

The Revelation

A series of articles explaining the Boof of Revelation in a simple and easy to understand way

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The rest of this page is intentionally left blank. This article series begins on the following page with the Outline of the Book of Revelation. The author has not checked for spelling or grammatical errors, but welcomes feedback. Please email all comments to: drdavebart@gmail.com and please visit my Website: DrDaveBart.info

The Revelation

Outline of the book

I read a lot of comments saying the Revelation isn't chronological, or that it isn't a future unfolding but has unfolded already, etc. These things are concluded when one doesn't understand the outline of the letter/book. This is foundational as with any book: once the outline is understood; establishing the context, the rest of the text will make sense.

As you read through my Blog posts on the Revelation (especially the Tribulation in chapters 6-19), follow this outline as it'll be a guide into how the events are laid out in its proper order and in its timeframe.

Basic Outline of the Revelation

From Revelation 1:19 (KJV) "Write the things which thou hast seen, and the things which are, and the things which shall be hereafter."

1. *The things which John had already seen* (Chapter 1)
2. *The things which are* (Chapters 2-3: the time and age of the churches)
3. *The things which shall be hereafter* (Greek: μετὰ ταῦτα: meta tauta: literally, after these things: after the time and age of the churches – Chapters 4-22)

Outline of: *The things which shall be hereafter*

1. The churches in the Throne Room of God (Chapters 4-5)
2. The Six Seal Judgements (Chapter 6)
3. First Interlude or Parenthetical Section (Chapter 7)
4. The Six Trumpet Judgements (Chapters 8-9)
5. Second Parenthetical Section (Chapters 10-15)
 - a. The Little Scroll (Chapter 10)
 - b. The Temple and Two Witnesses (Chapter 11)
 - c. The War on Earth and in Heaven (Chapter 12)
 - d. The Beast and false prophet (Chapter 13)
 - e. Various Announcements (Chapter 14)
 1. Concerning the 144,000, 14:1-5
 2. Concerning the Everlasting gospel, 14:6-8
 3. Concerning those who worship the Beast, 14:9-13
 4. Concerning the harvesting of the earth, 14:14-20
 - f. Prelude to the Bowl Judgements (Chapter 15)
6. The Seven Bowl Judgements (Chapter 16)
7. Third Parenthetical Section (Chapters 17-18)
 - a. Religious Babylon (Chapter 17)
 - b. Commercial Babylon (Chapter 18)
8. The Second Coming of Christ and conclusion of the 7-year Tribulation (Chapter 19)
9. The Millennial Kingdom and Great White Throne Judgement (Chapter 20)

10. The Eternal State (Chapter 21)
11. The New Jerusalem (Chapter 22:1-5)
12. Epilogue (Chapter 22: 6-21)

Notes concerning the Outline

1. The Seventh Seal contains the Trumpet Judgements and the Seventh Trumpet contains the Bowl Judgements, so not specifically mentioned in the Outline.
2. Chapters 4-22 being after the age of the church, and the church seen in heaven, Chapters 4-5, 19, concludes the Resurrection-Rapture of the Church will take place at some point before what unfolds in these chapters.
3. Chapters 4-22 follow the pattern of narrative and parenthetical section. The parenthetical should not be taken as chronological with the narrative, but seen as adding amplifying information to the narrative. The narrative is chronological.
4. The Tribulation (Chapters 6-19) is the 70th Week of Daniel (Dan 9:26-27) in great detail, which is outlined by Jesus in Matthew 24:4-31. This 7-year period is not for the church and is the period of God's wrath upon the earth as given us in Rev 6:17 "... Day of God's wrath is come." Is come in the Greek is ἤλθεν (Elthen) which is in the Aorist, which is past tense without regard to time, and never used in the Present or Future tenses. Here the wrath of God which has been poured out since the beginning (with the opening of the First Seal) is being acknowledged at the Sixth Seal.



The Revelation, Part 1

I recognise a need for people to have a basic understanding of the Book of Revelation as the things recorded in Chapters 4-22 are fast approaching in my view. Important too is the promise in Chapter 1:3 which state that the one who reads, hears, and keeps these things is blessed. This Blog will be done as a mini-series, so keep checking back to read what's next.

Let's jump-in with the introduction to the book: Rev 1:1-3 "The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, to shew unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass; and he sent and signified *it* by his angel unto his servant John: Who bare record of the word of God, and of the testimony of Jesus Christ, and of all things that he saw. Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein: for the time is at hand."

What is 'The Revelation'? 'Revelation' has its root in the Greek, *apokalupsis* (English, Apocalypse), and means the unveiling or the revealing; revelation. In the Hebrew sense it is pictured as the bridegroom lifting the veil off his bride to reveal her. The book of 'The Revelation' is the revealing of Jesus Christ which was given unto him; the lifting of the veil to show what John, the penman of this book, had seen, what was at that time, and what is to shortly come to pass. The same Greek word for shortly is translated as 'speedily' in Luke 18:8 and has in view that once these things start to come to pass, they will come speedily or swiftly. This book can be accurately titled as, The Revelation of Jesus Christ, and is in some translations. Note the Word Cloud of, The Revelation, at the introduction of this blog to see the words most often used in this book. God and earth are the two most often used words: God connected with judgment, and earth as the object of his judgment.

In the salutation of this book recorded in vv 4-8, John penned this book to 7-specific churches in Asia Minor. Why only seven churches out of the hundreds in existence, and why these specific churches? Ask the question of Bible students, how many books comprise the New Testament? and you will likely get the answer 27. What most students of the Bible and believers in general miss, are the seven letters given to the churches by Jesus himself. These letters are found in Revelation chapters 2 and 3. Each letter is addressed to a specific church of 1st century Asia Minor, so often not thought of applying to churches today. This is sad as these letters are for all who have the ability to read and hear them as they are penned for the churches (plural) of this age even though addressed to a specific church. Read the words of Jesus in these letters: "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches." The point I see here is this book isn't just for those who are members of any church, but for any who has an ear to hear. This is significant, especially to the population today, because the events recorded in Chapters 4 and following are yet future and those who are living to go into this period of time would do well to know what is contained in this book as it tells how to escape the horrors which will fall upon the earth.

Keep in mind that this book uses a lot of symbolism; however, if you pay close attention, most of the symbolism is explained within the text. For example, John said he saw seven golden candlesticks (1:12). If we stop reading there, we would not know who or what these candlesticks represent. They are defined for us in verse 20 where Jesus tells John, "and the seven candlesticks which thou sawest are the seven churches." The key to understanding this book is to note the symbolism and keep reading for its definition. The book follows a pattern as well. When we get to Chapter 6-19 there are Seven Seals, Seven Trumpets, and Seven Vials, which comprise the wrath and indignation of God being poured out upon the earth (those who dwell upon the earth). The Seven Trumpets are

contained in the 7th Seal, and the seven Vials are contained in the 7th Trumpet. After the sixth in each series is poured out, there is a break in the chronology of the events to record parenthetical sections adding amplifying information to better our understanding of what's taking place during this time.

Even though this book is largely about God's wrath being poured out upon the earth and the earth dwellers (Chapters 6-19), it is a book of grace and hope. Read with me verses 17-18 of Chapter 1: "And when I saw him (Jesus), I fell at his feet as dead. And he laid his right hand upon me, saying unto me, Fear not; I am the first and the last: I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death." To those who like John are in great fear over these things, Jesus says, don't fear. Why? Because he was dead but is alive and lives forever. These are words of encouragement. God's grace is demonstrated in that he gave us this book as a warning of what is to come, and if you are not one of Christ' and are here for this period of time, this book tells you how to gain eternal life, and how to be guaranteed to never be given it.

The Revelation is the only book that gives you the outline of it in the text: Rev 1:19 "(to John) Write the things which thou hast seen, and the things which are, and the things which shall be hereafter." This is exactly what we have, Chapter one, the things which John has seen. Chapters 2-3, the things which are (at John's time, and ours too if you understand the 7-letters are for all churches from John's day to today). Chapters 4-22, the things which shall be hereafter. After what? After the church is removed (see my blog, "What is the Rapture of the Church?"). Rev 4:1 "After this I looked, and, behold, a door was opened in heaven: and the first voice which I heard was as it were of a trumpet talking with me; which said, Come up hither, and I will shew thee things which must be hereafter." Interesting that the words "church/churches" is used in The Revelation 20-times but not once in the judgment chapters 6-19. Why? The church (body of Christ, the Bride of Christ, made up of people from every people group on earth who have their faith in Christ) is not on earth during this time, but in heaven.

Chapter one is what John saw as this Revelation was given to him to pen. Chapters 2-3 are the 7-letters from Jesus to the churches. Chapters 4-5 is the scene in heaven before the throne of Jesus, the Lamb of God, where the church is seen. Chapters 6-19 detail the events on the earth as God's wrath and indignation is being poured out. Chapters 20-22 is an overview of the Millennial Kingdom, the Judgment of Satan and all those who are not in Christ, the New heaven and Earth and New Jerusalem, and final words of exhortation to be ready for the King is coming.

Next Blog, we'll briefly look at the letters to the 7-Churches and the Throne in Heaven, and what's taking place there prior to the Seal Judgments being opened which begins with the famed Four-horsemen of the Apocalypse. -dB



The Revelation, Part 2

Chapter one of the Revelation, or the unveiling of the Lord Jesus Christ, John describes, “the things which thou hast seen” laying the ground work for that which is to follow; “the things which are”. John records seven specific epistles by Jesus himself, to seven specific churches of Asia Minor, following a very specific pattern. The picture at the top of this article is the remains of the church at Laodicea, which is near the modern city of Denizli, Turkey.

Interesting that out of all churches in existence only these seven are chosen. The pattern that emerges in these seven letters is interesting in itself. The pattern goes something like this: Jesus begins the letters with a *Commission* where he identifies the party in need of confrontation and identifies himself as the *Correspondent* with a specific title of himself. Jesus presents a *Commendation* for good performance. He then presents a *Concern* identifying areas in need of change. Jesus then presents practical steps of *Correction*, with *Consequences* if changes do not occur. Jesus then presents words of *Comfort* for the corrected congregation delivering *Counsel* where benefits are given for change bringing it all to a *Conclusion*.

Specific instruction is given in every letter for all who *have an ear to hear, hear what the Spirit saith to the churches* (notice the plurality – though a specific church is in mind, all churches are to hear). Also, interesting to note, there is a promise to the overcomer post-scripted in the first three letters, but is part of the body of the last four letters, which also includes an explicit eschatological reference; the first three letters do not (Groups A and B below).

There is a very obvious exception to the above pattern: There are no words of *Concern* made for the churches at Smyrna and Philadelphia, and there are no words of *Commendation* to the churches of Sardis and Laodicea.

For all these reasons, and because of the order the letters are written in, many Theologians also see these churches as representative of the ages of church history. Of course, no one would be able to recognise this until reaching the end of church history and the dates are subject to how history is understood. It goes something like this; which is my rendering:

Group A:

Ephesus: The Apostolic Church - A.D. 32 to 100

Smyrna: The Persecuted Church (period of Pagan persecution) – 100 to 327

Pergamum: The Married Church (union of church and state) – 327 to 822

Group B:

Thyatira: The Medieval Church (Papal Rule) – 822 to the Rapture

Sardis: The Denominational Church (Reformation churches) – 1648 to the Rapture

Philadelphia: The Missionary Church – 1792 to the Rapture

Laodicea: The Apostate Church – 1961 to the Rapture

I have set the Rapture of the church as the end date for the last four churches as there are explicit end time references suggesting that some form of these last four churches will be in existence when the Lord returns for all those in Him.

I want to spend just a little time before moving into the next section, “Things which shall be hereafter”, on one church specifically, and that is the church of Laodicea. To me, it seems clear that a good portion of believers today are part of this last church. Wouldn’t it be nice to be able to identify if we are part of this group, repent, and be more like the church of Philadelphia? Before we can ‘move’ we need to know where we are:

The Greek, *Laodicea*, has an interesting meaning: Lao, as in laity, means people. Dice, is a reference to the goddess of justice and moral order. Laodicea means, people rule, or rule by the people. Fitting as many Pastors avoid doctrinal truth to appease people in an attempt to grow large congregations. Churches become social clubs rather than a place to fall under the conviction of the Holy Spirit to repent of the things which separate them from God through the preaching of the Word. Let’s see what this letter by Jesus says to Laodicea, very likely the type of church we are living in today, which is the last of this age.

Laodicea was very wealthy during the Roman period being located on major trade routes. It was a centre of textile production and banking. The city received cold water from the nearby mountains and had hot springs nearby; the city being renowned for therapies it produced. The church itself was estimated to be about a city block long. The city and church were destroyed by an earthquake in the 7th century and abandoned.

The message to the “church of the Laodiceans” (3:14-22) is from Jesus who identifies himself as the, “Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God.” Jesus declares he is the Creator. The Greek, more accurately would be translated as, “the originator of God’s creation.” The importance? Jesus is immortal; everlasting. He is God, the Creator, and what he says is faithful (keeps his word) and true (contains no error) witness (reliable).

Jesus starts: “I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot. So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth.”

For many years I used to think Jesus was saying that he would want Christians to be either on fire doing all they can for Him, or to be totally cold not doing anything for the Lord. To be half-way doing something for the Lord meant he would be nauseated spewing that person from his mouth. Nowhere else in the Bible do I read that Jesus is happy with cold-hearted Christianity, but thought it was okay based on this verse. Better to be doing nothing than to be doing a little. Only when I discovered what Laodicea was in the day did I discover what the Lord was likely saying.

The city was known for its cold refreshing spring water they had ‘piped’ into the city. They were also known for their hot springs where people from all over would come taking advantage of their therapeutic properties. Jesus is actually saying, “I would thou wert refreshing or therapeutic... because you are neither refreshing nor therapeutic, I will spew you out of my mouth.” As followers of Christ we are to be ministering to others to be uplifting (refreshing) and/or, bringing healing and reconciliation (therapeutic). Apparently, the church at Laodicea were inward thinking not being any good to their neighbour or those in the community and not ministering to others within the church. Does this sound like you or your church congregation? Jesus, the Creator of the universe, the immortal God, is about ready to spew you out of his mouth.

Jesus continues: “Because thou sayest, ‘I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing’; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked:” The church was rich; well off. The people who made-up the congregation were well to do. The mistake many Christians make is to think there is something wrong with being well off, rich, and blessed. There is absolutely nothing wrong with having money in the bank; being well off. The

problem lies with our attitude towards riches and what our reliance and dependence is in. Are you self-sufficient without the need of reliance and dependence on God?

What does Jesus counsel these people to do? “to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich, and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear, and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see.” How do you buy gold tried in the fire from the Lord? Could it be by seeing how those before have invested into the lives of others, and though it cost them something, it sustained and ministered to those lives? Use what you have monetarily to glorify God. I will add here to, though this will be another study on its own: Your firstfruits offering and tithe belong to your spiritual head (Pastor) and the congregation where you belong. This is the starting point. From here bless Israel, the poor, and others which is in your power to do.

White raiment is being clothed in righteousness. Here the thought is that you will clothe yourself with white raiment. This is done by what you do with what you have and your attitude to those things as previously stated. When we stand before the Judgement Seat of Christ, will we be naked because all of our works were, “wood, hay and stubble” being burned away with fire (1 Cor 3: 12-15)? We need to be building those things considered by God to be “gold, silver, and precious stones”; things which are not burned away by fire.

Anoint your eyes with eyesalve that you might see. The thought in the language is to have that which is causing blindness to be purged so you can see. It doesn’t mean not having vision, but having things in your life impairing your spiritual sight; being blind towards those things God wants us to see. What caused the blindness at Laodicea? Could it have been their rich life of ease? Go back to the opening statement to Laodicea by Jesus: They were neither refreshing to those who needed to be refreshed, nor therapeutic offering assistance to meet the need of another. If you are like this then the remedy is to purge the blindness to ‘see’.

Jesus adds to this: “As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent.” Jesus is assuring them that through this rebuke he loves them. Did they repent? Will we? Jesus warns, he rebukes, then he chastises; which is like a father disciplining his child in a way to teach. Jesus’ chastisement is a kindness, though it may hurt initially, to bring us to a better place. Do not despise the chastisement of the Lord; be assured by it that he loves you.

I will wrap-up with verse 20: “Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.” This is a sad commentary on the Laodicean church, and much of the church today: Jesus is standing outside the door of the Laodicean church knocking and calling. The church isn’t opening up to him. Why? Is it because the church is steeped in its traditions, rituals, and structure, without room for the Lord to dwell and minister? Jesus is looking for any individual within the church to hear him and open up. Jesus will come in to this individual and fellowship with him. This is an incredible promise. We tend to think revival starts with the pastor and leadership of the church. No, revival begins in the heart of the individual. Don’t sit around waiting for something to start somewhere else to join in. Let it start with you. We alone will stand before the Lord who gave these warnings. Take the time to do self-evaluation and change the things that need changing to be pleasing unto the Lord; this is called overcoming. The reward? (v21) Jesus will grant you to sit with him in his throne; wow what an honour.

The next article I will begin dealing with the things which shall be hereafter, which is after the church age. The hereafter is divided into several parts: The first part is post-church age and pre-tribulation

(Ch. 4-5). The second part is the Tribulation age; more accurately the 70th Week of Daniel's prophecy recorded in Dan 9 (Ch. 6-19). The third part is Post-Tribulation. -dB



The Revelation, Part 3

We will be focusing on Revelation chapters 4 & 5, which are probably the most unique in the entire book. These give us a glimpse of a future event which takes place in heaven, prior to what will be poured out upon the earth as judgment from God. These two chapters are Post-Church and Pre-Tribulation. The picture at the top of this blog is an artist rendering of the 24-Elders around the throne in heaven.

When I say, Post-Church, I mean post-church on the earth. The Church has as its beginning the Day of Pentecost recorded for us in Acts 2. The book of Ephesians, Paul makes it clear the church was a mystery (concealed; not revealed) prior to its miraculous birth. Just as the church had an earthly beginning, so too, it will have an earthly ending; and this is what we have recorded for us in Revelation 4 & 5. Just to interject here: because the church has its beginning on the Day of Pentecost, some reason the church will be Raptured on the Day of Pentecost. There are some good arguments for this, but still only speculation as Jesus warned to watch, for we know neither the day nor the hour of Jesus' coming for his church. I only mention because if you do not know the Lord, and there is a sudden disappearance of a multitude of people from the earth on the Day of Pentecost, or any other day, it will be a good time to read the book of The Revelation.

Some see (4:1) the calling of John up to heaven to be shown the things hereafter (after the ages of the church, Chapters 2-3) as a picture of the Rapture of the Church (Jn 14:1-3, 1 Thess 4:13-18). Many argue that what is seen here in heaven is a partial church, or what they call the firstfruits of the church. While others claim it is the entire church, but what John sees takes place is after the 7-year time of Tribulation (chapters 6-19). All these views are incorrect for the following reasons:

In Chapter 5, Jesus, as the Lamb of God, is seen with a seven-seal scroll in his hand. He is the only one worthy to open the seals, which contain all the judgments to be poured out upon the earth. All of heaven fall on their faces before the throne in worship of the Lamb of God, who has this unopened 7-seal scroll in his hand. We see Jesus begin to open the seals in Chapter 6. Therefore, this scene in heaven (Ch. 4-5) is prior to the 7-year Tribulation to take place upon the earth. I want to focus on one group in heaven who praise the Lord, represented by the 24-Elders, and how they identify themselves:

Rev 5:9-10 "And they sung a new song, saying, 'Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; and hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth.'" The church is the only group in the entire Word of God defined as, redeemed unto God by the blood of Jesus from every nationality on the face of the earth who will reign on the earth as kings and priests. This is the very definition of the church, and this is not a partial church but is the entire church.

Chapter 4 is what we see this group doing: They are clothed in white raiment with crowns upon their heads (v 4), and they fall down before Him who sat upon the throne (Jesus) in worship casting their crowns before his throne (v10). Only the church is given crowns. There is a Crown of Righteousness given to those who love the Rapture; the appearing of Jesus for his church (2 Tim 4:8 "Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing."). What does this tell us

if the church is clothed in white with crowns on their heads to cast back at the feet of Jesus who is on his throne in heaven? The church has already come through the Judgment Seat of Christ at which we all must appear (2 Cor 5:10). The Judgment Seat of Christ isn't for a partial church but the entire church. This also indicates John's arrival (4:1) is at some point after the church has been in heaven, be it days, or years, for the church to have come through the Judgment Seat of Christ.

We know for 1 Thess 4:13-18 regarding the Rapture, the catching away, there is the resurrection of all those who have died in Christ. Paul elaborates on The Resurrection in 1 Cor 15:22-24: "For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. But every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming (the Rapture 1 Thess 4:13-18). Then cometh the end..." So, we have Jesus the Firstfruits, then we who are his at his coming, and this before the end, the Tribulation. The point is, when examining Scripture, the entire church is in heaven prior to the opening of the First Seal of the Tribulation, the greatest evidence recorded by John in Revelation 4 & 5. Take time to read these two chapters; what they describe of heaven is truly amazing.

What's amazing to me is that John, when he was called to heaven to be shown this future time, saw me, and all those in Christ, before the throne of God, yet to me (and us) this event is still future. Hard to get your head around when you think about it, but when you understand that God is outside of time so the beginning and the ending of time is within his view, it's not so hard to comprehend. Time is a measurement of decay, and there is no decay in eternity, not in heaven or in hell. Without decay nothing will perish. Think about this: No decay, only everlasting life, or everlasting damnation. Death only happens within the dimension of time. Remove time, and death is removed. Question is: Do you want to be part of the number seen before the throne of God in Revelation 4-5? What is the alternative?

Read Matt 25:31-46. This describes what takes place immediately after the Tribulation for all those who survive this 7-year period. Jesus is back on the earth and he divides the Gentile nations up into two groups defined as Goats and Sheep. He judges both groups based on their works. This is what he says to the group defined as Goats: (41) "...Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels. (v46) ...And these shall go away into everlasting punishment..."

It all comes down to a simple choice: Believe the Word of God, or don't. Eternal life is simple: Believe the Gospel (death, burial, resurrection of Jesus as payment for our sin and sin nature): Rom 10:9-10 "That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation."

Next Blog we'll start looking at the 7-year Tribulation period itself, which is more accurately the 70th Week of Daniel's prophecy (Dan 9) which Jesus elaborates on in Matthew 24. -dB



The Revelation, Part 4

What we need to keep in mind as the first seal of the Tribulation is about to be opened is the second after the resurrection/ rapture of the church takes place there will not be a single Christian upon the earth; the Restrainer (2 Thess 2) will be taken out of the way. Who or what restrains sin? Isn't it the Holy Spirit using the church to restrain sin? It is the Holy Spirit preventing the Antichrist from being revealed.

It is no mistake that the Lord used candlesticks in Revelation 1 to represent the 7-churches of Asia-Minor. These churches, which are representative of all churches throughout the church age, are comprised of believers who are to be the light of the world (Matt 5:14-16 "Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid. Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.") If we are not light, then darkness will take over. Darkness cannot overcome light. This is important, because as long as we are light, darkness has no power or authority; we surrender these when we stop being light.

