

## Revelation

New American Standard Bible (Updated 1995)  
with endnotes and suggested changes in brackets<sup>1</sup>

**Rev. 1:1** The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave Him to show to His bond-servants, the things which must soon take place; and [which] He sent and communicated it by His angel to His bond-servant John,<sup>2</sup> who testified [testifies] to the word of God and to the testimony of Jesus Christ, even to all that he saw.<sup>3</sup>

**Rev. 13** Blessed is he who reads and those who hear the words of the prophecy and heed the things which are written in it; for the time is near.<sup>4</sup>

**Rev. 1:4** John to the seven churches that are in Asia: Grace to you and peace, from Him who is and who was and who is to come, and from the seven Spirits who are before His throne,<sup>5</sup> and from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn of the dead, and the ruler of the kings of the earth. To Him who loves us and released us from our sins by His blood—<sup>6</sup> and He has made us to be a kingdom, priests to His God and Father—to Him be the glory and the dominion forever and ever. Amen.<sup>6</sup> **7** BEHOLD, HE IS COMING WITH THE CLOUDS, and every eye will see Him, even those who pierced Him; and all the tribes of the earth will mourn over Him. So it is to be. Amen.<sup>7</sup>

**Rev. 1:8** “I am the Alpha and the Omega,” says the Lord God, “who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty.”<sup>8</sup>

**Rev. 1:9** I, John, your brother and fellow partaker in the tribulation and kingdom and perseverance which are in Jesus, was on the island called Patmos because of the word of God and the testimony of Jesus.<sup>9</sup> **10** I was in the Spirit [spirit] on the Lord’s day, and I heard behind me a loud voice like the sound of a trumpet,<sup>10</sup> **11** saying, “Write in a book what you see, and send it to the seven churches: to Ephesus and to Smyrna and to Pergamum and to Thyatira and to Sardis and to Philadelphia and to Laodicea.”<sup>11</sup>

**Rev. 1:12** Then I turned to see the voice that was speaking with me. And having turned I saw seven golden lampstands;<sup>12</sup> **13** and in the middle of the lampstands I saw one like a son of man, clothed in a robe reaching to the feet, and girded across His chest with a golden sash [belt].<sup>13</sup> **14** His head and His hair were white like white wool, like snow; and His eyes were like a flame of fire.<sup>14</sup> **15** His feet were like burnished bronze, when it has been made to glow in a furnace, and His voice was like the sound of many waters.<sup>15</sup> **16** In His right hand He held seven stars, and out of His mouth came a sharp two-edged sword; and His face was like the sun shining in its strength.<sup>16</sup>

**Rev. 1:17** When I saw Him, I fell at His feet like a dead man. And He placed His right hand on me, saying, “Do not be afraid; I am the first and the last, **18** and the living One; and I was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore, and I have the keys of death and of Hades.<sup>17</sup> **19** “Therefore write the things which you have seen, and the things which are, and the things which will take place after these things.<sup>18</sup> **20** “As for the mystery of the seven stars which you saw in My right hand, and the seven golden lampstands: the seven stars are the angels of the seven churches, and the seven lampstands are the seven churches.<sup>19</sup>

**Rev. 2:1** “To the angel of the church in Ephesus write: The One who holds the seven stars in His right hand, the One who walks among the seven golden lampstands, says this:<sup>20</sup>

**Rev. 2:2** ‘I know your deeds and your toil and perseverance, and that you cannot tolerate evil men, and you put to the test those who call themselves apostles, and they are not, and you found them to be false; **3** and you have perseverance and have endured for My name’s sake, and have not grown weary. **4** ‘But I have this against you, that you have left your first love. **5** ‘Therefore remember from where you have

fallen, and repent and do the deeds you did at first; or else I am coming to you and will remove your lampstand out of its place — unless you repent.<sup>21</sup> 6 ‘Yet this you do have, that you hate the deeds of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate.<sup>22</sup> 7 ‘He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes, I will grant to eat of the tree of life which is in the Paradise of God.’<sup>23</sup>

Rev. 2:8 “And to the angel of the church in Smyrna write:

The first and the last, who was dead, and has come to life, says this:<sup>24</sup>

Rev. 2:9 ‘I know your tribulation and your poverty (but you are rich), and the blasphemy by those who say they are Jews and are not, but are a synagogue of Satan.’<sup>25</sup> 10 ‘Do not fear what you are about to suffer. Behold, the devil is about to cast some of you into prison, so that you will be tested, and you will have tribulation for ten days. Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown [wreath] of life.’<sup>26</sup> 11 ‘He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. He who overcomes will not be hurt by the second death.’<sup>27</sup>

Rev. 2:12 “And to the angel of the church in Pergamum write:

The One who has the sharp two-edged sword says this:<sup>28</sup>

Rev. 2:13 ‘I know where you dwell, where Satan’s throne is; and you hold fast My name, and did not deny My faith even in the days of Antipas, My witness, My faithful one, who was killed among you, where Satan dwells.’<sup>29</sup> 14 ‘But I have a few things against you, because you have there some who hold the teaching of Balaam, who kept teaching Balak to put a stumbling block before the sons of Israel, to eat things sacrificed to idols and to commit acts of immorality.’<sup>30</sup> 15 ‘So you also have some who in the same way hold the teaching of the Nicolaitans.’<sup>31</sup> 16 ‘Therefore repent; or else I am coming to you quickly, and I will make war against them with the sword of My mouth.’<sup>32</sup> 17 ‘He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes, to him I will give some of the hidden manna, and I will give him a white stone, and a new name written on the stone which no one knows but he who receives it.’<sup>33</sup>

Rev. 2:18 “And to the angel of the church in Thyatira write:

The Son of God, who has eyes like a flame of fire, and His feet are like burnished bronze, says this:<sup>34</sup>

Rev. 2:19 ‘I know your deeds, and your love and faith and service and perseverance, and that your deeds of late are greater than at first.’<sup>35</sup> 20 ‘But I have this against you, that you tolerate the woman Jezebel, who calls herself a prophetess, and she teaches and leads My bond-servants astray so that they commit acts of immorality and eat things sacrificed to idols.’<sup>36</sup> 21 ‘I gave her time to repent, and she does not want to repent of her immorality. 22 ‘Behold, I will throw her on a bed of sickness, and those who commit adultery with her into great tribulation, unless they repent of her deeds. 23 ‘And I will kill her children with pestilence, and all the churches will know that I am He who searches the minds and hearts; and I will give to each one of you according to your deeds.’<sup>37</sup> 24 ‘But I say to you, the rest who are in Thyatira, who do not hold this teaching, who have not known the deep things of Satan, as they call them — I place no other burden on you.’<sup>38</sup> 25 ‘Nevertheless what you have, hold fast until I come.’<sup>39</sup> 26 ‘He who overcomes, and he who keeps My deeds until the end, TO HIM I WILL GIVE AUTHORITY OVER THE NATIONS; 27 AND HE SHALL RULE THEM WITH A ROD OF IRON, AS THE VESSELS OF THE POTTER ARE BROKEN TO PIECES, as I also have received authority from My Father;’<sup>40</sup> 28 and I will give him the morning star.’<sup>41</sup> 29 ‘He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.’<sup>42</sup>

Rev. 3:1 “To the angel of the church in Sardis write:

He who has the seven Spirits of God and the seven stars, says this: ‘I know your deeds, that you have a name that you are alive, but you are dead.’<sup>43</sup> 2 ‘Wake up, and strengthen the things that remain, which were about to die; for I have not found your deeds completed in the sight of My God.’<sup>44</sup> 3 ‘So remember what you have received and heard; and keep it, and repent. Therefore if you do not wake up, I will come like a thief, and you will not know at what hour I will come to you.’<sup>45</sup> 4 ‘But you have a few people in Sardis who have not soiled their garments; and they will walk with Me in white, for they are worthy. 5

‘He who overcomes will thus be clothed in white garments; and I will not erase his name from the book of life, and I will confess his name before My Father and before His angels.’<sup>46</sup> 6 ‘He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.’<sup>47</sup>

Rev. 3:7 “And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write:

He who is holy, who is true, who has the key of David, who opens and no one will shut, and who shuts and no one opens, says this:<sup>48</sup>

Rev. 3:8 ‘I know your deeds. Behold, I have put before you an open door which no one can shut, because you have a little power, and have kept My word, and have not denied My name.’<sup>49</sup> 9 ‘Behold, I will cause those of the synagogue of Satan, who say that they are Jews and are not, but lie — I will make them come and bow down at your feet, and make them know that I have loved you.’<sup>50</sup> 10 ‘Because you have kept the word of My perseverance, I also will keep you from the hour of testing, that hour which is about to come upon the whole world, to test those who dwell on the earth.’<sup>51</sup> 11 ‘I am coming quickly; hold fast what you have, so that no one will take your crown [wreath].’<sup>52</sup> 12 ‘He who overcomes, I will make him a pillar in the temple of My God, and he will not go out from it anymore; and I will write on him the name of My God, and the name of the city of My God, the new Jerusalem, which comes down out of heaven from My God, and My new name.’<sup>53</sup> 13 ‘He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.’

Rev. 3:14 “To the angel of the church in Laodicea write:

The Amen, the faithful and true Witness, the Beginning of the creation of God, says this:<sup>54</sup>

Rev. 3:15 ‘I know your deeds, that you are neither cold nor hot; I wish that you were cold or hot.’<sup>55</sup> 16 ‘So because you are lukewarm, and neither hot nor cold, I will spit you out of My mouth.’<sup>56</sup> 17 ‘Because you say, “I am rich, and have become wealthy, and have need of nothing,” and you do not know that you are wretched and miserable and poor and blind and naked,’<sup>57</sup> 18 I advise you to buy from Me gold refined by fire so that you may become rich, and white garments so that you may clothe yourself, and that the shame of your nakedness will not be revealed; and eye salve to anoint your eyes so that you may see.’<sup>58</sup> 19 ‘Those whom I love, I reprove and discipline; therefore be zealous and repent.’<sup>59</sup> 20 ‘Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and will dine with him, and he with Me.’<sup>60</sup> 21 ‘He who overcomes, I will grant to him to sit down with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne.’<sup>61</sup> 22 ‘He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.’”

