilers provided me with a copy of 'The Mystery of Freemasonry Unveiled' written by His Eminence Cardinal Caro Y Rodriguez of Santiago, Chile, first published in 1925. This book confirmed everything I had said regarding the way the Illuminati established control of universal Freemasonry AT THE TOP. Cardinal Rodrigues substantiated what he published by documentary evidence undoubtedly obtained from the Secret Archives of the Vatican. He says that not one Mason in one hundred, below the 32nd degree, even suspects the Illuminati are in control AT THE TOP. Those 32nd degree Masons who have been in contact with us, since, agree with what he says "To prove this statement the Cardinal quotes from a letter signed by General Albert Pike.

"The letter is dated August 15th, 1871. It is addressed to Pike's Illustrious Brother Gussepi (Joseph) Mazzini, who had directed the Illuminati's revolutionary program, in accordance with Weishaupt's plan, since 1834..." On page 188 the Cardinal names several authorities who made reference to Pike's letter and plan in 1895 and 1896."

“On page 188 the Cardinal names several authorities who made reference to Pike’s letter and plan in 1895 and 1896.”

Albert Pike’s 1871 letter to Mazzini pro-posed three world wars needed to accomplish their purposes:

“The First World War must be brought about in order to permit the Illuminati to over-throw the power of the Czars in Russia and of making that country a fortress of atheistic Communism. The divergences caused by the "agentur" (agents) of the Illuminati between the British and Germanic Empires will be used to foment this war. At the end of the war, Communism will be built and used in order to destroy the other governments and in order to weaken the religions.”

“The Second World War must be fomented by taking advantage of the differences between the Fascists and the political Zionists. This war must be brought about so that Nazism is destroyed and that the political Zionism be strong enough to institute a sovereign state of Israel in Palestine. During the Second World War, International Communism must become strong enough in order to balance Christendom, which would be then re-strained and held in check until the time when we would need it for the final social cataclysm.”

“The Third World War must be fomented by taking advantage of the differences caused by the "agentur" of the "Illuminati" between the political Zionists and the leaders of Islamic World. The war must be conducted in such a way that Islam (the Moslem Arabic World) and political Zionism (the State of Israel) mutually destroy each other. Meanwhile the other nations, once more divided on this issue will be constrained to fight to the point of complete physical, moral, spiritual and economical exhaustion...We shall unleash the Nihilists and the atheists, and we shall provoke a formidable social cataclysm which in all its horror will show clearly to the nations the effect of absolute atheism, origin of savagery and of the most bloody turmoil. Then everywhere, the citizens, obliged to defend themselves against the world minority of revolutionaries, will exterminate those destroyers of civilization, and the multitude, disillusioned with Christianity, whose deistic spirits will from that moment be without compass or direction will receive the true light through the universal manifestation of the pure doctrine of Lucifer, brought finally out in the public view. This manifestation will result from the general reactionary movement which will follow the destruction of Christianity and atheism, both conquered and exterminated at the same time.”

The frog of Freemasonry is Witchcraft (Luciferianism). The frog of Judaism and evangelical Christianity is militant Zionism. Islam’s frog is militant Islam fighting Zionists and Christians. Few sincere followers of these frogs know that they are being used for a sinister purpose and will ultimately be betrayed by their unknown leaders.

On the other hand, these Luciferians are also blinded by their own pride and do not realize that the God of Heaven is using them to destroy all of man’s religious systems on earth to prepare the way for the Kingdom of God. That peaceable Kingdom will not be ruled by violent men.

We have a little more to discuss concerning the three frogs that we will take up in our next lesson.

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From: Newsletter Issue 1409

Before we continue our study in Revelation. I need to point out the importance of distinguishing the Old Jerusalem from the New Jerusalem. Often the name “Jerusalem” is all that is said, so we have to go to the context to determine for sure which Jerusalem it is talking about. The Old Jerusalem is the literal city in Palestine. It is sometimes referred to as the “Bloody City,” especially in the book of Ezekiel. I think that all of us would consider it that today, since it has been a city of strife, turmoil and bloodshed in the memory of all of us. If we go back in history, this has virtually always been the case though the name actually means the “city of peace.” The New Jerusalem is built up not of stones, but of men’s souls, their lives. Paul speaks of these men and women as living stones. I believe we are near to the time that this will be manifest so that all men will know it. But the object of the frog of Freemasonry and of Zionism, whether Jewish or Christian, is

to rebuild Solomon's temple in the Old Jerusalem and that become the center of worship for all the earth. God's plan is for the New Jerusalem to be in the hearts of men. Keep this in mind as we continue our study.

In our last lesson we were discussing the three spirits like frogs that came out of the mouth of the dragon, and out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet respectively. We looked at a paper that was written by Dr. Stephen Jones in which he identified the three frog spirits as Freemasonry, which he said is basically Witchcraft (or Luciferianism) coming from the mouth of the dragon; militant Zionism (from both Judaism and evangelical Christianity) coming from the mouth of the beast; and militant Islam coming from the mouth of the false prophet. The dragon, if we recall from our studies, is the Roman world, the fourth beast representing the leadership of the Babylonian succession of empires spoken of by Daniel in Daniel 7. In the last couple of centuries, this leadership has been manifested in the royalty and nobility of the European nations that came from the Roman Empire. We have seen in our studies that they have been and still are very steeped in the occult which has played a great part in the establishing and growth of the Freemasonry organization which has come out of this group of leaders who themselves are very intent on ultimately ruling the world.

The beast represents Papal Rome which became an extension of Imperial Rome when the latter fell. We considered it to be the little horn that Daniel saw come out of the fourth beast in Daniel 7:8. We were told in Rev. 13:2 that the dragon gave the beast his power, his seat and his great authority. We saw that the leadership representing this beast became very corrupt at times and, though claiming to be the Vicar of Christ, was very blasphemous toward God and His Son Jesus Christ. Though there have been great protest movements against this beast, which is a composite of the leadership of all of the empires of the Babylonian succession of empires, and these protest movements have done much to remove much of the power of this beast, its influence is felt in virtually every aspect of Christianity still. In the efforts to retain as much power as possible, this beast has compromised with Judaism so that not only has the occult of Catholicism, but the occult of Judaism been mixed with Christianity.

"The false prophet" is new to us in our study of the Scriptures. Though we have seen through the Scriptures many false prophets, Rev. 16:15 refers to a specific false prophet which can fairly easily be identified with Mohammed and his establishment of the religion of Islam.

It is important, I believe, that we point out that most of the Arab people that make up a large part of those who purport to be Muslims are descended from Ishmael, son of Abraham by his wife Hagar. Isaac, though born thirteen years after Ishmael by Abraham's wife Sarah, was the son of promise that God promised Abraham and to whom the promises made to Abraham were conferred following Abraham's death. This is a point of contention between the Muslims and the Christians and Jews today.

With this bit of review, let us first re-read Rev. 16:14-16. I think it would be safe to say that none of the people involved in these three frog spirits believe that they are setting out to gather the nations of the world to that great battle of that great day of God Almighty. Yet they all seem to believe that resorting to war and violence is okay in pursuit of their various goals.

One of the most basic goals of Freemasonry is to build a new "temple of Solomon." While a physical building is very much a part of their plan, this new temple is really a symbol of "the New World Order" that they are endeavoring to establish. From Dr. Jones "Study of the Book of Revelation," he says the following:

All of the symbolism in Western Freemasonry is taken from the Cabbala (Jewish mysticism), and the highest degrees actually teach directly from the Cabbala. The idea is to turn people into workers for unknown masters who are, in fact, Luciferian Cabbalists, the outward manifestation of the "dragon" in the book of Revelation. Needless to say, the lower-level freemasons have no idea what they are supporting or who is the god of their superiors. They are mere "workers" being used as pawns in a much larger plan to usurp power over God's creation.

In our last lesson we discussed in more detail how Freemasonry plans to bring about their ascension to rulership of the world partly through causing three world wars, two of which we now know have already happened.

But for the people of the world to accept and respond to their overall plan as they have planned it, we see cultural changes in our society, such as in music, movies, TV, styles, religion, education, etc., not only here, but on a worldwide basis, that have the effect of numbing the minds of the people so that there is no objection until it is too late. Keep in mind the dependence on the occult for a great deal of this. Take an objective look at most all entertainment today. Consider the virtual absolute failure of our education system. See what most “Christians” believe compared to what the Bible teaches. All of this has been planned. It has not happened by coincidence. As some famous person has said, everything that happens, happens for a reason.

Most of us are not very familiar with Muslim teaching. To become thoroughly familiar would take a great deal of time and study. But among their beliefs, they like the Jews are looking forward to the coming of their “messiah,” though by a different name. Some have believed that Osama bin Laden was that personage. We need, I believe, as we study Revelation, to be careful to not identify spirits with an individual just because he or she might be prominent on the world stage at a particular time. The spirit, in this case depicted as a frog, is what motivates people and nations to particular actions, not necessarily the person who is doing the action. Paul Williams wrote a book titled Osama’s Revenge that I would like to quote from to give us an idea of Muslim belief. However, in this quote, he writes with the assumption that many Muslims believe that Osama is that “messiah,” which of course we now know could not be. But the following from his book gives us an idea of some of the Muslim beliefs:

“His attendants bow before him and greet him as ‘awaited enlightened one.’ This title has been bestowed upon him by believers through the Muslim world both Sunnis and Shiites. He is more than a mighty warrior or a religious leader. To his followers, he is the rightly guided caliph the Mahdi who will appear during the last days of human history.

“His coming has been foretold by the Haddith, the collection of sacred teachings that supplement the Koran. In such writings, he is depicted as the prophet who will appear at a time when Muslims are oppressed throughout the world. He will unite the believers to fight off the vast army of their oppressors the army Yajuj waMajuj (‘the infidel unbelievers’), led by the Dabbah, or ‘the Beast.’ He will lead the Muslims to victory and bring forth the Day of Islam, when all people throughout the world believers and nonbelievers alike will fall in total submission to the will of Allah.

“After restoring justice to the world by imposing shariah on all nations, he will lead the people in prayer at Meccaan occasion at which Jesus will be present. Following the ceremony, he will rule over the Muslim people for seven years.

“The writings foretell that the long-awaited one will be a descendant of Mo-hammed through his daughter Fatima. He will have the same name as the Prophet, and his father will have the same name as the Prophet’s father. He will have a distinctive forehead, a prominent nose, and a black mole on his face. He will be known for his generosity and altruism. He will arise from Arabia and will be called from a cave by Allah to serve as the savior of all true believers...

“In his edicts and official correspondence, he no longer signs his name as Osama bin Laden but as Osama bin Muhammad bin Laden.

“He is the ‘awaited enlightened one.’

“He is the mighty warrior of the Apocalypse.

“He is the realization of nearly fourteen hundred years of Islamic history. “He is the Mahdi.” Of Notice that war is very much a part of how the Muslims plan to attain to ruler ship of the world just as it is with the spirit frog of the dragon.

The third frog spirit comes from the mouth of the beast. We discussed the difference between the two Jerusalem’s, the physical city in Palestine and the Jerusalem made up of people, a spiritual city, if you will. Zionism has its roots in Christ’s time. Jesus knew the thoughts of the elders and chief priests when he told the parable of the vine-yard. (Read Matt. 21:33-40) These elders and chief priests knew that He was the Son, the Heir. To usurp His authority and the kingdom, their solution was to kill him and then they

thought the inheritance would be theirs. The thing they never understood, and still deny, was the resurrection. But the usurpation of the kingdom started with them. We still have efforts being made today to complete that usurpation because they did not then and still do not understand the difference between the old city of Jerusalem and the New Jerusalem. The problem is that many Christians are Zionist as well. Many Christians, especially evangelical Christians, believe that Judaism is the second best religion and if Christ were added to it, it would be the best. Unfortunately, most of these Christians do not know what is taught in Judaism. The Talmud, which is the Jewish bible, teaches that all non-Jews have "Satanic souls" which means that non-Jews are very little above animal life. It uses the term "goy" in referring to them which puts them in the same class as cattle. The Jews, in their mind, are a superior race and every-one else deserves nothing above the status of a slave. Even though the Zionist Jews take all the help that is given them by the Zionist Christians, once their goal is reached, which is to have all the land from the Euphrates to the Nile and the Mediterranean to the Red Sea and to have a new temple built in Jerusalem, these Christian Zionists would be no more to them than slaves. The majority of Christian people do not understand this. Christians are actually helping Judaism to implement the Old Covenant and to nullify the sacrifice of Christ on the cross and the New Covenant even though they infer that they are New Covenant Christians.

To the Zionist Jew, their god is a god of vengeance. They never forgive, but are always seeking vengeance. This is the reason the stories of the so called Holocaust never die.

I need to point out that Judaism is a religion, not a race. According to Jewish sources that I have read, 90% of today's Jews are Ashkenazim Jews, meaning they descended from a son of Japheth whereas all true Jews descend from Shem, both sons of Noah. In addition, in 126 B.C. the Jews in Palestine conquered the Edomites, descendants of Esau, brother of Jacob and were forced by the Jews to accept Judaism as their religion. Josephus, the historian of that time period, tells us that from that time on, Edomites were known as Jews. When Jerusalem was destroyed by the Romans in 70

A.D. the majority of Jews in that area were killed. Those that escaped were a mix of Jews and Edomites. There were a number of Jews that were scattered throughout the nations at that time and many became Christians. But the people we call Jews today are a mixture, though predominately Ashkenazim, or Khazar, so very few are true Jews genetically. The Arabs know this and know that Biblically they are not entitled to the land, which is part of the reason they hate the Jews so much. Referring back to Albert Pike's letter, I think we can see how the Illuminati caused the nation of Israeli to be formed in 1948 and how they believe they can spark a war between the Muslims and the Jews.

As we can see, all three of these spirits are pushing the nations of the world toward war, with the idea of destroying each other, but I believe very few realize that God is using these spirit frogs to accomplish His own purpose.

Armageddon is the name of a place, the hill of Megiddo, not the name of the battle, though it is often used in that light. Megiddo was located about 25 miles southwest of the Sea of Galilee. There have been many battles fought there, in fact King Josiah of Judah fought and died there (II Chron. 35:22). My thought is that because there have been so many battles fought there, it is being used symbolically as the place of **"the battle of that great day of God Almighty."** Since it appears that all nations are going to be involved, a hill at Megiddo doesn't sound like a large enough battlefield. While I do believe that the beginning of the battle will probably involve Jerusalem and Palestine, this conflict will be a worldwide battle.

(Read Rev. 16:17-21) This reminds us of the blowing of the seventh trumpet (Rev. 10:7). When that trumpet begins to sound, we're told **"the mystery of God should be finished, as he hath declared to his servants the prophets."** Here in chapt. 16, we're told that when the seventh angel poured out his vial into the air, **"there came a great voice out of the temple of heaven, from the throne, saying, It is done."** What is done? And What is finished? Is it not this age and all that has been a part of it, as we have been studying here in the book of Revelation? This great battle that we have just been talking about comes as this age culminates. What we read in verses 18-21 are the culminations of that great battle. The great earthquake could well be literal or symbolic or both. Those who study earthquakes are telling us that we appear to be

poised on the brink of an extremely large earthquake, though most are not willing yet to say where or when. Following the great quake we just witnessed in Japan, several of these experts were on TV saying that the largest quake ever known could happen in the very near future. However, it appears that we may be on the brink of a very major shaking up of the people of the world as well. Recall from Alfred Pike's letter that part of their goal is that the multitude of people "will become disillusioned with Christianity, whose deistic spirits will from that moment be without compass or direction." If people become without compass or direction, then the greatest chaos the world has known will ensue. I believe God may very well let things go to that point before He intervenes.