In Revelation 4 these seven lamps of fire are in heaven before the throne of God; another indicator that all those in Christ, the church, have been resurrected/ raptured and are in heaven with Jesus before the first seal of the Tribulation is opened. I point this out because for whatever reasons there are, most Christians think the first part of the Tribulation (rightly the 70th Week of Daniel's prophecy) is a walk in the park, piece of cake, not that bad. Think for a moment how chaotic 2020 has been with the Covid-19 pandemic. This is nothing compared to what the famed 'Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse' unleash upon the world, unrestrained by the Holy Spirit; the church in heaven. The world will be very different to what it is today. It is paramount that those reading these words, if you do not know Jesus Christ as your Saviour, do not delay to put your faith in Him believing the Gospel (death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus for your sin); you may not have tomorrow.

Next Blog we'll begin taking a look at the Seven Seals by concentrating on the first four; the four horses and their riders. -dB

(We will now be going into the chapters of Revelation dealing with the 7-year period best known as The Tribulation period. This is found in Chapters 6-19 of the Book of Revelation)



The Tribulation, Part 1, Seals 1-4

This will be the first of several Blogs covering the 7-year period we call 'The Tribulation'. This period of time is introduced in Daniel 9:24-27, highlighted by Jesus in Matthew 24:4-31, and given in great detail in Revelation 6-19. The description of this 7-year period of time begins in Rev 6:1 with the opening of the first Seal, of a 7-Seal Scroll, by Jesus. Several things to keep in mind: The church is in heaven, though by the time this first Seal is opened, I suspect there will be multitudes on the earth following Jesus. All the judgments are contained within this single Scroll of 7-Seals. All Seals are opened by Jesus, so the Tribulation period is not man's wrath, or Satan's wrath, but God's wrath being poured out upon the earth. Will there be many survivors? Yes, multitudes from every nation (Matt 25:31-46). Clues on how to survive are written throughout Rev 6-19, and I suspect after the Resurrection/Rapture of the Church, the book of Revelation will become the most popular book of the Bible being read and heeded.

The famed Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse: A lot has been written and discussed about the imagery of these four riders found in Rev 6:1-8. We start off with a White horse and its rider. Many think that because we have a White horse mentioned here this rider must be Jesus. It's more likely that this rider is the one we know as the Antichrist (pseudo-Christ), which we'll look at in more detail with upcoming Blogs. The other three horses are, Red, Black, and Pale (sickly Green).

The White horse and its rider: We are told a crown is given to this rider. Jesus is already crowned, so one evidence this rider isn't Jesus. This rider was crowned for a specific purpose. The crown here represents political power, like no other at this time. This rider has a bow in his hand. This represents military might, but one thing missing are arrows. Through the show of might and threat of war, this leader goes throughout the world, not just in a local region, but globally, conquering and to conquer. You can topple people groups, and governments, through fear without firing a shot and this seems to be the case with this leader. He has the might to use force, and because he has this ability, the countries of the earth fear him and surrender to his control. You may dislike a leader now, but at this point in time, this leader has fear and dread as his companions and none, no person or country, will be able to stand up to him. The 'White' likely represents a false hope, a false righteousness.

Now, following close behind, is the rider of the Red horse. I do not see this as the same rider of the White horse. This could be a vice regent; someone in alliance with the first rider. His job: to rid the world of peace. Today we may have a few localised areas not very peaceful, but during this time, all peace will be removed. Perhaps the first rider conquers with a false peace through the show of power, and now through an unholy alliance, peace is totally removed. Fear reigns when peace is removed. It is so bad, people start killing one another. Unlike the first rider who had a bow only, no arrows, this second rider was given a "great sword", which could mean large or important, or that it does great/terrible things. Through it, this rider has the ability to kill where the first rider has the appearance to kill. The 'Red' could represent killing and bloodshed and through implication could have global war in view where people groups rises against others from hatred and/or fear. During the Tribulation this will especially be seen with certain people groups of the world coming against the Jews, where the holocaust pales in comparison.

The third horse is Black. All four horses follow a pattern and are closely connected. All could very well be riding at the same time and throughout a good portion of the 7-year Tribulation. They start in the order given, we just don't know how quickly the Seals are opened or how long it takes for these four to carry out the mission they have. This third rider is carrying a pair of balances in his hand and a voice in heaven is heard saying, "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." Black seems to represent famine, and not one necessarily controlled by governments. The pair of balances is to measure out food, which governments control along with the inflated prices, but when heaven declares for the recipients not to hurt the oil or wine, this seems to indicate a real and natural famine, or could mean not to waste these things because they are so expensive; likely the consequences of the first two riders. I'd like to note that the first two riders I see as literal figures on the earth, where the last two riders are not individuals but judgments as a result of these two individuals.

The final horse is a sickly green colour (translated as Pale in the KJV). Who is the rider of this horse? Death. What or who follows death? Hell. Why not Heaven? When people die, some go to Heaven as well as to Hell, don't they? In this time period, at least at this point in the Tribulation, there may not yet be followers of Jesus, but I suspect there will be multitudes. Today there is an increasing number of believers who deny the literal place of punishment called, Hell. They see Hell as nothing more than the grave, yet they have no problem seeing Heaven as a real place of abode. In this passage, Hell represents the abode of the damned for eternal punishment after physical death of a non-follower of Jesus. Interesting that most often the Word of God refers to believers as asleep while non-believers are labelled as dead. Death and Hell here are not one and the same. Hell follows after Death, in what I see as consuming the ones falling to Death who are not followers of Jesus. Followers of Jesus, we will see in an upcoming Blog, are in Heaven. Death and Hell will at the end give up their dead to be cast into the Lake of Fire (Rev 20:11-15). Of Death and Hell, it tells us in verse 8 that power is given to them both: The power they are given is over 25% of the population at this time to kill with sword, hunger, death, and with the beasts of the earth. Think about this for a moment: Destruction and shortage of food is so wide spread on the earth that the beasts of the field leave their habitation to look for something to eat, and it is human flesh they begin searching for and consuming. That is implied in this text. It has been suggested too that the "beasts of the earth" could be microscopic. This has some merit when you consider how scientist and doctors are playing god with geo-engineering/ genetic modifications. It's very frightening when you think about it.

People in the church have been taught for years that the first half of the Tribulation will be largely peaceful and non-eventful; it's the last half that becomes terrible. This is bad teaching, and I believe has led many not to be concerned about the end times, or to give their hearts to Jesus, thinking that if they miss the Rapture, they can then get 'right' and it won't be so bad going through the last 7-years of The Tribulation. If you rightly study and understand just the first four Seals, it'll be incredibly and indescribably awful on the earth, and this from the very start and becoming increasingly worse. If there was ever a time to surrender your life, your all, to Jesus the Saviour, the Lord of lords and King of kings, it is right now; do not delay. John 3:16 "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." Believe the Gospel (the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus for your sin) today

Next Blog we'll look at Seals 5 and 6 which will temporarily conclude the narrative to interject some parenthetical information – dB



The Tribulation, Part 2, Seals 5-6

The following will be an overview of Seals 5 and 6 recorded in Rev 6:9-17. Seal 5 shifts its view from earth to heaven, and Seal 6 from heaven back to earth. In the previous Blog I mentioned the rider of the Fourth Horse, Death with Hell following, taking those they kill to a literal hell. What about those followers of Jesus who are killed? Seal 5 answers this question: they are in heaven. So, are followers of Jesus part of the judgment of Death and Hell of the Fourth Seal? I tend to think not. We will see that multitudes of Jesus followers are killed, but likely not part of the Fourth Seal judgment, which confirms that even in the Tribulation, those who follow Jesus will not be subject to His wrath. They will, however, face unparalleled persecution from unparalleled anger and hatred likely being blamed for the woes of the world. We have witnessed the tip of the iceberg over the last several years in the States: The supporters of President Trump have been the target of hatred being attacked unprovoked, and denied service at a number of businesses who support the liberal left. Unbelievable, but shows how easy it'll be for a group of people to be hated for no other reason than mainstream sources insidiously promoting it.

The Fifth Seal (vv9-11): John's view switches to the Altar of God immediately after the opening of the 5th Seal. He sees, under the Altar of God, the souls of them that were slain during this first half of the Tribulation, for the Word of God, and for the testimony which they held.

Several observations: Apparently no natural death has taken place as the only souls seen are those who have been slain, martyrs. They have not been resurrected, so in their glorified, pre-resurrection state, just as those who die in Christ now are in their glorified, pre-resurrection state. Also, these souls seem excluded from all of Heaven except for the area beneath the Altar of God. This must be a large area to support a great multitude of souls, or a large area may not be required for those who are in a non-material state having no mass, and too likely in a multidimensional state. Not having gone to heaven to return to talk about it, we don't know anything more than what the Word of God tells us: We tend to make intelligent assumptions based on limited information. I may interject some thoughts on the text, but will do my best to say when I am doing this, and will stay as close to what the text is saying as possible, which can be difficult with a text regarding the future bathed in symbolism.

These souls, "cried with a loud voice". We miss some of the meaning here reading the English translation. What they are doing is screaming at God. This 'cry' is literally a *magnified shout*, as through a megaphone. This is what they are shouting out to God: "How long O' Lord, holy and true, does thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?" They recognize vengeance is warranted and apparently have a legal right to demand vindication. They are yelling to God asking how long he will delay their vengeance. What I find interesting is that their time on earth is completed, they have lived their life, and they are in heaven. You wouldn't think they would complain. One difference is these souls are of the Tribulation and not of the church. The church has been resurrected and raptured prior to the Tribulation. In the economy of the church, we are to forgive and love our enemies, which doesn't seem to apply to the dispensation of the Tribulation. God does not rebuke them, so this lends validity to their demand. So, how does God respond? These souls are given white robes, but we are not told by whom. White robes indicate that those in Christ

who have passed on from this life (in pre-resurrection state), have some type of bodily form. Goes without saying white robes also indicate these are souls of those who are righteous. These are told, but not necessarily by the Lord, to rest. Take it easy; enjoy your rest. "Rest yet for - a little season (*Gk: eti chronon mikron*), until their fellowservants also and their brethren, that should be killed as they were, should be fulfilled." This implies two things: these martyrs are from the first 3.5-years of the Tribulation, where their fellowservants and brethren are martyrs of the second 3.5-years of the Tribulation. And, that then they will have their answer; their vengeance.

The Sixth Seal, to understand more fully it's impact, skip the heavenly scene of the Fifth Seal (skip over verses 9-11). We end the Fourth Seal with Death and Hell over 25% of the Earth's population by the sword, hunger, death, with the beasts of the field. Now, verses 12-14: "...there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became as blood; And the stars of heaven fell unto the earth, even as a fig tree casteth her untimely figs, when she is shaken of a mighty wind. And the heaven departed as a scroll when it is rolled together; and every mountain and island were moved out of their places."

These things are so terrible in their scope that many good teachers and theologians change their Hermeneutic away from the literal to metaphoric. In other words, this isn't a real earthquake, but a shaking of human government, etc. In a minute we'll look at the response from the Earth's population to these things which will make it clear these events are literal and very real; as well as very terrible.

I'm going to interject some of my thoughts here: I see this earthquake, this "Great Earthquake" as being global in nature. The last time the Earth has experienced an earthquake like this was about 4,000-years ago when God judged the Earth with a global flood busting up the fountains of the deep (Gen 6-9). We hear today of 7-something magnitude earthquake in some region, which is devastating to that region, but the rest of the world is unaware of it until it is reported. The great earthquake of the Sixth Seal won't be able to be measured by the Richter Scale, and the whole earth will be so greatly impacted by this global event that every mountain and island will be moved out of its place.

Some see the darkening of the sun and the blood moon as a result of the great earthquake. I haven't known of an earthquake to have this type of impact on the atmosphere for this to occur naturally. I see these things as supernatural phenomenon. The great earthquake could be a result of a great shaking of the heavens; the solar system. Some observations: The sun becomes black but doesn't say the sky is black. If the sun failed in its light you wouldn't be able to tell if the sun were black as sackcloth of hair because it wouldn't be visible. It is seen, there is still light and heat reaching the Earth, but the sun is black. The moon becomes as blood, which I tend to see different to the 'blood moon' events which are not all that uncommon. The moon becoming as blood I see as something other than a natural occurrence, just as the sun becoming black is not a natural occurrence. What else is seen from the surface of the Earth? Stars of the heavens falling to the earth. Could these be meteors? Some have suggested so. Again, I see this as something unnatural, just as the "heaven departed as a scroll when it is rolled together". I have no idea what this means, but some of these things have been predicted elsewhere in Scripture (Isa 34, Joel 2, Matt 24). When reading these things, we may tend to forget that these are judgments as part of God's indignation and wrath being unleashed on a wicked world, not natural events. How does the population at this time respond?

Let's read Rev 6:15-17 "And the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every bondman, and every free man, hid themselves in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains; and said to the mountains and rocks, "Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb: For the great day of his wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?""

There is no difference in classes of people: The globalist elite as well as the poor in bondage will try to hide themselves; not in their homes as these have crumbled in the great earthquake, but in the rocks of the mountains and in the caves of the Earth. Even those who have invested millions in underground doomsday shelters likely will not escape the great earthquake. The people of the Earth will try to hide and will beg for the rocks to fall on them and hide them. From what though? Not from the stars of heaven falling or the Earth quaking, but from the face of God who is pouring out his wrath upon the earth; they know it and proclaim it. There are teachers today who say the wrath of God isn't poured out until the very end of the Tribulation in an attempt to justify a Post-Tribulation Rapture position, but what they fail at are the eye witnesses of the judgments of God being poured out upon the earth knowing that these judgments are His wrath; and "who shall be able to stand?" This is rhetorical: no one will be able to stand, just as no one but Jesus is able to open the 7-Seal Scroll.

Don't think that the Tribulation period won't be so bad and that you will somehow be able to endure it. We've just skimmed over the first half of this 7-year period of judgment. The worse is yet to come. I have said this repeatedly, if you do not know Jesus as your Saviour, it is foolish to delay in receiving His free gift of salvation. Salvation isn't earned or worked for, it is a free gift by God's grace received by faith based on the Gospel, which is the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus for your sin. Whosoever believeth upon Him will not be condemned. Those who believeth not are condemned already. There is enough information in these Blogs to make an informed choice to follow the Lord giving your heart to Him. Today is the day of salvation; you may not have tomorrow. The very second the Resurrection/ Rapture of all those in Christ takes place, there won't be one believer left upon the earth, and following Jesus then will be very different and very difficult.

The next Blog, as we enter Revelation 7, we'll be taking a break from the narrative and enter into a parenthetical section which will add information to help us understand the narrative better. -dB



The Tribulation, Part 3, Interlude

Revelation 7 is the first interlude, or parenthetical section, in the book of Revelation. These sections are important as they add content and give context to the events of the Tribulation. Many get tripped up on these not understanding what's parenthetical for our understanding and what's not. You will know these individuals straight away when you hear them say, the Tribulation, or the book of Revelation, isn't written in chronological order. Some say this out of ignorance and others as a means to justify a specific form of doctrine, e.g., a Post-Tribulation Rapture position. The account of the Tribulation is chronological, i.e., Seal two comes after Seal one, etc. with these parenthetical sections interlaced throughout the text. If the reader isn't aware of these, it could lead to a misunderstanding of the events and how they unfold.

Chapter 7 begins with, "And after these things". It is evidence of what's happening chronologically, but we must pause whenever we see this phrase and ask, What things? In this instance it's easy to answer this as "after these things" means after what John witnessed with the opening of the six-Seals, and which comes before the opening of the Seventh Seal. Twice we'll read in this chapter, "after these things", or "after this".

We see something which I consider as a form of judgment but independent of any Seals. John sees four angels standing on the four corners of the earth (this is an expression, not an indication the earth is flat). These angels apparently stop the wind from blowing. This is interesting as the rotation of the earth lends itself to the movement of wind, along with warm air rising, the high- and low-pressure systems, and the interactions between the hemispheres. The angels interrupt this pattern though the earth is still rotating. Do they neutralise the air temperature, or interrupt the rising of warm air? So complete is the stoppage of the wind, that even the sea and the trees are kept from it. Being an ex-sailor, it always amazed me when in the middle of the ocean on a clam day where the wind isn't blowing and the sea is like glass. So, it will be during this time between the sixth and seventh seals. I see this as a supernatural event, not a natural one, and according to verse 2 it was given to these four angels to hurt the earth.

John sees a fifth angel ascending from the east carrying the Seal of the Living God. He shouts to the four angels to hold off on their mission of causing hurt of the earth until they all have sealed the servants of their God in their foreheads. Servants: When Moses died, God appeared to Joshua to tell him of Moses' death. God's first words to Joshua were, Moses my servant is dead (Jos 1:2). God could have called Moses so many things, i.e. leader, statesman, etc. but chose the title, servant. This is who God is looking for, those who humble themselves to serve others.

Who do the five angels seal? Only those of the children of Israel. One hundred forty-four thousand in number. Twelve thousand from each of the following tribes are sealed: Judah, Reuben, Gad, Asher, Naphtali, Manasseh, Simeon, Levi, Issachar, Zebulun, Joseph, and Benjamin. What I find interesting is the order they are listed in, who is absent, and who is included. Absent is Naphtali's brother, Dan. Who is used in place of Dan? Manasseh, who isn't of the twelve sons of Jacob, but a son of Joseph. I wonder why? We know Dan was rebellious and disobedient. This could be why Dan is omitted. Why was Manasseh included? Manasseh was the firstborn of Joseph, yet his younger brother Ephraim, received the blessing of the firstborn from Jacob. We know from Jacob's words that Manasseh will be

a great people but not as great as Ephraim. Manasseh means to forget. Joseph exclaimed that through Manasseh, God made him to forget all his worry. I think we can speculate as to the why of these things. What I want to point out in all of this, is that there is no such thing as the '10-lost tribes' of Israel. Even the writers of the New Testament, apart from the book of The Revelation, acknowledge the existence and identification of the 12-tribes of Israel. Keep this in mind as God knows who is in each tribe; no tribe is lost.

Rev 14:4 tells us these 144,000 sealed servants are male virgins. Just a thought here: Throughout the ages, Satan has tried to thwart the plan and program of God. I'm sure Satan knows 144,000 Jewish male virgins will be sealed during the first half of this 70th Week of Daniel's prophecy. I would think Satan would try and prevent these men from being virgins. Could 'virgin' mean more than just not being defiled with women (sexually)? What if it meant the same as Noah being called, "perfect in his generation (Gen 6:9)"? Not being defiled in body; not corrupted. What if the Covid mRNA changing shot is a Satanic scheme to make the Jews in particular, corrupted in body? I'm not suggesting this is the case; I just don't know. For critical thinkers though, no stone should be left unturned.

Now we come to our second, "After this". After the sealing of the 144,000 by the five angels, John sees a great multitude which could not be numbered of all Gentile nations standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes and with palms in their hands. So, palm trees in heaven? Interesting. Who is this group of people? We know they aren't angels, or of the four beasts, or are they part of the Elders. They do worship the Lord though, but not as part of the redeemed as the church does. One of the Elders tells John that these are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. We know this isn't the church as the Elders are representative of the church. Also, the church will reign with the Lord upon the earth. This group doesn't. According to verse 15 they will serve God day and night in His Temple and before His throne. They will be personally fed by the Lamb and will have their tears wiped by him. These are the saints of the Tribulation who gave up their life for the testimony of the Lord. This apparently in the first half of the Tribulation but could include the entire period, though we don't know as John hasn't yet witnessed the last half. My point: Please do not be deceived in thinking that the first half of the tribulation is a piece of cake. Far from it. It'll be time of great persecution of those who follow the Lord.

Two things here: One, being a great multitude martyred indicates a great revival taking place immediately after the Resurrection/ Rapture of the church. I believe the Resurrection/ Rapture of the church is what sparks the revival as the world will witness this great event. So great is this witness that the Lord will send a strong delusion for those who love unrighteousness and not the truth, to believe 'The Lie' (2 Thess 2) that the Rapture didn't happen but was another event (UFO's?). 1 Cor 15 tells us that we all will be changed in the twinkling of an eye, but doesn't say that we will be raptured in the twinkling of an eye. Two, this multitude who have been martyred and before the throne are clothed, but according to Rev 20 won't have their bodily resurrection until after the Tribulation. They are clothed and not in their glorified bodies. This suggests that those of this age who die in Christ will have a type of clothed body in heaven, so not disembodied souls/ spirits. However, they will not receive their glorified bodies until the Resurrection/ Rapture detailed in 1 Thess 4.

Next post we'll look at the opening of the 7th Seal beginning in Chapter 8. -dB



The Tribulation, Part 4, The Seventh Seal and two Trumpets

We are back to the narrative in Chapter 8 and the opening of the Seventh Seal. Keep in mind that the rest of the judgments poured out upon the earth are contained in this Seal, and all are of God's wrath. The next series of judgments are the Trumpet Judgments. There are six Trumpet Judgments with the seventh introducing the next six. The Seventh Trumpet brings in the Seven Bowl (Vial) Judgments.

When John saw Jesus open this Seal there was silence in heaven for about a half hour. I've heard people say this is actually three-months, and other long time-frames. John wrote, "there was silence in heaven about the space of half an hour" and this is exactly what John meant. But why silence? Also, being in heaven where time is no more, how can they account for a half hour? Time is a dimension, just like length, width, and depth are. Just as length, width, and depth are measurements, so is time. Time is a measurement of decay. This is what's meant by time being no more in heaven. There are events and actions taking place in heaven, which we see as taking time to do, but not confined to element or dimension of decay. Until we actually get there, it'll be impossible to comprehend, just as if we lived in a 2D world trying to interact with 3D beings.

During this time, John sees seven angels standing before God and to these were given seven trumpets. Then an eighth angel who had a golden censer came and stood at the golden altar which is before the throne. He was given 'much incense'. Why 'much incense'? Seems for the much prayer offered up by the Tribulation Saints for both are offered up and ascend up before God.

This eighth angel who is offering up the incense with the prayers of the saints takes the censer, fills it with fire from the altar and throws it down upon the earth. Two things are heard, and two things are seen when this happens. Voices and thunder were heard. Lightning and an earthquake were seen. And now the seven angels with the seven trumpets prepare to sound. I believe this is why there is silence in heaven as every being and creature are in awe of what's about to take place.

Rev 8:7 "The first angel sounded, and there followed..." We tend to think the things coming just followed the sound of the trumpet. Much more than this, they also follow the voices, thunder, lightning, and the earthquake, not to mention the judgments already poured out upon the earth. Devastation is building up. We see following the earthquake and the sounding of the first angel, hail falling on the earth, then fire mingled with blood. Hail is a result of cold conditions, while fire has heat associated with it. The fire mingled with blood? I don't know what blood, or whose blood. Could it be the blood of the martyred saints? When these supernatural things hit the earth, one third of the tress are burned up along with All green grass. It can be translated as one third of the earth was burned up with all grass. This isn't just a local storm event; it's near global. I've seen a tornado go by within a mile or so of my home. Though we didn't experience much outside of rain, the devastation seen just a mile up the road was unbelievable. It was so bad; it was hard to comprehend. Now, imagine this 100s time worse and on a global scale. Something like we laugh at in sci-fi movies.