Rev. 4:1 After these things I looked, and behold, a door standing open in heaven, and the first voice which I had heard, like the sound of a trumpet speaking with me, said, “Come up here, and I will show you what must take place after these things.”<sup>62</sup>

2 Immediately I was in the Spirit [spirit]; and behold, a throne was standing in heaven, and One sitting on the throne.<sup>63</sup> 3 And He who was sitting was like a jasper stone and a sardius in appearance; and there was a rainbow around the throne, like an emerald in appearance.<sup>64</sup> 4 Around the throne were twenty-four thrones; and upon the thrones I saw twenty-four elders sitting, clothed in white garments, and golden crowns [wreaths] on their heads.<sup>65</sup> 5 Out from the throne come flashes of lightning and sounds and peals of thunder.<sup>66</sup>

And there were seven lamps of fire burning before the throne, which are the seven Spirits of God;<sup>67</sup> 6 and before the throne there was something like a sea of glass, like crystal; and in the center and around the throne, four living creatures [signs] full of eyes in front and behind.<sup>68</sup> 7 The first creature was like a lion, and the second creature like a calf [bull], and the third creature had a face like that of a man, and the fourth creature was like a flying eagle. 8 And the four living creatures [signs], each one of them having six wings, are full of eyes around and within; and day and night they do not cease to say,

“HOLY, HOLY, HOLY is THE LORD GOD, THE ALMIGHTY, WHO WAS AND WHO IS AND WHO IS TO COME.”<sup>69</sup>

**Rev. 4:9** And when the living creatures give glory and honor and thanks to Him who sits on the throne, to Him who lives forever and ever, **10** the twenty-four elders will fall down before Him who sits on the throne, and will worship Him who lives forever and ever [into the ages of ages], and will cast their crowns [wreaths] before the throne, saying,<sup>70</sup>

**11** “Worthy are You, our Lord and our God, to receive glory and honor and power; for You created all things, and because of Your will they existed [exist], and were created.”<sup>71</sup>

**Rev. 5:1** I saw in the right hand of Him who sat on the throne a book [scroll] written inside and on the back, sealed up with seven seals.<sup>72</sup> **2** And I saw a strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice, “Who is worthy to open the book and to break its seals?”<sup>73</sup> **3** And no one in heaven or on the earth or under the earth was able to open the book [scroll] or to look into it.<sup>74</sup> **4** Then I began to weep greatly because no one was found worthy to open the book [scroll] or to look into it;<sup>75</sup> **5** and one of the elders said to me, “Stop weeping; behold, the Lion that is from the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has overcome so as to open the book [scroll] and its seven seals.”<sup>76</sup>

**Rev. 5:6** And I saw between the throne (with the four living creatures) and the elders [in the middle of the throne and the four living signs, and in the middle of the elders] a Lamb standing, as if slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God, sent out into all the earth.<sup>77</sup> **7** And He came and took the book [scroll] out of the right hand of Him who sat on the throne.<sup>78</sup> **8** When He had taken the book [scroll], the four living creatures [signs] and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb, each one holding a harp and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints.<sup>79</sup> **9** And they sang a new song, saying,

“Worthy are You to take the book [scroll] and to break its seals; for You were slain, and purchased for God with Your blood men from every tribe and tongue and people and nation.<sup>80</sup> **10** “You have made them to be a kingdom and priests to our God; and they will reign upon the earth.”<sup>81</sup>

**Rev. 5:11** Then I looked, and I heard the voice of many angels around the throne and the living creatures [signs] and the elders; and the number of them was myriads of myriads, and thousands of thousands,<sup>82</sup> **12** saying with a loud voice,

“Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power and riches and wisdom and might and honor and glory and blessing.”<sup>83</sup>

**Rev. 5:13** And every created thing which is in heaven and on the earth and under the earth and on the sea, and all things in them, I heard saying,

“To Him who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb, be blessing and honor and glory and dominion forever and ever [into the ages of ages].”<sup>84</sup>

**Rev. 5:14** And the four living creatures [signs] kept saying, “Amen.” And the elders fell down and worshiped.<sup>85</sup>

**Rev. 6:1** Then I saw when the Lamb broke one of the seven seals, and I heard one of the four living creatures [signs] saying as with a voice of thunder, “Come.” **2** I looked, and behold, a white horse, and he who sat on it had a bow; and a crown [wreath] was given to him, and he went out conquering and to conquer.<sup>86</sup>

**Rev. 6:3** When He broke the second seal, I heard the second living creature [sign] saying, “Come.”<sup>87</sup> **4** And another, a red horse, went out; and to him who sat on it, it was granted to take peace from the earth, and that men would slay one another; and a great sword was given to him.<sup>88</sup>

**Rev. 6:5** When He broke the third seal, I heard the third living creature [sign] saying, “Come.” I looked, and behold, a black horse; and he who sat on it had a pair of scales in his hand.<sup>89</sup> **6** And I heard something

like a voice in the center of the four living creatures [signs] saying, “A quart of wheat for a denarius, and three quarts of barley for a denarius; and do not damage the oil and the wine.”<sup>90</sup>

**Rev. 6:7** When the Lamb broke the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the fourth living creature [sign] saying, “Come.” **8** I looked, and behold, an ashen [gray] horse; and he who sat on it had the name Death; and Hades was following with him. Authority was given to them over a fourth of the earth, to kill with sword and with famine and with pestilence and by the wild beasts of the earth.<sup>91</sup>

**Rev. 6:9** When the Lamb broke the fifth seal, I saw underneath the altar the souls of those who had been slain because of the word [message] of God, and because of the testimony which they had maintained;<sup>92</sup> **10** and they cried out with a loud voice, saying, “How long, O Lord, holy and true, will You refrain from judging and avenging our blood on those who dwell on the earth?”<sup>93</sup> **11** And there was given to each of them a white robe; and they were told that they should rest for a little while longer, until the number of their fellow servants and their brethren who were to be killed even as they had been, would be completed also.<sup>94</sup>

**Rev. 6:12** I looked when He broke the sixth seal, and there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth made of hair, and the whole moon became like blood;<sup>95</sup> **13** and the stars of the sky fell to the earth, as a fig tree casts its unripe figs when shaken by a great wind. **14** The sky was split apart like a scroll when it is rolled up, and every mountain and island were moved out of their places.<sup>96</sup> **15** Then the kings of the earth and the great men and the commanders and the rich and the strong and every slave and free man hid themselves in the caves and among the rocks of the mountains;<sup>97</sup> **16** and they said to the mountains and to the rocks, “Fall on us and hide us from the presence of Him who sits on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb;”<sup>98</sup> **17** for the great day of their wrath has come, and who is able to stand?”<sup>99</sup>

**Rev. 7:1** After this I saw four angels standing at the four corners of the earth, holding back the four winds of the earth, so that no wind would blow on the earth [land] or on the sea or on any tree.<sup>100</sup> **2** And I saw another angel ascending from the rising of the sun, having the seal of the living God; and he cried out with a loud voice to the four angels to whom it was granted to harm the earth [land] and the sea, **3** saying, “Do not harm the earth [land] or the sea or the trees until we have sealed the bond-servants of our God on their foreheads.”<sup>101</sup>

**Rev. 7:4** And I heard the number of those who were sealed, one hundred and forty-four thousand sealed from every tribe of the sons of Israel.<sup>102</sup> **5** from the tribe of Judah, twelve thousand were sealed, from the tribe of Reuben twelve thousand, from the tribe of Gad twelve thousand, **6** from the tribe of Asher twelve thousand, from the tribe of Naphtali twelve thousand, from the tribe of Manasseh twelve thousand, **7** from the tribe of Simeon twelve thousand, from the tribe of Levi twelve thousand, from the tribe of Issachar twelve thousand, **8** from the tribe of Zebulun twelve thousand, from the tribe of Joseph twelve thousand, from the tribe of Benjamin, twelve thousand were sealed.<sup>103</sup>

**Rev. 7:9** After these things I looked, and behold, a great multitude which no one could count, from every nation and all tribes and peoples and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, and palm branches were in their hands;<sup>104</sup> **10** and they cry out with a loud voice, saying, “Salvation to [by] our God who sits on the throne, and to [by] the Lamb.”<sup>105</sup> **11** And all the angels were standing around the throne and around the elders and the four living creatures [signs]; and they fell on their faces before the throne and worshiped God, **12** saying,  
 “Amen, blessing and glory and wisdom and thanksgiving and honor and power and might, be to our God forever and ever [into the ages of ages]. Amen.”<sup>106</sup>

**Rev. 7:13** Then one of the elders answered, saying to me, “These who are clothed in the white robes, who are they, and where have they come from?” **14** I said to him, “My lord, you know.” And he said to me,

“These are the ones who come out of the great tribulation, and they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.<sup>107</sup> 15 “For this reason, they are before the throne of God; and they serve Him day and night in His temple; and He who sits on the throne will spread His tabernacle over them.<sup>108</sup> 16 “They will hunger no longer, nor thirst anymore; nor will the sun beat down on them, nor any heat;<sup>109</sup> 17 for the Lamb in the center of the throne will be their shepherd, and will guide them to springs of the water of life; and God will wipe every tear from their eyes.”<sup>110</sup>

**Rev. 8:1** When the Lamb broke the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven for about half an hour.<sup>111</sup> 2 And I saw the seven angels who stand before God, and seven trumpets were given to them.<sup>112</sup>

**Rev. 8:3** Another angel came and stood at the altar, holding a golden censer; and much incense was given to him, so that he might add it to the prayers of all the saints on the golden altar which was before the throne.<sup>113</sup> 4 And the smoke of the incense, with the prayers of the saints, went up before God out of the angel’s hand.<sup>114</sup> 5 Then the angel took the censer and filled it with the fire of the altar, and threw it to the earth; and there followed peals of thunder and sounds and flashes of lightning and an earthquake.<sup>115</sup>

**Rev. 8:6** And the seven angels who had the seven trumpets prepared themselves to sound them.<sup>116</sup> 7 The first sounded, and there came hail and fire, mixed with blood, and they were thrown to the earth [land]; and a third of the earth [land] was burned up, and a third of the trees were burned up, and all the green grass was burned up.<sup>117</sup>

**Rev. 8:8** The second angel sounded, and something like a great mountain burning with fire was thrown into the sea; and a third of the sea became blood, 9 and a third of the creatures which were in the sea and had life, died; and a third of the ships were destroyed.<sup>118</sup>

**Rev. 8:10** The third angel sounded, and a great star fell from heaven, burning like a torch, and it fell on a third of the rivers and on the springs of waters.<sup>119</sup> 11 The name of the star is called Wormwood; and a third of the waters became wormwood, and many men died from the waters, because they were made bitter.<sup>120</sup>

**Rev. 8:12** The fourth angel sounded, and a third of the sun and a third of the moon and a third of the stars were struck, so that a third of them would be darkened and the day would not shine for a third of it, and the night in the same way.<sup>121</sup>

**Rev. 8:13** Then I looked, and I heard an eagle flying in midheaven, saying with a loud voice, “Woe, woe, woe to those who dwell on the earth [land], because of the remaining blasts of the trumpet of the three angels who are about to sound!”<sup>122</sup>