The great city that is divided into three parts is reference to the city Babylon, though, as the New Jerusalem is not a literal city, Babylon is no longer a literal city, but a representation of all of man's government throughout the world. The thought occurred to me as I studied this, that the three parts may very well be the three essentials of government, religious, political, and economic, that we have looked at. As we continue into Revelation we are told that "Mystery Babylon the Great" has fallen. However, as we study we will see that the next couple of chapters deal with each of these "essentials" individually as we are told of their destruction. If we keep in mind that concept of what "Babylon" really means, I think we can reasonably understand God's overall intent and plan. We can look at the opposing forces as God vs. man or New Jerusalem vs. Mystery Babylon. They are one and the same. Vs. 20 says that **"every island fled away, and the mountains were not found."** This reminds me of the story in John 8 of the woman taken in adultery. (Read John 8:3-11) The scribes and Pharisees were very anxious to see judgment carried out on the woman, but when Jesus told them to go ahead and stone her by **"He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her."** suddenly there was no one left to cast a stone. Islands and mountains represent nations. When Christ appears and men and nations are made aware of their sin by His very presence, they will suddenly be trying to hide from Him.

The great hail out of heaven could like-wise be like the earthquake, the hail could be either literal or symbolic or both. However, as John tells us, there will be those that instead of repenting, will blaspheme God as a result of the hail, whatever it turns out to be.

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From: Newsletter Issue 1410

We are ready for the 17th chapter of Revelation. (Read Rev. 17:1-3) Verse 5 gives us the name of this great whore **"Mystery, Babylon the Great. The Mother of Harlots and Abominations of the Earth."** Verse 15 interprets the **"many waters"** as peoples and multitudes, and nations, and tongues. So we are talking about the Babylonian system, or man's system of government. The book of Daniel in the Old Testament and the book of Revelation in the New Testament have to be taken together to, for the most part, be talking of the same thing. Though Daniel starts out with the Kingdom of Babylon in chapter 2 speaking of the nation of Babylon ruled by Nebuchadnezzar, when he describes the complete metal image in that chapter and John speaks of the beast with all of the characteristics of the four beasts of Daniel 7, they are talking about the completed Babylonian system, a system that dominates and rules the whole world today. Opposed to that is the stone cut out without hands in Dan. 2 that be-came a great mountain and ultimately destroyed the metal image and then filled the whole earth which is the Kingdom of God. With this, I would like to quote from a paper written by Dr. Stephen Jones that introduces us to these first 3 verses and the events that the next few chapters portray.

Babylon Sits on "Many Waters" Revelation 17:1 says, 1 And one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls came and spoke with me, saying, "Come here, I shall show you the judgment of the The "many waters" are interpreted in verse 15: 15 And he said to me, "The waters which you saw where the harlot sits, are peoples and multitudes and nations and tongues."

John's description of Babylon is similar to that found in Jer. 51:12,13, which says, **12 Lift up a signal against the walls of Babylon; post a strong guard, station sentries, place men in ambush! For the Lord has both purposed and performed what He spoke concerning walls of Babylon; post a strong guard, station**

sentries, place men in ambush! For the Lord has both purposed and performed what He spoke concerning the inhabitants of Babylon. 13 O you who dwell by many waters, abundant in treasures, your end has come, the measure of your end.

The Babylonian harlot sits on “many waters.” This indicates Babylon’s rule over all nations, even as we see in the original Babylon in Jer.27. Verse 5 sets forth God’s legal right to give all nations to Nebuchadnezzar, saying, **5 I have made the earth, the man and the animals that are on the face of the earth, by My great power, and by My outstretched arm, and I have given it to whom it seemed right in My eyes.**

In other words, by right of creation, God owns all things, and this gives Him the right to give dominion to whomsoever He wishes. He gave to the king of Babylon not only Judah, but ALL nations. Why? Because God had chosen the House of David and had given his descendants the divine right to rule all nations. But that right was still conditional upon their obedience. When they misused their divine authority and oppressed the other nations, God had mercy on those other nations and limited Jerusalem’s power. Thus, all the nations that David once ruled were able to revolt and become independent. Of course, that also meant that they were able to continue worshipping their idols and rejected the rule of the God of Israel.

Judah’s world authority ended with God’s judgment to put the nation under the authority of Babylon. But because all the nations were technically under the spiritual authority of Judah, God gave ALL these nations to Babylon not just Judah. He says in verse 6, **6 And now I have given ALL THESE LANDS into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, My servant, and I have given him also the wild animals of the field to serve him.**

It is important to understand that God had a reason for giving all nations to the king of Babylon, and that all the modern nations have been given to Babylon for the same reason SIN and a refusal to repent.

The Lawful Reason for Babylon’s Captivity

God told Israel in Deut. 28 that if they were obedient, God would bless them and make them the head of the nations (28:13). But if they were disobedient, verses 48 through 52 tell us the divine judgment: **48 therefore you shall serve your enemies whom the Lord shall send against you, in hunger, and in thirst [a famine of hearing the Word Amos 8:11], in nakedness, and in the lack of all things; and He will put an iron yoke on your neck until He has destroyed you. 49 The Lord will bring a nation against you from afar. 52 and it shall besiege you in all your towns. 63. and you shall be torn from the land where you are entering to possess it.**

This describes the “iron yoke.” It is an iron yoke when they are taken off the land and forcibly taken to a foreign land. This iron yoke did not come upon Judah until God gave that land into the hands of the king of Babylon. But mean-while, they had experienced a number of lesser forms of judgment, recorded in the book of Judges. This was where God brought foreign nations to conquer Israel, but Israel was allowed to remain in their land. Their judgment was primarily in paying taxes to those foreign nations.

Such lesser judgment is not de-fined in Scripture until the time of Jeremiah. Jeremiah defines it as a wooden yoke, as opposed to an iron yoke. God says in Jer. 27:2, **2 Thus says the Lord to me “Make for yourself bonds and yokes and put them on your neck.”**

So the prophet did so as an illustration of the captivity that was to come. But when he told the people about God’s judgment and the captivity that was coming, another prophet disagreed. Jer. 28:10 says, **10 Then Hananiah the prophet took the yoke from the neck of Jeremiah the prophet and broke it.**

This shows that the original yoke was made of wood, not of iron. If the people had submitted to God’s judgment, they would have been sentenced to a wooden yoke only. This means they could have remained in their land and just paid the Babylonian tax each year. But the people refused to submit to God’s judgment. So the word again came to Jeremiah in 28:13, 14, saying, **13 Go and speak to Hananiah, saying, “Thus says the Lord, ‘You have broken the yokes of wood, but you have made instead of them yokes of iron.’ 14 For thus says the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel, ‘I have put a yoke of iron on the neck of all these nations, that they may serve Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon; and they shall serve him. And I have also given him the beasts of the field.’”**

So the people sinned, and God judged them with a yoke of wood. They refused to submit to the divine judgment, and were thus guilty of contempt of court. That is a capital crime (Deut. 17:8-12). For this reason, Judah as a nation was sentenced to death. God then authorized the king of Babylon to carry out the sentence by destroying the nation itself and bringing the survivors as captives to Babylon.

It is of utmost importance that we understand the story of Jeremiah and the original Babylonian captivity as well as the laws underlying God’s judgments upon Judah. These are the same principles by which God has

judged America and the rest of the world in the past century.

America as a nation was blessed by God, because the people originally committed themselves to forming a Christian government. And so Deut. 28:1 was fulfilled, **1 Now it shall be, if you will diligently obey the Lord your God, being careful to do all His commandments which I command you today, the Lord your God will set you high above all the nations of the earth.**

But the Church discarded God's law, saying it was an evil thing. They dis-agreed with the moral principles on which society ought to be based. They allowed "freedom of religion," which brought in every ungodly religion, including witch craft into the country. And then those un- godly people were elected as our representatives in Congress. And then they passed ungodly laws and refused to allow godly judges to rule according to biblical law.

The Church was called to be God's watchdog, but they refused to bark. The Church saw nothing wrong with usury so they allowed the banking system to be established. Finally, those same bankers became powerful enough and rich enough to establish a union of banks un-der one roof, a private corporation of bankers who were powerful enough to actually take over the government in 1914. It was called the Federal Reserve Bank. It is neither federal, nor is a reserve. It is a private corporation that creates money out of nothing and lends it at face value to other banks and to our government at interest.

Because of America's sin, and because the Church cast aside His law, God put America under a yoke of wood. He brought in foreign bankers and set up a system of taxation in 1916 by which we would pay tribute to "Babylon."

It is fortunate for us that God blinded the eyes of the people to what was happening. In blinding us and making this a "secret, hidden" Babylon, God prevented us from fighting the captivity. Instead, we submitted to it and were thus allowed to remain in our own land, rather than being conquered and destroyed by war and then deported, as Judah was in Jeremiah's day.

How Mystery Babylon Came to Power in 1914

The great harlot is Babylon not the original city, as some have supposed, but the secret, hidden Babylon. In the past, some prophecy teachers have insisted that the old city of Babylon would be rebuilt, and indeed, Saddam Hussein at-tempted to rebuild it. All the bricks were inscribed with his name, as he attempted to make a name for himself. But that has come to an end with his fall from power in 2003.

There is also an inherent contra-diction in that view. They say in one breath that "the Antichrist" will rule from a temple in Jerusalem, but they also say that Babylon will be rebuilt. Well, which city is his capital city? In such an interpretation, he could hardly rule from both cities.

But the fact is, Babylon has manifested in our time as a worldwide system. It rules all nations today. We do not have to wait for a future Babylon to rise up. It is already here, and, in fact, it has been here for most of the past century. It came to power in 1914, precisely 2,520 years after the original Babylon became an empire (607 B.C.)

Many are still looking for a future fulfillment of Babylon, not realizing that it has held us captive since 1914. It is now ready to FALL, not rise up in the future. But God blinded the eyes of most of the people in order to judge them with-out their knowledge lest they would rise up and try to overthrow it, thereby incurring an even greater judgment.

The Secret ("Mystery") Kingdom of Babylon

Modern "Babylon" became an empire in 1914 with the signing of the Federal Reserve Act, which brought America and the whole world under its economic bondage. Its real purpose was planned in secret on Jekyll Island in 1910, and was first reported in Leslie's Magazine in 1916 in an article written by B.C. Forbes in praise of Paul Warburg, the primary founder of this system:

"Picture a party of the nation's greatest bankers stealing out of New York on a private railroad car under cover of darkness, stealthily traveling hundreds of miles south, embarking on a mysterious launch, sneaking on to an island deserted by all but a few servants, living there a full week under such rigid secrecy that the names of not one of them was once mentioned lest the servants learn the identity and disclose to the world this strangest, most secret expedition in the history of American finance.

"I am not romancing. I am giving to the world, for the first time, the real story of how the famous Aldrich currency report, the foundation of new currency system, was writ-ten." [Quoted in The Creature from Jekyll Is-land, by G. Edward Griffin, p. 9]

This was later confirmed in the official 1930 biography of Senator Aldrich, writing,

“Aldrich entered this discussion at Jekyll Island an ardent convert to the idea of a central bank. His desire was to transplant the system of one of the great European banks, say the Bank of England, bodily to America.” [Griffin, p. 17]

Griffin quotes speeches by Senator Aldrich himself and A. Barton Hepburn on pages 19 and 20,

“The organization proposed is not a bank, but a cooperative *union* of all the banks of the country for definite purposes.” Precisely: A union of banks. “Two years later, in a speech before that same group of bankers, A. Barton Hepburn of Chase National Bank was even more candid. He said, it will make all incorporated banks together joint owners of a central dominating power”. And that is about as good a definition of a cartel as one is likely to find.”

The fact that the Federal Reserve System is a private corporation owned by bankers is known to many, but not by the average American, who assumes it is part of the United States government. The bankers have allowed this myth to be perpetuated, but only God could blind the people to such an extent that it could remain a secret.

On page 23 of his book, Griffin quotes from Paul Warburg’s biography, “Paul M. Warburg is probably the mildest-mannered man that ever personally conducted a revolution. It was a bloodless revolution: he did not attempt to rouse the populace with arms. He stepped forth armed simply with an idea. And he conquered. That’s the amazing thing. A shy, sensitive man, he imposed his idea on a nation of a hundred million people.” (Griffin’s quote from Warburg, the Revolutionist, by Harold Kellock). This is how America and the whole world came under the dominion of Mystery Babylon. Kellock says, “*It was a bloodless revolution.*”

The fact that it was done precisely 2,520 years after the original Babylonian Empire was established in 607 B.C. is astounding. All of the major events of modern history from 1776 to the present day are tied to that 2,520-year time cycle. We are repeating biblical history in the greatest parallel of all time. Next year (2006) will be 2,520 years after the completion of the second temple in the days of Ezra and the prophet Haggai.

When Will This Captivity End?

It is obvious that our captivity to this Babylon is more than the 70 years of Judah’s captivity. Why? First of all, the captivity will not and cannot end until America repents of her sin (the cause of the captivity). The law is clear on that point, as well as all the precedents in the book of Judges. In Lev. 26 we find a chapter that runs parallel to Deut. 28. There we find the lawful answer in verses 40-42, **40 If they confess their iniquity and the iniquity of their forefathers, in their unfaithfulness which they committed against Me, and also in their acting with hostility against Me 41 I also was acting with hostility against them, to bring them into the land of their enemies or if their uncircumcised heart becomes humbled so that they then make amends for their iniquity, 42 then I will remember My covenant with Jacob, and I will remember also My covenant with Isaac, and My covenant with Abraham as well, and I will remember the land.**

This tells us that God will not remember His covenant until we humble our hearts and confess our iniquity. And so, theoretically, if America does not re-pent, we will be forever under the dominion of Babylon. We will remain under this bondage until we do repent.

We are nearing the end of the book of Jeremiah, but we did not have space enough to finish it last issue, so we will finish it in this issue and move on to the book of Ezekiel.

(Read Jeremiah 51:17-24) God through Jeremiah mocks the idols and the idol makers of Babylon and the other nations. He says they are falsehood, vanity and the work of errors and will perish in the time of their visitation, or judgment. But the God of Jacob is not like them. He is the **“Former of all things.”** The King James goes on to say, **and Israel is the rod of his inheritance.** The words “Israel is” have been added by the translator because he didn’t understand the verse I believe. The word “rod” here is from the Hebrew “*shebet*” which means “sceptre.” Leaving these words out and substituting scepter for rod, the scripture would read, **“He is the Former of all things: and the sceptre of His inheritance: the LORD of hosts is His name.”** Sceptre would indicate ruler and inheritance is a reference to all Israel. Then speaking of Israel, He says they are his battle axe and weapons of war. Then follows ten successive sentences starting out with the same phrase, **“I will break in pieces.”** The object ranges from nations to man

and woman to young and old to captains and rulers. While this happened in a sense with the fall of Babylon, I think it appropriate to again look at the book of Revelation. (Read Rev. 19:11-16) At first this sounds like He is ready for a literal battle until we realize that the sword He carries comes from His mouth, i.e. the sword is His Holy Word. To a certain extent, this is what has happened with Israel and Judah. As they left their captivities both, though in different ways and different times, have expanded the kingdom of God here on the earth. I believe this is what is meant by the “breaking in pieces.”

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From: Newsletter Issue 1411

In our last lesson we read the first three verses of Rev. 17 in which one of the angels, who had the seven last plagues, showed John what he called the great whore that sitteth upon many waters. John described what he saw as a **“woman sitting upon a scarlet coloured beast, full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns.”** He continues his description in verses 4-6 (Read) When John saw this sight we’re told that he **“wondered with great admiration,”** or as the margin of my Bible says “marveled with great amazement.” The woman displays great riches and has a golden cup in her hand that John says is **“full of the abominations and filthiness of her fornication.”** Upon her forehead was a name written, **“MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATION OF THE EARTH.”** If you recall, when we studied the seven churches as we began our study of Revelation, we’re told in Rev. 2:13 in discussing the church at Pergamos, that this was where Satan’s seat is. In our study, we said, “When the Babylonian Empire itself fell, the Chaldean Mysteries transferred its seat from Babylon to Pergamos. It is from these Chaldean Mysteries that much of the pagan religions originated and prospered.” Later, these “Mysteries” were further transferred to Rome and were gradually incorporated into the Church doctrines. (Read II Thess. 2:3-10) Paul foretold of the workings of these mysteries and pretty clearly identified them as coming from what we now know as the Roman

Catholic Church. We have looked at a number of the blasphemous statements made by Popes through the centuries and the persecutions and killing by the Church of those who dared to seek the truth. So I think we can reasonably identify this woman as the Church, (Roman Catholic Church). The beast that she is riding is the same seven headed and ten horned beast that we have become familiar with in the last few chapters that we determined to be the dragon representing the leadership of the Roman Empire. We have seen the same beast, but this time none of the heads or horns are crowned.