The Second Trumpet sounds, as if it couldn't get any worse. John could only describe it as it were a great mountain burning with fire which was cast into the sea. Why the sea and not the earth? The earth was pretty much decimated with the First Trumpet. Now the sea is being smitten. These things

indicate that the judgments are very specific and deliberate, not just some random event. Like the flood in Noah's day; not random or local, but specific and global; judgment of God. The result of this "mountain" being cast into the sea is that one third of the sea became blood. Not, became as blood, but became blood. We have blood mingled with fire just before this and now one third of the sea becoming blood. Along with this, one third of sea creatures which had life, died, and one third of the ships are destroyed. These judgments are precise. These are part of a grouping also known as the judgments of the thirds.

Here is an exercise to do: Write down all the judgments from the First Seal with the judgment listed and the effect. The earth has not seen anything like this since the Flood 4,000-years ago. Then you should ask yourself if you are a follower of Jesus Christ. If not, the odds are you will be destroyed during these judgments, and if not, the devastation will be so horrific that you will not want to be living during this time. If Jesus is not your Saviour, today is the day you need to commit your life to him. All those in Christ will be rescued before this time begins in the Resurrection/ Rapture. This event can be any second. Once it takes place, it'll be too late to escape and more difficult still to follow Jesus. Greater still is the chance of facing the Second Death in the Lake of Fire. Jesus, as God, entered his creation to redeem it by dying on the cross as our payment for sin, which is eternal separation from God in the Lake of Fire. Salvation is offered as a free gift; all you need to do is receive it. How? By faith: believe Jesus died, was buried, and rose again as payment for your sin, thanking him for His forgiveness, mercy, and grace. If you have made the decision to follow Jesus, email me; I'd like to hear from you and perhaps offer you suggestions on growing in your new life and becoming strong in faith.

Next time, we'll pick-up from Rev 8:10 and examine the next few Trumpets. -dB



The Tribulation, Part 5, Trumpet Judgments, cont.

From Revelation 8:10 we see the third angel sounding his trumpet of judgment. When he did, “there fell a great star from heaven, burning as it were a lamp and it fell upon the third part of the rivers and upon the fountains of waters.”

The Greek word for star is, aster. It means strown over the sky, as stars are. It can be literal or figurative. I need to point out that this word is also used when speaking of angles as stars. Example is in Rev 1:20 where it says, “The mystery of the seven stars (aster)...the seven stars are the angles of the seven churches”. The word for star is used 14 times in the Revelation. Revelation is highly symbolic, however, typically the symbolism is explained. It takes some discernment to discover what is literal and what is figurative.

Interesting in Rev 8:10, a ‘star’ is sounding a trumpet about a ‘star’ falling to the earth. The question then, is this ‘star’ of Rev 8:10 a literal star or an angel, or something else? It’s not a literal star as stars are thousands of times larger than the earth. It could be a meteor; however, meteors do not burn as a lamp; only when they enter the atmosphere and then only for a split second as they burn up quickly. It could possibly be an asteroid as they are bigger and can be seen for longer as they reflect sunlight, however, if one were on a collision course with the earth, it, like a meteor, wouldn’t burn as a lamp until it entered the earth’s atmosphere. An asteroid would be visible longer and because of its size could very well impact the earth’s surface. A comet burns like a lamp, but is too large in that it would completely destroy the earth if one made impact.

There is a suggestion being proposed that the Asteroid Apophis may be what’s in view here. It’s expected to impact the earth on 13 April 2029 (too early to tell and some are saying it’ll be a near pass by). Apophis means Evil Dragon or Snake which in Greek mythology causes chaos on the earth. The event recorded in Rev 8:10 is near the mid-point of the 7-year period we call the Tribulation, which means Apophis striking the earth on 13 April 2029 would suggest the start of the 70th Week of Daniel’s prophecy will be around October 2025. Interestingly, the 7th day of the Feast of Tabernacles in 2025 is 13 October. There is no significant Jewish holiday on 13 April 2029. Close holidays are Passover being observed on the 6th, and Holocaust Remembrance Day on the 11th. But to tell you the truth, this period of time will be so chaotic that I doubt holidays will be observed. One last point here: If (and this is a big IF) the 70th Week of Daniel’s prophecy were to begin on 13 October 2025, then the Rapture of the church would need to take place sometime prior to this date, which is something to think about as we are nearing 2022 as I write this.

Let’s stick with what we know and not hypostasise on what we don’t know. If an angel or an asteroid, it gives off light like a lamp (visible) and it strikes the earth. The star is named Wormwood. The reason is told us in verse 11: “because they (waters) were made bitter.” Wormwood is a reference to Apsinthos, which is a bitter plant. Here is Revelation 8:10-11 it turns one third of rivers and all the fountain of the waters (their origin point) bitter, to the point many men died.

Because one third of the waters were made bitter and not destroyed, I tend to believe the ‘star’ is not an asteroid. The kinetic energy released from an asteroid impacting the earth would destroy the ‘third part of it’ if not more, not just make the waters bitter.

We are moving through the section called the judgments of the thirds. Next time I will like to get through the Fourth Trumpet and the 'star' of Revelation 9, which is an angel. Before you read onto the next article, think about angels, who and what they are, when they were created, and how so many rebelled against God and why. Technically, angels are a pre-adamic race of beings. Job calls them Sons of God, which is a reference to a direct creation of God. They shouted for joy when God created the earth (Job 38:7). Were angels the original inhabitants of the earth and lost this home when the rebellion among their ranks occurred? There is a teaching along these lines becoming popular. We will through our studies examine these things. This is just a taste of what's to follow. -dB



The Tribulation, Part 5, Trumpet Judgments, cont.

From Revelation 8:10 we see the third angel sounding his trumpet of judgment. When he did, “there fell a great star from heaven, burning as it were a lamp and it fell upon the third part of the rivers and upon the fountains of waters.”

The Greek word for star is, aster. It means strown over the sky, as stars are. It can be literal or figurative. I need to point out that this word is also used when speaking of angles as stars. Example is in Rev 1:20 where it says, “The mystery of the seven stars (aster)...the seven stars are the angles of the seven churches”. The word for star is used 14 times in the Revelation. Revelation is highly symbolic, however, typically the symbolism is explained. It takes some discernment to discover what is literal and what is figurative.

Interesting in Rev 8:10, a ‘star’ is sounding a trumpet about a ‘star’ falling to the earth. The question then, is this ‘star’ of Rev 8:10 a literal star or an angel, or something else? It’s not a literal star as stars are thousands of times larger than the earth. It could be a meteor; however, meteors do not burn as a lamp; only when they enter the atmosphere and then only for a split second as they burn up quickly. It could possibly be an asteroid as they are bigger and can be seen for longer as they reflect sunlight, however, if one were on a collision course with the earth, it, like a meteor, wouldn’t burn as a lamp until it entered the earth’s atmosphere. An asteroid would be visible longer and because of its size could very well impact the earth’s surface. A comet burns like a lamp, but is too large in that it would completely destroy the earth if one made impact.

There is a suggestion being proposed that the Asteroid Apophis may be what’s in view here. It’s expected to impact the earth on 13 April 2029 (too early to tell and some are saying it’ll be a near pass by). Apophis means Evil Dragon or Snake which in Greek mythology causes chaos on the earth. The event recorded in Rev 8:10 is near the mid-point of the 7-year period we call the Tribulation, which means Apophis striking the earth on 13 April 2029 would suggest the start of the 70th Week of Daniel’s prophecy will be around October 2025. Interestingly, the 7th day of the Feast of Tabernacles in 2025 is 13 October. There is no significant Jewish holiday on 13 April 2029. Close holidays are Passover being observed on the 6th, and Holocaust Remembrance Day on the 11th. But to tell you the truth, this period of time will be so chaotic that I doubt holidays will be observed. One last point here: If (and this is a big IF) the 70th Week of Daniel’s prophecy were to begin on 13 October 2025, then the Rapture of the church would need to take place sometime prior to this date, which is something to think about as we are nearing 2022 as I write this.

Let’s stick with what we know and not hypostasise on what we don’t know. If an angel or an asteroid, it gives off light like a lamp (visible) and it strikes the earth. The star is named Wormwood. The reason is told us in verse 11: “because they (waters) were made bitter.” Wormwood is a reference to Apsinthos, which is a bitter plant. Here is Revelation 8:10-11 it turns one third of rivers and all the fountain of the waters (their origin point) bitter, to the point many men died.

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The Tribulation, Part 6, Trumpet Judgments, cont.

When Jesus created the lights of the heavens on Day 4 of creation he exclaimed: (Gen 1:14) "... Let there be lights in the firmament of the heaven to divide the day from the night; and let them be for signs, and for seasons, and for days, and years". In the Hebrew for signs: *oth*, meaning a signal as in a flag or beacon. For seasons: *moade*, meaning an appointment, or assembly; specifically, a festival. For days: *yom*, meaning from one sunset to the next. For years: *shawneh*, meaning a revolution of time (or a whole age). Also, when we read of the judgments surrounding the return of Jesus to the earth, we come across verses like Luke 21:25 where Jesus says, "And there shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars; and upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity; the sea and the waves roaring..." Here the word for signs is the Greek, *saymion* meaning an indication, ceremonially or supernaturally.

With this background let's look at the Fourth Trumpet in Revelation 8:12-13: "And the fourth angel sounded, and the third part of the sun was smitten, and the third part of the moon, and the third part of the stars; so as the third part of them was darkened, and the day shone not for a third part of it, and the night likewise. And I beheld, and heard an angel flying through the midst of heaven, saying with a loud voice, Woe, woe, woe, to the inhabitants of the earth by reason of the other voices of the trumpet of the three angels, which are yet to sound!"

I am not going to pretend to know the implications of all of these 'thirds', however, will try to convey a few thoughts regarding these things: If the third of the sun was darkened, as in being destroyed, life would instantly cease to exist on the earth. The anthropic principle suggests, in broad terms, the earth and universe are so finely tuned that if anything were changed, life would not be able to exist. What then is this darkening of the sun? I believe it will be a type of eclipse where one third of the available light is veiled, which is translated to the moon as the moon doesn't generate light, only reflects it. The third part of the stars darkened though? To me this suggests what is taking place is not natural but supernatural. This seems simple to explain compared to the next statement that the day and night shone not for a third part of it.

"...and the day shone not for a third part of it, and the night likewise (or in like manner) ..." It would stand to reason that if something takes place affecting the light on the earth, it would be adversely proportional to the darkness on the earth. With both light and dark being affected by a third part, then to me it would indicate the earth's rotation would increase yet with our time measuring devices remaining unchanged. What would be the impact on the earth and life on the earth if the earth's rotation speed increased enough where the day and night, as we currently measure time, shortened by one third? Some things I can think of would be changes in temperature, increased tide cycles disrupting ocean currents and action: matching the words of Jesus recorded in Luke 21:25 "...the sea and the waves roaring..." Wind currents would increase. Perhaps gravitational forces would be affected causing the earth's shape to change? The effects can and would be devastating. Maybe this is why an angel is heard in a strong voice as it flies through the midst of heaven exclaiming, "Woe, woe, woe, to the inhabitants of the earth by reason of the other voices of the trumpet of the three angels, which are yet to sound!"

What comes next is scary to say the least. An angel falls from heaven to the earth and unlocks a great bottomless pit to release heat and smoke and creatures which sting like a scorpion to torture the inhabitants of the earth; all except for the 144,000 who have the seal of God upon them. The torment is so great that people will seek death but death will flee from them. These creatures are organised with a leader leading them. This leader is identified as the angel of the bottomless pit and is named Apollyon. This is the Fifth Trumpet.

With the sounding of the Sixth Trumpet, this angel sounding the trumpet blast is sent to release the four angels which are bound in the Euphrates River. It seems they have been prepared over the course of 391-days to kill one third of men (human beings) upon the earth. They organise an army of horsemen numbering 200,000,000. These appear to be supernatural, as the horses have heads like lions and breathe out from their mouths fire, smoke, and brimstone (sulphur?) and also sting with their tails. The riders having breastplates of fire, jacinth, and brimstone. By these, a third part of mankind are killed.

Interesting that when people are being tormented and want to die, they can't; death flees from them, yet here when they aren't seeking death, it seeks them through these supernatural beings. Could these beings be the 'benevolent aliens' which are being disclosed by the US government? Are these the ones the evolutionists are saying seeded the earth so in essence we are their offspring? Readers, do not be deceived; there is nothing benevolent about interdimensional beings interfering with God's creation.

Here are some of the saddest words written in the Word of God: Rev 9:20-21 "And the rest of the men which were not killed by these plagues yet repented not of the works of their hands, that they should not worship devils, and idols of gold, and silver, and brass, and stone, and of wood: which neither can see, nor hear, nor walk: Neither repented they of their murders, nor of their sorceries, nor of their fornication, nor of their thefts." Can you imagine the wrath of God being poured out upon the earth and demonic beings torturing and killing the inhabitants of the earth, and people have no desire to repent of their wicked lifestyle? This is a bit beyond my comprehension. I just get a little bit sick and I'm praying to God asking for healing and forgiveness of things I have done which aren't pleasing unto Him.

One last thought: for those who think the church is on the earth during this time and protected by God, these judgments make it clear, no one is exempt except for the 144,000 Jewish evangelists. All are under God's wrath here, yet when we read of God's wrath in relation to the church, the church is promised to be delivered prior to the time of God's indignation and wrath (1-2 Thessalonians, et.al.). For those who have not committed their life to Christ, I wouldn't delay as every day we are drawing closer to the event where the church (all those in Christ) will be taken off the earth. What's to come after this will be horrific. I believe there will be a few years of peace as the Antichrist will need to rise to power and be in a position to confirm a covenant with Israel, which is the trigger for the 70th Week of Daniel's prophecy to begin, before the judgments start to fall. I wouldn't want to see anyone go through this horrific time which is rapidly approaching. My prayer is that these blog posts will make a difference for readers, especially to those who have not committed their lives to Christ where they will consider doing so before it's too late. Psalm 34:8 "O taste and see that the Lord is good: blessed is the one that trusteth in him."

Next article we'll start examining the next parenthetical section of the Tribulation narrative. Following this will be the Vial or Bowl judgments. -dB



The Tribulation, Part 7, Second Interlude. Intro and the Little Scroll

The first interlude we saw (Chapter 7) began with the words, “And after these things I saw...” This next interlude we will begin to examine recorded in Chapters 10-15 begins with the words, “And I saw...” and introduces to us the second half, or last 3.5-years, of this time we call the Tribulation as well as the main characters of the last half of this time period. Chapter 14 is parenthetical and gives a series of announcements important to the last half of this time period. Chapter 15 is a prelude to the remaining judgments to be poured out upon the earth which leads us back into the narrative of events we call The Great Tribulation, or last 3.5-years of the 7-year Tribulation period.

As mentioned in a prior post, this time should rightly be understood as the 70th Week of Daniel’s prophecy (Dan 9:27), or The Time of Jacob’s Trouble (Jer 30:7). This is important to keep in mind as it shows the main focus of this time period. Based on Jesus’ words in Matt 24, many describe this period as Tribulation and Great Tribulation corresponding to the first 3.5-years and the last 3.5-years of this time period.

Just a side note here: It is interesting that many using Matt 24:4-28, where Jesus is describing this seven-year period of time to his disciples, try to apply this to the church, which hadn’t been birthed as yet, and nowhere mentioned or alluded to. Look at the key words and phrases here: Many shall come saying I am your Messiah: Israel is looking for their Messiah where the church is looking to be raptured (caught-up or snatched away in fulfillment of Jn 14:1-3). Rumours of war: Most of the warring nations and conflict is in the Middle East focused on the destruction of Israel with her actively protecting herself. Ye shall be hated of all nations: This is true of Israel. The abomination of desolation given in detail by Daniel: An event at the Temple in Israel. Those in Judaea: no explanation required. Pray their fleeing from the Antichrist isn’t in winter or on the Sabbath: The Sabbath is observed religiously in Israel. The secret chambers: Reference to the Holy of Holies in the Temple at Israel. The entire focus of Jesus’ words regarding the 70th Week of Daniel’s prophecy (AKA The 7-year Tribulation), which begins in Dan 9:24 with the words, “Seventy weeks are determined upon they people (Jews) and upon they holy city (Jerusalem)”, is Israel, not the church. If you understand this, then you will also realise that the Rapture of the Church is not what’s being described in Mat 24:29-31, which is a post-Tribulation gathering of the Elect: in context, the Jews. A comparative study between 1 Thess 4:13-18 and Matt 24:29-31 will bear this out.

Revelation 10 will be my focus in this post: Rev 10:1-11 “And I saw another mighty angel come down from heaven, clothed with a cloud: and a rainbow *was* upon his head, and his face *was* as it were the sun, and his feet as pillars of fire: (2) And he had in his hand a little book open: and he set his right foot upon the sea, and *his* left *foot* on the earth, (3) And cried with a loud voice, as *when* a lion roareth: and when he had cried, seven thunders uttered their voices. (4) And when the seven thunders had uttered their voices, I was about to write: and I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Seal up those things which the seven thunders uttered, and write them not. (5) And the angel which I saw stand upon the sea and upon the earth lifted up his hand to heaven, (6) And swore by him that liveth for ever and ever, who created heaven, and the things that therein are, and the earth, and the things that therein are, and the sea, and the things which are therein, that there should be time no longer: (7) But in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he shall begin to sound, the mystery of God should be finished, as he hath declared to his servants the prophets. (8) And the

voice which I heard from heaven spake unto me again, and said, Go *and* take the little book which is open in the hand of the angel which standeth upon the sea and upon the earth. (9) And I went unto the angel, and said unto him, Give me the little book. And he said unto me, Take *it*, and eat it up; and it shall make thy belly bitter, but it shall be in thy mouth sweet as honey. (10) And I took the little book out of the angel's hand, and ate it up; and it was in my mouth sweet as honey: and as soon as I had eaten it, my belly was bitter. (11) And he said unto me, Thou must prophesy again before many peoples, and nations, and tongues, and kings."

Recognizing this passage to be part of an interlude, a parenthesis inserted into the narrative, will help us not to jump into skewed timelines and creating allegories leading to improper interpretation. Does this mean we'll reach a 100% understanding of what's being said? Likely not, however, it'll have the main theme and events of this time period in focus and understandable even though every detail may not be so easily understood.

A mighty angel descends from heaven with an open little book (booklet) in his hand. John is in heaven writing the things which he sees and told, so this mighty angel is not coming to John but to the earth. We are told he sets his right foot upon the sea and his left foot upon the earth. There has been some conjecture and speculation about what the "sea" and "earth" mean. If we take the text literally, then I would suggest the "sea" is the Mediterranean Sea, and the "earth" is Israel. Those who symbolise the "sea" and "earth" will suggest these refer to Gentile nations and are likely Asia and Europe as the prophecies to follow affect the East and the West. We can't know yet for certain what is meant, though I hold to a more literal interpretation; however, what's significant is the booklet the angel is holding is open; signifying, there is nothing secret or hidden here.

This mighty angel, who is not identified here, cried out (literally to scream or yell aloud) and John writes that seven thunders uttered their voices (made an address or speech through their words). Wonder what they said? Only those who are present at the time this happens, along with John, will ever know - as when John was about to write down what they said he was commanded by a voice speaking in heaven to not write it down but to seal it up. How do you seal up that which isn't written down? I believe what it means here is to put a seal on the words uttered and not publish them. Why? Obviously, these words are meant for the hearers of the time of utterance. In time, they have been uttered already. John heard them and told us about it, and they are a secret. Begs to question, why even mention it if the words are not permitted to be disclosed? When you have a 'secret' it's best to not let anyone know you have a secret. There is a greater purpose in this. It could be a check mark where the inhabitants of the earth will know exactly where they are at on the Tribulation timeline when these speeches are uttered after announced by this mighty angel.

This mighty angel then lifts his hand towards heaven. Note: Angels have hands and heaven is known as being upward from the earth. The earth being circular, is heaven up from all 360 degrees making up the circumference of the earth? I believe heaven is an unseen dimension surrounding us, so that any step off the earth, which would be upward relative to the one taking the step, will lead to heaven if that dimension were open unto us, and is I believe at the time of our departure in death or the Rapture.

Whom does this mighty angel swear to? Look at the description: a male who liveth forever and ever (continued duration without end), who created the heaven, the earth, and all that in them are. This could only be one person, our Lord Jesus Christ. I have had discussions with those who deny the eternality of the Lake of Fire. These same words describing Jesus as the one who liveth for ever and ever (εις τους αιωνας των αιωνων) are used in Rev 20:10 "And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever." When we reach the end of our Revelation study, we'll

examine who the residents of the Lake of Fire will be and if their fate will be for ever and ever or temporary.

What does this mighty angel swear to? He swears by Jesus that there should be time no longer. There are two ways to understand this: One, that the dimensionality of time will cease, or two, there will be no further delay for when the seventh Angel will sound his trumpet for the last judgments (bowl -or- vial) to be poured out and bring the Tribulation to a close. I think option two is the correct one here.

Now something perhaps, a bit difficult to understand: V7, "But in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he shall begin to sound, the mystery of God should be finished, as he hath declared to his servants the prophets." The reference to the seventh angel in verse 7 is why I believe v6 is referring to no further delay for when the seventh angel will sound.

The mystery of God should be finished: What is the mystery of God and to whom is it a mystery? The answer may rest in the seventh angel which is to sound. Rev 11:15 we are told when the seventh angel sounds great voices in heaven say, "The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever (same phrase as used previously for Jesus in v6 and for the devil in the Lake of Fire, Rev 20:10). In Matt 4 and Luke 4, the account is given of the devil showing Jesus all the kingdoms of the world and their glory in an instant of time and promised these to Jesus if he were to bow down and worship him. The "mystery of God should be finished" is something not previously revealed and could very well be the revealing of the control of the 'kingdoms of the world' being ripped away from Satan by God and control given to Jesus.

The phrase "As he hath revealed to his servants the prophets" may add another meaning. The 70-Week prophecy given to Daniel is divided into 69-Weeks and then one-Week. The first 69-Weeks are not a mystery as they have already been fulfilled with Jesus' entry into Jerusalem on a donkey when he was 'cut-off'. Many of the Jews today may not realise Jesus is their Messiah and it is he who was cut-off for them, however, this doesn't make it a mystery. The 70th Week however is clouded in a bit of a mystery. We have to piece together a lot of Scripture with New Testament passages to come to some conclusions, which are imperfect at best. A question: Is there a mystery alluded to in the Scriptures which isn't for the church and hasn't yet been revealed in the New Testament? Daniel 9:27 regarding the 70th Week may fit the bill. In speaking of the one who is to come and make a covenant with Israel for one-week (7-years) and the mid-point abomination of desolation, it says, "even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate." Consummation is completion. The subject is the Jews and Jerusalem. The Antichrist seeks to make them desolate (ruined). Would the "mystery of God should be finished (completed)" be the redemption of Israel, defeat of Satan, and the kingdoms of the world given to Christ as a result of the 7th Trumpet sounding? To me it is interesting to ponder these things. The more we do the more which will be revealed to us.

John hears the same voice from heaven which command him to take the booklet the mighty angel has open. John does and the angel tells him to eat it up. John obeys and finds it as was told him, sweet to the taste yet bitter to his belly. We wouldn't literally eat a book or booklet. Symbolically, when the book was first read (eaten) the knowledge was sweet and pleasing, however, when digested (discerned) and fulfilled, it become painful as a bitter belly is painful and not easily tolerated. We don't know what was written in the booklet, but it seems on the surface the discovery of the truth was sweet and the conclusion very bitter.