**Rev. 9:1** Then the fifth angel sounded, and I saw a star from heaven which had fallen to the earth; and the key of the bottomless pit [pit of the abyss] was given to him.<sup>123</sup> 2 He opened the bottomless pit [pit of the abyss], and smoke went up out of the pit, like the smoke of a great furnace; and the sun and the air were darkened by the smoke of the pit.<sup>124</sup> 3 Then out of the smoke came locusts upon the earth [land], and power was given them, as the scorpions of the earth have power.<sup>125</sup> 4 They were told not to hurt the grass of the earth [land], nor any green thing, nor any tree, but only the men who do not have the seal of God on their foreheads.<sup>126</sup> 5 And they were not permitted to kill anyone, but to torment for five months; and their torment was like the torment of a scorpion when it stings a man. 6 And in those days men will seek death and will not find it; they will long to die, and death flees from them.<sup>127</sup>

**Rev. 9:7** The appearance of the locusts was like horses prepared for battle; and on their heads appeared to be crowns [wreaths] like gold, and their faces were like the faces of men.<sup>128</sup> 8 They had hair like the hair of women, and their teeth were like the teeth of lions. 9 They had breastplates like breastplates of iron;

and the sound of their wings was like the sound of chariots, of many horses rushing to battle. **10** They have tails like scorpions and stings; and in their tails is their power to hurt men for five months. **11** They have as king over them the angel of the abyss; his name in Hebrew is Abaddon, and in the Greek he has the name Apollyon.<sup>129</sup>

**12** The first woe is past; behold, two woes are still coming after these things.<sup>130</sup>

**Rev. 9:13** Then the sixth angel sounded, and I heard a voice from the four horns of the golden altar which is before God, **14** one saying to the sixth angel who had the trumpet, "Release the four angels who are bound at the great river Euphrates."<sup>131</sup> **15** And the four angels, who had been prepared for the hour and day and month and year, were released, so that they would kill a third of mankind [the men].<sup>132</sup> **16** The number of the armies of the horsemen was two hundred million; I heard the number of them.<sup>133</sup> **17** And this is how I saw in the vision the horses and those who sat on them: the riders had breastplates the color of fire and of hyacinth and of brimstone; and the heads of the horses are like the heads of lions; and out of their mouths proceed fire and smoke and brimstone.<sup>134</sup> **18** A third of mankind [the men] was killed by these three plagues, by the fire and the smoke and the brimstone which proceeded out of their mouths.<sup>135</sup> **19** For the power of the horses is in their mouths and in their tails; for their tails are like serpents and have heads, and with them they do harm.

**Rev. 9:20** The rest of mankind [the men], who were not killed by these plagues, did not repent of the works of their hands, so as not to worship demons, and the idols of gold and of silver and of brass and of stone and of wood, which can neither see nor hear nor walk;<sup>136</sup> **21** and they did not repent of their murders nor of their sorceries nor of their immorality nor of their thefts.

**Rev. 10:1** I saw another strong angel coming down out of heaven, clothed with a cloud; and the rainbow was upon his head, and his face was like the sun, and his feet like pillars of fire;<sup>137</sup> **2** and he had in his hand a little book which was open. He placed his right foot on the sea and his left on the land;<sup>138</sup> **3** and he cried out with a loud voice, as when a lion roars; and when he had cried out, the seven peals of thunder uttered their voices.<sup>139</sup> **4** When the seven peals of thunder had spoken, I was about to write; and I heard a voice from heaven saying, "Seal up the things which the seven peals of thunder have spoken and do not write them." **5** Then the angel whom I saw standing on the sea and on the land lifted up his right hand to heaven, **6** and swore by Him who lives forever and ever, WHO CREATED HEAVEN AND THE THINGS IN IT, AND THE EARTH AND THE THINGS IN IT, AND THE SEA AND THE THINGS IN IT, that there will be delay no longer,<sup>140</sup> **7** but in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he is about to sound, then the mystery of God is finished, as He preached to His servants the prophets.<sup>141</sup>

**Rev. 10:8** Then the voice which I heard from heaven, I heard again speaking with me, and saying, "Go, take the book which is open in the hand of the angel who stands on the sea and on the land." **9** So I went to the angel, telling him to give me the little book. And he said to me, "Take it and eat it; it will make your stomach bitter, but in your mouth it will be sweet as honey."<sup>142</sup> **10** I took the little book out of the angel's hand and ate it, and in my mouth it was sweet as honey; and when I had eaten it, my stomach was made bitter. **11** And they said to me, "You must prophesy again concerning many peoples and nations and tongues and kings."<sup>143</sup>

**Rev. 11:1** Then there was given me a measuring rod like a staff; and someone said, "Get up and measure the temple of God and the altar, and those who worship in it."<sup>144</sup> **2** "Leave out the court which is outside the temple and do not measure it, for it has been given to the nations; and they will tread under foot the holy city for forty-two months.<sup>145</sup> **3** "And I will grant authority to my two witnesses, and they will prophesy for twelve hundred and sixty days, clothed in sackcloth."<sup>146</sup> **4** These are the two olive trees and the two lampstands that stand before the Lord of the earth. **5** And if anyone wants to harm them, fire flows out of their mouth and devours their enemies; so if anyone wants to harm them, he must be killed in

this way. **6** These have the power to shut up the sky, so that rain will not fall during the days of their prophesying; and they have power over the waters to turn them into blood, and to strike the earth [land] with every plague, as often as they desire.<sup>147</sup>

**Rev. 11:7** When they have finished their testimony, the beast that comes up out of the abyss will make war with them, and overcome them and kill them.<sup>148</sup> **8** And their dead bodies will lie in the street of the great city which mystically is called Sodom and Egypt, where also their Lord was crucified.<sup>149</sup> **9** Those from the peoples and tribes and tongues and nations will look at their dead bodies for three and a half days, and will not permit their dead bodies to be laid in a tomb. **10** And those who dwell on the earth [land] will rejoice over them and celebrate; and they will send gifts to one another, because these two prophets tormented those who dwell on the earth [land].<sup>150</sup>

**Rev. 11:11** But after the three and a half days, the breath of life from God came into them, and they stood on their feet; and great fear fell upon those who were watching them.<sup>151</sup> **12** And they heard a loud voice from heaven saying to them, “Come up here.” Then they went up into heaven in the cloud, and their enemies watched them.<sup>152</sup> **13** And in that hour there was a great earthquake, and a tenth of the city fell; seven thousand people were killed in the earthquake, and the rest were terrified and gave glory to the God of heaven.<sup>153</sup>

**Rev. 11:14** The second woe is past; behold, the third woe is coming quickly.<sup>154</sup>

**Rev. 11:15** Then the seventh angel sounded; and there were loud voices in heaven, saying, “The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ; and He will reign forever and ever [into the ages of ages].” **16** And the twenty-four elders, who sit on their thrones before God, fell on their faces and worshiped God, **17** saying, “We give You thanks, O Lord God, the Almighty, who are and who were, because You have taken Your great power and have begun to reign.<sup>155</sup> **18** “And the nations were enraged, and Your wrath came, and the time came for the dead to be judged, and the time to reward Your bond-servants the prophets and the saints and those who fear Your name, the small and the great, and to destroy those who destroy the earth [land].”<sup>156</sup>

**Rev. 11:19** And the temple of God which is in heaven was opened; and the ark of His covenant appeared in His temple, and there were flashes of lightning and sounds and peals of thunder and an earthquake and a great hailstorm.<sup>157</sup>

**Rev. 12:1** A great sign appeared in heaven: a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and on her head a crown [wreath] of twelve stars,<sup>158</sup> **2** and she was with child; and she cried out, being in labor and in pain to give birth.<sup>159</sup> **3** Then another sign appeared in heaven: and behold, a great red dragon having seven heads and ten horns, and on his heads were seven diadems [crowns].<sup>160</sup> **4** And his tail swept away a third of the stars of heaven and threw them to the earth. And the dragon stood before the woman who was about to give birth, so that when she gave birth he might devour her child.<sup>161</sup> **5** And she gave birth to a son, a male child, who is to rule all the nations with a rod of iron; and her child was caught up to God and to His throne.<sup>162</sup> **6** Then the woman fled into the wilderness where she had a place prepared by God, so that there she would be nourished for one thousand two hundred and sixty days.<sup>163</sup>

**Rev. 12:7** And there was war in heaven, Michael and his angels waging war with the dragon. The dragon and his angels waged war, **8** and they were not strong enough, and there was no longer a place found for them in heaven.<sup>164</sup> **9** And the great dragon was thrown down, the serpent of old who is called the devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world; he was thrown down to the earth, and his angels were thrown down with him.<sup>165</sup> **10** Then I heard a loud voice in heaven, saying, “Now the salvation, and the power, and the kingdom of our God and the authority of His Christ [Messiah] have come, for the accuser of our brethren has been thrown down, he who accuses them before our God day and night.<sup>166</sup> **11** “And they



overcame him because of the blood of the Lamb and because of the word of their testimony, and they did not love their life even when faced with death.<sup>167</sup> **12** “For this reason, rejoice, O heavens and you who dwell in them. Woe to the earth and the sea, because the devil has come down to you, having great wrath, knowing that he has only a short time.”<sup>168</sup>

**Rev. 12:13** And when the dragon saw that he was thrown down to the earth, he persecuted the woman who gave birth to the male child. **14** But the two wings of the great eagle were given to the woman, so that she could fly into the wilderness to her place, where she was nourished for a time and times and half a time, from the presence of the serpent.<sup>169</sup> **15** And the serpent poured water like a river out of his mouth after the woman, so that he might cause her to be swept away with the flood.<sup>170</sup> **16** But the earth helped the woman, and the earth opened its mouth and drank up the river which the dragon poured out of his mouth. **17** So the dragon was enraged with the woman, and went off to make war with the rest of her children, who keep the commandments of God and hold to the testimony of Jesus.<sup>171</sup>

**Rev. 13:1** And the dragon stood on the sand of the seashore. Then I saw a beast coming up out of the sea, having ten horns and seven heads, and on his horns were ten diadems [crowns], and on his heads were blasphemous names.<sup>172</sup> **2** And the beast which I saw was like a leopard, and his feet were like those of a bear, and his mouth like the mouth of a lion. And the dragon gave him his power and his throne and great authority.<sup>173</sup> **3** I saw one of his heads as if it had been slain, and his fatal wound was healed. And the whole earth was amazed and followed after the beast;<sup>174</sup> **4** they worshiped the dragon because he gave his authority to the beast; and they worshiped the beast, saying, “Who is like the beast, and who is able to wage war with him?”<sup>175</sup> **5** There was given to him a mouth speaking arrogant words and blasphemies, and authority to act for forty-two months was given to him.<sup>176</sup> **6** And he opened his mouth in blasphemies against God, to blaspheme His name and His tabernacle, that is, those who dwell in heaven.