We have read of the great persecutions and killing of martyrs that was carried out by the Church that probably numbered into the millions since the Church began to execute both ecclesiastical and temporal power. This would account for John seeing the **“woman drunken with the blood of saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus.”** Though who this woman is should no longer be a mystery, it still remains so with the majority of Christians to this day.

(Read Rev. 17:7-11) The beast that was would have been Pagan Rome, or Imperial Rome which then fell, or **“is not.”** This is the same as we read in chapter 13 that one of the heads had a deadly wound that was healed. Then we’re told that it will ascend from the bottomless pit. As we have discussed before, this is not a place. When we studied Rev. 11, we said “it represents symbolically the abode of darkness and evil, the opposite of heaven, our source of light and power.” Then we’re told it will go into perdition, or destruction. But before that happens, we’re told that it **“yet is.”** This again fits with what happened, the empire “was,” then “was not,” yet it still exists. This corresponds with the healing of the deadly wound that we read of in chapter 13. That it will ultimately be completely destroyed as part of the Babylonian system is without question.

As further explanation, the angel said the seven heads of the beast represented seven mountains upon which the woman sitteth. This is both literal and symbolic. Mountains in Scripture is symbolic for kingdoms. We know that the city of Rome sits on seven hills. What is less known by most people is that there were seven distinct kingdoms over which Papal Rome exercised power and control. In order of the time of their prominence as kingdoms under Papal rule, they were the Franks, the House of Saxony, Franconia, the House of Suabia, Spain, Austria and France.

Verse 10 says, **“And there are seven kings; five are fallen, and one is, and the other is not yet come; and when he cometh, he must continue a short space.”** We have discussed before that during Roman history, the empire was ruled over by seven distinct types of government. They are in order, Kings, Consuls, Dictators, Decimvirs, Tribunes, Military Emperors, and Christian Emperors. In the days of John, the Roman Empire was ruled by Military Emperors, the sixth type of government. These probably actually began following the death of Nero as he was succeeded by Roman generals who fought each other for the throne. As we have seen in our studies, the seventh type, Christian Emperors, began with Constantine’s Edict of Milan in 313 A.D that ended the persecution of the Church.

Papal Rome was of the seven, but it came into authority and power in 476 A.D. with the fall of the Western Roman Empire and thus became the eighth in the revival of Rome. In Daniel 7, Daniel only saw four beasts, but he saw a little horn come up in the fourth beast taking out three horns when it came up. It actually became a fifth empire or as we are discussing here, the eighth form of government for Rome. It actually exercised the authority and power of the sixth form of government, i.e. that of the Military Emperors, as its imperial rule was greater in some respects than that exercised by the Roman emperors because it exercised physical authority and mental or spiritual authority as well. I think this explains the woman (church) riding the beast (emperorship).

John tells us that this beast would go into perdition, or destruction. We have seen most of the temporal power of this combination beast with the woman rider be taken away. If we go back again to II Thess. 2, Paul says that this “Mystery of Iniquity” is to be destroyed by the brightness of the Lord’s coming. So this false system of worship that has caused so much misery through the ages will be destroyed as this age closes with Christ taking over His throne.

(Read Rev. 17:12-14) Verse 12 tells us, **“And the ten horns which thou sawest are ten kings, which have received no kingdom as yet; but receive power as kings one hour with the beast.”** In the metal image that Daniel saw in Daniel 2, it had two legs and of course two feet with ten toes. The two legs correspond with the two Roman Empires, the east and the west. The ten toes could correspond with the ten nations, or ethnic groups, in Europe, that were dominated by the Roman Church. These could be the ten kings, which have **“received no kingdom as yet,”** in the first century that John was alive. These were the 1. Bavarians, 2. Franks, 3. Burgundians, 4. Alelmanni, 5. Suevi, 6. Visigoths, 7. Alans, 8. Vandals, 9. Ostrogoths, 10. Lombards.

The two feet represent a religious empire in fact, two religious empires. The old Roman Territory ultimately was divided into Western Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodox, the latter of which was eventually conquered by the Islamic people, the clay mentioned in Daniel 2.

The ten horns did form ten independent kingdoms for a short season after the demise of the Roman Empire. Three of them were forcibly subdued at the time of Emperor Justinian as we have already studied. However, in time, mostly by accepting the Roman Pontiff as their supreme head, they came under the dominion of Rome once again and thus lost their sovereignty. Verse 13 tells us that these ten kings had a common goal, to give their power and strength unto the beast to make war with the Lamb. The only way to make war with the Lamb is to make war with His people. Daniel told us in Daniel 7 that the little horn made war with the saints and prevailed against them. However, Daniel 7:26, 27 tells us concerning this little horn, **“But the judgments shall sit, and they shall take away his dominion, to consume and to destroy it unto the end. And the kingdom and dominion, and the great-ness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey him.”** John tells us in Rev. 17:16, 17 **“And the ten horns which thou sawest upon the beast, these shall hate the whore, and shall make her desolate and naked, and shall eat her flesh, and burn her with fire. For God hath put in their hearts to fulfill his will, and to agree, and give their kingdom unto the beast, until the words of God shall be fulfilled.”** So I think we can see that ultimately the religious arm of the Babylonian system will be destroyed.

(Read Rev. 17:18) The city John is speaking of here is the Babylonian system, not a literal city. We will have more to say about this city as we study the next chapter.

Chapter 18 deals with the destruction of the economic arm of the Babylonian system. To understand it better, we need to go back to the source of this most destructive economic system. (Read Daniel 3:1-7) This should give us an idea of how plentiful gold was at that time. Depending on how a cubit is measured (some say 18 inches and some 23 inches) this column or image would have been 9 or 11.5 feet wide and 90 or 115 feet high. Casting such an image would have been a major accomplishment. But then notice who the king commanded to come to the dedication of this image. This was not an ecclesiastical gathering. All of the people commanded to come were government employees. Then notice that all the people were commanded to bow down and worship the image whenever they heard the musical signal. This is the first Biblical record we have of people worshipping gold. Gold was used for decorative applications prior to this and was even traded as a commodity. However, it was not an object of worship.

If we read the rest of Daniel 3, we'll see that three of the Jew captives, that Nebuchadnezzar had put in positions of responsibility in his kingdom, refused to bow down and worship this image as to them this was worshipping another god. As a result, they were cast into the furnace that had been used to cast this image. The king commanded that it be heated 7 times hotter than normal. It was so hot that the men who cast these three men into it were killed by the heat. Yet, all three men did not appear to be hurt. When the king looked into the furnace, he saw four men, one whom he said had the form of the Son of God. When he commanded the three men, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego to come out of the furnace, they came out and had absolutely no effect of the furnace on their person or on their clothing.

From this point on in history, gold became an object of worship. Money systems were based on the gold standard and backed by gold or silver. Since money was normally backed by gold, money then became the object of worship. Money became, to many, a source of revenue itself as they began to charge interest. Charging interest, or usury, as we see it referred to in Scripture, is strictly forbidden by God except to the stranger, meaning someone who does not live in one's own country. Debt and interest have become the foundation upon which the rich become richer at the expense of the less fortunate. Wealth is measured in money. In God's system, wealth is measured in production and the ability to produce. Millions of people have lived in abject poverty while millions more have lived in continual fear of the same because this Babylonian system has failed to supply in abundance the needs of life to all men everywhere. Millions of men have died or been maimed in wars that were fought to enrich the few. Virtually every war that has been fought has been fought for this purpose when the real truth is uncovered. As Paul says in I Tim. 6:10, **"For the love of money is the root of all evil."** This is what this Babylonian economic system has engendered to the whole world.

Man is not capable of undoing or correcting what this system has wrought. We see attempts on a near continual basis to prop up this system, but this is usually all that they are, attempts. Usually one repair causes another rip somewhere else so that there is no end to trying make this system work anymore. Only God can provide the solution which is complete destruction of the system as we see in Rev. 18.

(Read Rev. 18:1-3) This is not a problem just within our own nation, but every nation on earth has participated in the system so that all are guilty. All merchants have participated in the system whether they wanted to or not. Most have tried to use the system to enhance their own wealth, a wealth that they will lose with the fall of the system. We have seen in the past few years just how corrupted the system has become. A good example happened just the recently with the head of the International Monetary Fund being indicted for immoral sexual sins. As verse 2 says, Babylon is "become the habitation of devils and the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird." The corrupting influence of this economic system reaches into every aspect of life and affects everyone of us in one form or another.

(Read Rev. 18:4-8) While we all have to use the system, we don't all have to become a part of it. We have reached the point that it is virtually impossible for a person to purchase a home, a car, or even smaller necessities of life without incurring debt to do so. Certainly, we all need to avoid debt if at all possible, but it is sometimes necessary for us to incur it. When we do, we need to make it our top priority to pay it off. This is not what I mean when I refer to becoming a part of the system. When we incur debt needlessly in our efforts to make more money, or when we intentionally use our money itself to increase our wealth, we are then becoming a part of the system. God is telling us here to come out of the system. If this is our goal rather than the goal of using the system to multiply our wealth, I think God honors this. It is truly unfortunate that we have to have a part in it to live, but to do so with the desire only to increase our wealth is wrong. God

is going to judge the system by His own law. That which she (the Babylonian system) has “stolen” will have to be repaid double. Exodus 22:9 tells us, **“For all manner of trespass, whether it be for ox, for ass, for sheep, for raiment, or for any manner of lost thing, which another challengeth to be his, the cause of both parties shall come before the judges; and whom the judges shall condemn, he shall pay double unto his neighbour.”** This is the law. The case has been brought before God, the ultimate judge of all, and he is giving his judgment here in these verses in Revelation. The judgment will be carried out and all those that have profited by the system will have a part in the judgment.

In one sense, we are fortunate today in this time of mass communication and being near the end of the system in that we can see the things discussed in this Scripture being parroted by those in charge almost word for word. Even though we are seeing dire economic times, people in high places are saying almost daily what John is saying the system will say, **“I sit a queen, and am no widow, and shall see no sorrow”** for example.

They are telling us the system is too big to fail, that there is no way that our overall economic system can fail, that debt is not a problem that won't resolve itself. Yet God says that because of this arrogance, **“Therefore shall her plagues come in one day, death, and mourning, and famine; and she shall be utterly burned with fire: for strong is the Lord God who judgeth her.”** I believe we are living in the time when we will see this happen. However, before this sounds too negative, we need to always remember that God does not take something away that would leave us hanging without replacing it with something that will sustain us. God already has an economic system that will work and He announced it to Moses at Mt. Sinai. When God destroys the Babylonian system, His system is waiting in the wings.

(Read Rev. 18:9-14) It is interesting that God uses fornication as an allegory of the relationship that the kings, or rulers, of the earth with this Babylonian system. Fornication is a term used to refer to unnatural sexual sins. I have found five examples of fornication given in Scripture: incest, homosexuality, sodomy, interracial marriage, and harlotry. If we consider these in the sense of the relationship of the rulers of the various nations with this Babylonian economic system, I think we can begin to visualize the real corruptness of this system and the rulers who have been a part of it. We can see the reason that these “kings” **“shall bewail her, and lament for her.”** However, note that verse 10 says that they are going to stand “afar off” as they see this system meet its end, though they are going to bewail its passing.

The merchants are also going to mourn the death of this ungodly system because people are no longer going to buy their merchandise. But notice how that merchandise is listed. Gold, silver, precious stones, pearls, fine linen, etc. are at the top of the list, i.e. what they consider to be their most valuable items. Men, chariots, horses, sheep, cattle, wheat, etc. are at the bottom of the list. The merchandise that should be the most valuable for man's sustenance is the least valuable in the Babylonian system. Could this be the reason that so large a percentage of the world's population is starving or on the verge of it? God's economic system values this merchandise in exact opposite values. When men like Abraham and Isaac are mentioned as being rich, their wealth is in their crops, their flocks and their herds, i.e. those things that man needs to live on. When God blesses man with wealth, it is not in gold or silver, but rather in crops and animals. Consider the difference. Man thinks he is doing well when his money brings him interest in double digit figures. Genesis 26:12 tells us, “Then Isaac sowed in that land, and received in the same year a hundredfold,” a return on his investment of 100 percent. We'll continue with chapter 18 next issue.

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From: Newsletter Issue 1412

We were discussing in our last issue the fall of the Babylonian system as God brings it about. Revelation 18 continues with further discussion of this monumental fall.

(Read Rev. 18:1-3) This is not a problem just within our own nation, but every nation on earth has participated in the system so that all are guilty. All merchants have participated in the system whether they wanted to or not. Most have tried to use the system to enhance their own wealth, a wealth that they will lose

with the fall of the system. We have seen in the past few years just how corrupted the system has become. A good example happened recently with the head of the International Monetary Fund being indicted for immoral sexual sins. As verse 2 says, Babylon is **“become the habitation of devils and the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird.”** The corrupting influence of this economic system reaches into every aspect of life and affects everyone of us in one form or another.

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Man thinks he is doing well when his money brings him interest in double digit figures. Genesis 26:12 tells us, "Then Isaac sowed in that land, and received in the same year a hundredfold," a return on his investment of 100 percent.

(Read Rev. 18:15-19) John reiterates the plight of the merchants and the ship masters when they see this system by which they obtained what they are calling wealth be destroyed in a very short time. It is important that we understand that wealth that consists of gold, silver, precious stones, fine linen, etc. is not what God bases real wealth on. These are things that only the wealthy, by today's standards, have, yet, without food, clothing, and a means of procuring such things such as growing them, of what real value are they? But because gold, silver, precious stones, etc. are the measurement of wealth in most people's minds, I think we can see why merchants and shipmasters are in great despair when the system by which they gained them is destroyed.

We're told that the system falls in one hour. I would rather think that the one hour is used in the sense of long term prophecy which would mean that one hour would be about 15 years. I don't think the Bible indicates that this destruction happens instantly, but rather over a short period of time as God replaces it with His own system. But I think we can see the dilemma of those who are used to their money working for them, having to instead themselves having to produce something of intrinsic value in order to eat.

(Read Rev. 18:20-24) I think we can also see that this destruction will not happen without violence. The comparison of the destruction of the Babylonian system to the casting into the sea of a great millstone shows us how complete this destruction will be. It is very difficult for us, having lived with this system all of our lives, to imagine so complete a destruction as John is detailing. Virtually all of us want to see the destruction of at least some part of this evil economic system, but at the same time all of us will want to preserve some part of it as well. Without having the mind of Christ, as will be evident in the overcomers, it is difficult to imagine any kind of system that can and will replace the Babylonian system. We have the pattern of the replacement system given to us in the Law, but it is still hard to comprehend the loss of this Babylonian system since that is all that we have all lived with all of our lives.

Verse 24 gives us a strange twist in our study. We're told that **"in her was found the blood of prophets, and of saints and of all that were slain upon the earth."** This has particular bearing on our time now with the events that are transpiring in the Palestine area and Jerusalem in particular. In Luke 13:33, 34, as part of His answer to some who were warning Him not to go to Jerusalem because Herod wanted to kill Him, Jesus said, **"for it cannot be that a prophet perish out of Jerusalem. O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, which killest the prophets, and stonest them that are sent unto thee."** It is Jerusalem that Christ says is responsible for killing the prophets.

(Read Matt. 23:29-39) Jerusalem is the only city in Scripture that is charged with killing the prophets and being held responsible for doing so as in verse 35. In Rev. 18 we were talking about the city of Babylon that appears to be charged with the blood of the prophets, and of saints and of all that were slain upon the earth. Jesus considered Jerusalem to be guilty of all the blood shed on earth from Abel to His own day John extends this to the end of the age when great "Babylon" falls from power and is cast into the sea like a great millstone.

Obviously, somehow Mystery Babylon and old Jerusalem become synonymous with each other insofar as the law is concerned. In Rev. 11:8, in discussing the two witnesses, John told us, **"And their dead bodies shall lie in the street of the great city, which is spiritually called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified."** So Jerusalem, where our Lord was crucified, is spiritual Sodom and Egypt. Sodom is a symbol of immorality. Egypt is a symbol of bondage. Babylon is a symbol of commerce built upon usury, rather than upon the divine law. Sodom is remembered for being destroyed by fire and brimstone. Egypt is remembered for being destroyed by the ten plagues. The old city of Babylon is remembered for its sudden fall at the hand of Cyrus, who was a type of Christ.