And the angel said to John after this, "Thou must prophesy again before many peoples, and nations, and tongues, and kings." John was aged and in exile when he was given the Revelation. I am not

aware of him physically prophesying again before peoples (plural), nations, tongues, and kings. It is more properly understood as prophesying again concerning peoples, nations, tongues, and kings (the world). Could this mean the Book of Revelation will be John prophesying to the world? Indeed, John is in the most unique position of any individual being transported to heaven and dictated to prophecies regarding the coming 70th Week of Daniel's prophecy. He writes about the consummation of the mystery of God. Part of this mystery is understanding the church is in heaven purposely excluded from the events of the Tribulation where Israel will be miraculously protected and saved from the onslaught of Satan as we shall read about over the next couple of posts. Stayed tuned. -dB



The Tribulation, Part 8, Second Interlude cont. Temple and 2 Witnesses

Chapters 10-15 are part of this interlude, or parenthesis, we are currently examining. We are now entering Chapter 11. John was handed a reed, which is similar to a rod. A reed is a measuring device where a rod will often symbolise authority. John was given authority to measure: The rebuilt third Temple of God, the altar, and them that worship therein. The angel which commanded John to stand and measure these things told John not to measure the court which is without the temple as this is given to the Gentiles. The angel then tells John that the holy city (Jerusalem) will be trodden under foot for 42-months; but by whom? The angel uses the word “they” which seems to tie back to the Gentiles. So, what we seem to have going on is the Jews have rebuilt their temple (called by the angel the temple of God, which is important to note as God recognizes and approves of the rebuilt temple as a place of Jewish worship), and worship here at least part of the first half of this 7-year period, if not for all of it, then the Abomination of Desolation (2 Thess 2:4), followed by the last 3.5-years where the city will be trampled underfoot by some of the Gentile nations.

Now we have the words, “And I will give power unto my two witnesses, and they shall prophesy 1,260-days (3.5-years), clothed in sackcloth.” Who are these two witnesses? Their traits are listed in vv 4-6, their termination in vv 7-10, concluding with their translation in vv 11-14. Verse 15 picks up with the Seventh Trumpet.

These two witnesses seem to be two specific individuals, though they are not identified. They are to accomplish God’s work for the 1260-days of their ministry. What 1260-day period we don’t know; it could overlap the mid-point dividing line.

They will have miraculous power no one can stop, and they operate in this power as they will. They allow the Beast to kill them at the end of their 3.5-year ministry. Their bodies will lay in the streets of Jerusalem for 3.5-days. They are not buried but left to rot in the streets while the world throws a party celebrating their end.

After 3.5-days the Spirit of Life from God enter them and they are resurrected and then raptured to heaven with the same words which called John up to heaven to see and write the Revelation in Ch 4:1.

At the same hour of their resurrection and translation a great earthquake collapses 10% of the city killing 7,000 men. Interesting that those remaining are frightened and give glory to the God of heaven. Most during this time hide from God and refuse to give him glory.

But who are the two witnesses? Some speculate Moses and Elijah as the two witnesses have similar powers as Moses and Elijah. In addition, Moses and Elijah were on the Mount of Transfiguration with Jesus (Mat 17), and Jewish tradition believes these two men will return to Israel.

Others speculation the two witnesses will be Enoch and Elijah solely based on the fact that these two men never tasted death but were raptured to heaven by God. This is a weak argument as at the resurrection-rapture of the church, perhaps million will not taste of death, so in reality, these two witnesses can be anyone of God’s choosing to fulfill His purposes.

Look at verse 4: It says these two witnesses are the two olive trees, and the two candlesticks standing before the God of the earth. This is a reference to Zech 4:3, 14. These two olive trees are identified as Joshua and Zerubbabel. These two men operated by the Spirit of the LORD of Hosts. These men represent religious and civil order. Zech 4:14 state these two are anointed that stand by the Lord of the whole earth. The significance of Zech 4 being referenced in Rev 11:4 is the two witnesses will have the power of the Holy Spirit flowing through them to accomplish God's work. So, who are they? No one knows for sure, but they will receive global attention through their ministry, death, resurrection and rapture.

Rev 11:15-19 the Seventh angel sounded and there were great voices in heaven declaring the kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever (means without end). The church represented by the 24-Elders fall on their faces and worship God. They exclaim: "We give thee thanks, O Lord God Almighty, which art, and wast, and art to come; because thou hast taken to thee thy great power, and hast reigned." Here the glorified church is in heaven declaring the Lord is yet to come. Come where? To the earth? It indicates the resurrection-rapture of the church does not take place after this 7-year period of God's wrath upon the earth but must take place prior to and the church is expecting to be with Jesus when he returns to the earth.

Here's why (v18): "And the nations were angry, and thy wrath is come, and the time of the dead, that they should be judged, and that thou shouldest give reward unto thy servants the prophets, and to the saints, and them that fear thy name, small and great; and shouldest destroy them which destroy the earth." For a parallel passage, read Matt 25:31-46 where Jesus speaks of judging the Gentile nations immediately after his post-tribulation return to the earth.

John concludes that he saw the temple of God opened in heaven. There is a desolated temple on the earth at this time and a temple opened in heaven, which can never be destroyed or made desolate. What is fascinating to me is John sees the Ark in God's temple; meaning it is not on the earth. How and when did it get transported to heaven? Or is the Ark on the earth a mirrored representation of what's in heaven? I do not know.

Rev 12 is a hotly debated chapter. Some see the signs in Rev 12 has happened in the near past in our stary sky; however, is this what the passage is referring to? I say no, not at all. Let's look at this:

John sees a great wonder in heaven. This is where John is at. John is not on the earth looking up at the night sky. He is in heaven and this is where he sees this great wonder.

He sees a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars. This is a reference to the dream Joseph had recorded in Gen 37. This woman is Israel.

This woman is seen with child. Some think she is the church, but the church wouldn't be pregnant. Whom did Israel give birth to that would have any interest of Satan, the great red dragon (v3)? It is Jesus.

This great red dragon took a third part of the angels with him in his fall and sought to destroy the man child as soon as he was born. Satan tried to destroy Jesus at his birth. He was successful in killing all male babies two-years old and younger, however, missed Jesus as he was miraculously protected.

Verse 5 tells us that Jesus is to rule all nations with a rod of iron (John measures the temple with a rod: a symbol of authority). Jesus was “caught-up” (Raptured) to heaven and to his throne (we call this his Ascension).

The woman, Israel, flees into the wilderness (v6) where God has prepared a place for her to protect her and provide for her over the last 1260-days of this 7-year period.

What we have here in these first six verses is a history of Israel from her birth to her protection through this period also known as the Time of Jacob’s Trouble. -dB



The Tribulation, Part 9, Second Interlude cont. War in Heaven

We left off at Revelation 12:1-6 where we identified the Woman, the Dragon, and the Man child. These are Israel, Satan, and Jesus. In this overview of Israel's history, we read where Satan is wroth with Israel for this is the focal point of Messiah and salvation being offered to the world through Him. During the last half of the 7-year Tribulation, Satan seeks to destroy Israel, which is about the same land size and population as the State of New Jersey; however, God miraculously protects Israel from Satan's wrath during this time.

Now we come to a war taking place in heaven (12:7-12). Michael, who is one of the chief princes in heaven; Dan 10:13 (an Archangel – Jude 9), with his angels fight against Satan and his angels. Keep in mind that Michael is the guardian of Israel; full stop. Any war he is involved with will be for the protection of Israel. How big is his army? We don't know; however, we know Satan took one third of the angels with him, so does Michael meet him with the same number of angels, less, or more? We don't know but can safely assume this is a huge battle which takes place in the heavenlies.

We read something interesting in v8. Satan does not prevail over Michael and we are told there was no more place in heaven for them (Satan and his angels). So, is John looking back in time when Satan was cast down at, or near, the time of this present creation? We know from Job 1:6-12 that after the creation and Satan's fall, he still has access to heaven, though I'm certain it's very limited. I think v9 gives some insight into this question: It says Satan was cast out who deceiveth the whole world. To me this suggests John is seeing things as they are in the future during this final Week (7-years) before Jesus physically and visibly returns to the earth.

When Satan and his angels were cast down to the earth, John hears a voice in heaven. Before we look at what's uttered, think about this: Satan and his angels have their abode in Hell (Matt 25:41). During the 7-year Tribulation, and I believe near the mid-point, Satan and his angels who were summoned to heaven for battle are cast down to the earth. Like it's not horrific enough with the wrath of God being poured out from the opening of the First Seal, now the inhabitants of the earth will have Satan and his angels to contend with.

The voice in heaven is a voice of praise and worship. We do not know who uttered the words here, but so very profound: "Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down (another indication this is still future to us as Satan is accusing believers to God today), which accused them (the brethren) before our God, day and night (v10)."

Verse 11 begins, "And they overcame him..." And, is a conjunction joining what was said to what is being said. They, are the brethren who are being accused. Who is overcome here is Satan. Most believe the brethren being referred to in v11 are Tribulation saints. I tend to think these are present day brothers and sisters in the church. Two reasons: One, Satan has no reason to accuse the Tribulation saints before God. What would he accuse them of? In addition, his primary focus is Israel. A proper understanding of Matt 25:31-46 shows the surviving Gentile nations will be judged based on their works. Salvation in the Tribulation is not by God's grace. Satan is not worried about anyone's

good deeds during this 7-year Tribulation period. Two, Rev 13:7 tells us that Satan, through the Beast, wars with the saints and overcomes them, not the other way around.

How do we overcome Satan today? By the blood of the Lamb (salvation) and by the word of our testimony (speaking the Word of God to others – witnessing). Matt 16:18 Jesus promises the church the gates (power and authority) of Hell will not overcome it. During the Tribulation, the saints are overcome and killed by the power and authority of Hell – Rev 13:7 tells us authority was given to the Beast to overcome the saints. This authority can only come from Heaven, and as it's given during the Tribulation period, it's never given during the church age of grace.

“They loved not their lives unto death (12:11).” This should be true of us today in the church, and it is for many who are being martyred for their faith present day and throughout church history. It will also be true for many of the saints during the Tribulation. What else can we take away from this? Aren't we to die to self? We can't die to self if we are in love with self. To love God more than self is the first step in dying to self (dying to self-will and any self-ambition outside the will of God for our lives).

Look at the great contrast in verse 12: “Therefore rejoice, ye heavens, and ye that dwell in them.” It doesn't say to those on the earth to rejoice, does it? What does this verse say to those on the earth? “Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and of the sea!” Why? “For the Devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time.” Satan knows his time is coming to an end. He knows he's defeated. However, as we noted, he can do nothing without the authority given to him from God in Heaven.

I've spoken to some who believe the first six seals and part of the Seventh Seal is Satan's wrath. With the Scroll in Heaven, and Jesus with the church in Heaven, and all judgements administered from Heaven by heavenly beings, and with Satan cast down to the earth, it can't be Satan's wrath poured out in judgement upon the inhabitants of the earth. It's all the wrath of the Lamb.

We read from Isaiah 10:5-7 regarding the Assyrian, which is a name given to the coming Antichrist of the 7-year Tribulation, “O Assyrian, the rod of mine anger, and the staff in their hand is mine indignation. I will send him against an hypocritical nation, and against the people of my wrath will I give him charge...” Satan through the Beast will be nothing more than the vehicle of God's wrath; an instrument of God's wrath. Satan may be angry, yet he is just an instrument. Satan can do nothing apart from God allowing it to happen. Satan thinks he'll be a victor; however, he's losing.

From Rev 12:13 to the end of the chapter we see how Satan, the Dragon, responds to being cast down to earth knowing he's running out of time. Satan's great wrath is focused on Israel (the woman) because Jesus and salvation has come from her.

God's response to Israel is amazing, and the rest of the inhabitants of the earth are excluded from God's response. God gives Israel supernatural speed to flee to a place He has prepared for her, and He provides and protects Israel here during the last 3.5-years of this 7-year Tribulation period.

Satan tries to use a supernatural flood to overcome (drown) Israel, however, the earth opens up and swallows the flood. Interesting it doesn't specifically say God opened up the earth, yet we all assume this to be correct. The text says, “And the earth helped the woman...” Does God's creation instinctively know God's desire and will to respond to Him? I think it's very likely.

Verse 17 has been used in some debate. The verse says this: "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."

Those who like to argue the church is on the earth during the 7-year Tribulation claim the remnant of the seed of Israel is the church. This is a stretch. The remnant of the seed of Israel is Israelites. How this remnant is distinguished from the rest of Israel who is being miraculously protected by God is they are followers of God and Jesus Christ. They keep the commandments given to Israel by God, and have the testimony of faith in Jesus Christ. This is what makes Satan, the dragon, angry to make war with the remnant of the seed of Israel. He hates salvation given by God's grace through faith. Satan would want all to perish with him. Don't be one. If you do not know Jesus Christ as your Saviour, believe Him, His Words, His promise of eternal life, today.

Next article we will continue with this parenthetical section from chapter 10 through 15. We'll begin learning more about who the Beast is and his agenda on the earth being empowered by Satan. I believe it's more than empowerment. I believe the Beast will be genetically connected to Satan and this in fulfillment of Gen 3:15 which says, "And I (God) will put enmity between thee (Serpent) and the woman (Eve), and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel."

This is the first end time prophecy in the Word of God and it's yet to be fulfilled. I believe it will be fulfilled in the rise of the Beast we'll read about in Rev 13. We know the seed of the woman (Eve) in Gen 3:15 is Jesus. The seed of the Serpent? It will be the coming Beast who will be thrown into the Lake of Fire at the conclusion of the coming Millennial Kingdom reign of Christ and His Bride. Will the genetic connection of the Beast to Satan also be seen in the inhabitants of the earth who take the Mark of the Beast? I see it as a real possibility. Stay tuned. -dB



The Tribulation, Part 10, Second Interlude cont. The Beast

Who are the Beasts being referred to in the Revelation? In Revelation 13:1-10 we have a description of The Beast, and in vv11-18 a description of Another Beast, many scholars call the False Prophet.

The KJV reads at 13:1, "And I stood upon the sand of the sea, and I saw a beast rise up out of the sea..." A better rendering of the Greek may be, "And he stood (referring to the dragon) upon the sand of the sea, and I (John) saw a beast rise up out of the sea..." A literal translation would be, "And I saw out of the sea a beast rising..."

John is in heaven seeing this 'vision' so he's likely not standing upon the sand of the sea; however, what's clear is he saw a beast rising out of the sea and the dragon (v2), who we know to be Satan from chapter 12, gave him his power. The name attributed to this beast is, Antichrist (in opposition to or in place of Christ).

Rev 11:7 there is a beast which rises out of the bottomless pit which kills the Two Witnesses. Is this beast the same as the coming Antichrist? It could very well be as we know he is in power on the earth at this time and his power comes directly from Satan.

John says the beast which he saw has seven heads, ten horns, and ten crowns (Greek: diademata, meaning royalty) upon the horns, and upon its heads the name of blasphemy. When we think of the word, blasphemy, we think of insults hurled at God. Here, blasphemy is the act of claiming deity or having the attributes of deity (the beast acts as he is God and does not deny deity); hence the name, Antichrist.

John continues his description of the beast which was like a leopard, with feet like a bear, with a mouth like a lion. The dragon not only gave the beast his power, but his seat (position among the nations) which comes with great authority.

The question of who or what are heads, horns, crowns should be answered along with the significance of the beast having body parts like a leopard, bear, and lion. We get insights from Daniel 7. Daniel in his vision saw four beasts. We understand from Daniel that beasts are rulers of specific kingdoms. The four beasts Daniel saw were Babylonian Empire (lion), Medo-Persian Empire (bear), Greek Empire (leopard) under Alexander the Great, whose four heads were his generals who ruled Asia Minor, Syria, Egypt, and Macedonia, and the fourth being the Roman Empire with no animal characteristic ascribed to it.

We learn from here too that horns represent rulers in nations, however, different from the beasts which represent the head of that nation. Many see horns as nations and believe a ten-nation confederate must be in place during the reign of the fourth beast. Daniel 7:24-25 suggests horns are not nations but powerful men – leaders – rulers, in these nations; an alliance of oligarchs (oligarch: a very wealthy business leader with a great deal of political influence).

I see the beast in Rev 13 being the fourth beast in Daniel 7. He has absorbed the former kingdoms of Babylon (lion), Medo-Persia (bear), and Greece (leopard). He has seven heads, or in control of seven

nations, or leaders of seven nations, with ten oligarchies who are wearing crowns of royalty (they are the influence behind the nations; not the President, King, or Prime Minister).

Some things to consider regarding the fourth beast and kingdoms of the earth: Of the four kingdoms Daniel saw, there were two already past: Egypt and Assyria. The fourth kingdom, Roman, had two legs, so was in two parts. We can see this today in Western Rome which fell in A.D. 476, and Eastern Rome, which has never fallen. The Byzantine Empire was absorbed into the Ottoman Empire in A.D. 1453. This was replaced by the Turkish Republic in 1922. Though the names have changed, the old Byzantine Empire has been lying dormant; however never extinct. While many focus on Western Rome as the kingdom of the Antichrist, I believe what Daniel sees rising in the last days is the other leg of his vision; the Eastern Roman kingdom. "The Assyrian" is one of the names given to the Antichrist, and ancient Assyria reached into modern day Turkey, the old Byzantine Empire. Because of what Daniel writes about the Assyrian, it's the author's view that the coming Antichrist, who will reign terror upon the earth during the final Week (7-years), will have Jewish roots (forefathers being displaced Jews), yet will have his allegiance to Islam. Daniel tells us he will not follow the ways of his forefathers or the God of his forefathers; he will not adhere to Judaism (Dan 11).

This man, and he is only a man, however, in my view is genetically tied to Satan in fulfillment of Gen 3:15, will have one of his heads (allied national leader) wounded to death and his wound was healed. Interesting that the world didn't wonder (marvel with intent to follow) after the one healed, but the beast whom he was allied to. Could it be that the beast resurrected this national leader? I think this is a real possibility to cause the world to marvel to the point of wanting to be in alliance with him.

Daniel 7:24-27 gives more insight into this person called the Beast (wild beast, i.e., not confirming to anything or anyone). In addition to the 10-horns, or oligarchies, another will arise diverse from all the others and will subdue three oligarchs. A wealthy businessman with political influence, diverse from any other oligarch or politically influential person, will persuade three of the ten most powerful and influential men to follow him. It reminds me of President Trump. He is a rich and political influential man who has views diverse from any other. I am not saying President Trump is the 11th horn that shall rise and subdue three others. Only using him as an example of how this can easily occur. This man, in contrast to President Trump, will speak against God the Most High, and wear out the saints of the Most High and think to change times and laws for three- and one-half years (the last half of the final Week). This being during the final Week and the church caught-up to heaven prior to this time, this horn cannot be a believer of this age, which President Trump is.

The response of the world to the miracle of the beast is to worship the dragon, who is Satan. They worship Satan for ordaining the beast to do miraculous things. Satan can and does appear as an angel of light (2 Cor 11:14), however, he is an imposter and the inhabitants of the earth, by larger, cannot discern it.

Can we know today who this beast will be? We can probably guess who the ten oligarchies are, however, the Word (2 Thess 2) is clear the Antichrist (man of sin, the lawless one, that wicked one) cannot be revealed as long as the church is on the earth and not yet gathered unto the Lord. The best we could ever do is guess and make assumptions; but why? There is too much focus today on the Antichrist when we should be looking for our Redeemer, Jesus Christ. He is coming back any day now to catch away His Bride. How wonderful it will be for Him to find us ready and watching for him. What a blessed day that will be when my Saviour I will see.

Next time we'll look at what the beast, the Antichrist, will seek to do and accomplish upon the earth, and how the False Prophet fits into this end time scenario. -dB



The Tribulation, Part 11, Second Interlude cont. False Prophet

Before we look at the False Prophet (13:11-18) I would like to back up a little to have a deeper look at the Beast (vv5-10): We are told that there was given to the Beast a mouth speaking great things, and blasphemies. Who gives this ability to him? I believe it's the Dragon (Satan). If the Beast is genetically tied to Satan, this should be easy to do. This ability seems to be for the last half of the Tribulation (42-months). It really could be any 42-month timeframe during this 7-year period. Being limited to 42-months indicates that though the Dragon gave this ability to the Beast, he has been restricted by God to operate only 42-months.

Isaiah 10:5-6 "O Assyrian, the rod of mine anger, and the staff in their hand is mine indignation. I will send him against an hypocritical nation, and against the people of my wrath will I give him a charge, to take the spoil, and to take the prey, and to tread them down like the mire of the streets."

The Assyrian, which is a title given to the Beast (the one most know as The Antichrist), will be an instrument in God's hands to pour out His indignation upon those who are the people of God's wrath. Satan, the Beast, and False Prophet, can do nothing unless it is allowed from God in heaven.

The Beast will blaspheme God, His name, His tabernacle (standing on the earth during the Tribulation), and those who dwell in heaven. This is interesting because I do not believe the Beast, or Satan, cares about the angels in heaven. They hate the redeemed by God. The church is the redeemed of God. Those un-resurrected souls under the altar of God have not yet been redeemed; the church has been and is in heaven prior to the Tribulation (Rev 1, 4-5). Rev 13:6 seems to be a pre-tribulation resurrection-rapture verse.

It is also given to the Beast (by Satan with God's permission) to make war with the saints to overcome them. Jesus promises the church the gates of hell (power and authority of hell) will not overcome/prevail over the church (Matt 16:18). God allows these saints to be overcome by the power of hell, so these saints cannot be the church. God does not lie or contradict Himself.

All of the earth whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb will worship the Beast. This is incredible power and influence to cause these to worship. However, today those who claim to be Christ, have an easy time to deceive people into following them.

Verses 9-10 commands all who have an ear listen to what is being said here; the promise: He who leads others into captivity will himself go into captivity. He who kills with the sword will be killed with the sword. This is a poetic promise that God will righteously judge, and this promise will increase the patience and faith of the saints.

John sees Another Beast coming up out of the earth. The first Beast is a head of an empire, kingdom, or nation, so it would seem this other beast is a head of an empire, kingdom, or nation; however, instead of being allied, this beast is servant to the first beast. This second beast has two horns, or two powerful and influential business men or oligarchs. These presents themselves as a lamb but speak as the Dragon. Could these two men be religious leaders posing in the position of false authority of Jesus? The world is worshipping the Dragon, so in like manner these two men seem to have the same charismatic influence. The difference we see here is that though this second beast has the power of the first, he causes all to worship the first beast.

We read the first beast was healed of a deadly wound. If we go back to v4 we read the inhabitants of the earth asking, who can make war with the beast? Could it be that in a military conflict the beast was killed and then miraculously healed? Verse 14 tells us he was wounded by a sword and lived. Whatever the situation it causes the earth to follow after and worship the beast.