**Rev. 13:7** It was also given to him to make war with the saints and to overcome them, and authority over every tribe and people and tongue and nation was given to him.<sup>177</sup> **8** All who dwell on the earth will worship him, everyone whose name has not been written from the foundation of the world in the book of life of the Lamb who has been slain.<sup>178</sup> **9** If anyone has an ear, let him hear. **10** If anyone is destined for captivity, to captivity he goes; if anyone kills with the sword, with the sword he must be killed. Here is the perseverance and the faith of the saints.<sup>179</sup>

**Rev. 13:11** Then I saw another beast coming up out of the earth [land]; and he had two horns like a lamb and he spoke as a dragon.<sup>180</sup> **12** He exercises all the authority of the first beast in his presence. And he makes the earth [land] and those who dwell in it to worship the first beast, whose fatal wound was healed.<sup>181</sup> **13** He performs great signs, so that he even makes fire come down out of heaven to the earth in the presence of men.<sup>182</sup> **14** And he deceives those who dwell on the earth [land] because of the signs which it was given him to perform in the presence of the beast, telling those who dwell on the earth to make an image to the beast who had the wound of the sword and has come to life.<sup>183</sup> **15** And it was given to him to give breath to the image of the beast, so that the image of the beast would even speak and cause as many as do not worship the image of the beast to be killed.<sup>184</sup> **16** And he causes all, the small and the great, and the rich and the poor, and the free men and the slaves, to be given a mark on their right hand or on their forehead,<sup>185</sup> **17** and he provides that no one will be able to buy or to sell, except the one who has the mark, either the name of the beast or the number of his name.<sup>186</sup> **18** Here is wisdom. Let him who has understanding calculate the number of the beast, for the number is that of a man; and his number is six hundred and sixty-six.<sup>187</sup>

**Rev. 14:1** Then I looked, and behold, the Lamb was standing on Mount Zion, and with Him one hundred and forty-four thousand, having His name and the name of His Father written on their foreheads.<sup>188</sup> **2** And I heard a voice from heaven, like the sound of many waters and like the sound of loud thunder, and the voice which I heard was like the sound of harpists playing on their harps. **3** And they sang a new song

before the throne and before the four living creatures and the elders; and no one could learn the song except the one hundred and forty-four thousand who had been purchased from the earth [land].<sup>189</sup> **4** These are the ones who have not been defiled with women, for they have kept themselves chaste. These are the ones who follow the Lamb wherever He goes. These have been purchased from among men as first fruits to God and to the Lamb.<sup>190</sup> **5** And no lie was found in their mouth; they are blameless.<sup>191</sup>

**Rev. 14:6** And I saw another angel flying in midheaven, having an eternal gospel to preach to those who live on the earth [land], and to every nation and tribe and tongue and people; **7** and he said with a loud voice, “Fear God, and give Him glory, because the hour of His judgment has come; worship Him who made the heaven and the earth and sea and springs of waters.”<sup>192</sup>

**Rev. 14:8** And another angel, a second one, followed, saying, “Fallen, fallen is Babylon the great, she who has made all the nations drink of the wine of the passion of her immorality.”<sup>193</sup>

**Rev. 14:9** Then another angel, a third one, followed them, saying with a loud voice, “If anyone worships the beast and his image, and receives a mark on his forehead or on his hand, **10** he also will drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is mixed in full strength in the cup of His anger; and he will be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb. **11** “And the smoke of their torment goes up forever and ever [into the ages of ages]; they have no rest day and night, those who worship the beast and his image, and whoever receives the mark of his name.”<sup>194</sup>

**Rev. 14:12** Here is the perseverance of the saints who keep the commandments [instructions] of God and their faith in Jesus. **13** And I heard a voice from heaven, saying, “Write, ‘Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on!’” “Yes,” says the Spirit, “so that they may rest from their labors, for their deeds follow with them.”<sup>195</sup>

**Rev. 14:14** Then I looked, and behold, a white cloud, and sitting on the cloud was one like a son of man, having a golden crown [wreath] on His head and a sharp sickle in His hand. **15** And another angel came out of the temple, crying out with a loud voice to Him who sat on the cloud, “Put in your sickle and reap, for the hour to reap has come, because the harvest of the earth [land?] is ripe.” **16** Then He who sat on the cloud swung His sickle over the earth [land?], and the earth [land?] was reaped.<sup>196</sup>

**Rev. 14:17** And another angel came out of the temple which is in heaven, and he also had a sharp sickle. **18** Then another angel, the one who has power over fire, came out from the altar; and he called with a loud voice to him who had the sharp sickle, saying, “Put in your sharp sickle and gather the clusters from the vine of the earth [land?], because her grapes are ripe.” **19** So the angel swung his sickle to the earth [land?] and gathered the clusters from the vine of the earth [land?], and threw them into the great wine press of the wrath of God. **20** And the wine press was trodden outside the city, and blood came out from the wine press, up to the horses’ bridles, for a distance of two hundred miles.<sup>197</sup>

**Rev. 15:1** Then I saw another sign in heaven, great and marvelous, seven angels who had seven plagues, which are the last, because in them the wrath of God is finished.<sup>198</sup> **2** And I saw something like a sea of glass mixed with fire, and those who had been victorious over the beast and his image and the number of his name, standing on the sea of glass, holding harps of God. **3** And they sang the song of Moses, the bond-servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying,

Great and marvelous are Your works, O Lord God, the Almighty;

Righteous and true are Your ways, King of the nations!

**4** Who will not fear, O Lord, and glorify Your name?

For You alone are holy;

For ALL THE NATIONS WILL COME AND WORSHIP BEFORE YOU,

FOR YOUR RIGHTEOUS ACTS HAVE BEEN REVEALED.<sup>199</sup>

**Rev. 15:5** After these things I looked, and the temple of the tabernacle of testimony in heaven was opened, **6** and the seven angels who had the seven plagues came out of the temple, clothed in linen, clean and bright, and girded around their chests with golden sashes. **7** Then one of the four living creatures gave to the seven angels seven golden bowls full of the wrath of God, who lives forever and ever [into the ages of ages]. **8** And the temple was filled with smoke from the glory of God and from His power; and no one was able to enter the temple until the seven plagues of the seven angels were finished.<sup>200</sup>

**Rev. 16:1** Then I heard a loud voice from the temple, saying to the seven angels, “Go and pour out on the earth [land] the seven bowls of the wrath of God.”<sup>201</sup>

**Rev. 16:2** So the first angel went and poured out his bowl on the earth [land]; and it became a loathsome and malignant sore on the people who had the mark of the beast and who worshiped his image.<sup>202</sup>

**Rev. 16:3** The second angel poured out his bowl into the sea, and it became blood like that of a dead man; and every living thing in the sea died.<sup>203</sup>

**Rev. 16:4** Then the third angel poured out his bowl into the rivers and the springs of waters; and they became blood. **5** And I heard the angel of the waters saying, “Righteous are You, who are and who were, O Holy One, because You judged these things; **6** for they poured out the blood of saints and prophets, and You have given them blood to drink. They deserve it.” **7** And I heard the altar saying, “Yes, O Lord God, the Almighty, true and righteous are Your judgments.”<sup>204</sup>

**Rev. 16:8** The fourth angel poured out his bowl upon the sun, and it was given to it to scorch men with fire. **9** Men were scorched with fierce heat; and they blasphemed the name of God who has the power over these plagues, and they did not repent so as to give Him glory.<sup>205</sup>

**Rev. 16:10** Then the fifth angel poured out his bowl on the throne of the beast, and his kingdom became darkened; and they gnawed their tongues because of pain, **11** and they blasphemed the God of heaven because of their pains and their sores; and they did not repent of their deeds.<sup>206</sup>

**Rev. 16:12** The sixth angel poured out his bowl on the great river, the Euphrates; and its water was dried up, so that the way would be prepared for the kings from the east.<sup>207</sup> **13** And I saw coming out of the mouth of the dragon and out of the mouth of the beast and out of the mouth of the false prophet, three unclean spirits like frogs; **14** for they are spirits of demons, performing signs, which go out to the kings of the whole world, to gather them together for the war of the great day of God, the Almighty.<sup>208</sup> **15** (“Behold, I am coming like a thief. Blessed is the one who stays awake and keeps his clothes, so that he will not walk about naked and men will not see his shame.”)<sup>209</sup> **16** And they gathered them together to the place which in Hebrew is called Har-Magedon.<sup>210</sup>

**Rev. 16:17** Then the seventh angel poured out his bowl upon the air, and a loud voice came out of the temple from the throne, saying, “It is done.”<sup>211</sup> **18** And there were flashes of lightning and sounds and peals of thunder; and there was a great earthquake, such as there had not been since man came to be upon the earth [land], so great an earthquake was it, and so mighty.<sup>212</sup> **19** The great city was split into three parts, and the cities of the nations fell. Babylon the great was remembered before God, to give her the cup of the wine of His fierce wrath.<sup>213</sup> **20** And every island fled away, and the mountains were not found. **21** And huge hailstones, about one hundred pounds each, came down from heaven upon men; and men blasphemed God because of the plague of the hail, because its plague was extremely severe.<sup>214</sup>

**Rev. 17:1** Then one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls came and spoke with me, saying, “Come here, I will show you the judgment of the great harlot who sits on many waters, **2** with whom the

kings of the earth committed acts of immorality, and those who dwell on the earth [land?] were made drunk with the wine of her immorality.”<sup>215</sup> **3** And he carried me away in the Spirit into a wilderness; and I saw a woman sitting on a scarlet beast, full of blasphemous names, having seven heads and ten horns.<sup>216</sup> **4** The woman was clothed in purple and scarlet, and adorned with gold and precious stones and pearls, having in her hand a gold cup full of abominations and of the unclean things of her immorality, **5** and on her forehead a name was written, a mystery, “BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND OF THE ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH.” **6** And I saw the woman drunk with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the witnesses of Jesus. When I saw her, I wondered greatly.<sup>217</sup>