The old Jerusalem is Sodom in that its lawlessness caused it to kill the prophets. Jerusalem is Egypt in that it is in bondage with her children, the followers of Judaism who rejected Jesus. Jerusalem is also Babylon, in that its "children" have gained control over the world system through their financial and banking empires.

Old Babylon was not liable for the blood of prophets. This liability was incurred when Babylon and Jerusalem merged corporately just as liability for immoral lawlessness and bondage was incurred when they merged with Sodom and Egypt. Of course there was not a physical merger, but rather a merger that occurred mystically or spiritually.

Jerusalem, then, is spiritual Babylon, spiritual Sodom, and spiritual Egypt. Those who today are working to establish Jerusalem (old) as the Kingdom of God are working against God, not for Him. Christian Zionists have been tricked into supporting the opposition without really knowing who they are working for, or their real agenda.

The last few issues have been discouraging at best as they have described the fall of the Babylonian system.

I say this from the standpoint that unfortunately we are all affected by the system and as it falls, it is going to make us wonder just where we are in relation to it. However, chapter 19 is a good news chapter, though at first read it might appear to be a bit somber. As we learn to understand it, I believe this will change and we will all appreciate the good news.

(Read Rev. 19:1-6) That God has rendered judgment on all three aspects of this system is truly something to rejoice about. Remember that John is in the spirit in the Kingdom of God that we discussed in Rev. 4. So what he is seeing is the rejoicing of the whole kingdom.

(Read Rev. 19:7-9) This is the voice of the great multitude of verse 6 that is speaking verses 7 and 8. This passage is usually not understood because of a failure to understand who the bride is. We studied in chapter 17 of the false bride, i.e. the Church, that has tried to insert herself into the position of the bride. But Scripture is quite specific as to who the true bride really is. Hosea 1 is basically the divorce decree that God gave to Israel, His first bride. This first marriage took place at Mt. Sinai as God brought the Israelites out of Egypt. However, Israel, the bride, did not keep her word and went after other gods or lovers as Hosea 2 describes them. (Read Deut. 24:1-4) This is the law of divorce. God found great uncleanness in Israel as she turned from Him to gods made by man. Thus God gave her a bill of divorce in Hosea 1. This severed all ties between God and Israel. The ex-Israelites could no longer call themselves by the name of Israel, which means God rules, or ruling with God, because of this divorce. This still holds today. The people today that call themselves Israel do so in violation of God's law in two or three different ways and will be judged for it.

Yet God had made some unconditional promises to Abraham that left Him obligated to these people even though the people had sinned greatly. For this reason, we see God seeking to re-marry Israel in Hosea 2:14-23 (Read). But the question comes to mind, is not re-marrying Israel a violation of law. Based on Deut 24:4, this would certainly seem to be the case. However, there is more to the law. (Read Romans 7:1-3) Christ, as God the husband, died thus releasing Israel from the divorce law that would have prevented her from re-marrying God, or Christ. Now that He is risen from the dead, we see Him alluring Israel to be His bride again. But this time, it will not be a marriage based on conditions, or the Old Covenant. This new marriage will be based on the New Covenant in which Israel will be in complete agreement with God in all His ways. Rev. 21:2 equates the bride with the New Jerusalem. This will be the New Jerusalem, the Sarah, not Hagar, the Old Jerusalem. (Read Gal. 4:22-31) Bride Israel New Jerusalem.

Israel is the corporate Bride of Christ. This has individual as well as corporate aspects. The corporate Bride is the sum total of all the individuals who have been married to Him through-out history. On the individual level, we have discussed the three steps that one must take toward coming into this marriage bond with Jesus Christ. The first is to by faith accept justification by the blood of the Lamb that is to experience the Feast of Passover. This is free and cannot be bought or earned. The second is to be filled with the Spirit, or to be sanctified, that is to experience the Feast of Pentecost. This requires effort on the part of the individual to grow and mature in Christ. The third is glorification that is to experience the Feast of Tabernacles. The first two steps cannot be bypassed to achieve the last.

Quoting from the book Who Is An Israelite by Dr. Stephen Jones, "Passover and Pentecost were both fulfilled

in 33 A.D. Jesus became the Passover Lamb when He died on the cross while everyone was killing the lambs for Passover that year. After His resurrection, He ascended and then returned at the Feast of Pentecost (Acts 2:1) to fulfill that feast. This concluded the work of His first coming the work that He had to do as the Messiah-King of Judah.

“The autumn feasts (Trumpets, Atonement, and Tabernacles) are fulfilled in the events surrounding the second coming of Christ, when He comes as the heir of Joseph’s birthright. This is the time of the marriage” that the book of Revelation describes.”

This fulfillment of the first two feasts allowed us as individuals to come into a marital relationship with Jesus Christ. Because of our spiritual immaturity and imperfections, this marital relationship is not instantly perfect the moment we accept Christ’s justification by faith nor is it perfect when we are sanctified or experience Pentecost. We still have much growing and maturing to do. So while we have the beginning of a marital relationship, the marriage bond is not what it will be.

Israel, as the Bride, is not composed exclusively of natural, or genetic, Israelites. While the marriage is exclusively with Israel, it does not exclude those who are not natural Israelites, nor does it necessarily include all natural Israelites. (Read Isa. 56:6-8) Isaiah is referring to Solomon’s dedicatory prayer when he dedicated the temple. (Read I Kings 8:41-43) Galatians 3:29 makes it clear that whether one is a natural Israelite or a non-natural Israelite, one must be Christ’s to be an heir of the promises. This will exclude many natural Israelites and include many non-natural Israelites. In studying the Law, one would see that there are many reasons that a person would be cast out of the congregation, i.e. lose citizenship rights. This may be permanent or temporary depending on the reason for the casting out and/or the repentance of the one cast out. The point is that through sin or uncleanness, a natural Israelite could lose his or her citizenship rights, so Paul is saying that whether one is a natural Israelite or a non-natural Israelite, to be a true Israelite, thus an inheritor of the Abrahamic Promises, one must have Christ.

Getting back to Rev. 19:7, the angel tells John, “his wife hath made herself ready.” This making herself ready is the three step process that we have been discussing. Verse 8 tells us that the Bride is to be granted to be arrayed in fine linen and then exclusively of natural, or genetic, Israelites. While the marriage is exclusively with Israel, it does not exclude those who are not natural Israelites, nor does it necessarily include all natural Israelites. (Read Isa. 56:6-8) Isaiah is referring to Solomon’s dedicatory prayer when he dedicated the temple. (Read I Kings 8:41-43) Galatians 3:29 makes it clear that whether one is a natural Israelite or a non-natural Israelite, one must be Christ’s to be an heir of the promises. This will exclude many natural Israelites and include many non-natural Israelites. In studying the Law, one would see that there are many reasons that a person would be cast out of the congregation, i.e. lose citizenship rights. This may be permanent or temporary depending on the reason for the casting out and/or the repentance of the one cast out. The point is that through sin or uncleanness, a natural Israelite could lose his or her citizenship rights, so Paul is saying that whether one is a natural Israelite or a non-natural Israelite, to be a true Israelite, thus an inheritor of the Abrahamic Promises, one must have Christ.

Getting back to Rev. 19:7, the angel tells John, “**his wife hath made herself ready.**” This making herself ready is the three step process that we have been discussing.

Verse 8 tells us that the Bride is to be granted to be arrayed in fine linen and then explains that the fine linen is the righteousness of saints. Saints are Christians. The supposed conferring of sainthood on individuals by the Church misrepresents the true use of the term in Scripture. This is something that is conferred by God upon all Christians.

In verse 9, the angel instructs John to write “**Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb.**” In our western culture, we have the wedding, or marriage, before the marriage supper, or the reception. In Scripture, this order is reversed. The marriage supper preceded the wedding and would last for seven days. The story of Jacob in Gen. 29 helps us understand this custom. (Read Gen. 29:21-28) Jacob had served Laban for seven years in lieu of a dowry (which Jacob apparently had stolen from him as he journeyed to Padanaram in search of a wife). Laban deceived him and at the end of the feast gave him Leah, his oldest

daughter, instead of Rachel whom Jacob loved. When Jacob confronted Laban about this deception, Laban basically said that if he would fulfill her week, i.e. finish the week of festivities for the bride and groom, then he would give Jacob Rachel, if he would agree to another seven years' service. So they had another week of feasting and Laban gave Jacob his younger daughter Rachel.

Another example is in the story of Samson. Samson saw a young Philistine woman that he decided that he wanted to marry, so he asked his parents to set up the wedding. They objected because of the fact that she was a Philistine, but Samson insisted. So finally his father went to the woman and apparently made arrangements for the wedding. (Read Judges 14:10-13) We won't go into the whole story; the point is that the feast was a weeklong affair. We aren't told just when the bride was introduced into the affair, but the feast started before the wedding.

We will continue our discussion of the marriage supper in our next issue.

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From: Newsletter Issue 1501

In our last issue we were discussing the marriage supper that we find discussed in Rev. 19. We are continuing this discussion in this issue.

We are no longer dealing with history as we have in most of the book of Revelation, but rather are looking at the future. As a result, we are speculating on how, and sometimes what, things are going to happen. I believe the "marriage supper" will be, in effect, a training time for those who will rule and reign with Christ. How long it will last I don't know, but I would venture that it will be seven something, whether it is days, weeks, months, or years.

Jesus gave a couple of parables that have to do with the marriage supper that we need to look at to hopefully make this story more complete. (Read Matt. 25:1-13) This is in keeping with the custom of there being a feast beginning before the marriage. The bridegroom, in this case Jesus Christ, tarries, i.e. He doesn't come when He is first expected. When He finally comes, some will be prepared and some will not. The difference between being prepared or not apparently is whether one has extra oil, something that can be bought. I submit that this oil is knowledge, knowledge that helps prepare one for the coming of the Bridegroom. Since all ten are virgins, I believe this tells us that all ten are Christians, but five have been justified and sanctified and are ready for the glorification. The five foolish virgins have either just relied on their justification, or have not been serious about their sanctification. This isn't cause to remove their names from the book of life, but does prevent them from having part in the first resurrection.

(Read Matt. 22:2-14) The first to be invited to the marriage were the people of Jerusalem to whom Christ first came. He had sent invitations well in advance by His prophets, but the people had consistently refused the invitation. Basically, John the Baptist issued the final invitation and called himself a friend of the bridegroom. (John 3:29) We saw the consequences of the rejection of the invitations in 70 A.D.

Note that in those that then came to the wedding feast, there were both bad and good. There would be both good and evil men respond to the wedding invitation during the Christian era. This would be consistent with the Pentecostal Age, since Pentecost is a leavened feast. So what will God do about it? Vs. 11 continues, **"And when the king came in to see the guests, he saw there a man which had not on a wedding garment: and he saith unto him, Friend, how camest thou in hither not having a wedding garment? And he was speechless."** It was the custom that the parents of the groom, especially if they were prosperous, would furnish a special garment for each of the guests since the feast would last for seven days. In this case, why did this man not have a wedding garment? Everyone would have been given the special garment and have been expected to wear it. It would have been very strange for one not to wear his. It would have had to have been a deliberate refusal. The garment of salvation represents the righteousness of the saints. In the marriage supper in Rev. 19, the garment would represent the **away, and cast him into outer darkness; there**

shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. For many are called, but few are chosen.” Only those who qualify for the Feast of Tabernacles, or glorification, will be at this wedding feast. This does not mean that other Christians “go to hell.” The “outer darkness” is simply exclusion from the feast. The picture painted here is that of a well lit hall where the feast is prepared for the guests that are properly attired, while the outside is dark.

This tells us of the difference between believers and overcomers. We will discuss this more in the next chapter. glorified body. The man would be a Christian since he had accepted the invitation. He was justified by faith and may have even been filled with the Spirit, or sanctified, but was unwilling to go beyond that to seek, or wear the glorified body. He went to the wedding, but was not allowed to participate in the feast which is represented in Scripture by the seven day Feast of Tabernacles.

Verses 13, 14 then tell us, **“Then said the king to the servants, Bind him hand and foot, and take him**

The first resurrection is for the overcomers while the second resurrection is for all the rest, including believers.

(Read Rev. 19:10) Remember that John has been listening to one of the angels that had the seven last plagues in his hands. When John started to worship him, the angel reminds him quite sternly to not do so as he considers himself only a fellow servant with John.

John then sees a major scene change. (Read Rev. 19:11-16) I found a lesson prepared by Dr. Stephen Jones of God’s Kingdom Ministries that covers a lot of what is included in these verses that states things better than I can. I would like to include this lesson as part of our lesson. It doesn’t cover everything that we want to look at in these verses, so we will look at them further in our next lesson. Following is Steve’s lesson he entitled “The White Horse Company.”

Revelation 19:11, 14 says, 11. And I saw heaven opened; and behold, a white horse, and He who sat upon it is called Faithful and True; and in righteousness He judges and wages war. **14. And the armies which are in heaven, clothed in fine linen, white and clean, were following Him on white horses.**

The One sitting on this white horse is Jesus Christ Himself. The others who also are seated on white horses are the body of Christ. Both are being manifested at the same time, because the Head will not come without the body, nor can the body function without the Head. In Revelation 3:14, we read, **14. And to the angel of the church in Laodicea write: The Amen, the faithful and true Witness, the Beginning of the creation of God, says this.**

Jesus Christ is the Amen of God. Why? Because He did only what He saw His Father do, and said only what He heard His Father say (John 5:19; 8:26-29). In other words, He bore witness to the Father. He was “faithful” to speak what He had heard His Father speak and to do what He had seen His Father do. And He was careful to speak and do precisely what the Father had spoken and done hence, He was a “true” witness as well.

But we ourselves are to follow His example, for God is raising up an Amen people who are in agreement with Him. So 1 John 2:6 tells us, **6. the one who says he abides in Him ought himself to walk in the same manner as He walked.**

One of the chief characteristics of the overcomer is that he is in agreement with Jesus Christ. Agreement creates a double witness, by which all things are established upon the earth. Deut. 19:15 says, **15. on the evidence of two or three witnesses a matter shall be confirmed.**

God has put His Holy Spirit into people on earth in order to create for Himself an earthly witness. This is because on the highest level, heaven and earth are two witnesses. Moses mentions this in Deut. 4:26.

The White Horse

The white horse is symbolic. It was never meant to be taken literally, as if Jesus is coming to earth on a flying horse. Certainly, if He wants to do so, who am I to forbid it? But like so much symbolism in the book of Revelation, this horse is a direct reference to a constellation called Pegasus, “the chief horse.” Its brightest star is Markab, (or Merhak in Hebrew). It means “returning from afar.”

All of the constellations, as they were originally named, are prophecies of Christ and reveal the divine plan of redemption for the world. Men later twisted it and used it for unlawful purposes, and that corrupted form is now called Astrology. But God is the One who named the stars and constellations in the beginning. Psalm 147:4 says, **4. He counts the number of the stars; He gives names to all of them.**

In the Bible, the horse was a symbol of salvation. This is because horses were so important to an army in time of war. They often “saved the day” for the foot soldiers. But God gave instructions to Israel and specifically to the kings that they were not to place their trust in horses. In God’s instruction to kings, we read in Deut. 17:16,

16. Moreover, he shall not multiply horses for himself, nor shall he cause the people to return to Egypt to multiply horses, since the Lord has said to you, ‘You shall never again return that way.’ Egypt was well known for its horses. Isaiah 31:1-3 makes mention of this as well, saying,

1. Woe to those who go down to Egypt for help, and rely on horses, and trust in chariots because they are many, and in horsemen because they are very strong, but they do not look to the Holy One of Israel, nor seek the Lord. 3. Now the Egyptians are men, and not God, and their horses are flesh and not spirit. In other words, God is their salvation not horses from Egypt. If we rely upon carnal weapons of warfare, we will find ourselves “returning to Egypt.” That is, arms races will actually bring us back into bondage, not freedom. We are seeing this even today, for the more we wage war in the Middle East, the more we lose our freedoms.