The second beast, we call the False Prophet, displays power the first beast hasn't displayed. He does great wonders, perhaps posing as someone anointed from heaven, like an angel of light? He causes fire to fall from heaven which is witnessed by the inhabitants of the earth. The miracles he does are a great deception. The miracles seem to be performed in the sight of the first beast (the Antichrist). This False Prophet calls upon the inhabitants of the earth, not the political leaders which seems strange, to make an image to the beast. It doesn't say the image is of the beast. I personally think it'll be the image of the god of this world, the Dragon, Satan, who was originally created as a most beautiful being (Ezek 28:12-19).

The False Prophet has the power to cause this image to have life. Today, we can discern what is holographic, computer generated, fabricated. This image doesn't have simulated life which could be discerned if synthetic; it has actual genetic, biologic life. The image which comes to life has intellect so that it can speak. The False Prophet decrees that all who will not worship the image be put to death.

It is this False Prophet who causes all to receive a mark in their right hand or forehead. Note: This mark is that of the beast, not of the individual. This mark allows all who receive it to be tracked and controlled. No one will be able to buy or sell unless they either have the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name. the world didn't have this technology one generation ago; however, it has this technology today. It's time to wake up if you are not aware what will be transpiring in the very near future.

The number of the beast, the antichrist, is the number of a man; not a god, deity, or supernatural being. The number 666 could simply mean, it's a man, it's a man, it's a man knowing that the number six represents man in Scripture. Interesting that in Islam the Bismillah (in Arabic the phrase, "in the name of Allah" (Arabic, Bisim, for, "in the name of", and "Allah" followed by crossed swords)) looks very similar to the Greek letters forming 6-6-6 (Chi, Xi, Stigma). Some have proposed that 666 in Rev 13:18 is actually a reference to the name of Allah (or the coming prophesied Mahdi – the Islamic end of days religious ruler to rid the world of evil). It's proposed that John actually wrote the Arabic, Bisim Allah with crossed swords, and the translators didn't know this and assumed it was the Greek 6, 6, 6. This is conjecture though; we just do not know for sure. What we do know is that those who refuse to take the mark will have an incredibly horrific life on earth, even to being put to death. It

reinforces that today, not tomorrow, is the day of salvation. If you do not know the Lord Jesus as your Saviour; do not delay: Tomorrow may be too late.

Technically the interlude, or parenthetical section, ends here; however, the narrative does not pick up again until Chapter 16. Chapters 14-15 are considered announcements. Since these are not part of the narrative, I have left them as part of this second interlude. We'll examine these announcements in the next article. -dB



The Tribulation, Part 12, Announcements

We have several announcements in Chapter 14 followed by the Prelude to Bowl Judgements in Chapter 15. This will conclude the parenthetical section which started back in Chapter 10. Chapter 16 starts back with the narrative.

The Announcements in Chapter 14 are: Concerning the 144,000, amplifying what we learned about them from Chapter 7:1-8 (14:1-5). Concerning the Everlasting Gospel (14:6-8). Concerning Beast Worshipers (14:9-13). Concerning the Harvesting of the Earth (14:14-20). Let's look at these going in order starting with the 144,000 in this article.

The 144,000 were introduced to us in Chapter 7:1-8. The four angels dispatched to carry out judgement were halted by a fifth angel which carried the seal of the living God. This fifth angel told the other four not to hurt the earth, sea, or trees until we (all five it seems) have sealed the 144,000 servants of 'our God' (He is the God of the angels as well as our God) in their foreheads (not on but in, so it's something permanent). This is at the Fifth Seal as well. Could these five angels be the ones carrying out the judgements of the first five seals? I want to point out here for those who think this time is a time of Satan's wrath or man's wrath: It is God's wrath administered from heaven by heavenly creatures.

These 144,000 are 12,000 from all of the tribes of Israel. The tribes mentioned are Judah, Reuben, Gad, Asher, Naphtali, Manasseh, Simeon, Levi, Issachar, Zebulun, Joseph, and Benjamin. Note: Ephraim is in Joseph. Dan is not mentioned but Manasseh (also of Joseph) is in his place. I will not discuss at this point in time why Dan is excluded and Manasseh is included. Some think the numbering of the 144,000 is figurative or symbolic. When the Word of God is so specific with numbering and names, it should be looked at as being literal, unless the literal sense doesn't make sense. So, we have here literally 12,000 from each of the twelve tribes mentioned for a total of 144,000 Jewish evangelists.

What we learn of these 144,000 from Chapter 14: They are in heaven at this point. They have the name of the Father written in their foreheads. This seems to be the seal the five angels sealed these servants of God with. It's quite possible the name of the Father as a seal in their foreheads will be there and visible for all of eternity.

There was a new song sung before the heavenly creatures and the church, yet only the 144,000 could learn it. Interesting the amount of singing which takes place in heaven. The church sings their song (5:9-10) and the 144,000 sing their song (14:3) and they have musical accompaniment, which may not be instruments, but creatures whose voices sound like musical instruments. Why the music and

personal singing of new songs? I think it's more than just for worship. It may be that we need these songs personally to elevate our happiness and joy, if this is possible in heaven.

These 144,000 are virgins (not defiled with women). This would indicate they are likely unmarried and sexually pure. In our society today it seems impossible. I heard it proposed that these 144,000 may be the resurrected children being under the age of two when slaughtered by Herod when he learned of the birth of Jesus. This is an interesting hypothesis, however, is speculative even though it may be correct. We just aren't given enough information to make that determination; we have to stick with what the text tells us.

They follow the Lamb wherever he goes. The Lamb, Jesus, is in heaven, which indicates these 144,000 are in heaven as well. The next sentence tells us these were redeemed from among men, being the firstfruits unto God and to the Lamb. For clarification: Jesus is the Firstfruits of the resurrection of the church. The resurrection of the church is the harvest. These 144,000 being Jewish males in the 7-year Tribulation are not connected with the church; they are connected to Israel in this the 70th Week of Daniel's prophecy (Dan 9:26-27). The 144,000 are the forerunners of the salvation of Israel at the end of this time. It is in this sense they are the firstfruits. All Israel will be saved (Rom 11:26) and these 144,000 are the firstfruits unto God and the Lamb.

The last statement concerning them is a great statement. In their mouth was found no guile for they are without fault before the throne of God. Listen to the doxology in Jude 24-25 concerning us: "Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present *you* faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy, to the only wise God our Saviour, *be* glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen." When we enter heaven, regardless of our faults here and now, Jesus will present us faultless before the presence of His glory. I can't wait. -dB



The Tribulation, Part 13, Announcements, cont.

The last article we examined Revelation 14:1-5 concerning the 144,000. The next thing John sees in the midst of heaven is an angel having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth (v6-8). This seems to be that last opportunity given to the inhabitants of the earth to repent before the Lord comes back to the earth. This gospel isn't carried and preached by men, but by an angel from heaven. It's shared with ALL inhabitants of the earth.

Jesus says, recorded in Matt 24:14, "And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world as a witness to all nations, and then the end will come." Some may see Matt 24:14 fulfilled with Rev 14:6 looking at the similarities. Yet, are these the same? Perhaps, but I would like to focus on the difference. Matt 24:14 is the gospel of the kingdom, which is specifically directed and given to Israel. Rev 14:6 is the everlasting gospel, which is given to the entire world. Everlasting (Greek: *aionion*) signifies it is unchanging, not necessarily unending, so it is true in its message. Those Gentiles who survive the Tribulation will be judged by their works for eternal life to enter the kingdom (Matt 25:31-46). This is a bit of a paradox for the gospel we know for the church is of God's grace through faith.

The gospel of the kingdom seems to be more about how one lives for the Lord in the kingdom age. The gospel given to the church is called in the New Testament: Gospel of Christ, Gospel of God, Gospel of Grace of God, the Gospel of his Son, the Gospel of Peace, my (Paul's) Gospel (given to him to preach to the Gentiles), Christ' Gospel, the Gospel of your Salvation, our (Paul and those ministering with him) Gospel, the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. Not once is the Gospel called the Everlasting Gospel in the entire New Testament, with the only exception being Rev 14:6. The Everlasting Gospel is given right before the final judgements of the Tribulation. I see the Everlasting Gospel as a call to repentance, but not one of grace. I do not see any grace in the Tribulation, with the only exception being Israel. We know from the following verses in Rev 14 that whomever receives the Mark of the Beast will have their part in the Lake of Fire. There is no unconditional grace given to those who are following Jesus yet take the Mark for survival. The Everlasting (unchanging) Gospel is a call to repentance, for we see repeatedly mankind refuses to repent though under the wrath of God, but not to salvation by grace. Those making it to the end will be judged by Jesus based on their works; yet those who refuse the Mark of the Beast and die at his hand are seen in heaven. Refusing the Mark is a work which leads to martyrdom, or can lead to martyrdom. I could be totally wrong here; however, I present these thoughts to give the readers something to contemplate and think on. The church, to whom the grace of God is extended to, is caught-up to heaven prior to this final 7-year period of God's indignation and wrath being poured out upon the earth. After the resurrection – rapture of the church, everything changes. If perhaps someone who is not in Christ is facing these things in the coming Tribulation period, repent of your sins (change your mind regarding them as they are an offense to God), and refuse the Mark of the Beast, his name, his number. This action may cost you your life, however, you will not perish eternally in the Lake of Fire.

I will not elaborate on verses 7-8 but to only say verse 8 indicates that the ancient city of Babylon will be rebuilt and will be a global leader. This could be the very seat of the Beast (Antichrist) whom the Word of God calls the Assyrian. It makes sense for one known as the Assyrian to rule from Babylon. Before the Gulf War, under the rulership of Saddam Hussein, Babylon started being rebuilt.

We come to verses 9-13 which details what happens to those who worship the Beast. Though on the earth it seems like the right thing to do, it is very short lived. Those who worship the Beast, and those who take his Mark, will drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture (it's 100%) into the cup of his indignation. These will be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels (not the unholy ones), and of the Lamb. Their smoke of torment ascends up for ever and ever. This is the same as saying world without end. Their torment will never end, and they will have no rest.

Verse 12 says, "here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus." The saints who are following Jesus with this knowledge will have the desire to endure without the Mark.

Verse 13 is the second Beatitude (Blessing and/or state of great joy) in the Revelation. A voice (the Holy Spirit?) says to John, write: Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them." These followers of Jesus during the Tribulation will face immense hardship to endure to the end of their life or to the end of the Tribulation. It will not go unnoticed by the Lord. He will give them rest from their labours, and their works will continue to reap rewards in eternity. Here is an application for us today: We should be doing works for the Lord in obedience to Him which will continue to produce reward long after we are gone. We should leave a Godly legacy to our families, and build a ministry which will continue to operate after our death. Anything which will continue to bring souls to salvation will continue to reap reward in eternity. Think and pray about this and what the Lord may lead you to do.

The last segment of chapter 14 is verses 14-20. This is concerning the harvest of the earth. Let me be clear; not all gatherings in Scripture are regarding the church; neither are all harvests. Matt 24:31 is a post-wrath gathering of the Jewish Elect as an example. Matt 25:31-46 is the gathering of the surviving Gentile nations of the Tribulation. 2 Thess 2:1-3 is the gathering of the church prior to the Day of the Lord and revealing of the man of sin. Here in Rev 14:14-20 is a poetic rendering of the gathering and reaping of the wicked for their harvest is ripe. The wicked are the fully ripe grapes. The sickles are the instruments for gathering, or reaping of, the grapes. The great winepress is of God's wrath. Angels are dispatched to bring in this harvest.

Interesting here we see a temple in heaven and the altar. There is fire in heaven as one of the angels has power over fire. Jesus as the Son of man, with a sickle in his hand, is part of this operation; however, this reference could be referring to an angel. By the way, Son of Man is the number one title Jesus used of himself during his earthly ministry. There are at least three angels involved, and perhaps a fourth if the Son of man is a reference to an angel.

Verse 20 suggests the winepress of God's wrath is at Megiddo (Armageddon). How many people do you think are crushed by this gathering to have blood extend roughly 322-kms (200-miles) and 122-cm (4-ft) deep? We would need to know the width of the valley to compute this, however, it doesn't take a genius to know that this would be millions upon millions of people. So, let me ask: Would you want to be part of this number, or the number who are caught-up to heaven by Jesus before this time begins? It's very simple; you just need to believe the Gospel of grace by faith. The Gospel for us is Jesus as God, entered his creation to die, be buried, and rise again for your sin. Applying this personally to you is a matter of believing it by faith. Eph 2:8-9 says, "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: *it is* the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast." Salvation is 100% of God by his grace. It is appropriated to us by faith. We can do nothing, no work or good deed, to earn it. Grace through faith. If you do not know Jesus as your Saviour, I invite you to receive this Gospel message today believing Jesus died just for you as payment for your sin. When you believe (trust Him, His Word) by faith, salvation becomes yours. Drop me a line, send an email, if you have made a decision for Christ; I'd like to offer some guidance on your new journey. -dB



The Tribulation, Part 14, Prelude to the Bowl Judgments

Chapter 15 is the last of this parenthetical section before John returns to the narrative. What we see here is the prelude to the bowl, or vial, judgements. It is what John sees in heaven as the angels prepare to unleash these final judgements upon the earth.

The KJV is a great translation; however, English words and meanings have changed over time, so when reading it's good to cross examine the text to make sure you know what it is saying. We have such a situation in verse 1. This verse reads, "And I saw another sign in heaven. Great and marvellous, seven angels having the seven last plagues: for in them is filled up the wrath of God." Reading this verse at face value we would think it is saying God's wrath hasn't yet been poured out. Where the KJV reads, "for in them is filled up the wrath of God" today's word usage is a little different. "Filled up" in the KJV in today's English means "completed". The end of this verse should read: "Because in them was completed the wrath of God." In other words, these seven vials do not start the wrath of God, they complete the wrath of God. This is an important point as we have already discussed 6:17 where the inhabitants of the earth at the 6th Seal exclaim, they have been under God's wrath (past tense) since the beginning. This whole seven-year period is God's wrath poured out upon the earth.

Verse 2 John says he saw 'something like' a sea of glass mingled with fire. It's important to recognise figures of speech used throughout Scripture. I see many misinterpret Scripture by reading a simile as being literal.

John saw those who are conquering over the Beast. The KJV says, "them who had gotten the victory". The Greek, *nikontas*, should be translated, those "conquering" over the Beast, his image, and the number of his name; however, these are seen in heaven, and they are in body. Do they indeed have the victory or have been prevailed over and killed by the Beast? Could them being killed be considered having the victory over the one who killed them?

John sees them standing upon what looks like a sea of glass, and they have harps of God. Interesting it doesn't say they are playing the harps. The word, harps, is used three times in Revelation and it's tied to the voice of the one who has it. It could be that when the redeemed begin to sing, their voices sound like harps (beautiful), or that they are actually playing harps while they are singing. One day we'll find out. If we will actually play harps in heaven, or any musical instrument, I wonder if the knowledge of playing will be intrinsic to who we will be in glory?

John says he is seeing these things in heaven. One thing about these parenthetical sections is that they seem anything other than chronological to what's happening on the earth. The ones with harps seem to be either the souls of them who have been martyred so far, or John is seeing further ahead

to after their resurrection (Rev 20:4-6). We have already encountered a paradox where the souls of the martyred are clothed in robes of white, yet they haven't been resurrected. It would seem that souls have a bodily form though their glorified bodies are not yet theirs. This is something interesting to think about, and it would be difficult to be dogmatic about that which we don't fully know or understand.

These with the harps of God (they belong to God) sing the song of Moses. This is different to the 'new song' the church sings (5:9-10) and further evidence this group who has overcome and is overcoming the Beast is not the church. The song of Moses is in Exodus 15:1-19. In this song they acknowledge the wrath of God against their enemies and praise God for his deliverance, and his redemption, leading them unto God's holy habitation. These harpists in Rev 15:3 also sing the song of the Lamb, which is: "Great and marvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints (literally, King of the nations). Who shall not fear thee, O Lord, and glorify thy name? For thou only (alone) art holy: for all nations shall come and worship before thee; for thy judgements are made manifest (righteous acts have been revealed)."

John continues to write what he sees. After the harpists have sung their songs, John sees the Holy of Holies in heaven opened. Seven angels come out of the temple having the seven plagues. People who argue that there won't be a temple on the earth seem to miss there is one in heaven, and the one on the earth will be patterned after it. These angels are clothed in linen pure and white (bright), and girded with golden sashes around their chests. John then sees one of the four living creatures give unto the seven angels seven golden vials full of the wrath of God. I wonder why golden vials? What is the significance as it relates to the wrath of God? In the Bible, gold is the pinnacle of not only wealth, but equivalent to wisdom, knowledge, and faith. There is nothing greater than these things. I see the golden vials as representing the wisdom of God in pouring out His wrath. It's not something done in haste or out of emotion; it's the exercise of the wisdom and judgement of God which is holy and perfect. John concludes speaking of God's wrath that it is from the Godhead who lives forever and ever (literally age to age or without end). John sees the temple filled with the smoke FROM the glory of God and FROM His power. There have been times while meeting with other believers worshipping the Lord that His presence was so great the room had a smoky haze in it. I think this was just a foreshadow, a glimpse, of what John saw. Israel witnessed the glory of God crossing the threshold of the temple (Ezek 10) and it was described as a cloud (smoke).

What's interesting is that John said no man was able to enter into the temple. This shows that man is in heaven and had access to the temple of God. We know from Rev 7 the martyred of this 7-year period of God's wrath will serve God in His temple while the church will reign with Jesus on the earth as kings and priests (1:4-6, 5:9-10). Apparently too from Rev 7 the temple of God is near the throne of God. Men were not allowed to enter the temple in heaven until the seven plaques from the seven angels are completed.

Next article we'll look at what's contained in these seven golden vials (bowls). These will complete the wrath of God which started with the opening of the first seal. -dB



The Tribulation, Part 15, Bowl Judgments Begin

We saw from Chapter 15, the Prelude to the Bowl Judgements, the Bowl Judgements complete the Wrath of God. When we examined the Seals, the 7th contains the Trumpet Judgements, and the 7th Trumpet contains the Bowl (or Vial) Judgements. The Bowl Judgements actually have seven judgements, meaning the 7th does not contain another set of judgements. These judgements are fierce and appear to be unleashed in rapid succession. The wrath of God being poured out in the Tribulation from 6:1 progressively becomes more severe. Seal One a Global Leader (we call the Antichrist) rides to conquer and take peace from the earth. And now, almost 7-years on, the final judgements of wrath are poured out upon the earth completing the wrath of God.

Chapter 16 starts back with the narrative and we read John hears a 'Great' voice coming out of the Temple of God. He doesn't identify the voice, however, this voice gives command to the seven angels, whom we saw in the temple in 15:6, to go and pour out the vials of the wrath of God upon the earth. Having 24-years military experience, this voice seems that of a military commander to his warriors. Even though we are not told whose voice this is, I will speculate and say it is God's voice as it's coming from His temple. One day we will know.

First Vial, or Bowl is poured out and ALL who received the Mark of the Beast or worshipped his image develop an injurious and evil sore. It could be malignant. The word for sore suggests a type of ulcer.

The second angel is right behind the first and pours out his Bowl into the sea. What sea we don't know. It could be the Mediterranean Sea. When looking at the Third Bowl judgement, sea here could likely mean all the major bodies of water (Oceans and Seas). The sea literally becomes blood as of a dead man, meaning red in colour. The consequence is that everyone and everything, living in the sea died and the seas turn red with blood.

The third angel follows closely behind and pours out his Bowl into the rivers and the springs of the of the waters. All rivers and springs of the waters turn into blood. The springs of the waters shows that the rivers of blood won't be washed away by their feed in springs. Even the sources of the waters are blood.

When this third Bowl is poured out and the waters turned into blood, the third angel breaks out in praise. This is what he says: "Thou art righteous, O Lord, which art, and wast, and shalt be, because thou hast judged thus. For they have shed the blood of saints and prophets, and thou hast given them blood to drink; for they are worthy." The angels of heaven have been witnessing the acts of humanity since the beginning of creation. They likely know far better than we do the depravity of man witnessing our fall over the last 6,000-years. They also know far better than we do the holiness, righteousness, and justice of God. What they likely have trouble understanding is the mercy and

grace of God, which He alone understands fully and we once we enter the heavenly realm. Knowing how much we have been forgiven, presently we just have a taste of God's mercy and grace.

In response to this angel's praise, John hears from the altar of the temple a voice saying, "Even so, Lord God Almighty, true and righteous *are* thy judgments." And they are.

The fourth angel pours out his Bowl upon the sun causing it to scorch men of the earth with fire and great heat. The next six words amazes me beyond words: "And (the men scorched with heat and fire) blasphemed the name of God." I know for myself when I get just a little bit hurt or sick or out of sorts, I call out to God for mercy, grace, healing, forgiveness, and seeking what I need to do to change. These men, instead of repenting and giving God glory, blaspheme the name of God who has power over these plagues. To me this is the very definition of insanity. When they are cast into the Lake of Fire for ever and ever, they will continue to blaspheme thinking they are worthy of life on their own terms, by their own pride. Praise the Lord for the mercy He offers right now to all who call upon Him. It's freely given without anything in return apart from faith to believe. I wouldn't delay in seeking God for His forgiveness and mercy now while you still can. It doesn't go well for the inhabitants of the earth once the church is caught-up into heaven.

The fifth Bowl is poured out directly onto the seat, or throne, of the Beast. His 'kingdom' became full of darkness. His 'kingdom' will likely be his capital, which could very well be rebuilt Babylon, Iraq, or it could be a wider kingdom. All those who are part of the kingdom of the Beast will be inflicted with so much pain, they will literally chew their tongues. Again, instead of repenting of their wickedness, they blaspheme the God of heaven because of their pains and sores. This blows my mind. Don't they have any realisation that they are facing eternal separation from God in the Lake of Fire? I am reminded of the well-known quote by missionary Jim Elliot: "He is no fool who gives up what he cannot keep to gain what he cannot lose." These who follow the Beast are the epitome of who fools are (biblical definition of fool: One who says in their heart, there is no God – Psa 14:1, 53:1).

The sixth angel pours out his Bowl upon the river Euphrates. Recently in the news, it was reported that the Euphrates River is drying up and people are claiming we are in the Sixth Bowl judgement. Sorry, not so, especially since the opening of the First Seal of the Tribulation is still ahead for the world and will come sometime after the resurrection-rapture of the church. However, before the Euphrates River dries up under Tribulation judgement, it will first turn into blood (Third Bowl).

It indicates the reason for the Euphrates drying up is to prepare the way of the kings of the east (literally kings of the rising of the sun). Could it be that the Lord is aiding the armies of the nations of the orient in their march toward Armageddon? You would think roads and other means would be much quicker, yet we do not know what shape the earth will be in at this point in time. One fourth of the earth will be destroyed, which will include infrastructure. I imagine satellite and GPS systems will be wiped out by EMP (Electromagnetic Pulse) from the sun. The dried up river bed may be the quickest and easiest way for the military to travel and they may be limited to conventional weapons.

John sees three unclean spirits like frogs coming out of the mouths of the Dragon (Satan), the Beast (Antichrist), and the False Prophet (the unholy trinity). I don't know what John means by, "like frogs". It could mean green in colour and frog like in shape, or in the way they act or move.

These frog-like spirits are of demons performing miracles (signs). The purpose is to gather the kings of the inhabited world together for the battle (lit, war) of that great day of God Almighty. War is composed of a number of battles. This is what's in view here. The battles in the war of that great day of God the Almighty, would include the campaign of the Antichrist into Egypt (Dan 11:40-45), the siege of Jerusalem (Zech 14:2), as well as the final battle of Armageddon (Rev 16:16).