**Rev. 17:7** And the angel said to me, “Why do you wonder? I will tell you the mystery of the woman and of the beast that carries her, which has the seven heads and the ten horns. **8** “The beast that you saw was, and is not, and is about to come up out of the abyss and go to destruction. And those who dwell on the earth, whose name has not been written in the book of life from the foundation of the world, will wonder when they see the beast, that he was and is not and will come.”<sup>218</sup> **9** “Here is the mind which has wisdom. The seven heads are seven mountains on which the woman sits, **10** and they are seven kings; five have fallen, one is, the other has not yet come; and when he comes, he must remain a little while. **11** “The beast which was and is not, is himself also an eighth and is one of the seven, and he goes to destruction. **12** “The ten horns which you saw are ten kings who have not yet received a kingdom, but they receive authority as kings with the beast for one hour.”<sup>219</sup> **13** “These have one purpose, and they give their power and authority to the beast. **14** “These will wage war against the Lamb, and the Lamb will overcome them, because He is Lord of lords and King of kings, and those who are with Him are the called and chosen and faithful.”<sup>220</sup>

**Rev. 17:15** And he said to me, “The waters which you saw where the harlot sits, are peoples and multitudes and nations and tongues.”<sup>221</sup> **16** “And the ten horns which you saw, and the beast, these will hate the harlot and will make her desolate and naked, and will eat her flesh and will burn her up with fire. **17** “For God has put it in their hearts to execute His purpose by having a common purpose, and by giving their kingdom to the beast, until the words of God will be fulfilled.”<sup>222</sup> **18** “The woman whom you saw is the great city, which reigns over the kings of the earth.”<sup>223</sup>

**Rev. 18:1** After these things I saw another angel coming down from heaven, having great authority, and the earth was illumined with his glory.<sup>224</sup> **2** And he cried out with a mighty voice, saying, “Fallen, fallen is Babylon the great! She has become a dwelling place of demons and a prison of every unclean spirit, and a prison of every unclean and hateful bird. **3** “For all the nations have drunk of the wine of the passion of her immorality, and the kings of the earth have committed acts of immorality with her, and the merchants of the earth have become rich by the wealth of her sensuality.”<sup>225</sup>

**Rev. 18:4** I heard another voice from heaven, saying, “Come out of her, my people, so that you will not participate in her sins and receive of her plagues;”<sup>226</sup> **5** for her sins have piled up as high as heaven, and God has remembered her iniquities.<sup>227</sup>

**Rev. 18:6** “Pay her back even as she has paid, and give back to her double according to her deeds; in the cup which she has mixed, mix twice as much for her. **7** “To the degree that she glorified herself and lived sensuously, to the same degree give her torment and mourning; for she says in her heart, ‘I SIT as A QUEEN AND I AM NOT A WIDOW, and will never see mourning.’”<sup>228</sup> **8** “For this reason in one day her plagues will come, pestilence and mourning and famine, and she will be burned up with fire; for the Lord God who judges her is strong.”<sup>229</sup>

**Rev. 18:9** “And the kings of the earth, who committed acts of immorality and lived sensuously with her, will weep and lament over her when they see the smoke of her burning, **10** standing at a distance because

of the fear of her torment, saying, ‘Woe, woe, the great city, Babylon, the strong city! For in one hour your judgment has come.’<sup>230</sup>

**Rev. 18:11** “And the merchants of the earth weep and mourn over her, because no one buys their cargoes any more — **12** cargoes of gold and silver and precious stones and pearls and fine linen and purple and silk and scarlet, and every kind of citron wood and every article of ivory and every article made from very costly wood and bronze and iron and marble, **13** and cinnamon and spice and incense and perfume and frankincense and wine and olive oil and fine flour and wheat and cattle and sheep, and cargoes of horses and chariots and slaves and human lives. **14** “The fruit you long for has gone from you, and all things that were luxurious and splendid have passed away from you and men will no longer find them. **15** “The merchants of these things, who became rich from her, will stand at a distance because of the fear of her torment, weeping and mourning, **16** saying, ‘Woe, woe, the great city, she who was clothed in fine linen and purple and scarlet, and adorned with gold and precious stones and pearls; **17** for in one hour such great wealth has been laid waste!’ And every shipmaster and every passenger and sailor, and as many as make their living by the sea, stood at a distance, **18** and were crying out as they saw the smoke of her burning, saying, ‘What city is like the great city?’ **19** “And they threw dust on their heads and were crying out, weeping and mourning, saying, ‘Woe, woe, the great city, in which all who had ships at sea became rich by her wealth, for in one hour she has been laid waste!’<sup>231</sup>

**Rev. 18:20** “Rejoice over her, O heaven, and you saints and apostles and prophets, because God has pronounced judgment for you against her.”<sup>232</sup> **21** Then a strong angel took up a stone like a great millstone and threw it into the sea, saying, “So will Babylon, the great city, be thrown down with violence, and will not be found any longer. **22** “And the sound of harpists and musicians and flute-players and trumpeters will not be heard in you any longer; and no craftsman of any craft will be found in you any longer; and the sound of a mill will not be heard in you any longer;<sup>233</sup> **23** and the light of a lamp will not shine in you any longer; and the voice of the bridegroom and bride will not be heard in you any longer; for your merchants were the great men of the earth, because all the nations were deceived by your sorcery [magic].<sup>234</sup> **24** “And in her was found the blood of prophets and of saints and of all who have been slain on the earth.”<sup>235</sup>

**Rev. 19:1** After these things I heard something like a loud voice of a great multitude in heaven, saying, “Hallelujah! Salvation and glory and power belong to our God; **2** BECAUSE HIS JUDGMENTS ARE TRUE AND RIGHTEOUS; for He has judged the great harlot who was corrupting the earth with her immorality, and HE HAS AVENGED THE BLOOD OF HIS BOND-SERVANTS ON HER.”<sup>236</sup> **3** And a second time they said, “Hallelujah! HER SMOKE RISES UP FOREVER AND EVER.”<sup>237</sup> **4** And the twenty-four elders and the four living creatures fell down and worshiped God who sits on the throne saying, “Amen. Hallelujah!”<sup>238</sup>

**Rev. 19:5** And a voice came from the throne, saying, “Give praise to our God, all you His bond-servants, you who fear Him, the small and the great.” **6** Then I heard something like the voice of a great multitude and like the sound of many waters and like the sound of mighty peals of thunder, saying, “Hallelujah! For the Lord our God, the Almighty, reigns.”<sup>239</sup> **7** “Let us rejoice and be glad and give the glory to Him, for the marriage of the Lamb has come and His bride has made herself ready.”<sup>240</sup> **8** It was given to her to clothe herself in fine linen, bright and clean; for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints.<sup>241</sup> **9** Then he said to me, “Write, ‘Blessed are those who are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb.’” And he said to me, “These are true words of God.”<sup>242</sup> **10** Then I fell at his feet to worship him. But he said to me, “Do not do that; I am a fellow servant of yours and your brethren who hold the testimony of Jesus; worship God. For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.”<sup>243</sup>

**Rev. 19:11** And I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse, and He who sat on it is called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He judges [rules] and wages war.<sup>244</sup> **12** His eyes are a flame of fire, and on

His head are many diadems [crowns]; and He has a name written on Him which no one knows except Himself. **13** He is clothed with a robe dipped in blood, and His name is called The Word of God.<sup>245</sup> **14** And the armies which are in heaven, clothed in fine linen, white and clean, were following Him on white horses.<sup>246</sup> **15** From His mouth comes a sharp sword, so that with it He may strike down the nations, and He will rule them with a rod of iron; and He treads the wine press of the fierce wrath of God, the Almighty.<sup>247</sup> **16** And on His robe and on His thigh He has a name written, "KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS."<sup>248</sup>

**Rev. 19:17** Then I saw an angel standing in the sun, and he cried out with a loud voice, saying to all the birds which fly in midheaven, "Come, assemble for the great supper of God, **18** so that you may eat the flesh of kings and the flesh of commanders and the flesh of mighty men and the flesh of horses and of those who sit on them and the flesh of all men, both free men and slaves, and small and great."<sup>249</sup>

**Rev. 19:19** And I saw the beast and the kings of the earth and their armies assembled to make war against Him who sat on the horse and against His army.<sup>250</sup> **20** And the beast was seized, and with him the false prophet who performed the signs in his presence, by which he deceived those who had received the mark of the beast and those who worshiped his image; these two were thrown alive into the lake of fire which burns with brimstone.<sup>251</sup> **21** And the rest were killed with the sword which came from the mouth of Him who sat on the horse, and all the birds were filled with their flesh.<sup>252</sup>

**Rev. 20:1** Then I saw an angel coming down from heaven, holding the key of the abyss and a great chain in his hand.<sup>253</sup> **2** And he laid hold of the dragon, the serpent of old, who is the devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years; **3** and he threw him into the abyss, and shut it and sealed it over him, so that he would not deceive the nations any longer, until the thousand years were completed; after these things he must be released for a short time.<sup>254</sup>

**Rev. 20:4** Then I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and judgment [ruling] was given to them. And I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded because of their testimony of Jesus and because of the word of God, and those who had not worshiped the beast or his image, and had not received the mark on their forehead and on their hand; and they came to life and reigned with Christ for a thousand years.<sup>255</sup> **5** The rest of the dead did not come to life until the thousand years were completed. This is the first resurrection.<sup>256</sup> **6** Blessed and holy is the one who has a part in the first resurrection; over these the second death has no power, but they will be priests of God and of Christ and will reign with Him for a thousand years.<sup>257</sup>

**Rev. 20:7** When the thousand years are completed, Satan will be released from his prison, **8** and will come out to deceive the nations which are in the four corners of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together for the war; the number of them is like the sand of the seashore. **9** And they came up on the broad plain of the earth [land] and surrounded the camp of the saints and the beloved city, and fire came down from heaven and devoured them.<sup>258</sup>

**Rev. 20:10** And the devil who deceived them was thrown into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are also; and they will be tormented day and night forever and ever [until the ages of the ages].<sup>259</sup>

**Rev. 20:11** Then I saw a great white throne and Him who sat upon it, from whose presence [face] earth and heaven fled away, and no place was found for them.<sup>260</sup> **12** And I saw the dead, the great and the small, standing before the throne, and books were opened; and another book was opened, which is the book of life; and the dead were judged [punished] from the things which were written in the books, according to their deeds.<sup>261</sup> **13** And the sea gave up the dead which were in it, and death and Hades gave up the dead which were in them; and they were judged [punished], every one of them according to their deeds.<sup>262</sup> **14**

Then death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire.<sup>263</sup> **15** And if anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.<sup>264</sup>

**Rev. 21:1** Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth passed away, and there is no longer any sea.<sup>265</sup> **2** And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, made ready as a bride adorned for her husband.<sup>266</sup> **3** And I heard a loud voice from the throne, saying, "Behold, the tabernacle of God is among men, and He will dwell among them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself will be among them,<sup>267</sup> **4** and He will wipe away every tear from their eyes; and there will no longer be any death; there will no longer be any mourning, or crying, or pain; the first things have passed away."<sup>268</sup> **5** And He who sits on the throne said, "Behold, I am making all things new." And He said, "Write, for these words are faithful and true."<sup>269</sup>