Jesus is our Salvation. He is the true “Horse.” Jesus’ Hebrew name, *Yeshua*, means “salvation.” His Greek name, *Iesus*, or *Iesous*, is simply a transliteration of the Hebrew **YahSus**. *Yah* is short for *Yahweh*. *Sus* is the Hebrew word for *Horse*.

In other words, **YahSus** literally means “Yahweh’s Horse,” which symbolically means “Yahweh’s Salvation.” About 200 years ago the English language created the letter “J” to replace many of the “I” sounds. This is how we came to change the spelling of *Iesus* to **Jesus**.

When Jesus said in John 4:22, “*salvation is of the Jews*,” a better rendering of this is: “*Yeshua is of the Judeans*,” that is, Jesus comes from the tribe of Judah. Jesus was identifying himself to the Samaritan woman as the source of Salvation that was to come out of Judah.

He Who Rides the White Horse

The one riding the White Horse is Christ, and those who follow Him on white horses are identified with Jesus, their Salvation. I believe that these are the *arnion*, the “little lamb” company mentioned often in Revelation. This is not the same word as *amnos*, which means the full-grown or mature lamb. Jesus is the Lamb of God (the *amnos* of God) who takes away the sin of the world (John 1:29, 36). We also read in Acts 8:32 that Jesus was the Lamb who was to be killed, as prophesied in Isaiah 53. Again, the word for “Lamb” is the Greek word *amnos*, the full-grown Lamb.

Finally, Peter tells us in 1 Pet. 1:19, **19. but with the precious blood, as of a Lamb [amnos] unblemished and spotless, the blood of Christ.**

Thus, it is clear that Jesus is the *amnos* of God. By way of contrast, in John 21:15, Jesus asked Peter, “Do you love Me?” When Peter answered in the affirmative, Jesus told him, “Feed my lambs,” using the Greek word *arnion*.

Peter was certainly not expected to feed Jesus Himself, but the “little lambs.” *Arnion* is the body of Christ. And this is the word that John always uses in the book of Revelation. This *arnion* body derives its authority and glory from Jesus, the *Amnos*. Since they also represent the Amen company, they do as their Head does, and they speak as their Head speaks.

In all things, they bear true and faithful witness to Jesus, even if it means dying for His sake. The purpose of the feast of Tabernacles is to bring forth such a body that is like Christ in every respect, for He is reproducing Himself in the earth. Collectively, this reproduced body is called the Manchild.

He Judges and Wages War

Rev. 19:11 says, “*and in righteousness He judges and wages war.*” What type of war? How does He judge? These questions are not answered here, so we must go to other parts of Scripture for answers.

We often use the word “judge” as if it is synonymous with “condemnation,” simply because men generally condemn when they judge others. But these words are not the same. It is possible to judge without condemning. John 5:22 says,

22. For not even the Father judges anyone, but He has given all judgment to the Son. This is truly an amazing statement that most people have not understood. The Father does not judge anyone! All judgment is delegated to the Son. Why? Upon what law is this based? John 5:26 and 27 says,

26. For just as the Father has life in Himself, even so He gave to the Son also to have life in Himself; 27. and He gave Him authority to execute judgment, because He is the Son of Man. Here is the answer. The Son was given the authority to judge, “because He is the Son of Man.” The word “man” is simply the definition of the Old Testament name, Adam. Jesus is the “last Adam” (1 Cor. 15:45).

Jesus had to be born of Adamic lineage in order to receive the original dominion mandate given in Gen. 1:26. The highest position, called the Birthright, was passed down from father to son through the generations coming to David and finally to Jesus Christ Himself. The title, “Son of Man” is given because of His lineage through Mary back to Adam.

In other words, when God gave Adam the dominion mandate in Gen. 1:26, God was giving man authority to judge. And the Judge of the highest court in the Universe is Jesus Christ Himself. Final judgment has been given to Him, because He is the Son of Adam, the heir of the dominion mandate.

Even so, He is not the only one called to judge the world. He is the highest Judge sitting on the Supreme Court of Heaven, but there are also lesser judges who judge with the mind of Christ. Paul says in 1 Cor. 6:2, “*or do you not know that the saints will judge the world?*” In the next verse, he asks, “*Do you not know that we shall judge angels?*”

Some people, of course, rub their hands with glee, because they think this means that they will soon have opportunity to condemn those who have wronged them. But Jesus taught us by example how to judge. John 5:30,

30. I can do nothing on My own initiative. As I hear, I judge; and My judgment is just, because I do not seek My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me.

The judges of all lower courts must abide by the mind and will of the higher court, or else they will be overruled and be ashamed. Jesus judged all things by the mind of His Father. Likewise, we are to judge by the mind of Christ. This requires more than a mere knowledge of the law. It requires revelation to know how to apply it specifically. This is impossible for the carnal mind to do, because the carnal mind can hear evidence, but only the mind of the Spirit can discern truth from lies or half-truths. Only the mind of the Spirit knows all things.

Divine judgment, like all things coming from God, is based upon Love. That simple principle is hard for the carnal mind of man to grasp. How can judgment proceed from Love? It has to do with the ultimate purpose of all judgment. God’s purpose is to correct and restore, not to condemn and to cast out permanently.

This has always been the divine purpose, for as Paul says in Romans 13:10, “*love is the fulfilling of the law.*” Love and law are not at cross purposes. In reality, they are one and the same, because they have the same Source. This is the Mind by which both the *Amnos* and the *arnion* company will judge righteously.

Likewise, it is by this principle of Love that they wage war. Paul says in 2 Cor. 10:3-6,

3. For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh, for the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh, but divinely powerful for the destruction of fortresses. 5 We are destroying speculations [logismos, “thoughts, or fleshly reasoning that seems logical to the carnal mind”] and every lofty thing raised up against the knowledge of God, and we are taking every thought captive to the obedience of Christ, 6 and we are ready to punish [ekdikao, “that which proceeds from justice”] all

disobedience, whenever your obedience is complete.

Paul tells us that we are to wage war, but he makes it clear that we are not to wage the type of warfare as men and nations do. Our warfare is not against people, but against those spiritual forces that keep people in bondage. Our warfare is not even against “the wicked,” but against the spiritual forces that make them wicked so that they can be set free in Christ.

In other words, our warfare is not destructive. It is constructive. Our armor is not carnal either. According to Ephesians 6:11-17, we conduct warfare dressed in spiritual armor. This is the only type of armor that can defend against the “enemy” in verse 12,

12. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in heavenly places.

This is what God is teaching us even today. We are learning the art of spiritual warfare, so that we banish from our minds the idea that we are supposed to use carnal weapons against flesh and blood people.

And so when Revelation 19:11 speaks of waging war in a righteous manner, it is not referring to Christ coming to “slaughter enemies,” as has been so often taught. In fact, if we may skip down to verse 15, we can see the type of weapon that is to be used against His enemies.

15. And from His mouth comes a sharp sword, so that with it He may smite the nations.

Once again, people have carnalized this sword in order to make it destructive. If it were a carnal sword, John would have seen it in His hand, rather than in His mouth. In Rev. 1:16 we read,

And in His right hand He held seven stars; and out of His mouth came a sharp two-edged sword; and His face was like the sun shining in its strength.

In an Old Testament setting, a two-edged sword was a destructive weapon that could separate head from body. But the New Testament weapon is described in Heb. 4,

12. For the word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intents of the heart. 13 And there is no creature hid-den from His sight, but all things are open and laid bare to the eyes of Him with whom we have to do. The sword is the spoken word of God. That is why it comes from the mouth, not from the hand. And this is con-firmed in Ephesians 6:17, where Paul says,

17. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.

This sword is able to divide soul and spirit and can “*judge the thoughts and intents of the heart.*” It is much sharper and more effective than a physical sword. To the one who has such a sword, “*all things are open and laid bare.*” In other words, all the facts are known in every case that comes before such a Judge.

When Israel came to Mount Sinai for their first Pentecost, they refused to hear the word of God (Ex. 20:18-21). They did not realize that they were refusing to receive the Sword of the Spirit. They were left only with a carnal sword.

Thus, when they later worshiped the golden calf, the penalty was executed by physical swords, which was all that the Levites had at their disposal. On that day, 3000 died and were subtracted from the Church in the wilderness (Ex. 32:28).

In Acts 2, however, the 120 disciples gathered in the upper room to receive the Sword of the Spirit. Then they went out into the street, using the sword from their mouth, and ADDED 3,000 to the Church (Acts 2:41).

They had a different sword that laid bare the hearts of the people, and the people repented according to the word of Peter (Acts 2:38).

This is the type of sword that the rider of the white horse is going to wield. It is the Sword of the Spirit,

which Jesus uses, and that same Sword is used by the company of overcomers that form His body. By this sword, they will judge and wage war. The results will be awesome.

The “Wrath of God” The rest of Rev. 19:15 says, **15. and He will rule them with a rod of iron; and He treads the wine press of the fierce wrath of God, the Almighty.** I saw a bumper sticker once that read: “Jesus is coming soon and boy is He mad!”

No, He is NOT mad or angry. We cannot attribute our carnal attitudes to Jesus, for that creates a false image of Him and is a violation of the second commandment.

The word translated “wrath” comes from the Greek word *orge* (pronounced OR-gay). Strong’s concordance says that it means “*desire* (as a reaching forth or excitement of the mind).” It has to do with strong passion. Men of passion can certainly be angry, but the word can be expressed also in terms of LOVE.

Yet Strong’s Concordance says that this Greek word is derived from *oregomai*, which means “to stretch forth oneself; i.e., reach out after (long for).”

So it is clear that “wrath” has to do with passion, or feeling very strongly about something. It does not mean AN-GER, although anger may be passionate (emotional). Anger is merely one expression of passion. But what about His “FIERCE wrath”? Does this not indicate an expression of anger?

The word “fierce,” which comes from the Greek word *thumos*, is defined in Strong’s Concordance as meaning “passion (as if breathing hard).” So instead of proving the anger of God, this word simply confirms the passionate nature of God in setting out to accomplish His purpose.

So let us not think of God as being the Angry God of Jonathan Edwards in the 1700’s. He is the God of Love who is passionate about His creation and is reaching out to all mankind. He is also correcting the injustice in the earth and filling the whole earth with His glory.

So once we understand the vivid word pictures in Revelation 19, and get a proper understanding of the Greek terms that John is using, we see that this chapter is not at all frightening or violent. Instead, it is a prophecy of the manifestation of the sons of God, which accompanies the second coming of Christ.

As I showed in FFI #206, John 7 indicates that Christ will come in the middle of the Feast of Tabernacles, joining the Head with the Body, and then this perfected Body will be presented to the Father on the 8th day of the feast. Then they will return to the earth on the “white horses” to do the work of restoration, which is the great passion of Jesus Christ.

We will continue our discussion of Rev. 19 in our next issue.

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From: Newsletter Issue 1502

Last issue, we were discussing Rev. 19:11- 16 and I said that there were still some things we needed to discuss in these verses that we would cover in this issue. In verse 13 we’re told, **“And he was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and his name is called The Word of God.”** The statement that His vesture was dipped in blood is thought by those who take this whole chapter to mean that Christ is coming to declare a bloody war on the un-saved as a sign of that bloody battle. But as we saw in our last lesson, God is not declaring a bloody war, but rather it will be a time of claiming victory through His Word based on His love of His creation, mankind. So what does this statement refer to? To understand this whole story we need to start back in Gen. 1:26-28 (Read). God gave dominion over all living things on the earth to Adam. This is often referred to as the Dominion Mandate. Included in this Dominion Mandate, we also see that Adam is commanded to be fruitful and multiply. This is often referred to as the Fruitfulness Mandate. These man-dates then passed from Adam to his son Seth and then to his son Enos, etc. until it passed to Noah. Together they became known as the birthright. The birthright normally passed to the father’s first born son,

though sometimes certain circumstances caused it to pass to a later born son. This was usually at the father's discretion, though there were exceptions, but the normal transfer was to the first born son. An example of an exception is in the case of Enoch in Gen. 5:18-24. Enoch's father Jared was 162 when Enoch was born and he lived to the age of 962. However, Enoch only lived 365 years, so his father Jared was still alive when Enoch died, so the birthright that he held passed to his grandson, Methuselah.

When Noah died, this birthright went to Shem, who apparently was Noah's youngest son. We're not told why. Again Shem outlived his sons and grandsons so that Isaac, son of Abraham, became the recipient of it. It was Isaac's intent to pass it to Esau, the oldest of his twin sons, Esau and Jacob. However, Jacob, apparently understanding the importance of this birthright more than his brother, kind of tricked his brother into selling it to him for the price of a bowl of pottage. God later confirmed that this was according to His plan.

These men that had received the birthright down through the generations were not necessarily ruling the world as we think of ruling today, i.e. ruling by oppression. But ultimately the holder of the birthright would be the one to rule all the world. There were others who wished to be rulers, just as there are those today who wish to rule the whole world. Nimrod is an example. According to the book of Jasher, his claim to rule was apparently based on his having in his possession the clothing made of skins that God made for Ad-am when He cast him out of the Garden of Eden, which had been passed down from generation to generation.

Jacob did a strange thing when he blessed his sons just before he died. He separated the sceptre, which designated the actual ruler, from the birthright. Gen. 49:8-10 tells us this. Going on in Gen. 49 we see in verses 22-26 that Joseph was blessed with fruitfulness. The Fruitfulness Mandate continued to be called the birthright. I Chron. 5:1, 2 confirms that the sceptre went to Judah and the birthright to Joseph. (Read) Since the Bible mentions this as much as it does, I believe we need to attach some significance to it.

The name Israel was first recorded in the story of Jacob as he returned from the land of Padanaram with his four wives and eleven sons at the time. When he found out that his brother Esau, who had threatened to kill him, was coming to meet them, Jacob made some strategic decisions in an effort to save at least a part of his family in which he divided them into two different companies and sent them on their way with presents of flocks and herds for Esau ahead of them. He stayed that night by himself before he too continued his journey. During the night another man appeared and the two of them wrestled until the break of day. Jacob lost the wrestling match when the other man **"touched the hollow of his thigh"** which put Jacob's hip out of joint. When the wrestling was completely over, the other man gave Jacob the name "Israel" which means "God rules, or ruling with God." Before he received the name, Jacob had come to realize that all things were in the hand of God, that he had to be in agreement with God, that he had to turn himself over to God. Then he was given the name "Israel." We can't say just what Jacob thought, but here in this name came the real meaning of the birthright, God rules or ruling with God. Jacob recognized then that it was a manifestation of God Himself that he had been wrestling with.

Just before Jacob died, he had Joseph bring his two sons, Ephraim and Manasseh, to him and he blessed them and adopted them as his own, specifically passing his name Israel to these two sons of Joseph. This made thirteen tribes of Israel, but the name "Israel" went specifically to Ephraim and Manasseh.

Now, we know that the sceptre eventually ended up with King David and that God made an unconditional promise to David that his throne would last forever and that only His descendants would sit on it. (Read II Samuel 7:10-17) Of course, David's son Solomon followed David to the throne, but when he died the kingdom was split into two kingdoms, the kingdom of Judah and the kingdom of Israel. One kingdom had the sceptre, i.e. the descendants of David ruling from the throne of David in Jerusalem. The other kingdom had the birthright in that Ephraim and Manasseh, sons of Joseph, were the dominant tribes in that kingdom. Eventually, the kingdom of Israel was taken into captivity by the Assyrians and were removed out of the land of Canaan and placed in an area south of and between the Black and Caspian seas. A hundred years later what was left of the kingdom of Judah was also taken into captivity by the Babylonians and they were moved and scattered throughout the kingdom of Babylon. Daniel 2:37, 38 tells us that God temporarily gave the dominion of the earth into the hands of the king of Babylon which in turn gave it to the rulers of the kingdoms that were to follow successively the Kingdom of Babylon. It had temporarily been taken from the kings of Judah since they were no longer kings.

At that time it appeared that the throne was lost and that David's descendants would no longer sit on it. That this did not turn out to be the case is another story that we will cover at some other time. The point that we want to follow from here is that Jehoiachin, the last successive descendant of David to reign over Judah was removed from the throne and taken captive as well. However, he had a son in Babylon and the line of David from Jehoiachin continued until the time of Christ. It was to this line of descendants of David that Christ was born as is recorded in Matt. 1. (The word "husband" in verse 16 in the King James Translation needs some explanation as the Joseph spoken of here is not Mary's husband, but rather her father. The word translated "husband" literally means "man." Since the genealogy was reckoned only through the men, Mary's father was not only the man of his generation, but he was also the man of Mary's generation as well. Christ was not related to Joseph, Mary's husband, since He was conceived prior to Mary and Joseph coming together. Mary was His mother and God was His father.)