Verse 15 is another Beatitude in the book of Revelation. People tend not to recognise these and try to make them part of the narrative, and in so doing, build doctrine around them which is not correct. Beatitudes are mostly parenthetical to the text and are points of praise. In light of how terrible things are during this time of judgement and wrath (we have already established from the text this is the time of God's wrath upon the earth), John writes the words of Jesus that his church be ready now, pre-tribulation. The Lord is coming like a thief (a call to vigilance), and blessed is the one who is watching and keeping themselves ready. The ones who don't will walk in shame. How embarrassing it will be for those who are not ready and not watching to be caught off guard not expecting the Lord to catch us away when he does. Their nakedness may be that they will be the only ones of the church not receiving the Crown of Righteousness promised to those who are ready and watching for their Bridegroom? Perhaps there is special clothing given to those who are prepared? I wouldn't sit idly by thinking Jesus won't redeem His church until after this 7-year period of wrath. I'm not suggesting we drop all responsibilities and sit doing nothing. Watching is an active process. While we are engaged in everyday life and activities, we should keep an eternal perspective. We are prepared when we know in our hearts if the Lord should come for us today, we have no disappointments or unfulfilled desires we are leaving behind.

Verse 16 says, "And he gathered them together into a place called in the Hebrew tongue Armageddon." The personal pronoun, he, isn't in the text. It literally says, and lead them together, or collect them together. Because of this we don't know if this is God or the evil spirits doing the gathering. I would suggest based on what we have already read that it's the evil spirits who bring the kings of the earth together to battle against the Lord.

Just a side note about Armageddon. It's literally, mount Megiddo, near the city of Megiddo, at the head of the plain of Esdraelon, also known as the Valley of Jezreel. A simple Internet search will reveal photographs and information of this area.

The seventh and final Bowl is poured out into the air by the angel carrying this Bowl. John says there is a great voice out of the temple of heaven, from the throne, saying, "It is done." After this there were flashes of lightening, voices, thunders, and a great earthquake. This earthquake is the largest and worse earthquake the earth has ever experienced since the creation. As the result of the earthquake the 'great city' was divided into three parts. We don't know what city is in view here; it could either be Jerusalem or Babylon. In addition to this, all the cities of the nations fell.

The text inserts a specific judgement upon Babylon the great. We are told Babylon was remembered before God. This is not saying God had forgotten Babylon and suddenly had an, oh yeah moment. The verb is in the Aorist, which is past tense without regard to time. Babylon was not forgotten. Was remembered could be looked upon as, now is the time for Babylon to have the cup of the wine of the fierceness of the wrath of God.

The result of the great earthquake is not limited to every city falling but every island disappearing (fled away= to vanish) as well as all the mountains being levelled. This just boggles the mind when you think about it. Reading the account of the Flood in Genesis and how terrible it was with the fountains of the deep being broken up, so much so, we still feel the effects of this today with tectonic plates shifting and realigning, pales in comparison with the effects of this coming great earthquake. Okay all you climate justice warriors, never fear, the earth will be around long enough for God to execute his indignation and wrath upon it, and there is nothing you can do to stop it.

Hail could be a natural follow-on to a global event such as this earthquake, but when I think of the judgements from God, they are supernatural. There will be no doubt whatsoever they are from God. Remember those under the judgements of the Sixth Seal (Rev 6:17) acknowledging they have been under God's wrath since the beginning (Gk verb, Elthen for "is come", which is Aorist and never used for present or future tenses). We read in Verse 21 that great hail fell from heaven upon men. This is a global event as the great earthquake is a global event. The weight of the average hailstone is about the weight of one talent. A talent is equal to about 100 lbs (45 kg). To get an idea, if you ever have a chance, visit an area where Bunya Pines grow. In late summer and early spring, they drop their cones. An average cone is about 5 kg, or 11 lbs (can weigh as much as 20 kg, or 44 lbs) and can easily kill a person if it falls on them. A Rev 16:21 hail stone weighs 9-times more than the average Bunya Pine Cone and falling from a far greater height. The devastation from the hail will be horrific.

How do people respond experiencing these things? They blaspheme God because of the hail for the hail was exceeding great. Wow, seriously? Sadly, the world is getting to this point now. At one time when tragedy struck, people would flock to churches and ask God for forgiveness. Nowadays people damn everything and everyone that stands for the moral good and stick their finger in the air at God in defiance. Not all of course, but seeing true mass repentance is becoming something of the past. And in Revelation, repentance in judgement seems non-existent. Yet, we read what takes place immediately after the Tribulation when Jesus is back on the earth, where He sets up his kingdom and calls all the Gentile nations together to judge them upon their works. One group is granted eternal life to enter the kingdom while the other group is cast into eternal hell and damnation (Matt 25:31-46). Jesus remains a just judge. No one will ever receive more than they deserve. The problem is men think too highly of themselves and cannot truly see how wicked they are compared to the one Holy and Righteous God.

Next time we'll enter the last parenthetical section before the Millennial Kingdom covered in Rev 17-18. These things we may cover in a couple of articles. -dB



The Tribulation, Part 16, Religious and Commercial Babylon

One of the seven angels which had one of the seven vials talked with John and said, “Come hither; I will shew unto thee the judgment of the great whore that sitteth upon many waters: With whom the kings of the earth have committed fornication, and the inhabitants of the earth have been made drunk with the wine of her fornication.”

What John saw was in the spirit. Interesting here that the angel carried John away in the spirit. This would imply he was in heaven bodily, and that he could enter and leave his body in the heavenly state he was in. John was taken to the wilderness. He didn't say which wilderness, so it must have been understood which by his hearers. This leaves three places to consider: The Negev going south from Jerusalem, the Judean Desert which is going east from Be'er Sheva to the Jordan Valley, or the Syrian Desert, though not in Israel. The Syrian Desert includes most of Jordan, a portion of Saudi Arabia where it combines with the Arabian Desert, and about a third of Iraq.

We'll look at verse 5 in a sec, but I want to point out that if literal Babylon is in view in chapters 17-18, then the wilderness John is taken to is more than likely the Syrian Desert. Babylon sits in the desert plains about 89 km (55-miles) south of modern-day Baghdad.

The angel promises to show John: The judgment of the Great Whore. Her guilt? Persuading the kings of the earth to commit fornication with her, likely by deception. And allowing the inhabitants of the earth to be drunken with the wine of her fornication. The kings and inhabitants of the earth give us insight to what the many waters represent which this whore sits on; verse 1. Many waters are a reference to the Gentile nations of the earth, though some see the waters as the apostate church. Do all Gentile nations commit fornication with the whore? I would say not based on Matthew 25:31-46 where Jesus gathers together all the Gentile nations after the Tribulation to judge them based on their works for eternal life or eternal damnation. Many of the nations of the earth are counted worthy to enter the Kingdom with eternal life.

What John sees: A woman sitting on a scarlet-coloured beast. This beast has seven heads and 10-horns. This is interesting because we see this Beast in Revelation 13. This Beast we call the Antichrist, will have seven rulers (oligarchs) controlling 10-nations. This woman is riding the back of the Antichrist. Revelation 17:4 tells us the woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet colour and decked with gold and precious stones and pearls. She has a golden cup in her hand full of abominations and filthiness of her fornication. John sees on her forehead the name written: 'Mystery Babylon the Great, the Mother of Harlots and Abominations of the Earth'.

This passage is highly symbolic and people have been arguing over the identity of this Mother of Harlots for years. So, who is this woman in cahoots with the Antichrist? We know of the unholy

trinity of Satan, the Beast, and False Prophet. The Beast (Antichrist) has a system setup that all must obey or be killed, or starve to death not being able to buy and sell without his Mark. Now we have this woman who seems to be controlling the Beast by riding on his back. She is called, Mystery Babylon the Great. A mystery is something which hasn't been revealed before. I believe there is enough information in this passage to tell us who she is. Where the Beast controls political systems globally, this woman who joins herself to the Beast is a religious system. The woman riding the Beast indicates she is controlling the Beast. Being identified as a whore tells us she is deceiving national leaders and the inhabitants of the earth making gains financially. A whore, by definition, is someone who engages in sexual acts for money. In Scripture, those who engage in spiritual acts contrary to the Word of God, as in going after other gods, are considered whores. The Mystery is that during the Tribulation an unholy religious system who is deceiving people spiritually is joined with and guiding the Beast (Antichrist) and his political alliances.

Many view Mystery Babylon as the Roman Catholic Church (Western Rome). I believe this is incorrect. Western Rome is never associated with Babylon. John wouldn't have been taken to a familiar desert to be shown these things if Western Rome was in view. Most don't realise while Western Rome fell, Eastern Rome hasn't. John is seeing what transpires during the Tribulation. The Roman Catholic Church's influence is in this age, not so much in the coming post-rapture Tribulation. The person of the Antichrist being identified as The Assyrian, and the language surrounding him, point to Islam. In Revelation 17-18 we have a religious Babylon and a commercial Babylon, and I see both coming out of the Eastern leg of Rome, which is Islamic. Indicating this too is that this woman is said to be full of names of blasphemy. The Roman Catholic Church may have some bad doctrine; however, it is Islam which blasphemes all that Judaism and Christianity is. Some years back I was preaching at the church I am a member of where an Iranian Naval officer was attending the service that day. I was made aware of it that morning before the service as we had been praying for him through his wife who attended regularly. I modified my message and preached on the Deity of Jesus. After the service this Iranian Naval Officer told me that in his country, he would be obligated to kill me for what I said about Jesus; his deity. Tribulation saints, you will not do so well under an Islamic Antichrist and religious system who would love nothing better than to behead you.

John then sees the woman drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus. She through the power of persuasion causes the kings and inhabitants of the earth to get 'in bed' with her. She then turns her attention to the saints and relishes in their blood. John says something astounding: When I saw her, I wondered with great admiration (Gk: *thaumazo megas thauma*, meaning, wondered with great wonder). Imagine seeing a woman who defies all beauty and arrayed in beauty and beautiful things like no other, then to see her gorge herself on the blood of the saints whom the Antichrist kills. I think we all would say, I wondered with great wonder; she is beautiful and terrifying both at the same time.

The angel speaks to John and asks him, "Wherefore didst thou marvel?" The angels are not like us; they do not fully understand the human emotion, intellect, and will. The angel, in verses 7-18, gives an interpretation of what we have seen thus far, which we have covered some. I will not write out the passage here, but ask that you read while I make a few comments on these verses.

The Beast John sees was, and is not, and yet is. Only those who are not the saints of God will wonder in amazement (marvel) when they see the Beast. It seems to be a bit of a riddle. The answer here could be in the words, and is not. The Beast rises to power (he was), then killed (and is not), then

miraculously brought back to life (and yet is). This is one possible explanation. Another is that he rises to political power (he was) and then taken over and dominated by the woman even though he still lives; perhaps as a figurehead only (and is not, and yet is).

The Beast is the same we saw in 11:7 who ascends out of the bottomless pit, which is likely the centre of the earth, to kill the Two Witnesses. We read in 19:20 where he along with the False Prophet are cast into the Lake of Fire.

Verse 9 says, "And here is the mind which hath wisdom. The seven heads are seven mountains, on which the woman sitteth." This symbolism is where many get the idea the seven mountains represent the Vatican; however, we are speaking of spiritual Babylon. Constantinople, the capital city of the Ottoman Empire (Eastern Rome), sits on seven mountains.

"There are seven kings: five are fallen, and one is, and the other is not yet to come...the beast is the eighth, and is of the seven." Some say the seven kings are past and coming kingdoms. Does this fit? The "five are fallen" in this setting would be Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, Medo-Persia, and Greece. The one which is, would be Rome A. The one which is not yet come will be Rome B. Then the Beast is the eighth. The only problem is that Rome A fell too. Rome B, the Ottoman Empire, never fell and is currently on the rise again. The world isn't under an empire as such though globalists are uniting to create a world government.

I tend to see the seven kings coming from the seven mountains. Could there be seven rulers rising in the revived Ottoman Empire where five are fallen (taken over) where there is only one Caliphate. He will be joined by another leader, and both surrender to the Beast. The Islamic Caliphate would be the religious ruler who is joined by a coming political ruler and the political ruler turns his power over to the Beast where the Caliphate is the woman who rides the Beast. Verse 11 tells us the Beast is of the seven. We know he had no part in the past empires of the earth, however, he could very well have a connection, as the Assyrian, to the seven Islamic leaders of the revived Ottoman Empire. This is speculation on my part. The following verses may confirm what I suspect.

We now have from the angel to John the description of the 10-horns: These are 10-kings, which have received no kingdom as yet; but receive power as kings one hour with the Beast. I made a case looking at Revelation 13:1 that these horns are nations. Does this case stand here? Maybe or maybe not. I can't ignore there are a couple of possibilities here. My view is that the "kings" are oligarchs who are the influence behind the 10-nations. It's the same as the seven heads we see in 13:1 and 17:3. These oligarchs do not have a kingdom, and their power comes directly from the Beast. In one hour with the Beast, they receive their power. This could also mean that for one purpose they are united with the Beast. It doesn't mean they rule for one hour only. Verse 13 tells us these oligarchs have one mind, and shall give their power and strength unto the Beast.

These oligarchs bring the nations they have power over into war with the Lamb (Jesus). There is an interesting statement in verse 14. The Lamb will overcome them: for he is Lord of lords, and King of kings: and they that are with Him are called, and chosen, and faithful. This seems to be a direct

reference to the pre-tribulation raptured church which is in heaven with Jesus while the 7-year Tribulation is being poured out upon the earth.

The angel continues: The waters the woman sits on are peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues. As I mentioned towards the start of this article, I see these as representing the Gentile nations of the earth. Some scholars will argue that these represent the apostate church, or the Roman Catholic Church. I believe this to be an incorrect view.

The last three verses add incredible insight and sets the stage for what we see in Chapter 18, which will be our next article. The 10-horns, or nations controlled by the oligarchs, which are the political influence behind the Beast, hate the whore. They hate the religious control over the Beast and his system. They overthrown the whore and make her powerless. I don't know if they do this by war or by some other means. It seems to be done quickly. We see that God put it in the hearts of these oligarchs to turn against the whore to fulfil His will. In agreement, these oligarchs will persuade their nations to wholeheartedly follow the Beast until the words of God are fulfilled.

We have these concluding words: "And the woman which thou sawest is that great city, which reigneth over the kings of the earth." We have been saying the woman is a religious system that rode the back of the Beast. If this is the case, then the city must be the focal point of this religious system. Chapter 18 gives us insight into this city; which is Babylon. Babylon is the heart of the Assyrian Empire, the Beast is known as the Assyrian, and the things regarding the woman and the Beast seem to parallel Islam. The next article will focus on the last chapter of the last parenthetical section of the Tribulation. -dB



The Tribulation, Part 17, Religious and Commercial Babylon, cont.

We examined the religious Babylon from Chapter 17 in the last article, which controlled the Beast and many nations of the earth for a time, until she is overthrown and made powerless; not the Beast though.

Another angel comes down from heaven to the earth. Isn't John in heaven? No, remember from Chapter 17 that John is taken in the spirit to the desert? I think it's likely the Syrian desert as this is where the city of Babylon can be seen from. This angel has great power, and the earth was lightened with his glory. We learn from the Old Testament angels can possess great power over men and the earth. John hears this angel yell out in might with a strong voice: "Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and is become the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit, and cage of every unclean and hateful bird." The Greek word for "hold" and "cage" is the same (phulake) and means prison. The angel is telling us Babylon is demonic. Why? "For all nations have drunk of the wrath of her fornication, and the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her, and the merchants of the earth are waxed rich through the abundance of her delicacies." The nations may have been deceived by the woman; however, this doesn't free them of their guilt, just as Eve was deceived and death became her end for her disobedience to God; deception isn't an excuse for sin.

John now hears a voice from heaven. This voice I believe is the Father's based on His relationship with Israel. Here is what He says: "Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues." It seems some Jews will be living or doing business in the city of Babylon, which is about 1,076 km (670 mi) in an easterly direction from Jerusalem. My question is if this is the last half of the Tribulation and Israel is hidden, protected, and provided for according to Revelation 12, why are there Jews in Babylon? I think it's because these were in Babylon and not Israel when those in Israel flee from the dragon. Revelation 12:14 tells us Israel is given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness to her place. This would be near to Babylon, so perhaps some continue past the place God has prepared for Israel and seek an advantage of living or doing business in Babylon?

The voice from heaven continues: "For her sins have reached unto heaven, and God hath remembered her iniquities. Reward her even as she rewarded you, and double unto her double according to her works: in the cup which she hath filled fill to her double. How much she hath glorified herself, and lived deliciously, so much torment and sorrow give her: for she saith in her heart, I sit a queen, and am no widow, and shall see no sorrow. Therefore shall her plagues come in one day, death, and mourning, and famine; and she shall be utterly burned with fire: for strong is the Lord God who judgeth her. And the kings of the earth, who have committed fornication and lived deliciously with her, shall bewail her, and lament for her, when they shall see the smoke of her burning, standing afar off for the fear of her torment, saying, Alas, alas, that great city Babylon, that mighty city! for in one hour is thy judgment come." This amazes me that judgment from God falls on this city for her great sin, and the ones of the earth who have had anything to do with Babylon do

not rejoice, but are in great sorrow for Babylon. Interesting note: Babylon here is destroyed in one day. This is the second time in her history this has happened. We read in Daniel 5:1, 3-5, 30 that judgment fell on Babylon in one day when it was taken over by Darius. This is confirmation that we are speaking of the same city and that Babylon isn't a metaphor for another city, like Rome, or a country like the United States.

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

What does the voice from heaven say? Not weep over her, but: "Rejoice over her, *thou* heaven, and ye holy apostles and prophets; for God hath avenged you on her." Rev 18:21-24 "And a mighty angel took up a stone like a great millstone, and cast it into the sea, saying, Thus with violence shall that great city Babylon be thrown down, and shall be found no more at all. And the voice of harpers, and musicians, and of pipers, and trumpeters, shall be heard no more at all in thee; and no craftsman, of whatsoever craft he be, shall be found any more in thee; and the sound of a millstone shall be heard no more at all in thee; and the light of a candle shall shine no more at all in thee; and the voice of the bridegroom and of the bride shall be heard no more at all in thee: for thy merchants were the great men of the earth; for by thy sorceries were all nations deceived. And in her was found the blood of prophets, and of saints, and of all that were slain upon the earth."

There isn't a whole lot to comment on in this chapter as most of it is self-explanatory. Some observations: The merchants of the sea can see the smoke of the burning city and cry over her. Babylon isn't a sea port or near a sea; however, Babylon is situated on the banks of the Euphrates River which flows into the Persian Gulf in the south and originates in Turkey going north. The Tigris River also starts in Turkey (Lake Hazer) running parallel to and joins the Euphrates not far from the Persian Gulf. The point being that water is near with Babylon on the east bank of the Euphrates, which is significant in itself.

In Isaiah 13 and Jeremiah 51 it is prophesied Babylon will be destroyed in much of the same way as described in Revelation 18. Babylon hasn't been destroyed in this fashion, so the Scriptures must be fulfilled. To say Babylon in Revelation 17-18 isn't literal Babylon but figurative for something other isn't properly interpreting the Word of God. The city of Babylon is the city of Babylon, and interestingly, its restoration and rebuilding began in the early 1980s. Between now and the start of

the 7-year Tribulation, Babylon will be completely restored and rebuilt, and the third temple will be built in Israel.

The next article we will be back to the narrative of the Revelation. Chapter 19 has the Second Coming of Christ and the end of the Tribulation as its main focus. -dB



The Tribulation, Part 18, The 2nd Coming and the end of The Tribulation

Chapter 19 begins with the words, “And after these things...” It’s a chronological construct by the Greek, meta tauta: Literally, “after these things.” After what things? The events we read of in chapter 18. John hears a great voice of many people, in heaven, saying, “Alleluia; Salvation, and glory, and honour, and power, unto the Lord our God: For true and righteous are his judgments: for he hath judged the great whore, which did corrupt the earth with her fornication, and hath avenged the blood of his servants at her hand. Alleluia.”

We then read this phrase: ‘And her (Babylon) smoke rose up for ever and ever.’ This phrase indicates the beginning of the eternal punishment of the wicked. For ever and ever, is literally, world or age which has no end.

Verse 4-5: “And the four and twenty elders and the four beasts fell down and worshipped God that sat on the throne, saying, Amen; Alleluia. And a voice came out of the throne, saying, Praise our God, all ye his servants, and ye that fear him, both small and great.” The word we have read a couple of times already, Alleluia, has Hebrew origin meaning, Praise ye Jah (Praise you Jehovah). Alleluia is used only four times in the New Testament, and all in Revelation 19 (vv1,3-4, 6). It’s proclaimed in an act of worship to the Lord, not only for what He has done, but what is to come as we read in v6: “Alleluia: for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth.”

Verses 6-10 is a prelude to the Second Coming of Christ to the earth. Here we see the church, as the virgin Bride of Christ (2 Cor 11:2), in heaven ready for the Marriage of the Lamb which has come. We need to make an extinction between the church and Israel. Israel is seen in the Old Testament as the wife of Jehovah who was an unfaithful whore (pictured in Hosea) who will be restored to God in the coming Kingdom. The church, because of Christ, will be presented as the chaste, virgin, Bride of Christ. Does this mean in this life we are perfect and sinless? Absolutely not! What it does mean is that we are proclaimed justified and imputed the righteousness of God in Christ Jesus, who became sin for us. Making Israel the church or the church Israel is doctrinal error. Both Israel and the church are distinct in their beginning, calling, program, and future completion. Once the Bride of Christ, the church, is taken off the earth (1 Thess 4:13-18), God will complete His program and promises (Dan 9:24, Jer 31:31-37, Heb 8:6-13, Rom 11:25-27) to Israel.

Verse 8 we read: “And to her (Bride of Christ) was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints.” This is a testament to the grace of God by which we live and have our being. We cannot do anything apart from God’s grace and the righteous acts we do by His grace become our garments. Giving a glass of cold water in the name of the Lord to one who is thirsty is as much of a righteous act as giving large sums of money to a ministry out of one’s abundance. Corrie ten Boom said, “The measure of a life, after all, is not its duration, but its donation.” What we do, what we give, in the name of Jesus, and I’m not speaking of just money, will reap a reward in eternity.

The angel who has been escorting John and commanding him what to do, commands him yet again to write, and we have yet again another Beatitude in the Book of Revelation: "Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb." Let's think about something here. If the church is the Bride of Christ who is about to wed her Bridegroom, Jesus; then who are the called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb? The answer is simple, yet many make it so complex. Those called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb are all those who are saints which are not part of the church. We have the Old Testament saints, of whom John the Baptist said are friends of the Bridegroom. We also have the Tribulation saints, who became followers of Christ after the Bride of Christ was taken off the earth. I will add too that the Angels of heaven will be in attendance as well. It will not be a small event is certain. Without going into great detail, the Greek text indicates the wedding itself takes place at the Father's house in heaven. Verse 7 speaks of the Bride of Christ as His wife (gune) which is used of one already married, in contrast to one espoused and not yet married (numphe), a bride or wife to be (Rev 18:23). The marriage supper will likely take place on the earth at the start of the Millennial Kingdom (alluded to in Matt 22:1-14, 25:1-13).