**Rev. 21:6** Then He said to me, "It is done. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give to the one who thirsts from the spring of the water of life without cost."<sup>270</sup> **7** "He who overcomes will inherit these things, and I will be his God and he will be My son."<sup>271</sup> **8** "But for the cowardly and unbelieving and abominable and murderers and immoral persons and sorcerers and idolaters and all liars, their part will be in the lake that burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death."<sup>272</sup>

**Rev. 21:9** Then one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls full of the seven last plagues came and spoke with me, saying, "Come here, I will show you the bride, the wife of the Lamb."<sup>273</sup> **10** And he carried me away in the Spirit to a great and high mountain, and showed me the holy city, Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God,<sup>274</sup> **11** having the glory of God. Her brilliance was like a very costly stone, as a stone of crystal-clear jasper.<sup>275</sup> **12** It had a great and high wall, with twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels; and names were written on them, which are the names of the twelve tribes of the sons of Israel.<sup>276</sup> **13** There were three gates on the east and three gates on the north and three gates on the south and three gates on the west.<sup>277</sup> **14** And the wall of the city had twelve foundation stones, and on them were the twelve names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb.<sup>278</sup>

**Rev. 21:15** The one who spoke with me had a gold measuring rod to measure the city, and its gates and its wall.<sup>279</sup> **16** The city is laid out as a square, and its length is as great as the width; and he measured the city with the rod, fifteen hundred miles [twelve thousand stadia]; its length and width and height are equal.<sup>280</sup> **17** And he measured its wall, seventy-two yards [one hundred forty-four (12 x 12) cubits], according to human measurements, which are also angelic measurements. **18** The material of the wall was jasper; and the city was pure gold, like clear glass. **19** The foundation stones of the city wall were adorned with every kind of precious stone. The first foundation stone was jasper; the second, sapphire; the third, chalcedony; the fourth, emerald; **20** the fifth, sardonyx; the sixth, sardius; the seventh, chrysolite; the eighth, beryl; the ninth, topaz; the tenth, chrysoprase; the eleventh, jacinth; the twelfth, amethyst. **21** And the twelve gates were twelve pearls; each one of the gates was a single pearl. And the street of the city was pure gold, like transparent glass.

**Rev. 21:22** I saw no temple in it, for the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb are its temple.<sup>281</sup> **23** And the city has no need of the sun or of the moon to shine on it, for the glory of God has illumined it, and its lamp is the Lamb.<sup>282</sup> **24** The nations will walk by its light, and the kings of the earth will bring their glory into it.<sup>283</sup> **25** In the daytime (for there will be no night there) its gates will never be closed; **26** and they will bring the glory and the honor of the nations into it,<sup>284</sup> **27** and nothing unclean, and no one who practices abomination and lying, shall ever come into it, but only those whose names are written in the Lamb's book of life.<sup>285</sup>

**Rev. 22:1** Then he showed me a river of the water of life, clear as crystal, coming from the throne of God and of the Lamb,<sup>286</sup> **2** in the middle of its street. On either side of the river was the tree of life, bearing twelve kinds of fruit, yielding its fruit every month; and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the

nations.<sup>287</sup> **3** There will no longer be any curse; and the throne of God and of the Lamb will be in it, and His bond-servants will serve Him;<sup>288</sup> **4** they will see His face, and His name will be on their foreheads.<sup>289</sup> **5** And there will no longer be any night; and they will not have need of the light of a lamp nor the light of the sun, because the Lord God will illumine them; and they will reign forever and ever.<sup>290</sup>

**Rev. 22:6** And he said to me, “These words are faithful and true”; and the Lord, the God of the spirits of the prophets, sent His angel to show to His bond-servants the things which must soon take place. **7** “And behold, I am coming quickly. Blessed is he who heeds the words of the prophecy of this book.”<sup>291</sup>

**Rev. 22:8** I, John, am the one who heard and saw these things. And when I heard and saw, I fell down to worship at the feet of the angel who showed me these things.<sup>292</sup> **9** But he said to me, “Do not do that. I am a fellow servant of yours and of your brethren the prophets and of those who heed the words of this book. Worship God.” **10** And he said to me, “Do not seal up the words of the prophecy of this book, for the time is near.<sup>293</sup> **11** “Let the one who does wrong, still do wrong; and the one who is filthy, still be filthy; and let the one who is righteous, still practice righteousness; and the one who is holy, still keep himself holy.”<sup>294</sup>

**Rev. 22:12** “Behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me, to render to every man according to what he has done.<sup>295</sup> **13** “I am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end.”<sup>296</sup> **14** Blessed are those who wash their robes, so that they may have the right to the tree of life, and may enter by the gates into the city.<sup>297</sup> **15** Outside are the dogs and the sorcerers and the immoral persons and the murderers and the idolaters, and everyone who loves and practices lying.<sup>298</sup> **16** “I, Jesus, have sent My angel to testify to you these things for the churches. I am the root and the descendant of David, the bright morning star.”<sup>299</sup>

**Rev. 22:17** The Spirit and the bride say, “Come.” And let the one who hears say, “Come.” And let the one who is thirsty come; let the one who wishes take the water of life without cost.<sup>300</sup>

**Rev. 22:18** I testify to everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: if anyone adds to them, God will add to him the plagues which are written in this book; **19** and if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God will take away his part from the tree of life and from the holy city, which are written in this book.<sup>301</sup> **20** He who testifies to these things says, “Yes, I am coming quickly.”<sup>302</sup>

Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.<sup>303</sup> **21** The grace of the Lord Jesus be with all. Amen.<sup>304</sup>



<sup>1</sup> Many of these endnotes, especially those for chapters 4-22, I developed from Jack Crabtree's thirteen talks on the book of Revelation that can be found on Gutenberg College's website, [www.gutenberg.edu](http://www.gutenberg.edu). Jack and I share the same perspective on God's plans and purposes for the nation of Israel, the Jews, that it still remains for Him to fulfill His promise to them to make of them a "great nation," indeed the greatest nation of all human history when Jesus returns and rules over them on the land of Israel and over the rest of the world during the millennial kingdom described in Revelation 20. As a result, in mainly symbolic language the book of Revelation is speaking of the fulfillment of this promise which follows God's discipline and judgment of the Jews for their rejection of Jesus as their Messiah two thousand years ago. God's judgment will be severe as it was in the days of the northern Kingdom of Israel when the Assyrian Empire destroyed it around 700 B.C., and in the days of the southern Kingdom of Judah when the Babylonians destroyed it around 600 B.C., and in the days following Jesus' first appearance when Rome destroyed Jerusalem and the temple in A.D. 70 and exile the Jews around A.D. 135. However, His mercy and fulfillment of His promise will be proportionately and overwhelmingly magnificent towards the Jews when Jesus restores the Kingdom of Israel on their land at his return.

<sup>2</sup> The "Revelation of Jesus the Messiah" is the revealing of things pertaining to Jesus, not the revealing of things from Jesus. This means that the whole book of Revelation is mainly about him as God's main character within the story of creation. The issue is whether or not people are willing to recognize this and embrace this truth for the sake of obtaining God's eternal mercy and salvation. Thus, this "revelation" becomes a test for all human beings who come in contact with it.

In the light of the rest of the book, the above makes more sense than simply the "revelation from Jesus the Messiah," even though the next statement is that God gave to Jesus this "revelation" to show to his bond-servants. So it really is both. This book reveals Jesus and was given to Jesus by God to reveal/demonstrate/show to his followers, because it will be only they who value it and embrace it. Others will ignore it to their eternal destruction.

Four options for *angelos* – 1) God ultimately sent and communicated this message by His *angelos*, a theophany, and this same messenger is also the messenger of Jesus as the icon of God and eternal Messiah within the creation, or 2) the *angelos* or messenger is sometimes Jesus himself and sometimes his "messenger" who communicates to John on his behalf, or 3) the *angelos* is Jesus in vision format as his messenger which actually is God's messenger too (so that #1 and #3 are basically the same), or 4) the *angelos* is a regular, conventional angel and separate created being. Looking at the beginning and the end of Revelation, sometimes the angel is Jesus in vision format, and sometimes he is a regular, conventional angel. Here at the beginning of Revelation, probably #3 (#1) is correct. At the end of Revelation, #4 is probably correct, because the angel tells John not to worship him (Revelation 22:8,9).

Cf. [Revelation 22:6](#) And he said to me, "These words are faithful and true"; and the Lord, the God of the spirits of the prophets, sent His angel to show to His bond-servants the things which must soon take place. [7](#) "And behold, I am coming quickly. Blessed is he who heeds the words of the prophecy of this book."

Cf. [Revelation 22:8](#) I, John, am the one who heard and saw these things. And when I heard and saw, I fell down to worship at the feet of the angel who showed me these things. [9](#) But he said to me, "Do not do that. I am a fellow servant of yours and of your brethren the prophets and of those who heed the words of this book. Worship God." [10](#) And he said to me, "Do not seal up the words of the prophecy of this book, for the time is near.

Cf. [Revelation 22:16](#) "I, Jesus, have sent My angel to testify to you these things for the churches. I am the root and the descendant of David, the bright morning star."

And this information is being "signified" (ἐσήμανεν) to John through God's and Jesus' *angelos* in the manner of revealing visions to demonstrate the truths that God wants to communicate to him.

This information is also about what must take place quickly (ἄ δεῖ γενέσθαι ἐν τάχει) (not "soon" per se), i.e., that God will fulfill in terms of His promises when He has planned. And once the ball starts rolling, there is no stopping it, and God will finish His business quickly.

Cf. [Luke 18:8](#) "I tell you that He will bring about justice for them quickly (ἐν τάχει). However, when the Son of Man comes, will He find faith on the earth?"

Cf. [Acts 12:7](#) And behold, an angel of the Lord suddenly appeared and a light shone in the cell; and he struck Peter's side and woke him up, saying, "Get up quickly." And his chains fell off his hands.

<sup>3</sup> Through the book of Revelation, John is bearing witness to God's message of salvation and eternal life. He is also bearing witness to Jesus and the witness of him and his role as the center of history and the major character of the end of this age, which John will see in all the visions that will be presented to him and that he records in Revelation.

The idea of bearing witness or a witness is mentioned 11x in Revelation. For example, [Revelation 6:9](#) When he opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of those who had been slain for the word of God and for the witness they had borne.

<sup>4</sup> The person who embraces the truth of Revelation will be blessed, i.e., will obtain eternal life instead of eternal destruction—the only two options in the message of the book.