Christ had to be born a mortal for two reasons. First, the dominion of the earth had been given by God to man. If Christ was to ultimately rule the world, He would have had to be a man to legitimately have this dominion. Second, He had to be a descendant of David to legitimately receive the sceptre, or the Kingship, since it was promised by God to David that only his descend-ants would occupy David's throne. So in His first coming, He not only secured through His crucifix-ion and resurrection the blessing of justification and the promise of eternal life for all mankind, the greatest example of serving man through love, but in doing so He secured the right to the dominion mandate and the kingship, being born a direct descendant of David, and thus Judah.

However, this leaves the birthright, or the fruitfulness mandate, which was, in effect, a part of the dominion mandate God made with man. To be the ruler of all the earth, which was the in-tent of God in giving Adam the combination man-date in the first place, Christ must secure the fruitfulness mandate as well. To do so, we are told that in His second coming, His vesture was dipped in blood. This takes us back to Gen. 37:23 -36 (Read). Christ's vesture dipped in blood identifies Him as coming as Joseph in His second coming as He was identified as coming as Judah in His first coming. In securing the birthright and the sceptre, or the kingdom and the kingship, Christ will lawfully be able to assume the throne as King of Kings to rule all the earth as we are told in Rev. 19:15. This is referred to as the two works of Christ. This has been a rather long, yet brief explanation of the first part of Rev. 19:13, but I felt that I needed to put the whole story together the best I could for a better understanding.

In verse 15, we're told that **"he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God."** It is in the fall that the grape harvest takes place, the time of the treading out of the grapes. The Feast of Tabernacles is associated with this harvest. Though the Scripture speaks of the winepress of the fierceness and wrath, I think this is a clue that can help us understand when Christ will return. We have discussed before, and probably will again, that since Passover and Pentecost, spring harvest feasts, were fulfilled in the crucifixion of Christ and the anointing of the disciples with the earnest of the Spirit in conjunction with all of the requirements of those feasts, it is pretty reasonable to assume that Christ's second coming will be in conjunction with the fall feasts, Trumpets, Atonement and Tabernacles. Thus I believe we can take this clue as supporting evidence that His return will be in conjunction with these fall feasts.

(Read Rev. 19:17-21) To understand what is happening here we have to remember what we studied in our last issue. Christ is to smite the nations with the sword that goeth out of His mouth, i.e. the Word of God. As the Babylonian method of ruling by oppression is confronted by God's method of ruling by serving, there is obviously going to be carnage, not in the literal sense, but in the sense that those used to being in power are going to be destroyed from that power because they will not understand ruling by serving. But we are assured here that God's method of ruling by serving will overcome the Babylonian oppression method. It is hard to imagine just what will happen, but I think we can be assured that the symbolism here of the birds of prey feasting on the flesh of the current rulers will certainly be reflected in what literally happens.

As we have discussed before, the lake of fire burning with brimstone is not a literal lake of fire, but rather is the judgment of God, i.e. the restoration process to restore all things in accordance with God's law. The beast spoken of in verse 19 is the same beast that John saw in chapter 13 that we determined to be a composite of all of the leadership of the Babylonian succession of empires. It is not specifically one man, though we may see one man as its representative at various times in history. It is this composite of leadership, this thinking that has developed over the centuries, since Nebuchadnezzar, within the leadership of the

nations that have become a part of this Babylonian system plus the kings or rulers of the nations today that are gathering to make war against Christ. Have you ever been offended by someone who caught you doing something wrong or expressed an opinion about you that you know is right, but that you are ashamed to admit? If you didn't make an immediate effort to correct either what you did or the type of person that you were, am I right that as time went on you came to dis-like more and more the person who either caught you doing wrong or expressed an opinion about you, even though that person had done nothing further to make matters worse for you? I think this is somewhat human nature. This is the way it is with those in positions of leadership within the many tentacles of the Babylonian system and Jesus Christ. Even though Christ has done nothing to expose this system for the fraud that it is, the people involved have exposed it themselves, but hated Jesus Christ for it.

We, in our generation, are being faced more than previous generations with the hatred than is being taught and exercised by the Moslem people, particularly against the Jews and the Christians. When Christ returns, I believe this hatred will at first only intensify greatly. But, understanding what the lake of fire really is, notice that rather than waging a military campaign with all the carnage that goes with it against the beast and the false prophet, God says that they will be taken and cast into the lake of fire. I think we can look at this as an act of love, one in which rather than be destroyed, all of these people will be able to learn complete righteousness that they too can come into full agreement with Jesus Christ. To think that God cannot bring this about is to put a limit on God that we simply cannot do.

Verse 21 says that the remnant, i.e. those who are left after the beast and false prophet are cast into the lake of fire, were slain with the sword of Him that sat upon the horse. Keep in mind that that sword is the Word of God. To be slain with His Word, which includes the law, the prophets and the gospel, is to be converted to Him. (Read Rom. 7:9-13) This is the type of slaying that is done with the sword of the Word.

(Read Rev. 20:1-3) I believe that we have to be consistent as we study God's Word. We were introduced in Rev. 12 to a great red dragon, having seven heads and ten horns, and seven crowns upon his heads. We determined at the time that this dragon was the same beast as the fourth beast that Daniel saw in Daniel 7 which he described but did not name. The four beasts that Daniel saw represented the kings, or the rulers of the four successive world empires that were to rule the world beginning with the Babylonian Empire first headed by Nebuchadnezzar. The fourth empire was that of the Roman Empire which was the Empire in power at the time that Christ was born, so this "dragon" represented the ruler ship of the Roman Empire. This eventually went from Imperial Rome to Papal Rome which in turn spread its influence and doctrines into all of Christianity. In chapter 12 this dragon had other names including , **"that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan."** I believe we are talking about this same entity here in Rev. 20. Again, the "bottomless pit" is not a place, but rather the abode of darkness and evil. This could be in men's minds. Whatever, or wherever, it is, the influence of this dragon is to be restricted so that it's influence will not be felt for a thousand years. This thousand years could be literal or symbolic, but since the same time period is listed again in verse 4 where it appears to be intended more in a literal sense, I would think it would be literal here. This Babylonian system, in all of its aspects, is not to influence the world any longer until this thousand years is completed. Since we have been influenced by it all of our lives economically, politically and religiously, it is difficult to imagine what it will be like to live without its influence. This system has been the ruler of the world since Nebuchadnezzar, now this ruler ship is to go to what Revelation 2 and 3 refer to as overcomers.

(Read Rev. 20:4-6) The fact that there is a first resurrection establishes that there will be at least a second resurrection. If we go back to the things that the overcomers were to overcome in Rev. 2 and 3 and compare that to the description of those in that first resurrection, I think we can see that both are talking about the same thing. As a quick review, the things that had to be overcome were: 1. Refusing to hear God thus giving rise to Nicolatism (lording it over the laity); 2. Tribulation; 3. Doctrine of Nicolaitanism and doctrine of Balaam; 4. Jezebellion submission of state to Nicolaitanism; 5. The deception of believing justification is by works; 6. Holding fast to the Gospel; and 7. Spiritual blindness, nakedness of unrighteousness and poverty of faith.

The overcomers in Rev. 20:4 are those who: 1. Are beheaded for the witness of Jesus and for the Word of God; 2. Have not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their

foreheads, or in their hands. Compare these with all of the above. I don't believe that one has to be a martyr to be an over-comer, but one has to be that committed in one's heart to overcoming all of the above.

Again, we find the thousand years mentioned. As we understand more of the purpose of this first resurrection, the thousand years appears to be a literal time period. This period appears to be a time in which the overcomers are given the job of evangelizing the world. The Scripture is quite clear that it is God's intent that **all** men (men and women) will become citizens of His kingdom which He will set up on the earth and that that kingdom will function as per His 'original intent. It will be the job of the overcomers to teach God's way not only through His Word, but by example as well. Again, I'm not sure our imaginations can imagine what that will be like. Paul says in I Cor. 2:9, quoting from Isa. 64:4 and 65:17, **"Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him."**

Verse 5 says, **"But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished."** indicating that they would live when the thousand years are finished. As I studied this many years ago, this appeared quite plain and simple to me. I was quite surprised as I conducted some seminars later that it is not that simple to many people. The argument that I was presented with is that, yes, there are two resurrections, but the first occurs when one accepts Christ as their Saviour, and the second either when one dies and goes to heaven, or there will be a general resurrection and the Christian will go to heaven and everyone else will go to hell. It wasn't until I learned some about Greek mythology that I understood where this teaching came from. I knew that it did not come from Scripture, but I was surprised at how widespread this doctrine is. Also there are those that believe that the first resurrection happened at the time of Jesus' death as mentioned in Matt. 27:50-54 (Read). But if this were the case, Paul would have been mistaken when he told Timothy to shun those who taught this. (Read II Tim. 2:16-18) The question might arise as to what resurrection that Paul was talking about. We're told in Rev. 20 that the dragon, or Satan would be bound when the first resurrection took place. This certainly had not happened when Paul was writing to Timothy, so I think we can assume that he was at least talking about the same resurrection that John is talking about here in Revelation. If Hymenaeus and Philetus had been talking about Jesus' resurrection, Paul would have agreed with them as this was quite evident. If they had been talking about the general resurrection, then all of the dead would have been standing before God and obviously, this had not happened. So I think Paul had to be talking about this first resurrection as described by John.

We will continue to discuss this first resurrection in our next issue as we continue with Rev. 20:4-6.

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From: Newsletter Issue 1503

In our last issue we were discussing Rev. 20:4-6 where it is discussing the first resurrection. We want to continue that discussion. Different people or groups have declared the first resurrection to have taken place at different times. However, since no one can point to a person and say that he or she has been resurrected immortal, and obviously we still have that old dragon operating, when confronted, the answer seems to be that it was spiritual and those who have been resurrected were resurrected in secret and are now in heaven. We are asked to accept this by faith. To believe this is to join Hymenaeus and Philetus. I don't think it will be any secret when the first resurrection occurs.

Rev. 20:6 says, **"Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection."** This leaves no room for the non-Christian. Yet in some other Scriptures we are told that the resurrection will include both the Christian and the non - Christian. (Read John 5:28, 29) The fact that Jesus says **"the hour is coming"** indicates that this is not two resurrections, but rather that those that have done good and those that have done evil are resurrected at the same time. Obviously this is not the first resurrection where only the righteous are resurrected. (Read Acts 24:15) Paul is speaking in the singular when he says "a resurrection" in which both the just and the unjust will be resurrected. These are both speaking of a general resurrection and indicating that there will be Christians in that resurrection as well. In Rev. 20:12, John is discussing the final judgment and he tells us that not only were the books of the law opened from which to judge, but the

book of life was opened as well. If there were to be no Christians at this judgment, there would be no need of the book of life.

The point that I believe needs to be made is that not all Christians qualify for the first resurrection. It will be for overcomers only. Paul tells us in Heb. 11:35 that there were Christians who were tortured, **“not accepting deliverance; that they might obtain a better resurrection.”** Paul says of himself in Philippians 3:8-12 that he was striving for the better resurrection. (Read) Verse 11 should read “resurrection from the dead” in-stead of “of the dead.” The word “resurrection” should actually read “out resurrection.” Paul was not saying that he was concerned about being resurrected, but rather that he was striving for the resurrection from among the dead, i.e. the first resurrection in which the **“rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished.”** This should be the goal of all Christians. It is not automatic when one accepts Christ as their Saviour. It is something that is to be strived for.

Rev. 20:6 goes on to say, **“On such the second death hath no power.”** The second death is defined in Rev. 20:14, so we will wait until we get that far to discuss it further. We just need to acknowledge that it will not be a factor to those who have part in this first resurrection.

Verse 6 then tells us that those resurrected in this first resurrection **“shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thou-sand years.”** This is the reward of the overcomer. If you recall when we studied Rev. 2 and 3, we listed the rewards of the overcomer. They were: 1. To eat of the tree of life (have age lasting life); 2. Escape the second death; 3. Have the hidden manna (spiritual food so needed), and a white stone (symbol of Covenant relationship), and a new name (signifying a change in character and position); 4. Power over nations and the morning star; 5. Be clothed in white raiment (priestly garments) and assurance of name in book of life; 6. Be made a pillar in the temple of God, have new name, will be a part of the New Jerusalem and will have God’s new name; 7. To sit with Christ on His throne, i.e. to rule with Him.

As we concluded our last lesson with Rev. 20:6, we read, **“Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection; on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years.”** With Christ ruling and the overcomers ruling with Him, this thou-sand year age will be the most glorious the earth has experienced since the Garden of Eden.

Isaiah foresaw this in Isa. 2:2, 3. **“And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain (kingdom) of the LORD’S shall be established in the top of the mountains (over all the kingdoms), and shall be exalted above the hills (smaller kingdoms); and all nations shall flow unto it. And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain (kingdom) of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob; and He will teach us of His ways, and we will walk in His paths: for out of Zion (the new Zion Heb. 12:22) shall go forth the law, and the word of the LORD from (new) Jerusalem.”**

Yet, we’re told that there will still be those who reject the Kingdom of God. (Read Rev. 20:7 -10) We speak frequently of God’s sovereignty and point out that everything that happens does so in complete accordance with God’s plan. Some-times it may sound as if God is unfair, or unjust. Yet if we look at history, it really seems as if God bends over backward, as the saying goes, to be fair and to give man every chance. I think this is what He is planning at the end of the thousand years. Even though the earth will have just completed a glorious one thousand years in which the benefits of righteousness will be on true display, it appears that there will still be those who are still opposed to the rule of Jesus Christ. So God gives them one last chance to attempt to prove that man’s system is better than God’s system. Keep in mind that the “beloved city” is no longer a physical city, but rather the New Jerusalem that is in the hearts of Christian people. Fire is symbolic of God’s law. (Read Deut. 33:2, 3) Moses, in blessing the children of Israel before his death, said in part, speaking of God, “from His right hand went a fiery law for them.” and then in verse 3, speaking to God, says, “all His saints are in thy hand.” The “fiery law in his hand” is identified with the saints in His hand. When God’s law is written on the hearts of the overcomers, they become His fiery law, they become the administrators of divine justice and ruler ship in the earth. Saying that “fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them” is a symbolic way of saying that the rule of Christ, and the overcomers, through God’s law destroys (or converts) those who are still resisting God’s kingdom. The devil, i.e. that “dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan” that we determined to be what is left of the Roman Empire, or the Babylonian system, is cast into the “lake of fire.” In other words, this

system that had ruled men since Nebuchadnezzar until the rule of Christ, like the leadership of that system as well as the false prophet (Islam), has to go through the judgment requiring restoration of all the damage it has done. This is no small thing. This will be a very major undertaking.

(Read Rev. 20:11-15) We need Daniel's vision of this same event also to make the picture we are seeing here complete. (Read Daniel 7:9, 10) As we study these passages, we will see that Daniel and John are seeing the same event transpire. This is the second, or general resurrection. As we have studied in our last lesson, there will be both Christians and non-Christians in this resurrection and subject to the judgment of the one on the Great White Throne. This is probably one of the most misunderstood passages in the Bible and the source of several false teachings. To understand what transpires here, we need to review God's system of justice.

In Daniel's vision, God portrays Himself as the "Ancient of Days" and His hair as being like pure wool. Since God is ageless and can portray Himself in any manner that He so desires, why the "Ancient of Days" and the white hair? Part of the answer is in Lev. 19:32. (Read) In our courtrooms today, when the judge enters the courtroom, the command comes from the bailiff for all to stand until the judge is seated. This custom is probably from this law. In the case of the Great White Throne, God is probably manifesting Himself in this manner to portray this reverence to justice.