The Second Coming of Christ is described in verses 11-21. Some key things we see here: Jesus is seen riding on a white (of light – shiny white) horse. This is an indication there are animals in heaven. This doesn't mean our deceased pets are there though. Jesus is called "Faithful" and "True" (pistos kai alethinos: Trustworthy with the cumulative force of being Truthful). This is how he judges and makes war. He has eyes like a flame of fire (flashes of lightening) and on His head, crowns (diadema: not of reward, but of royalty). John recognises that Jesus at this point has a name written which "no man knew". I think this is important in that other beings may know this name, just no man. It could be too that this is the same name given to the overcomers mentioned in Rev 2:17, 3:12. I would also speculate that Jesus doesn't always have eyes like a flame of fire, however, may be what His eye change to when He's about ready to judge in righteousness.

Jesus is wearing a vesture dipped in blood. Isaiah 63:2-3 gives some insight as to whose blood this vesture is dipped in. Isaiah speaks of the garments being red from the winepress of the wrath of God. We read back in Rev 14 of the winepress of the wrath of God.

Now we hear a name Jesus is called that is not a secret. He is called, The Word (logos) of God. This was introduced to John which he began his Gospel with (Jn 1:1-5). This is a proof that Jesus is God for those who think Jesus is a created being. Logos is the divine expression of God; with all authority of the Godhead.

Verse 14: "And the armies which were in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean." Who are these armies (an army composed of many)? I would suggest it is the Bride of Christ who we saw in v8 being clothed in fine linen. There is so much in the Revelation to show the church is caught-up to God prior to the Tribulation and us coming back with Jesus to the earth is just one example. Speaking of Jesus' Second Coming, it seems most focus on the setting up of His kingdom; however, we are reading here that the first order of business is war and judgment. We read in Matt 24:30 "...and they (tribes of the earth) shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory."

Out of Jesus' mouth "goeth a sharp sword, that with it He should smite the nations...and He treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God." We read the name Jesus uses as He comes back to the earth is, The Word of God. It's His Word which is the sharp sword coming out of His mouth. In John 1 speaking of Jesus being the Word it describes that with His Word, He creates all things, including man for in Him is life. Now we see by His Word the Gentile nations of the earth will be smitten as a result of His wrath. On His blood-soaked vesture and on His thigh, there is this name written: King of kings, and Lord of lords. Jesus will rule the nations of the earth with a rod of iron.

We've seen what surrounds the Second Coming of Christ to the earth, now we'll quickly look at Armageddon, which concludes the Tribulation as Jesus returns to the earth with us His army at His side (vv17-21). To show the devastation which ensues read vv17-18: "And I saw an angel standing in the sun; and he cried with a loud voice, saying to all the fowls that fly in the midst of heaven, 'Come and gather yourselves together unto the supper of the great God; that ye may eat the flesh of kings, and the flesh of captains, and the flesh of mighty men, and the flesh of horses, and of them that sit on them, and the flesh of all men, both free and bond, both small and great'. The birds are called by an angel to gather together to eat the flesh of 'all' men (the whole - all those who come against the Lord), and those who ride horses along with their horses. It's a complete and utter destruction of those who come against Jesus. Now picture this: For 7-years everything has unfolded as the book of Revelation 6-19 says it would. The resurrection-rapture of the church was witnessed prior to this 7-year period. The inhabitants of the earth see Jesus with the host of His armies coming in the air to the earth. And they still want to have a go and fight Jesus even though they can read how it ends for them? This is beyond my comprehension. Are they so deceived? Well, as the day is approaching I can see how deceived people are today, which boggles the mind, so apparently it'll be no surprise, especially with the Beast (Antichrist) leading them. What's ironic is that I believe the inhabitants of the earth will receive a genetic modifier which promises them everlasting life in their flesh, yet we read they will be destroyed with the birds of the earth gathered together to eat their flesh. Only two entities are not destroyed on the earth: The Beast and the False Prophet are taken (by angels?) and cast alive into the Lake of Fire. These two are the first everlasting inhabitants of the Lake of Fire and will still be burning there when hell gives up its dead to be cast into the Lake of Fire burning with brimstone - sulphur (Rev 21). The rest of those who come to battle against the Lord will be slain by the sword (Word) which comes out of the mouth of the Lord, "and all the fowls were filled with their flesh."

What the reader should take away from these articles regarding the Tribulation is that they wouldn't want to be here during this time fastly approaching humanity. The good news is that no one need be here. All those who are in Christ will be caught-up to heaven by Jesus before this time come. The judgments of this time will not be theirs. If you have not decided to follow Jesus by believing His Word, the Gospel (that Jesus as creator God entered His creation and died, was buried, and rose again for your sin), do not delay. Not only are you not promised tomorrow, Jesus can return for His Bride, the church, today. We are living in the last minutes of this age of God's grace which is fastly coming to a close. I pray you will bow your head and believe the Gospel committing your heart and life to Christ. If you are reading this and the sudden disappearance of millions all across the globe has already happened; do not believe what the media and politicians tell you. They are liars and have Satan, the Father of Lies, as their god. Decide to follow Jesus. You won't have His grace during the time of judgements upon the earth. You will have to decide to refuse the Mark offered by the Beast, which means it will likely cost you your life. It'll be a very difficult time to live in. That's why I make such a push for readers to follow Christ now, before He calls his church away, for afterwards, it'll be nearly impossible to follow Jesus.

Next time, since we have concluded the Tribulation, we'll look at the Millennium and the Great White throne Judgment. -dB



The Revelation, Part 5, The Millennial Kingdom

There is some debate, especially in recent days, regarding what we read in Revelation 20. We'll stick with what the text says and not venture out into what it doesn't say. It surprises me how many actually develop their doctrine based on pure speculation. Speculation is not the friend, or companion, of biblical interpretation (Hermeneutics); nice to think about and ponder, however, not the basis for doctrine.

John sees an angel descend from heaven carrying a key. A key implies something is either to be opened or to be locked, and in this case, it's The Bottomless Pit. It seems the bottomless pit can only be opened or locked under the authority of God who sends angels to do His bidding. There is no reason to not understand The Bottomless Pit as a literal place. But, where is it and what is it?

For the where, Rev 9 gives us a clue: Here, the Fifth Angel is given the key to the bottomless pit and he opens it. Out of it arises smoke; so much smoke the sun and the air are darkened. Anyone exposed to an intense fire understands how the air becomes unbreathable from the smoke; and here the entire sky above the smoke turns to darkness. This suggests the location of the bottomless pit is in the earth. The Greek word used for 'bottomless pit' is, Abussos, and it's where we get the English word, Abyss (unfathomably deep or boundless place). Some theologians see the bottomless pit as being geocentric, or in other words, at the centre of the earth where there is no bottom but every direction is up. It would be similar to someone standing at the North Pole: there is no more going north, east or west; all directions are south from the North Pole. From the bottomless pit, the smoke can only go up and it covers the entire earth indicating it comes out of every opening of the earth; maybe from the world's volcanos.

We also read in Revelation 17 the Beast (the Antichrist) will be seen coming out of the bottomless pit to be cast into perdition (damnation) and all the earth dwellers who were not written in the Book of Life will wonder (marvel) after the Beast, who was, is not, and yet is (was on the earth ruling, then cast into the bottomless pit, then taken out to be cast into perdition).

So, what is The Bottomless Pit? It's a holding cell, if you will, for terrifying creatures described in Rev 9 who are let out by the Fifth Angel, and have a leader named, Abaddon, and for the Beast, and for another being we'll see shortly in Rev 20. What the text does not say: The text does not say the Bottomless Pit is hell; it's a separate place for two purposes; to unleash creatures for judgment and to hold the Beast until his judgment, and to hold Satan until the end of the 1,000-year reign of Christ with the church upon the earth serving as kings and priests (Rev 1:4-6; 5:9-10).

The angel in Rev 20, which I believe is the same Fifth Angel seen in chapter 9, is seen with a chain in his hand. My question is, with the bottomless pit is a holding cell, why does Satan need to be

chained? Could he in his state transcend the gates of this pit? I don't know; however, we can be certain that Satan will be bound by this angel with chains and confined to the bottomless pit, showing Satan isn't as strong as he thinks he is. Satan is bound during the Kingdom age and will be let loose for a season (space of time) at its conclusion.

This next section of verses 4-6 have been misinterpreted, and for no other reason than not reading what the text says. We have another Beatitude in verse 6 as well which contains important information. What's misinterpreted is regarding the resurrection which John sees: Firstly, John sees thrones, and those who sit on them, and judgment (to make a legal decision) was given to them. We are not told here what specific judgment(s) they make. I am going to make an assumption here based on word usage throughout the Revelation that the thrones and those who sit on them represent the church, as in the Twenty-Four Elders. The Holy Spirit may have inserted this group at this point in the text as a way of saying the resurrection John witnesses is not the church as the completed church is already in heaven. And a clear resurrection is seen here as well. Note that who John sees is post-tribulation and pre-millennial. John sees the souls, not the bodies, of them who were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the Word of God, and which had not worshipped the Beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands. These cannot be the church for the souls seen here are those martyred for refusing the Beast, worship of him, and his mark; if it were the church then the souls would include all those martyred from the founding of the church 50-days after Jesus' ascension to heaven, and it doesn't. The text implies a resurrection had already taken place, which is the pre-tribulation resurrection-rapture of the church. Evidence too is that these whom John sees in heaven are not associated with a rapture. In the Word of God there are a number of resurrections, but there is only one resurrection-rapture exclusive for one body, and that's the body of Christ, the church, the Bride of Christ. This is not who John sees in heaven having been beheaded; this group is the martyred of the seven-year Tribulation period, also mentioned in Revelation 7, no other soul that died by any other means, as in natural death, sickness, or any other way apart from those beheaded. John makes this statement and this is where we get the idea of their resurrection from: "they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years. But the rest of the dead lived not again..." The past tense verbs used here indicates that John witnessed the thousand-year period, or at least see these same "souls" at the end of the Millennium as he did at the beginning, and the rest of the dead didn't live again until after the thousand years were finished, suggesting the souls John sees have a bodily resurrection before entering the Millennial age. Paul reinforces the pre-tribulation resurrection of all those in Christ in 1 Cor 15:23-24 "(resurrection) But every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming. Then *cometh* the end..." As you continue reading the passage, the end is the Day of the Lord which begins one second after the resurrection-rapture of the church and continues to the conclusion of the Millennial Kingdom.

The Beatitude in v6 says something interesting which is misinterpreted by many who think the resurrection of the church is at the conclusion of the Tribulation, even though no Rapture is seen here. I'm going to propose something with Verse 6: "Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years." The first resurrection will be of those who reign on the earth. This isn't the martyrs of the Tribulation as we read in Rev 7:15 the martyred of the Tribulation will serve God, day and night in His temple, which is before the throne of God (I believe on the earth during the Millennial, however, in heaven prior to this). The first resurrection begins with Christ as the firstfruits, then those of the pre-tribulation church who have died in Christ. The first resurrection is all those who are in Christ, from the day of His resurrection to the pre-tribulation resurrection-rapture of the church. These are blessed and holy as none of these will experience the Second Death,

which is the lake of fire which burneth forever and ever (literally without end). Included as not experiencing the second death are the martyred of the Tribulation, though not included as the Bride of Christ, the church which was upon the earth, in heaven resurrected-raptured and in glory. The martyred of the Tribulation apparently experience pre-millennial resurrection, but no rapture. I see the souls of the martyred of the Tribulation in heaven under the altar of God while the Tribulation is being poured out upon the earth and as soon as God sets up His temple upon the earth, the martyred of the Tribulation are resurrected to serve God (Godhead) in His temple.

Let's put v6 in context with verses 4-5: John sees the church represented by the 24-Elders resurrected prior to the Tribulation and sitting on thrones. He then sees the souls (not yet resurrected) of those beheaded for the witness of Jesus and the Word of God, who had not worshipped the Beast or taken his mark. These reign with Christ during the 1,000-years, but nothing said about ruling with him on the earth. There are no contradictions in the Word of God and Rev 7:15 makes it clear these martyrs serve God in His temple during this time of the Kingdom on the earth. Verse 5 states, "But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection (*hautē hē anastasis hē prōtē*)."

We already saw from 1 Cor 15:23-24 the (first) resurrection is in parts: Jesus, the firstfruits. Some 2,000-years later those who are His at his coming. Then cometh the end (*eita to telos*). This phrase can be rendered, then (at the) end. It seems the First Resurrection will include all those from Jesus' resurrection to the start of the Millennial Kingdom.

Most understand the phrase, "the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished" as applying to the wicked only; no righteous. Followed is the sentence, "This is the first resurrection." I am wondering if the righteous of the Tribulation who dies of means other than martyrdom, and those righteous of the Millennial Kingdom who die, will be resurrected along with the wicked at the conclusion of the Millennial Kingdom? Some Theologians see the Old Testament saints raised here. We'll examine this in the next article. -dB



The Revelation, Part 6, The Millennial Kingdom, cont.

In the last article, we made it through most of Revelation 20:4-6, which deals with the resurrection of the martyred of the 7-Year period of God's indignation and wrath upon the earth (The Tribulation). Why do we see the resurrection of the Tribulation martyrs here (v4) when no resurrection is mentioned, only souls, which indicates no resurrected body? It's inferred by the comment, "and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years." Also with the following comment: "But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished." The word, *lived*, indicates resurrection. Though here we see these martyred of the Tribulation will reign with Christ for a thousand years, we read of their specific duties in 7:15-17 which is serving God in his temple day and night, an earthly idiom as there is no night in heaven, just day. I'm not going to be dogmatic here, however, believe the martyred of the Tribulation will serve in heaven during the thousand years. God's temple is in heaven. If this is the "fourth, or Millennial, Temple" which will be upon the earth during the thousand years, then the martyred of the Tribulation will be serving on the earth. We can't be 100% sure as not enough information is given; however, regarding the church, the Bride of Christ, we know from 1:4-6, 5:9-10, we will reign with Christ on the earth as kings and priests in His kingdom, which is for Israel.

The 7-year Tribulation is now over and we have a Beatitude: Revelation 20:6 "Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years." We covered the "first resurrection" in the previous article; but, will recap to say the first resurrection, or those who serve God and Christ the thousand years, is the church and likely the martyred of the Tribulation, of whom Christ is the Firstfruits (1 Cor 15:23-24).

So, who are the "rest of the dead (v5)" resurrected after the thousand years? The short answer is those written, and not written, in the Book of Life (v15). Based on Job 19:25-26, Daniel 12:1-3, it is assumed the Old Testament saints will be resurrected after the Millennial. There is some argument that the Old Testament saints were raised with Jesus and part of the Firstfruits; however, Paul tells us in 1 Cor 15:23 that Jesus alone is the Firstfruits of the resurrection. Then we have a couple of parables and verses like John 5:28-29, which indicates a resurrection at the end of the world (end of the Millennial) of the just and unjust which would be those not of the church, or Tribulation. Note: the resurrection and rapture of the church is just that, for the church only. We know for the Millennial Kingdom, death will be rare (Isa 65:17-25), and though the Bible doesn't say, there will likely be those who die natural deaths during the Tribulation. Only the martyred of the Tribulation are raised after the Tribulation. I would speculate after the Millennial there will be a final resurrection which will include as the "rest of the dead" the unrepentant wicked of all ages, Old Testament saints, those of the Tribulation who died by other means than martyrdom, and those who died during the Millennial Kingdom. No other resurrection is mentioned. Though there is some debate regarding these things, we will fully know one day.

Now we come to a post Millennial events timeline beginning in verse 7 and continuing through to the end of the chapter (v15). Key words setting the context of this passage are: “And when the thousand years are expired.” So many I have spoken to ignore these words in an attempt to change the order of events creating a false teaching. All which is described in this passage is AFTER the Millennial Reign of Christ on the earth with His Bride and the resurrected martyred of the Tribulation.

The first thing noted after the Millennial is Satan is “loosed out of his prison (the abyss).” He immediately goes about to deceive the nations which are in the “four quarters of the earth.” How shockingly different this season will be after 1,000-years of peace. Think about those of the 1800s, if they were to be placed in our society today, how shocked they would be by the wickedness and evil which occupies every corner of our society, and how far the church of the living God has fallen. Multiply this wickedness by 10-times and that’s likely what it will be like for the inhabitants of the Millennial earth when Satan is loosed.

Satan, whom I imagine will appear miraculously as an angel of light (far better than how the ‘greys’, aka, aliens, appear to us today) gathers the nations of the earth to battle, the number of whom is like the sand of the sea (innumerable to John who witnesses this). Note: Gog and Magog are mentioned in v8. This is not a reference to the Magog invasion in Ezek 38-39. It’s symbolic for the worldwide enemies of Christ. This boggles the mind that after 1,000-years of perfect peace with Jesus and His Bride ruling on the earth, there will be worldwide enemies of Jesus. Jesus, and those who are in Christ (His Bride) during the 1,000-years, I believe, will know who these people will be. The human population of the Millennial Kingdom will be huge. At the conclusion of the 7-year Tribulation, all Israel, called the Elect in Mt 24:31), will be gathered to enter the Kingdom. Then those survivors of the Gentile nations who are judged by works and worthy of eternal life will enter the Kingdom (Mt 25:31-46). These who enter the Kingdom will marry, have children, raise families, and expand society. With most living the full thousand years, it won’t take long for the population to be in the multi-billions by time we reach the end of the Millennial age. It’s not hard to conceive that there will be a large number who will oppose Jesus through the deception of Satan, who is the father of lies.

Satan knows in advance what will happen, yet goes about deceiving the nations as it’s written. Does he expect a different result? No, I don’t think so. Satan is a being of hate and destruction and his aim is to get as many individuals as possible to follow him; it doesn’t matter if he loses the battle, if he can lead millions of people into hell, to him he wins. Satan, with the armies of the earth encircle the camp of the saints (military camp or barracks which would be outside the city), and the beloved city (Jerusalem). Before they can launch an attack, fire comes down from God out of heaven. This seems similar to Sodom and Gomorrah. Notice that while Jesus and the ‘saints’ are on the earth at Jerusalem, God is in heaven. The fire devours the armies which comes against Jesus and those who are His. Then the devil that deceived those of the nations who came against Christ is cast into the lake of fire and brimstone. Already occupying this lake is the Beast (Antichrist) and False Prophet. The fate of the unholy trinity: “will be tormented day and night for ever and ever (day and night: will there be the marking of time in the Lake of Fire? This will add to the torment).” People argue against the eternality of the Lake of Fire. For ever and ever in the Greek is, εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας τῶν αἰῶνων. It’s equivalent to saying, world without end; no ending of the torment (βασανισθησονται, to torture with pain). Now we will look at who will be joining the unholy trinity in the Lake of Fire to be tormented forever and ever.

John sees a great white throne in heaven. He also sees the one sitting on the throne who is in such greatness that John says the earth and heaven try to flee from His presence but could find no place to flee to. John sees the following standing before the throne: The dead small and great (interesting the earth and heaven try to flee from the face of God yet these are so bold to stand in His presence). The books were opened, including the book of life, and the dead were judged out of those things written in the books according to their works. What's being written regarding your life, your works, in these books? Note that those who are in Christ will not be judged by their works as Jesus paid the price of sin and imputed His righteousness to those who trust Him. Jude 24-25 "Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy, to the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen." Those judged by their works will be those of the earthly ages who were apart from God, those of the Tribulation who were not followers of Christ, and those of the Millennial age. We read the sea gave up the dead, and death and hell delivered up the dead. This is the final resurrection. The results of this judgment? Death and hell were cast into the Lake of Fire, along with whosoever was not found written in the book of life. This is the second, and permanent, death. Death is separation. We die and our immaterial is separated from our material being. Here, those going into the Lake of Fire will be eternally separated from the presence of God. Earth and heaven won't find a place to flee to, however, the Lake of Fire which will burn forever I believe will be a place outside the earth, heaven and the very presence of God, the most painful of torment and suffering.

Friend, if you do not know Jesus as your Saviour, I would not wait one second longer. Salvation is simple and easy. Repent (change your mind about your sin), believe the Gospel (Jesus as Creator God entered his creation to die, be buried, and rise again for YOUR sin), and call out to Him in faith to save you. There is absolutely no work or self-righteous act you need to do. Faith (belief) is what saves. I'll leave you with a passage from Romans as I conclude this article. The next article will be what John sees as the start of eternity for those who are in Christ, and what an amazing eternity it'll be. -dB

Romans 10:9-13 "That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. For the scripture saith, Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed. For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek: for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him. For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved." If you have made the decision to follow Jesus in saving faith, please send me an email to let me know.



The Revelation, Part 7, The Eternal State

We embark on the final two chapters of The Revelation. At this point we have come through the 7-year period of God's indignation and wrath upon the earth, the Millennial Kingdom on the earth, final rebellion of Satan, and the final judgments and sentencing of the dead to the Lake of Fire. We are now given a glimpse of what theologians call the eternal state. Time as we know it is completed. Believers from the beginning of time are all resurrected, glorified, perfect, never to perish or suffer again. What an amazing thought this is.

John sees a new heaven, and a new earth, for the former have passed away (see also, 2 Peter 3, 7, 10, 12). Two trains of thought here. One is the heaven and earth are destroyed and a new creation of them are made. The other thought is that the heaven and earth are renewed, by fire. Either way, it'll be 'new'.

John makes an interesting observation: There is no more sea. The seas are what gives our sky a blue colour being the reflection of the deep ocean waters. Without the sea the colour of the atmosphere will have another source, which I believe will be from the throne of God in the midst of the new city, the holy city called, New Jerusalem. It'll be beautiful beyond description.

John sees this new city descending down from God out of heaven to the earth. John describes the city as being prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. I've heard several teach the physical city of New Jerusalem is in fact the Bride of Christ. This is unfortunate as this teaching is based on a simile. The text says the city is adorned 'as a' bride, not that the city is the bride. The point is the city will be beautiful beyond all cities. Chapters 21, 22 gives us the description of this city in detail.

Another thing I hear is the New Jerusalem cannot descend to the earth because it's too big. The size of the city is given as 12,000 furlongs on each of the four sides. Converted this is equal to about 1,500 miles or 2,400 kilometres. This city will stretch to just about all four corners of Australia and also the United States of America; it's a huge city. The height would extend well into outer space. Because of the curvature of the earth a flat foundation would have to be dug well into the earth's crust. Obviously, this is why there are those who say the Word of God cannot be true and the New Jerusalem cannot be on the earth, neither be suspended above the earth. The Word of God is absolutely true, and what these naysayers miss is that New Jerusalem comes to a new earth. Nothing in the Word to say the new earth won't be 10 times or 100 times larger than the current earth. The current earth is the size of a pin head when compared to some of the heavenly bodies observed in our universe. It's not beyond our comprehension to imagine the new earth being much larger than its current size. Some people just want to find reasons to not believe the Word of God, which is sad.