And the time is near in the sense that the opportunity for anyone who hears this book to embrace its truths is always there for him to do so. No one should wait long to choose to believe what God is communicating and to take advantage of His grace, mercy, and salvation that comes through Jesus as the Messiah. This makes more sense than interpreting him as saying that there is a short amount of time between the "revelation" and Jesus' return since Jesus made it clear that it is a rather long period of time between his first and second appearances.

In other words, John is talking about a subjective nearness of God's fulfilling His plans with Jesus return, not an objective nearness. This is similar to Paul's warning in 1 Thessalonians 5 that people will be thinking "Peace and safety" in spite of all the

signs to the contrary. Their subjectivity will be oriented away from God so that they completely misread the signs of the end times, thinking that they can bring themselves peace and safety instead of fleeing from the wrath of God.

Cf. [Revelation 22:8](#) I, John, am the one who heard and saw these things. And when I heard and saw, I fell down to worship at the feet of the angel who showed me these things. [9](#) But he said to me, “Do not do that. I am a fellow servant of yours and of your brethren the prophets and of those who heed the words of this book. Worship God.” [10](#) And he said to me, “Do not seal up the words of the prophecy of this book, for the time is near.

[Revelation 22:12](#) “Behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me, to render to every man according to what he has done.”

<sup>5</sup> The book of Revelation is specifically for the 7 churches to whom the letters of chapters 2 & 3 are addressed.

And it is from God, the transcendent Creator of all reality, every person and thing within the creation and every event that takes place for His purposes. He is not a contingent being, dependent on someone else for His existence. Instead, everyone else is dependent upon Him for their existence. This is the better way to understand what God means that He is, was, and is to come along with His being the first and the last as He says also in [Isaiah 41:4](#); [44:6](#); and [48:12](#). Indeed, God is eternal, but the emphasis is on His being the all-encompassing, independent, and transcendent origin of anything else that exists besides Him. God comes first in our thinking about reality, because nothing can exist apart from Him, and then comes that which He has made, so that He is given credit for everything besides Him that exists. It is as Paul speaks of God in [Acts 17:24-28](#) – [Acts 17:24](#) “The God who made the world and all things in it, since He is Lord of heaven and earth, does not dwell in temples made with hands; [25](#) nor is He served by human hands, as though He needed anything, **since He Himself gives to all people life and breath and all things;** [26](#) and He made from one man every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth, having determined their appointed times and the boundaries of their habitation, [27](#) that they would seek God, if perhaps they might grope for Him and find Him, though He is not far from each one of us; [28 for in Him we live and move and exist, as even some of your own poets have said, ‘For we also are His children.’” \(See the notes too for v. 8 below.\)](#)

And there is also the beginning of the apostles’ prayer in [Acts 4:24](#) And when they heard this, they lifted their voices to God with one accord and said, “O Lord, it is You who MADE THE HEAVEN AND THE EARTH AND THE SEA, AND ALL THAT IS IN THEM.”

And it is from His Spirit who acts within the creation to complete His plans and purposes within the story that He is telling. Four times in Revelation besides the three in [Isaiah](#) below is a phrase about God’s having been and now being is used—

cf. [Isaiah 41:4](#) “Who has performed and accomplished it, calling forth the generations from the beginning? ‘I, Yahweh, am the first (אֲנִי יְהוָה רִאשׁוֹן) (ἐγὼ θεὸς πρῶτος), and with the last (אֲנִי יְהוָה אֲחֵרִית) (καὶ εἰς τὰ ἐπερχόμενα). I am He (אֲנִי יְהוָה) (ἐγὼ εἰμι).”

[Isaiah 44:6](#) “Thus says Yahweh, the King of Israel and his Redeemer, Yahweh of hosts: ‘I am the first and I am the last (אֲנִי יְהוָה רִאשׁוֹן וְאֲנִי יְהוָה אֲחֵרִית) (Εγὼ πρῶτος καὶ ἐγὼ μετὰ ταῦτα), and there is no God besides Me. [7](#) ‘Who is like Me? Let him proclaim and declare it; yes, let him recount it to Me in order, from the time that I established the ancient nation. And let them declare to them the things that are coming and the events that are going to take place.

[Isaiah 48:12](#) “Listen to Me, O Jacob, even Israel whom I called; I am He, I am the first, I am also the last (אֲנִי יְהוָה רִאשׁוֹן וְאֲנִי יְהוָה אֲחֵרִית) (ἐγὼ εἰμι πρῶτος, καὶ ἐγὼ εἰμι εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα). [13](#) “Surely My hand founded the earth, and My right hand spread out the heavens; when I call to them, they stand together.”

cf. [Rev. 1:8](#) “I am the Alpha and the Omega,” says the Lord God, “who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty.”

cf. [Rev. 4:8](#) And the four living creatures [signs], each one of them having six wings, are full of eyes around and within; and day and night they do not cease to say, “HOLY, HOLY, HOLY is THE LORD GOD, THE ALMIGHTY, WHO WAS AND WHO IS AND WHO IS TO COME.”

cf. [Rev. 16:4](#) Then the third angel poured out his bowl into the rivers and the springs of waters; and they became blood. [5](#) And I heard the angel of the waters saying, “Righteous are You, who are and who were, O Holy One, because You judged these things; And Satan and his main historical follower, the beast, are made out to be like God, but far inferior to him because God will destroy them.

cf. [Revelation 17:8](#) “The beast that you saw was, and is not, and is about to come up out of the abyss and go to destruction. And those who dwell on the earth, whose name has not been written in the book of life from the foundation of the world, will wonder when they see the beast, that he was and is not and will come.”

<sup>6</sup> Revelation is also from Jesus.

This is the first of many statements of praise and worship of God and Jesus in Revelation.

Jesus is the “faithful witness” of the information in this book, the truth of God and the gospel of salvation from His eternal condemnation and destruction.

Jesus is the primary human being who will ever be raised from the dead, because it is through him that resurrected believers acquire God’s eternal mercy and life. He is the heir of the Father’s property, the eternal kingdom of God. And he rules over authentic believers for all eternity. Cf. [Colossians 1:18](#) He is also head of the body, the church; and He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, so that He Himself will come to have first place in everything.

Jesus will eventually rule over all the other leaders of nations on the earth during the millennial kingdom. Cf. [Psalm 2:1](#) Why are the nations in an uproar and the peoples devising a vain thing? [2](#) The kings of the earth take their stand and the rulers take counsel together against the LORD and against His Anointed, saying, [3](#) “Let us tear their fetters apart and cast away their cords from us!” etc.

Jesus is also the one who has loved us by dying for us on the cross in order to qualify to be out high priest and advocate. Cf.

Romans 5:6-9 and Hebrews.

By becoming our champion and savior from God's condemnation and destruction, Jesus has crafted us believers into being as the Jews were meant to be, a "kingdom," i.e., group who are ruled by God and Jesus, to evangelize the world, which we do now and will do even more intensely during the millennial kingdom. Cf. **Ex. 19:5** 'Now then, if you will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant, then you shall be My own possession among all the peoples, for all the earth is Mine; **6** and you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.' These are the words that you shall speak to the sons of Israel. Cf. **1 Peter 2:5** you also, as living stones, are being built up as a spiritual house for a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.

Jesus' glory and authority to rule over the creation will last into the ages of ages, i.e., through the millennial kingdom and on the new earth that will last forever.

Cf. Revelation 1:18; 4:9,10; 5:13; 7:12; 10:6; 11:15; 15:7; 19:3; 20:10; 22:5 for uses of the phrase **εις τούς αιώνας τών αιώνων**.

<sup>7</sup> Similar to the vision in Daniel 7:13-14 where the Messiah comes with the clouds of heaven to appear before God, Jesus will descend out of the sky (clouds) onto the earth, and the Jewish nation who killed and crucified him will "see" him—will know that he has returned. And some of these Jews will mourn their error so as to become believers on the land of Israel in the millennial kingdom. These will be the 144,000 mentioned first in Revelation 7. And the Gentiles, "all the tribes of the earth," who rebelled against him will know that they are going to be subject to God's judgment and condemnation. Thus, some "mourning" is repentant (the Jews), and some is unrepentant (the Gentiles).

Daniel 7:13,14 – **13** "I kept looking in the night visions, and behold with the clouds of heaven, one like a Son of Man was coming (וְיָצָא עִם עָנָנִים שְׁמַיִם כְּבָר אֶתֶּן הַיְיָ), and he came up to the Ancient of Days and was presented before Him (ἐθεώρου ἐν ὄραματι τῆς νυκτός καὶ ἰδοὺ ἐπὶ τῶν νεφελῶν τοῦ οὐρανοῦ ὡς υἱὸς ἀνθρώπου ἤρχετο, καὶ ὡς παλαιὸς ἡμερῶν παρήν, καὶ οἱ παρεστηκότες παρήσαν αὐτῷ). **14** **And to him was given dominion, glory and a kingdom, that all the peoples, nations, and men of every language could serve him.** His dominion is an everlasting dominion, which will not pass away; and his kingdom is one which will not be destroyed."

**Zechariah 12:10** "I will pour out on the house of David and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the Spirit of grace and of supplication, so that they will look on Me whom they have pierced [killed]; and they will mourn for Him, as one mourns for an only son, and they will weep bitterly over Him like the bitter weeping over a firstborn [because of their sin of mistakenly crucifying their Messiah]."

Genesis 12:3c – and in you all the tribes of the earth will be blessed (וְנִבְרַכְךָ כָּל מְשֻׁפְתֹת הָאָרֶץ) (καὶ ἐνευλογηθήσονται ἐν σοὶ πᾶσαι αἱ φυλαὶ τῆς γῆς).

**Matthew 24:29** "But immediately after the tribulation of those days **THE SUN WILL BE DARKENED, AND THE MOON WILL NOT GIVE ITS LIGHT, AND THE STARS WILL FALL** from the sky, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken. **30** "And then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn ("τότε κόψονται" πᾶσαι αἱ φυλαὶ τῆς γῆς), and they will see the **SON OF MAN COMING ON THE CLOUDS OF THE SKY with power and great glory.** **31** "And He will send forth His angels with **A GREAT TRUMPET** and **THEY WILL GATHER TOGETHER His elect from the four winds, from one end of the sky to the other.**

<sup>8</sup> Here is a lone statement from God that He ultimately is the reason and source for all that exists, from the beginning of the creation to the end, because it is implied that He is the eternal God. Plus, He is the all-powerful God who exercises complete authority over the creation.