He further pictures the throne to be **"like the fiery flame and his wheels as burning fire."** Thrones symbolize the administration of the law by one in authority. In countries that have a monarchical government, sitting on the throne signifies that the king is issuing decrees or judgments in an official capacity according to the laws of the nation. In America where we have no kings, but rather a separate judicial system, the judges sit "at the bench." The "bench" and the "throne" would signify similar duties. God is often manifested as fire such as the burning bush and the fire on Mt. Sinai. The river of fire is God's judgment coming from the throne.

In both cases, we are told that the books were opened and the people were judged by these books. There are those that believe that God has a book that lists each individual sin that each individual has committed. I believe that the books are the books of the law, the divine standard of right and wrong. The divine law defines sin and is the divine standard by which all of men's deeds are judged. John says in I John 3:4, **"sin is the transgression of the law."**

There seems to be a variety of thought as to what the fire mentioned in these two passages really is. One common view is that this "fire" is literal and that it will last forever on the grounds that the people will be immortal and fireproof, but will be able to experience pain. Another is that it is literal and will simply "burn up" (annihilate) the sinners. This is to misunderstand God's judgment. One needs to understand the difference between punishment and judgment. God judges, man punishes.

Malachi 3:6 says, **"For I am the LORD, I change not."** As author of the Divine Law, I think we can say that since God does not change, neither does His law, unless He makes the change. I find nowhere in Scripture where He says that He changes the laws of judgment, and nowhere in Scripture where burning someone alive is part of His judgment. The only use of fire as part of judgment is where a dead body might be burned (cremated) for the purpose of preventing an honorable burial. Lev. 21:9 says, **"And the daughter of any priest, if she profane herself by playing the whore, she profaneth her father: she shall be burnt with fire."** Lev. 20:14 prescribes the same judgment when a man, and his wives, who marries both a wife and her mother. They were to be executed first and then their body burned. An example of this is found in Joshua 7:25 when Achan, whose greed caused 36 Israelites to be killed in the battle of Ai. **"And Joshua said, Why hast thou troubled us? The LORD shall trouble thee this day. And all Israel stoned him with stones, and burned them with fire, after they had stoned them with stones."** This tells how the law was actually administered to help us understand how the law is to be interpreted.

Burning people alive as a judgment for sin was practiced by the pagans in and around Canaan who worshipped Molech and Baal. It was their practice to burn their children to atone for their own sins. Unfortunately Israel and Judah often adopted these same doctrines. God told the prophet Jeremiah about this in Jer. 19:5, **"They have built also the high places of Baal, to burn their sons with fire for burnt offerings unto Baal, which I commanded not, nor spake it, neither came it into my mind."**

We do find fire used as a symbol of judgment. We have already mentioned Deut. 33:2, 3 where the law is referred to as a fiery law. We also mentioned the fact that God manifested Him-self as fire at Mt. Sinai. In Deut. 4:36, Moses is addressing all of Israel. He says, **“Out of heaven he made thee to hear his voice, that he might instruct thee: and upon earth he shewed thee his great fire; and thou heardest his words out of the midst of the fire.”** The law was spoken and went forth from the midst of the fire on the mount. This compares to Daniel saying that **“A fiery stream issued and came forth from before him (from His throne),”** David used similar terminology in describing what happened the day that God spoke the law to the people at Mt. Sinai, **“Then the earth shook and trembled; the foundations also of the hills moved and were shaken, because he was wroth. There went up a smoke out of his nostrils, and fire out of his mouth devoured; coals were kindled.”** (Psa. 18:7, 8) Does this not mean that the fire that comes from His mouth is His word? God says in Jer. 23:29, **“Is not my word like as a fire? saith the LORD; and like a hammer that breaketh the rock in pieces?”**

Stephen Jones makes the comment in a study he made on the Lake of Fire, “There are two kinds of fire: earthly and divine. The earthly type of fire burns the flesh-body. The divine fire burns „the flesh“ in our souls, as it purifies us by means of discipline.” “The flesh” means that which is within us that draws us to man as opposed to that which is in us that draws us to God.

In describing God’s appearance as fire on Mt. Sinai, Moses says in Deut. 4:24, **“For the LORD thy God is a consuming fire, even a jealous God.”** The Israelites, at the time they were at Mt. Sinai, thought that the fire they were seeing would devour them physically. Moses, 40 years later, reminds them of what they were saying and thinking in Deut. 5:25, **“Now therefore why should we die? For this great fire will consume us: if we hear the voice of the LORD our God any more, then we shall die.”** They did not understand the difference between earthly fire and divine fire. What the all-consuming fire of God destroys is the “flesh” that we should submit to Him for destruction anyway. The purpose of God’s judgment is to teach the world righteousness, not to burn them to ashes. Earthly fire burns literal flesh to ashes divine fire burns “the flesh” to ashes. We understand spiritual things by their earthly counterparts. But we should not confound the two.

Our Roman law system is not concerned with justice, but rather deterrence. In God’s law system, the priorities are reversed, justice is primary and deterrence is secondary. In our Roman law system, there is no consistency in punishment as one person may be fined one amount for a certain crime, and another person fined a greatly different amount for committing the same crime, or jail sentences many vary. This results in one person being punished too much and the next not being punished enough. The victim is rarely compensated for their loss. With God’s system, the judgment fits the crime. For example, if a person steals \$1,000.00, he must restore to the victim double, no more without the consent of the sinner, no less without the consent of the victim.’

Burning people in hell is not justice it is a punishment. In true justice, justice is not served until all the victims of the injustice have been compensated as per the divine law for the loss. This does not happen in man’s prison system, nor does it happen by torturing the perpetrator, nor could it ever happen by annihilating all sinners by fire. Only the justice of the Divine law found in the Bible is true justice. Not only was the purpose of Divine justice to compensate the victim, but it is designed to work toward the sinner’s forgiveness and restoration to the congregation.

However, the law is weak in some ways. If a man commits murder, the law cannot restore the victim back to life, so restoration is not possible because of fleshly weakness. When there is no possible way for restoration to be made, the sinner was to be put to death. But putting the sinner to death is only partial justice, since the victim cannot be compensated. The death penalty is the law’s way of deferring judgment to the Great White Throne, where justice can be completed as there is no longer any fleshly limitation in the law’s power to restore the losses incurred by the victim. Sin is reckoned as debt, thus the sinner is a debtor to the victim. Only God can make this situation right, though it is not within my wisdom to know just how He will do it. I just believe that He can make all things right. I need to say that should a murderer, for example, place his faith in Jesus Christ, then Christ’s crucifixion will satisfy the law at the Great White Throne of Judgment.

Only victims can forgive. The purpose of the law is not to forgive, nor is it within the authority of the judge to forgive. For example, if a person steals \$1,000.00, the penalty is to restore \$2,000.00 to the victim. If a judge reduces the amount, he violates the right of the victim. If he increases it, he violates the right of the sinner. Only the victim has the right to reduce the amount of the debt as only he has the power of grace to forgive what is owed him.

Once the debt has been paid, the law mandates forgiveness of the sinner. (Read Lev. 19:17, 18) No one has the authority to exact any more from the sinner than the law allows. Loving your neighbor means that one cannot treat anyone as an ex-convict. He is a forgiven sinner under grace.

We are leading up to the “lake of fire”, but for us to thoroughly understand what the “lake of fire” represents, we have to thoroughly understand God’s laws of judgment. We will continue to do this in our next issue.

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From: Newsletter Issue 1504

We are leading up to the “lake of fire”, but as we mentioned in our last issue, to understand just what the “lake of fire” is, we have to thoroughly understand God’s laws of judgment. We want to continue our discussion on this subject that we started in our last issue.

The laws of redemption provide another provision by which debts can be paid. In such cases a near kinsman may act as the debtor’s redeemer, paying the debt on his behalf. The redeemer, in effect, purchases the debt note of the debtor and the debt is transferred to the redeemer. The redeemed debtor must then work for the redeemer until the debt note is paid.

This is another reason that Jesus Christ came as a man to be a kinsman redeemer in order to have the lawful right of redemption. He purchased our debt note. We’re told in I Cor. 7:23, **“Ye are bought with a price.”** Israel was redeemed from being sold into slavery to the Assyrians, but all men are redeemed from sin. Once we acknowledge this, Paul says in Romans 6:22, **“But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life.”** The NASB translation makes this a little plainer, **“But now having been freed from sin and enslaved to God, you derive your benefit, resulting in sanctification, and the outcome, eternal life.”** Christ did not purchase for us the right to be disobedient to His law, but rather in order that we might serve Him and learn righteousness, which results in sanctification with the outcome being eternal, or age lasting life.

Getting back to the fire that both Daniel and John saw associated with the Great White Throne of Judgment, I think if we can now associate fire with the law of God, we can see that true justice will be carried out. It is wrong for us to assume that all of a sudden, God abandons His requirement of justice, even to the worst criminal that ever existed. We think of justice being when the sinner is punished. Justice goes beyond this, both for the sinner and the victim. For true justice to exist, the victim has to be compensated. How often have you heard of this happening? Also for true justice to exist, the rights of the sinner have to be met as well. I think it safe to say that many sinners have been over punished and many have been under punished, but none have been required, in fact most have been prevented from making restitution. Forgiveness is seldom even thought of, much less carried out, even after the sinner has completed the man imposed punishment.

There are instances of victimless crimes, i.e. where no one is damaged, but a person has broken the law in some manner. Two men may get into a dispute in which one person may be trying to cheat another in a business deal, and they end up taking the matter to the court for the court to decide. (Read Deut. 25:1-3) The man who is trying to cheat is found guilty of trying to cheat, though he hasn’t actually been able to accomplish it. The law allows for corporal punishment, but note that it is limited. To go beyond the limitation would constitute torture, whereas within the limitation, it is considered justice. Luke 12:42-48 gives another example of when corporal punishment is required. (Read) This maybe the principle of judgment for Christians who have not attained to overcomer status at the Great White Throne of Judgment. They have not done all

that is expected of them by the Master, but are still servants. Note in verse 46 that Jesus says that the errant servant will have his portion appointed to him with the unbelievers, i.e. instead of being judged to be an overcomer, that person will be judged with, or at the time of the unbelievers. He doesn't receive the same judgment as the unbeliever, but is judged at the time the unbeliever is judged.

God does not change, so His requirement for justice does not change either. We can see then that the "lake of fire" cannot mean destruction or eternal torture, neither of which are part of God's laws of judgment. It has to represent some-thing else and as we have seen that restitution is required for true justice, it would be logical for restitution to be at least a part of what the "lake of fire" represents.

However, there is one more facet of the law that we have not discussed that has to play a part in what we are discussing. This is the law of the Jubilee. The Jubilee allowed all debt to be cancelled every 49 years. This put a limit on all debt. Even if a person was sold for his debt, when the Jubilee came, he was released from whatever portion of debt he still owed and he could return to his own land free and clear of his debt. I have heard it speculated that if people like Hitler and Stalin had to pay the debts that they created by killing millions of people, there is no way they could ever pay that debt. I don't know how the Jubilee will work in the long run, but it may be that on the higher level of things, the Jubilee will come every 49,000 years instead of every 49 years. We are only about 6,000 years into that cycle. But I am quite sure that the Jubilee will be part of God's plan for the ages.

We don't know just how God will work all things out, but I believe that once we understand God's law, we can understand that we are not coming to a sudden destruction of the world as some predict, nor is the majority of mankind going to be destroyed or held to be tortured for eternity. God is a loving God and has shown us His love through Christ's sacrifice on the cross. He isn't done yet.

Getting back to the Great White Throne of Judgment, Rev. 20:12 and 13 both tells us that in this judgment, every man will be judged according to his works. This again points to the law of restitution. (Read Acts 3:19-21) There is to be a time then that this restitution will take place. For restitution to take place, there are two things that have to be determined by the judge. First is to determine one's guilt or innocence of sinning, or damaging someone else. If one is found guilty, it is one's works that determine what restitution is required. The type of restitution is not arbitrary. It is predetermined by law. So if two people commit the same sin, the restitution required is the same for both people. Circumstances can effect it, but again it will be the same for everyone under the same circumstances.

All of the dead will be resurrected to this judgment, whether they are in the grave, in the sea, or wherever. The word "hell" in verses 12 and 13 is from the Greek "*hades*" which literally means "the unseen world." When the Greek translators translated the Hebrew Scriptures into Greek in the "Septuagint" *hades* was the Greek word that they used to translate the Hebrew word "*sheol*." *Sheol* in the Old Testament is translated hell 31 times and grave 31 times and pit 3 times. Even where it is translated "hell" one could substitute the word "grave" and usually it will make it more understandable. The point is that the word "hell" here in Revelation is referring to the grave. (Read Acts 2:23-32) Peter is pointing out that David had assurance of his own resurrection from "hell" or the grave because he believed that Christ would overcome death. Peter then says that David was speaking of the resurrection of Christ and **"that his soul was not left in hell,"** i.e. was not left in the grave, but was resurrected.

Rev. 20:14 then tells us that **"death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death."** The second death then cannot be the same as the first death if the first death is to be cast into the lake of fire. It has to mean some-thing else. (Read I Cor. 15:24-26) This is not referring to the first death, or mortal death, as He overcame that death with His own resurrection not only for Himself, but for all men. So I believe this is talking about the second death as it says that He must reign until He has put all enemies, including death, under His feet. This second death then has to do with the lake of fire. If, as we have discussed, the lake of fire is a time of restitution, those who are going through it are separated from Christ, i.e. without His mercy, as they work to restore the damage they have done in this life time. This separation, or death, is an enemy of Christ because of His love of all mankind. Once that has been completed, that enemy will have been put under the feet of Christ, i.e. it will have been destroyed, never to be a factor again.

Rev. 20:15 then tells us that **"whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the**

lake of fire.” Obviously there will have been some at this judgment whose names are written in the “book of life,” but who have not qualified for the earlier resurrection, but who now escape the second death, or the lake of fire by virtue of having their names written in the “book of life.” These will receive their portion then at the time the unbelievers receive their portion, or their sentence to the lake of fire. While the believer’s portion is immortal life, they will have missed out on an age of reigning with Christ, or as it is very often spoken of in Scripture, “eternal life” or “everlasting life.” These terms, properly translated, mean “age lasting life,” i.e. life during the age between resurrections.

Revelation 21 has been taken in many different ways. I have heard some people indicate they were looking for a new city to come down from heaven in the shape of a huge cube. Some have indicated they are looking for a city to be lowered down from heaven by means of a series of cranes and pulleys. Many are looking for a new city to be placed over the old city of Jerusalem and for there to be a new temple in which people will basically continue the religion of Judaism by sacrificing animals and being administered by the Levitical priesthood. There are many other interpretations as well. The problem with these various interpretations is a failure to under-stand what the New Jerusalem really is, though Scripture tells us what it is. Let’s first read Rev. 21:1-8.

Though there may well be some major literal changes in heaven and earth as we now know them, I believe that the **“new heaven and new earth”** is symbolical of these changes. In II Peter 3:13, Peter may give us a clue as to the meaning of what John is saying here, at least in one sense, **“Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, where in dwelleth righteousness.”** While there will probably be literal changes, such as **“there was no more sea,”** I think the main point of what John is saying is that the major change will be that righteousness will prevail. There was a major literal change in heaven and earth at the time of No-ah in that prior to the flood there was a canopy of water above the earth, or in heaven. This water descended to the earth at the time of the flood. I have trouble imagining what happened, so I am not going to try to imagine what will happen in the future. But, Jesus, in His prayer in Matt. 6:10 prayed, **“Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven.”** This indicates to me that when God’s kingdom comes it will be set up on the earth and His will will be done on the earth as it is in heaven. Paul, in Romans 4:13, speaking of the promise that God made to Abraham, says, **“For the promise, that he should be the heir of the world,”** with the word **“world”** being translated from the Greek kosmos, meaning **“arrangement, beauty, or world”** according to Young’s Concordance. These, plus many other Scriptures, tell me that this earth is not literally going away, but the order we now know is going to change pretty drastically.