What we know about the New Jerusalem (taken from Ryrie's Study Bible notes): "This heavenly city will be the abode of all the saints (Heb. 12:22-24), the bride of Christ (Rev. 21:9-10), and the place Christ is preparing for His people (John 14:2). During the millennium the new Jerusalem (described in detail in Rev. 21:9-22:5) apparently will be suspended over the earth, and it will be the dwelling place of all believers during eternity (as is emphasized in 21:1-8)."

Please read on your own the description of the New Jerusalem in Rev 21:9-27. Chapter 22:1-5 moves from the description of the city to the blessings of the city. There's no sea on the earth, however, there will be a river, and I imagine a great river, which proceeds out of the throne of God and of the Lamb. Two members of the Godhead share a throne, yet, the Holy Spirit appears to have a ministry or function which doesn't require him to have a throne. To state the obvious that the Holy Spirit is a spirit without physical form is a weak argument as God the Father is also Spirit without bodily form as we know it, yet has a throne. Solomon also built a temple for God which He dwelt in (His glory). It could be the Holy Spirit has a throne but it's not mentioned. There is so much we don't yet know about heaven; I imagine it'll take an eternity to discover it all, and the thing is, it's a temporary dwelling place. Those who die in Christ and those of us raptured, will only dwell in heaven until New Jerusalem comes to the new earth.

Next to the river is the tree of life, the same tree of life that was in the garden of Eden. By this time this tree will be over 7,000-years old, yet young, as there is no time in eternity. No time in hell or in heaven; it'll be like one never ending day. Time is a dimension, and like the other three dimensions, it measures something: time is a measurement of decay. When time is no more, than decay is no more. Once one steps from death to the other side, fate is sealed. In this temporary and fleeting life, we have only this moment. To gamble with one breath isn't worth the risk of not placing faith in Jesus Christ for salvation and forgiveness of sins.

Now to present what appears to be a contradiction: Rev 22:2b "...the tree of life, which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations." In this verse we have an indication of time with the tree of life yielding her fruit each month. So, is this a contradiction with what I said earlier that time will be no more in eternity? I'm not going to pretend to know it all; far from it. What I do know is that the aspect of the measurement of decay will not be present in eternity. Events will still transpire giving a timing element, but without any deterioration. We will know that we are not subject to time, so for us, eternity will be a never ending day, yet it'll take time, if you will, to complete a task. It'll be like the garden of Eden prior to the fall: No curse, no limitations of the curse, no decay, just perfection. Read Genesis 3:16-24 of the results of the imposed curse upon humanity and then reverse it all for eternity. No more curse. Fitting we should read in Rev 21:4 "And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away." Rev 22:3a "And there shall be no more curse..."

To highlight a couple of things from 22:3b-5: The throne of God and of the Lamb replaces the curse. There is no curse in God's presence for His people at His place. We as servants will serve God. We will see His face, which no one since the fall was able to do and live. Moses came the closest being shown a glimpse of God's hinder parts (non-consuming attributes of God). And His name will be in, or on, our foreheads. This is a mark of citizenship and more importantly of sonship. All throughout eternity, in whatever age we encounter, for Jesus spoke of ages to come (Eph 2:7), all will know we are members of Christ' family. Eph 5:30 says that presently we are: "...members of his body, of his

flesh, and of his bones.” It’ll be fully realised when we enter eternity. An analogy I can think of relates to my time in the Navy. I was honoured to be selected for the Senior Enlisted Academy (SEA), which is reserved for the top 3% of the Navy enlisted to go through the qualification process. As a graduate, we have the opportunity to purchase a Class Ring showing the class number and year of graduation. It was a matter of pride and honour to wear this ring which showed all who saw it the distinction and exclusivity it represented and all who wore it (graduates) carried the reputation of being top leaders in the enlisted community. All who will see the name of Christ on our foreheads will recognise the distinction and honour this brings to us as the Bride of Christ; we carry His name.

We then read in v5 that there will be no night in New Jerusalem. There will be day and night on the earth, but the city never sleeps, and neither do we. We have continual Sabbath which never ends, which doesn’t mean we won’t be working, but there is no toil in our work (no curse=no toil), just immense satisfaction and happiness. The Lord God (Jesus) will be our light. No matter where we go or what we’ll do, Jesus gives us our light; He is our light. We’ll never experience darkness, which is the absence of light, ever again.

“And they (we) shall reign for ever and ever.” For ever and ever in the Greek is: εις τους αιωνας των αιωνων. These are the same words used of Satan, the Beast, and False Prophet being cast into the Lake of Fire (20:10). It means world without end. We will reign with Jesus, for ever and ever. This is not only amazing, but beyond comprehension. I believe too, the longer we serve, the more responsibility and reward we’ll be given. In other words, eternity will not become stale or mundane, but will become better and better and more rewarding. If you are like me, it’s beyond comprehension, so the thing to do is to keep meditating on these things and be amazed at the possibilities which enter your spirit and mind.

Verses 6-19 are an Epilogue (concluding remarks). The final two Beatitudes are here in verses 7 and 14. This gives us a total of seven beatitudes in the Revelation. Comment on verse 7, “Behold, I come quickly: blessed is he that keepeth the sayings of the prophecy of this book.” Jesus is speaking here. The audience is Jewish though the seven year tribulation impacts the entire world. The idea of Jesus saying, I come quickly, is not that he is coming sooner than the appointed time of His Second Coming, but won’t delay when that time is fully come. Because Jesus said, blessed is he that keepeth the sayings of the prophecy of this book, rules out this is a reference to the destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70 as is held to by Preterist doctrine. To them this would have to be a narrative of things past, not things to come (prophecy). The things, the judgments, in the Revelation have not yet befallen the world, especially the part where the completed church is in heaven worshipping Jesus prior to the First Seal of the Tribulation being opened.

I will conclude the book of Revelation with another coming. This one isn’t regarding the coming of Jesus for His church or with His church; it’s an invitation by Jesus to come to Him in light of all which is to happen: Rev 22:16-17 “I Jesus have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things in the churches. I am the root and the offspring of David, and the bright and morning star. And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.” If you have not yet decided to follow Jesus, he extends an invitation to you to come to Him. You need not bring anything, only to freely receive His gift of salvation by faith (belief in the fact of the Gospel that Jesus as Creator God entered His creation to die, be buried, and rose again for your sin and redemption). Please do not delay in

deciding to receive God's free gift of salvation. Please reach out to me if you have any questions, like more information, or to share with me your decision to follow Jesus. -dB

The Revelation (and 7-year Tribulation, Ch 6-19) is now completed. Following are a couple of articles giving more detail to highlight specific events.



Four Seals of Wrath

The period known as 'The Tribulation' is actually seven-years of God's indignation and wrath upon the earth. This period of time is introduced in Daniel 9:26-27, highlighted by Jesus in Matthew 24:4-28, and given in great detail in Revelation 6-19. The description of this seven-year period of time begins in Rev 6:1 with the opening of the First Seal, by Jesus, of a Seven Seal Scroll.

Some argue God's wrath doesn't begin until the Sixth Seal has about run its course and when the Seventh Seal is about to be opened based on Rev 6:17 "For the great day of his wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?" This article is to address this claim specifically to show God's wrath (wrath of the Lamb) begins with Jesus opening the First Seal.

Several things to keep in mind in the light of this entire time frame being God's wrath: The completed church is already in heaven (Rev 1:4-6, 5:9-10, 4:10-11) though by the time the First Seal is opened there will be multitudes on the earth following Jesus. All judgments are contained within this single (singularity in context is key) Scroll of Seven Seals. All Seals are opened by Jesus, so the Tribulation period is not man's wrath, or Satan's wrath, but God's wrath being poured out upon the earth and its inhabitants. This seven-year time frame is called, the Time of Jacob's Trouble (Jer 30:7), the Hour of Temptation or Adversity (Rev 3:10), The Indignation (Isa 26:20), Day of Wrath (Rom 2:5). These descriptions are in a singularity. This Seven-Year period, most call The Tribulation, is never divided into pre-wrath and wrath. The singularity alludes to this time as a single period of God's wrath which comes from the singular scroll opened by a singular person (Jesus). It is a single time-period of 7-years; a dispensation of wrath upon the earth which emanates from the Second Person of the Godhead.

Will there be many survivors? Yes, multitudes from every Gentile nation will stand before Jesus at the conclusion of The Tribulation to be judged for eternal life to enter the Kingdom and eternal damnation to be cast into Hell (Matt 25:31-46). Clues on how to survive are written throughout Revelation 6-19, and I suspect after the Resurrection/Rapture of the Church, the book of Revelation will become the most popular book of the Bible being read and heeded.

The famed Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse (seen with the opening of the first Four-Seals): A lot has been written and discussed about the imagery of these four riders found in Rev 6:1-8. We start off with a White horse and its rider. Many think that because we have a White horse mentioned here this rider must be Jesus. It's more likely this rider is the one we know as the Antichrist (pseudo-Christ). The other three horses are, Red, Black, and Pale (sickly Green). I want to unpack the imagery

of these horses, their riders, and the judgments which fall upon the earth and her inhabitants. It is much more horrific than most realise. Some believe and teach the first 3.5-years (1260-days) of The Tribulation will be relatively peaceful and things won't get bad until after the mid-point with what is called the Abomination of Desolation (Dan 9:27, 12:11-12, Mt 24:15, 2 Thess 2:4, Rev 13:14-15). When you understand the first Four-Seals, it becomes obviously clear the first half of The Tribulation will be extremely horrific and people need to be made aware, especially those who are not saved; not caught-up to heaven by Jesus prior to this time.

The White Horse and its rider: We are told a crown is given to this rider. Jesus is already crowned, so one evidence this rider isn't Jesus. This rider was crowned for a specific purpose. The crown here represents political power, like no other at this time. This rider has a bow in his hand. This represents military might, but one thing missing are arrows. Through the show of might and threat of war, this leader goes throughout the world, not just in a local region, but globally, conquering and to conquer. You can topple people groups, and governments, through fear without firing a shot and this seems to be the case with this leader. He has the might to use force, and because he has this ability, the countries (peoples) of the earth fear him and surrender to his control. You may dislike a leader now, but at this point in time, this leader has fear and dread as his companions and none, no person or country, will be able to stand up to him. The 'White' likely represents a false hope, a false righteousness.

Following close behind, is the rider of the Red Horse. I do not see this as the same rider of the White Horse. This could be a vice regent; someone in alliance with the first rider. His job: to rid the world of peace. Today we may have a few localised areas not very peaceful, but during this time, ALL peace will be removed. Perhaps the first rider conquers with a false peace through the show of power, and now through an unholy alliance, peace is totally removed. Fear reigns when peace is removed. People are so consumed with fear they start randomly killing one another. Unlike the first rider who had a bow only, no arrows, this second rider was given a "great sword", which could mean large or important, or that it is used to do great/terrible things. Through it, this rider has the ability to kill where the first rider has the appearance to kill. The 'Red' could represent killing and bloodshed and through implication could have global war in view where people groups rise against other people groups from hatred and/or fear. During The Tribulation this will especially be seen with certain people groups of the world coming against the Jews, where the holocaust pales in comparison. Today, we see a foreshadow of these things taking place. The world stage is being set. Those with eyes wide open can see these things taking place on a small localised scale and it's frightening. Imagine what it'll be like when the Holy Spirit who is restraining the Antichrist is taken out of the way with the removal of the church (2 Thess 2:1-10). Today, we see the forming of a global alliance of an oligarchy, who are wealthy, who will establish the global system which the Antichrist uses for his purposes.

The third rider is on a Black Horse. All four horses follow a pattern and are closely connected. All could very well be riding at the same time and throughout a good portion of the Seven-Year Tribulation. They start in the order given, we just don't know how quickly the Seals are opened or how long it takes for these four to carry out the program they have, however, we see a definite progression from bad to worse. This third rider is carrying a pair of balances in his hand and a voice in heaven is heard saying, "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." Black seems to represent famine, and not one necessarily controlled by governments. The pair of balances is to measure out food, which governments control along with the inflated prices, but when heaven declares for the recipients not

to hurt the oil or wine, this seems to indicate a real and natural famine, or could mean not to waste these things because they are so expensive; likely the consequences of the first two riders. Oil and wine can also represent medications and the things which heal, especially natural substances used for medicinal purposes. I'd like to note the first two riders I see as literal figures on the earth, where the last two riders are not individuals but judgments as a result of these two individuals.

The final rider is on a Pale Horse; more accurately, sickly green. Who is the rider of this horse? Death! What or who follows death? Hell! Why not Heaven? When people die, some go to Heaven as well as to Hell, don't they? In this time period, at least at this point in The Tribulation, there may not yet be followers of Jesus, but I suspect there will be multitudes. It seems a good portion of saints are beheaded by the Antichrist system, yet I'm sure many will die of the judgments as well. While the unbelieving are turned into Hell, the souls of the saints enter Heaven. Today there is an increasing number of believers who deny the literal place of punishment called, Hell. They see Hell as nothing more than the grave, yet they have no problem seeing Heaven as a real place of abode. In this passage, Hell represents the abode of the damned for eternal punishment after physical death of a non-follower of Jesus. Interesting that most often the Word of God refers to believers as asleep while non-believers are labelled as dead. Death and Hell here are not one and the same. Hell follows after Death in what I see as consuming the ones falling to Death who are not followers of Jesus. Followers of Jesus are seen in Heaven (Rev 7:9-17). Death and Hell will at the end give up their dead to be cast into the Lake of Fire (Rev 20:11-15). Of Death and Hell, it tells us in 6:8 that power is given to them both: The power they are given is over 25% of the earth (terrain) including the population at this time to kill with sword, hunger, death, and with the beasts of the earth. Think about this for a moment: Destruction and shortage of food is so wide spread on the earth that the beasts of the field leave their natural habitation to look for something to eat, and it is human flesh they begin searching for and consuming. Animals who naturally do not eat flesh, will be eating flesh during this time for survival; which is implied in this text. It has been suggested too that the "beasts of the earth" could be microscopic, like we've seen recently with the release of SARS-CoV-2, yet far worse considering 25% of the population is destroyed equating to about 2,000,000,000 people. This has merit when considering how scientist and doctors are playing god with geoengineering and genetic modifications, and now with the assistance of Artificial Intelligence (AI). It's very frightening when you think about it.

Summary of first Four-Seals: All peace removed from the earth being replaced with all fear. Global war. Global famine, pestilence, disease. People indiscriminately killing people, which would include own family members. Beasts of the field leaving their natural habitat to devour people. These beasts could very well be microscopic as well. As of this writing, genetically modified mosquitoes have been released in South America and Florida. It seems they are now carrying pathogens harmful to humans. One fourth of the earth with its inhabitants will be destroyed at the Fourth Seal. For people to say these Four Seals have nothing to do with the wrath of God are ignorant of what these Four Seals bring upon the earth and its inhabitants. It's so bad, the Lord Jesus will come and remove those who are His through faith prior to this eventful time (1 Thess 1:9-10, 4:13-18, Jn 14:1-3).

People in the church have been taught for years the first half of The Tribulation will largely be peaceful and non-eventful; it's the last half that becomes terrible. This is bad teaching, and I believe has led many not to be concerned about the end times, or to give their hearts to Jesus, thinking that if they miss the Rapture, they can then get 'right' and it won't be so bad going through the last Seven-Years of The Tribulation. If you rightly study and understand just the first Four Seals, it'll be incredibly and indescribably awful on the earth, and this from the very start and becoming

increasingly worse. If there was ever a time to surrender your life, your all, to Jesus the Saviour, the Lord of lords and King of kings, it is right now; do not delay. John 3:16 "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." Believe the Gospel (the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus for your sin) today – dB



What is the Rapture of the Church?

There has been a lot of discussion regarding the Rapture of the Church in recent years, but not as a settled mainstream doctrine of the Church. Some deny it altogether while others argue about the timing of the Rapture.

I'll start by defining what the Rapture is: The English word 'Rapture' is not in the English Bible. In the Greek text the word is, *Harpazō*. Long story short, the English translation of the Bible received an influence from the Latin Vulgate. The English term 'Rapture' comes from the Latin word, *Rapiemur*. Its meaning is, to be caught-up, to take (by force), catch away, and pluck. In the passage which describes the Rapture in detail, the word, *Harpazō* or *Rapiemur*, is translated in the King James Version (KJV) as, "caught up". Here is the 'Rapture' passage: 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18 "But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. (14) For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. (15) For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive *and* remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. (16) For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: (17) Then we which are alive *and* remain shall be **caught up** together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. (18) Wherefore comfort one another with these words."

With the catching away so clear, why do many deny the Rapture? Number one reason is because the English term Rapture isn't in the Bible. What they may not realise is that the Greek word, *Harpazō*, is used 13-times in the Greek New Testament text. I will not spend any more time here in addressing the deniers of the Rapture, or *Harpazō*. I will continue to use the word Rapture here as it is the most commonly used and accepted term to describe this future event of the Church. Did I say future? Some teach the Rapture took place in 70 A.D. with the destruction of Jerusalem by Rome. In this teaching, Jesus showed up in 70 A.D. and we have been in His kingdom ever since. There are a lot of problems with this view (Preterist View – end time prophecies have already been fulfilled) and I will not take the time here to address these. I will take the view in this article that the Rapture is still future.

What are the most common views, and which one is correct? The basic views surrounding a future Rapture of the Church are all different in regard to the timing of the Rapture. The most popular I believe is what's called the Pre-Millennial, Pre-Tribulation, Rapture View. This is where the Church is called off the earth to be with the Lord prior to the final 7-year period before the Lord physically returns to the earth called the Tribulation period and before the 1,000-year reign of Christ on the

earth in his kingdom. Second most popular I believe is a Post-Tribulation Rapture View. In contrast to the Pre-Trib view, this view suggest that the Rapture of the Church will take place immediately after the 7-year Tribulation Period. Third is a Mid-Tribulation Rapture View, which has several variations associated with it. Mid-Trib states the Rapture of the Church takes place at the 3.5-year mark of the Tribulation period. The variations include a Pre-Wrath Rapture View where God's wrath is sometime after the start of the Tribulation and before the completion of it. Variations suggest the Rapture takes place prior to the 4th Seal Judgment of the Tribulation, and another before the 6th Seal, and another after the 6th Seal and before the 7th Seal, and on it goes.

Okay, so which view is correct? And what about those who set dates for the Rapture? Throughout the decades a number of Pre-Tribulation Rapturists have set dates for this event based on world events. Of course, they have been wrong as the Rapture view they held to has not yet taken place. Many who hold to a Post-Trib view have set dates for the start of the Tribulation which has been equally fruitless. But, can we know what view is correct and when the Rapture will take place?

As to the timing, which defines the view, I'd like to start with a promise Jesus made recorded in John 14:1-3 "Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. (2) In my Father's house are many mansions: if *it were* not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. (3) And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, *there* ye may be also." The context is the Father's house. The promise is that Jesus will come to take us, his church, to the Father's house where there are 'abodes' prepared for us. Out of all the Rapture views, which one can this promise be fulfilled with? A Pre-tribulation Rapture is where the promise of Jesus to take his own to the Father's house (in heaven) is best fulfilled. This could be fulfilled with a Mid-Tribulation Rapture but a key Rapture concept rules this out, which is imminence, meaning the appearance of Jesus to his church to call us off the earth can happen at any moment. If it were Mid-Tribulation, you would be able to calculate the very day of the Rapture. And Jesus' promise cannot be literally fulfilled in a Post-tribulation Rapture. Read Matthew 25:31-46 (I won't write out here to save space) where we are told what transpires immediately after the Tribulation. There is no Rapture post-tribulation but a judgment of the Gentile nations of the earth. There cannot be a Post-Tribulation Rapture for one very simple reason: There would be no one to enter the Kingdom of Jesus. All those in Christ would be glorified and everyone else cast into everlasting punishment (hell). No righteous in the nations (sheep in Mathew 25) to enter the Kingdom. In addition, a Post-tribulation Rapture would be Post-wrath as well which goes against the promises that the church would be kept from the time of God's wrath upon the earth.

The strongest argument for the Pre-tribulation Rapture of the Church comes from Revelation 4-5. There is a group in heaven pre-tribulation who identify themselves: "(5:9-10) for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; And hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth." Only one group in the Word of God who fits this description and that is the church. Also, in Chapter 4 we see this same group casting their crowns at the feet of Jesus. Who in the Word of God receives crowns as a form of reward? It is the church. This event then would not only be pre-tribulation but post-Judgment Seat of Christ. Further evidence is found in Revelation 19 where the Bride of Christ (the Church) is in heaven preparing for the wedding feast while the Tribulation is taking place on the earth. I can go on, but you get the point; I hold to the doctrine of a Pre-tribulation, Pre-millennial, Rapture of the Church.

In my view, the Rapture takes place sometime prior to the start of the Tribulation (rightly, the 70th Week of Daniel's prophecy, recorded in Daniel 9). It is imminent (can happen at any time), so actually we cannot know the exact day of the Rapture; we are to be looking up for our redemption is drawing near. If we cannot know when the Rapture will take place, can we know when the Tribulation will begin? I think there are hints of this in Scripture, but cannot be dogmatic as there isn't enough information to formulate an exact timing. However, there is enough in the Word of God to understand that all these things are very close.

What happens at the Rapture? Go back to 1 Thess 4:13-18 and then read 1 Corinthians 15:51-52 "Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, (52) 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." A resurrection of all those who have died in Christ takes place. Corresponding with this resurrection is the glorification of those in Christ who are alive. This resurrection and glorification change happen in the twinkling of an eye, but this doesn't necessarily mean the Rapture takes places in the twinkling of an eye. Many think that at the Rapture airplanes with Christian pilots will crash, automobiles driven by Christians will crash, those operating dangerous equipment will vanish causing disasters; there will be resulting global chaos. I have a different view on this. There is a hint in Acts 1:6-11 where the Ascension of Christ is recorded. The words, in like manner, of how Jesus returns for his church is a hint. I am of the view that even though the resurrection and glorification of all those in Christ will be in an instant (twinkling of an eye), the Rapture (catching away of the church from off the earth) will be a slow process, meaning it could take many minutes, enough time to stop the vehicles being driven, to shut down equipment, to turn over controls of aircraft, etc. But, most importantly to be a sign to the unbelieving world of the truth of the Word of God. Apparently, there is a global revival after the Rapture. In Revelation 7:9-17 there is an innumerable number of souls who were killed for the name of Christ during the Tribulation. With the church Raptured and the Tribulation in all of its horribleness beginning probably a short time after (within a few years?) there would need to be an event to lead to this great multitude willingly dying for Christ, and I think the catalyst is the Rapture; but just a thought, not a doctrine.

I will conclude with the words of Peter in 2 Peter 3:10-11 "But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up. (11) **Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness**?" For those who do not know Jesus as their Saviour, do not haste to call upon his name for salvation, for we do not know what day or hour the Lord will come back. For those of us who do know the Lord, in light of what's about to occur, we need to be living godly lives fulfilling the will of God, which is to be a light to the world bringing the Gospel to lost souls. I for one believe the time is very short, and those who know me really well, know that every year, and just about every day of the year, I am looking up, for I believe our redemption is drawing very near. -dB

I hope you have enjoyed these articles on Eschatology (Future Things). If you have any questions or comments, please feel free to reach out to me. Dr Dave Bartholomew, at DrDaveBart@gmail.com And visit my website if you have a chance and read other articles in other categories I have. DrDaveBart.info

May the Lord of all comfort give you peace by His abundant grace.