John then sees the holy city, the new Jerusalem **“coming down from heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.”** We dis-cussed in previous lessons that Israel is the bride of Christ and Jerusalem, the capital of Israel, rep-resents all Israel. However, not understanding that there are two Jerusalem’s has proved to be a stumbling block to many in understanding prophecy. In Revelation, John uses the term **“new”** Jerusalem to help us understand there are two. However, especially in the Old Testament, the word **“new”** is not used in referring to what we now know as the **“new Jerusalem,”** thus it can be confusing sometimes as to which Jerusalem it is talking about. For example, Isa. 62:1, 2 says, **“For Zion’s sake will I not hold my peace, and for Jerusalem’s sake I will not rest, until the righteousness thereof go forth as brightness, and the salvation thereof as a lamp that burneth. And the Gentiles shall see thy righteousness, and all kings thy glory: and thou (Jerusalem) shalt be called by a new name, which the mouth of the LORD shall name.** At first glance, it might appear that Isaiah is talking about the old Jerusalem. However, John applies the prophecy, not to the old Jerusalem, but to the New Jerusalem. Rev. 3:12 makes reference to Isa. 62:1, saying this new name is **“New Jerusalem”**: **“Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, which is new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God: and I will write upon him my new name.”**

Isaiah continues in Isa. 62:4 and 5 to speak of Jerusalem saying, **“Thou shalt also be a crown of glory in the hand of the LORD, and a royal diadem in the hand of thy God. Thou shalt no more be termed Forsaken; neither shall thy land any more be termed Desolate: but thou shalt be called Hephzibah (My Delight Is in Her), and thy land Beulah (Married): for the LORD delighteth in thee, and thy land shall be married.”** John then refers to this prophecy in Rev. 21:2, where we see that the holy city which

God marries is not the old Jerusalem but rather the New Jerusalem. **“And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.”**

As a quick review of what the New Jerusalem actually is, in I Cor. 3:16 Paul asks, **“Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?”** Corporately, all these individual temples, or the Church are al-so the temple. In Eph. 2:19-22, Paul says, **“Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints, and of the household of God; And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone; In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit.”** The apostle Peter tells us in I Peter 2:5, **“Ye also, as lively (living) stones, are built up a spiritual house, and holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.”** So I think we can conclude that the new temple, the new Jerusalem, is the individual Christians in whose hearts God abides and corporately, the Church, i.e. the coming together of the individual Christians.

Keep Rev. 4 in mind as John is viewing all of this from “heaven,” or the perfected kingdom. It is from here that he hears the great voice saying, “Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God.” This has been God’s plan from the beginning of creation. We are not told that we are going to heaven to be with God, but rather that God is coming to earth to be with man. The result of God abiding with man is that there will ultimately be no more death, no more sorrow, no more pain, for all of these things will pass away. God promises to make all things new. Remember Paul’s statement in I Cor. 2:9, quoted from Isaiah, “Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.”

He again promises that the overcomer will be the inheritor of the kingdom and God will be his God, and the overcomer will be His son. But those who have gone the way of the world will have their part in the lake of fire, which John again says is the second death.

We will complete our study of the book of Revelation in our next issue beginning with Rev. 21:9

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From: Newsletter Issue 1505

In our last issue, we studied through the first eight verses of Revelation 21. We begin our les-son this issue with verse 9. (Read Rev. 21:9-21) This description of the New Jerusalem, this holy city that is the bride of Christ, i.e. Israel as a whole, confirms to us that it is Israel that is the bride of Christ. Let’s look first at verse 16. We usually think of something that has the same measurement for its width, length, and height as being a cube. Yet there is one other structure that can have an equal width, length, and height. That is a pyramid. In Isa. 19:19, 20, we read, **“In that day shall there be an altar to the LORD in the midst of the land of Egypt, and a pillar at the border thereof to the LORD. And it shall be for a sign and for a witness unto the LORD of hosts in the land of Egypt: for they shall cry unto the LORD because of the oppressors, and he shall send them a saviour, and a great one, and he shall deliver them.”** We have studied this before as the Great Pyramid in Egypt. There is much inside this pyramid that testifies of Christ and His plan. But for now, I want us to consider the structure of the pyramid itself. On the Great Pyramid, the chief corner stone is the cap stone. Though it was cut and lies at the base of the pyramid, it was never put in place because a mistake was made and it doesn’t fit. This alludes to two things I want us to understand. In a pyramid, the chief cornerstone is at the top of the pyramid.

In God’s plan for mankind, the chief cornerstone, Jesus Christ is at the top of the organizational structure. The apostles might be in the next layer for example and the organizational structure would expand with each succeeding layer as one worked down to the base. I believe this is the type of organization structure that there will be in the kingdom, i.e. different degrees of responsibility based on how we handle responsibility to God in

this life.

The second thing is that on the Great Pyramid, as I have said, the capstone did not fit, so was not put in place. It would seem to me that the error was in the structure as the capstone was cut off site according to plan. I believe this is indicative of the fact that Christ was rejected as king in His first coming, but in His second coming the structure will conform. He will take the throne over not only Israel, but of the whole world.

Note the number of times that the number 12 is given in the structure of the New Jerusalem. According to Dr. Bullinger, the number 12 de-notes "governmental perfection." "It is the number or factor of all numbers connected with government: whether by Tribes or Apostles, or in measurements of time, or in things which have to do with government in the heavens and the earth."

The prophets prophesied of this time as well, and reading some of their prophecies might help us understand better what we are reading in Rev. 21. (Read Isa. 60) In verse 18 Isaiah says that they will call their walls "Salvation" and their gates "Praise." Rev. 21:12 says that this city had a wall great and high. Calling the walls "Salvation" indicates that only the saved may enter this city. Keep in mind that this city is Christian people, so only the saved, the Christians can be a part of it. (Read Zech. 2:1-5) In verse 4 Zechariah says that this New Jerusalem will be without walls, yet in verse 5 he says that the

LORD says He will be a wall of fire round about. There will not be a physical wall as we think of a wall around a city, but rather the wall will be Salvation and Fire (law). The law is the "fire" of God that judges all men. A law is a moral boundary. Sin is transgression of the law. So the wall of fire in Zechariah's prophecy is the boundary of the law. No one passes through this wall by physically walking through one of its gates. One may qualify only by "Salvation."

Rev. 21:17 says that this wall is 144 cubits high according to the measure of a man, that is, of the angel. Obviously the description of the walls and gates here is symbolic. Dr. Stephen Jones made the following observation in his book "Struggle for the Birthright". "The wall is said to be 144 cubits high which is the biblical number denoting the elect. The numeric value of the letters in the name Lazarus is precisely 144. This connects the number to those elect who are raised from the dead and saved from death."

Rev. 21:12-14 reminds us of Rev. 4 where the 24 elders surrounded the throne, a combination of the 12 patriarchs of Israel and the 12 apostles. Here the twelve gates represent the 12 tribes of Israel and the 12 foundations represent the 12 apostles. That there are 3 gates on each side of the city also takes us to Numbers 2 where the order of march of Israel during the Exodus had 3 tribes on each of the four sides of the tabernacle with one tribe being dominant over the other 2. The standard, or flag, of these dominant tribes is then represented in Rev. 4 by four beasts. The original pattern of the organization of Israel, as given in Numbers 2, is now repeated in this city, the New Jerusalem. The comparison of New Jerusalem to Israel is unmistakable.

Though the names of the precious stones garnishing the foundations in Rev. 21 don't match up with the names of the stones in breast plate of judgment that was worn by the high priest in Ex. 28:15-21, there is certainly a comparison. There were 12 stones in each case and it may be that though the names of the stones are different in some cases as presented in Scripture, they may still have been the same stones.

We're told in Rev. 21:21 that the twelve gates were twelve pearls. This reminds us of a short parable Jesus gave in Matt. 13:45, 46. "Again the kingdom of heaven is like unto a merchant man, seeking goodly pearls: Who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had, and bought it." The pearl of great price was the "Lost 10 Tribes of Israel." Jesus was the merchant man who sold all He had and bought the pearl, i.e. with His life He purchased, or redeemed, Israel who had been sold into captivity to the Assyrians. The parable immediately preceding this parable compared Israel to a treasure hidden in a field. The man (Jesus) found the treasure (Israel) and went and sold all that he had and bought the whole field (the world). Where the gates with the names of the tribes of Israel are individual pearls in Rev. 21, Jesus combined them into one pearl in Matt. 13.

(Read Rev. 21:22-27) If we as individuals are the temple, the living stones that make up the temple, then it is

Christ in us that is the temple. There would be no need of a board and stone building for a temple.

Isaiah also prophesied that there would be no need of the sun or the moon. **“The sun shall be no more thy light by day; neither for bright-ness shall the moon give light unto thee: but the LORD shall be unto thee an everlasting light, and the days of thy mourning shall be ended. Thy sun shall no more go down; neither shall thy moon withdraw itself: for the LORD shall be thine everlasting light, and the days of thy mourning shall be ended.”** (Isa. 60:19, 20) Again, our imagination cannot fathom just what all this will mean, we just have to believe that God is in charge and what we will see will be something far greater than we can imagine.

Both Isa. 60:21 and Rev. 21:27 make it clear that only the righteous will inhabit the New Jerusalem. **“Thy people also shall be all righteous: they shall inherit the land for ever, the branch of my planting, the work of my hands, that I may be glorified.”** (Isa. 60:21) **“And there shall in no wise enter into it anything that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie: but they which are writ-ten in the Lamb’s book of life.”** (Rev. 21:27)

Following is a quote from “The Struggle for the Birthright” by Dr. Stephen Jones: “Christians need to learn that the New Jerusalem is a spiritual, heavenly “city” that will cover the whole earth in the restoration of all things. The purpose of the physical creation was to manifest the glory of God, and this purpose will at last be fulfilled. Though Adam lost this glory when he sinned, the Last Adam will restore this glory to the earth. Jesus prayed the Father’s will be done in earth as it is in heaven. That prayer will be answered when the New Jerusalem has fully come down from heaven, for the New Jerusalem is the will of God for creation. But at the present time all of creation is yet groaning as they await the manifestation of the Sons of God (Rom. 8:19), for we do not yet see all things put in subjection to Christ (Heb. 2:8).”

Before we leave the subject of the New Jerusalem, we need to discuss another term that is often used in Scripture that means much the same as the New Jerusalem. That term is “Zion.” In the Old Testament, Zion, or Mt. Zion, was where David ruled Jerusalem and all Israel within the city of Jerusalem. Zion has become symbolic of ruler ship. There are many today who think of prophetic Zion as the physical location within the city of Jerusalem. Many of these “Zionists” to-day, both Christian and Jewish, have placed their faith in the old Jerusalem, thinking this is the fulfillment of the promises to Abraham.

However, Hebrews 12:22-24 tells us, “But ye are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, To the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, And to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel.”

There is a new Mt. Zion just as there is a New Jerusalem. The book of Hebrews makes it clear that our hope is in a greater High Priest (Jesus Christ), and that He ministers in a greater temple, i.e. our hearts. This greater temple is in a heavenly Jerusalem and its greater “Mt. Zion.” He ministers by means of a better covenant than that which the Levitical priesthood ministered. The “New Zion” has all of the characteristics of the New Jerusalem, but it symbolizes the place of Jesus’ rule, for He is the Son of David.

(Read Rev. 22:1-7) John continues to de-scribe the conditions that will exist after the Great White Throne of Judgment. Again, our imagination cannot fully comprehend just what those conditions will be like, even with the descriptions that John is giving. In Genesis, Adam and Eve were put out of the Garden of Eden so that they could not partake of the tree of life after they had violated God’s Word and eaten of the tree of knowledge of good and evil. This was actually for their protection that they were put out of the garden, for if they had also eaten of the tree of life, they would have had immortal life, but in a sinful state. Here Christ is showing John that the tree of life will once again be on the earth, but the people who will be allowed to partake of it will be righteous.

The throne of God and of Christ will be there as well. It has been the plan of God from the beginning to ultimately dwell with man. Up to this time that we are seeing in John’s revelation, man has not been allowed to

see the face of God. Now, man will not only see His face, but His name will be in their forehead. I believe this means that men will manifest God in themselves.

Again, we see that there will be no need of the sun or the moon as God will give the light. The night and day cycle that we are familiar with today will no longer exist as we know it. Obviously we are going to have to experience that time before we can understand all that it means.

This brings us to the end of the revelation that Christ is giving John. Jesus ends the revelation with a statement, **“Behold, I come quickly: blessed is he that keepeth the sayings of the prophecy of this book.”** To me this is saying that when the prophecies that we have seen in this book have taken place, then the coming of Christ is quite eminent. As we have seen as we have studied, most of the prophecies have taken place and what is left appears to be about to happen or is in the process of happening now. Based on this, it appears to me that the return of Christ could be very near.

(Read Rev. 22:8, 9) John makes the mistake again, after seeing this revelation, of worshipping the angel that has been showing him these things. The angel stops him and instructs him to worship God only. The angel identifies himself as being a fellow servant with John and the prophets that preceded him.

(Read Rev. 22:10) This is the opposite of what Daniel was instructed to do with what he saw and was told. Why, we might ask, was Daniel told to seal up the words he heard (Dan. 12:9) some 600 years earlier and John is told to not seal up what he heard and saw when it has been at least 2000 years since he was told thus? The statement, “for the time is at hand” and the statement at the end of verse 6, “the things which must shortly be done” give us the answer. While it has taken 2000 years for all that John saw to come to pass, it started at the time that John was writing, the time was truly at hand. This is the reason that I believe we have to look at the book of Revelation from a historicist viewpoint. Those who hold to a future fulfillment simply have not studied history to see how history corresponds with the events that John portrays symbolically.

(Read Rev. 22:11) This verse corresponds with Dan. 12:10, **“Many shall be purified, and made white, and tried; but the wicked shall do wickedly: and none of the wicked shall understand; but the wise shall understand.”** In both cases, this is not talking about what conditions will be like following the Great White Throne of Judgment, but rather are intended to bring us back to reality, to the present time. These are going to be the conditions that we see now and have seen in history up until now. After the judgment, those whose names were not written in the book of life will be undergoing the “lake of fire” judgment of restoration that we have discussed already.

(Read Rev. 22:12, 13) Verse 12 is a reference to the Throne of Judgment. The rewards will be positive for those whose names are in the book of life and negative for those whose names are not written in the book of life.

In verse 13, Alpha and Omega are first and last letters in the Greek alphabet. In effect, God is saying that He is immortal, He pre-existed, exists in the present, and will exist eternally.

(Read Rev. 22:14, 15) Once the Babylonian system falls, the Kingdom of God will fill the vacuum that will result. However, not all people are going to want to abide by the righteous rule of our Lord, Jesus Christ. Rather than abide, they are going to want to live somewhere else. I believe this “somewhere else” is the “without” of verse 15. Ultimately, all will want to live in the Kingdom, but this won’t be until after the Great White Throne of Judgment.

(Read Rev. 22:16) By identifying Himself as the **“root and offspring of David”** He is saying that not only is He the offspring, or son of Da-vid, but as the root He pre-existed David, even as He pre-existed Abraham. In John 8:58, He says, “Before Abraham was, I am.” (Read Matt. 22:41-46) The answer that the Pharisees couldn’t come up with is in this statement “root and off-spring of David.” The Messiah was more than the son of David. He was also the “root” of David that is He pre-existed David and therefore was older than David. David was respecting His Elder when he called his son Adonai, or Lord.

Following is a quote from Dr. Stephen Jones’ study of Revelation: “According to A Dictionary of the Bible,

by John D. Davis, first published in 1898, the name 'Lucifer' was a reference to the bright morning star. Lucifer primarily refers to the king of Babylon in Isaiah 14, and as such was a counterfeit Christ. Under the heading of 'Lucifer,' John Davis writes,

The planet Venus, as the morning star. With the exception of the sun and moon, Venus is the brightest object in the sky. It appears as a morning or an evening star according as it is west or east of the sun, returning to the same position about every nineteen months. As the former, Venus is the harbinger of daylight."

The morning star indicates that Jesus appears be-fore the dawn of a New Day. His first appearance signaled the dawn of the Pentecostal Day (Age); His second appearance signals the dawn of the Tabernacles Day (Age)."

(Read Rev. 22:17) The bride, as we have seen is now part of the Amen company, she is in complete agreement with God. As such, she along with the Spirit, can issue the invitation to those who are athirst to come and take of the water of life freely. The fountain from which this water comes, or course, is Jesus Christ. Rev. 22:18-21 is self-explanatory and completes the book of Revelation. This completes our study of the book of Revelation. It is our hope and prayer that this study has been beneficial to you.

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