In other words, God's being the Alpha and the Omega is not a reference to His eternity, but to His all-encompassing importance. Jesus will same the same thing in v. 17 with the words "the first and the last." There are no more important persons that the transcendent Creator and His icon and proxy within the creation, Jesus of Nazareth. The issue in the book of Revelation for the readers is whether or not they acknowledge and embrace God and Jesus as having the importance that they both deserve. If they do, they gain Gods' mercy through Jesus and eternal life. If they do not, they will incur His wrath, condemnation, and destruction.

Then, when God says in this verse that He "is" and "was" and "is to come," He again is not referring to His eternity even though this is implied. Instead, He is referring to His encompassing everything that exists other than Himself in the same way that Paul speaks of God in Acts 17:24-28 – **Acts 17:24** "The God who made the world and all things in it, since He is Lord of heaven and earth, does not dwell in temples made with hands; **25** nor is He served by human hands, as though He needed anything, **since He Himself gives to all people life and breath and all things;** **26** and He made from one man every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth, having determined their appointed times and the boundaries of their habitation, **27** that they would seek God, if perhaps they might grope for Him and find Him, though He is not far from each one of us; **28 for in Him we live and move and exist, as even some of your own poets have said, 'For we also are His children.'**"

<sup>9</sup> John now identifies himself and begins explaining the experience of visions that he had to the people in the Christian communities in the seven cities in western Asia, i.e., the western part of modern day Turkey.

He says that he is their brother, a fellow child of God because of his changed inwardness and faith in Jesus.

He also participates with them in the tribulation, probably meaning the Great Tribulation of Jews and Christians between Jesus' first and second appearances (cf. **Matt. 24:21** "For then there will be a great tribulation, such as has not occurred since the beginning of the world until now, nor ever will.")

John also will participate in the Kingdom of God when Jesus returns first to restore the Kingdom of Israel and then to rule over the new, eternal earth.

Likewise, he perseveres in his belief and faith as do the rest of Christians during the difficult times they encounter before Jesus' return. He is waiting for the return of Jesus and his own resurrection as all Christians should.

Cf. **1 Thessalonians 1:5b** Just as you know what kind of people we were among you for your sake, **1:6** you, indeed, became imitators of us and of the Lord by embracing the message in the midst of great difficulty with the joy of the Holy Spirit. **1:7** The result was that you became an example to all believers in Macedonia and Achaia. **1:8** Indeed, from you the message about the Lord has sounded forth. Not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but in every place your belief, which is directed towards God, has gone out, so that we have no need to say anything, **1:9** because they themselves report about us what sort of entrée we had into you as a group and how you turned to God from idols to become enslaved to the living and true God, **1:10** and to wait for His Son from the heavens, whom He raised from among the dead, Jesus, who rescues us from the coming wrath.

And John has been relegated to living on the island of Patmos in the Aegean Sea near the west coast of Turkey because of his faith in the message of Jesus and all the things to which Jesus bore witness at his first appearance and which are offensive to the unbelieving heart and mind. In other words, he probably is in exile from Ephesus. Compare this with v. 2, that John “testifies to the word of God and the testimony of Jesus Christ.” He has borne witness to Jesus which has gotten him in trouble and resulted in his exile to Patmos, and he is bearing witness to Jesus and his angelos with their message in this book of Revelation. By extrapolation, this is what we all should do and can expect depending upon the time of history and circumstances of unbelievers’ hostility to the truth that we encounter.

<sup>10</sup> Based on the other clues in this context, this is Jesus himself who is speaking to John with the voice like a trumpet that means he is proclaiming vital information to him with clarity and sufficient volume. Plus, John is “in the spirit,” which is to say that he has not traveled anywhere physically. He has only moved within his mind to see what Jesus is revealing to him about God, the seven churches, and the events that will culminate in his return and establishment of the Kingdom of God.

“On the Lord’s day” is probably a reference to the Jewish Sabbath, the completion of the week. Thus, John was not doing much of anything else anyway, since it was the Sabbath. What better time to experience all these visions that tell the story of the completion of God’s eternal plans and purposes for Jesus and his people.

Why does Jesus appear behind John initially and starts speaking? Probably to emphasize the importance of this message in that he is going to make John turn around to see and hear him as he gathers and assimilates this important information.

<sup>11</sup> These seven “churches” (ἐκκλησίαι) are seven Christian communities in the listed cities, all of which are in ancient Asia (Turkey).

<sup>12</sup> As he says in v. 10, John is facing away from the person starts speaking

The original menorah of Exodus 25:37 as required by God for the temple was all one piece. These seem to be separate but of the same number—seven, because Jesus is standing in the middle of them. Assuming that these have a lamp on top of each stand and they give off visible light, then they are symbolic of Jesus’ being the Light of the world (cf. **John 1:9** There was the true Light which, coming into the world, enlightens every man.). And now he is enlightening John and anyone who is willing to learn from Revelation as to what God will do as his return draws near and even afterwards with the millennial kingdom first and then the new, eternal earth.

Or the lampstands could be symbolic of Jesus’ acting always with light and clarity so that he always does exactly what God wants him to do.

<sup>13</sup> Assuming this is Jesus in the middle of the lampstands, symbolizing that he is taking advantage of each one as symbolic of his being the Light of the world (or lighting his own way to do exactly what God wants him to do), John says that he was “like a son of man,” meaning that he was pretty far out looking person, but he was a man, i.e., Jesus is all his humanity as a participant in this creation and God within it. This, like **Daniel 7:13**, is not a reference to his being the Messiah as the Son of Man/Son of God, because the word “like” precedes the phrase. Instead, the phrase is being used to refer to a being who is a human being, who is nevertheless because of his role a very important human being. Indeed, this human being is the Light of the world and the central character in God’s story involving all other human beings. Cf. **Daniel 7:13** “I kept looking in the night visions, and behold, with the clouds of heaven one like a Son of Man was coming, and He came up to the Ancient of Days and was presented before Him. His robe all the way to his feet = he was fully clothed with who he is.

A “sash” (ζώνη) is really a belt, and John said that Jesus had a golden one wrapped around his “breasts” (μαστοί). This is the only reference of a belt around a person’s breasts in the NT. Two other references to breasts in **Luke 11:27** and **23:29**, both women’s and the act of nursing. And there is **Rev. 15:6** and the seven angels who had the seven plagues came out of the temple, clothed in linen, clean and bright, and girded around their chests with golden sashes. As a result, I am going to guess that “breasts” = “chest” and that a golden sash/belt around them/it symbolizes a royal responsibility from God to act in a way that executes His justice, which Jesus certainly will as described in **Revelation 19** when he returns and destroys the armies of Armageddon and then acts as judge and mediator at the first and second resurrections.

The Greek word for “chest” is στῆθος.

Cf. **Exodus 28:4** “These are the garments which they shall make: a breastpiece and an ephod and a robe and a tunic of checkered work, a turban and a sash (צַדִּיקָה = girdle) (ζώνην), and they shall make holy garments for Aaron your brother and his sons, that he may minister as priest to Me.”

Thus, Jesus is being revealed in this vision as a priest.

<sup>14</sup> Jesus’ white hair is symbolic of his wisdom that is like the transcendent creator of **Daniel 7:9** “I kept looking until thrones were set up, and the Ancient of Days took His seat; His vesture was like white snow and the hair of His head like pure wool. His throne was ablaze with flames, its wheels were a burning fire.” In other words, white hair indicates some who has lived a long time and acquired great wisdom about life and reality. No one is wiser than the transcendent Creator who is eternal, and Jesus as God within the creation has His quality of wisdom, even if he does not have His quantity of knowledge (cf. **Matt. 24:36** “But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but the Father alone.”).

Eyes like a flame of fire = Jesus is ready to carry out God’s judgment according to his role as the Messiah. Cf. **Rev. 2:18** “And to

the angel of the church in Thyatira write: The Son of God, who has eyes like a flame of fire, and His feet are like burnished bronze, says this,” Cf. [Rev. 19:11](#) And I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse, and He who sat on it is called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He judges and wages war. [12](#) His eyes are a flame of fire, and on His head are many diadems; and He has a name written on Him which no one knows except Himself. Cf. [2 Thessalonians 1:6](#) For after all it is only just for God to repay with affliction those who afflict you, [7](#) and to give relief to you who are afflicted and to us as well when the Lord Jesus will be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels in flaming fire, [8](#) dealing out retribution to those who do not know God and to those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. [9](#) These will pay the penalty of eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power, [10](#) when He comes to be glorified in His saints on that day, and to be marveled at among all who have believed — for our testimony to you was believed.

<sup>15</sup> Feet like burnished bronze are symbolic of taking a strong standing, i.e., firmly planted in one’s beliefs and role that God has given to a person or thing. Jesus is firmly planted in the eternal plans and purposes of God for him as the Son of God, Messiah, King, Priest, and Ruler of the Kingdom of God.

[Ezekiel 1:7](#) Their legs were straight and their feet were like a calf’s hoof, and they gleamed like burnished bronze.

[Daniel 10:6](#) His body also was like beryl, his face had the appearance of lightning, his eyes were like flaming torches, his arms and feet like the gleam of polished bronze, and the sound of his words like the sound of a tumult.

[Revelation 2:18](#) “And to the angel of the church in Thyatira write: The Son of God, who has eyes like a flame of fire, and His feet are like burnished bronze, says this:

A voice like the sound of many waters is a strong and mighty voice, indeed, like the voice of God in [Ezekiel 43:1](#). Jesus is speaking with God’s voice because he is the icon of God within the creation.

[Ezekiel 1:24](#) I also heard the sound of their wings like the sound of abundant waters as they went, like the voice of the Almighty, a sound of tumult like the sound of an army camp; whenever they stood still, they dropped their wings.

[Ezekiel 43:1](#) Then he led me to the gate, the gate facing toward the east; [2](#) and behold, the glory of the God of Israel was coming from the way of the east. And His voice was like the sound of many waters; and the earth shone with His glory.

[Revelation 14:2](#) And I heard a voice from heaven, like the sound of many waters and like the sound of loud thunder, and the voice which I heard was like the sound of harpists playing on their harps.

[Revelation 19:6](#) Then I heard something like the voice of a great multitude and like the sound of many waters and like the sound of mighty peals of thunder, saying, Hallelujah! For the Lord our God, the Almighty, reigns.”

<sup>16</sup> The seven stars are the “angeli” of the seven churches, i.e., the angelos of Yahweh that is present within the authentic believers of each Christian community in each of the seven cities. For Jesus to hold these angeli is for him to be the focal point of God’s activity within these Christian gatherings, indeed, within any individual Christian and to rule over all them.

[Revelation 1:20](#) “As for the mystery of the seven stars which you saw in My right hand, and the seven golden lampstands: the seven stars are the angels of the seven churches, and the seven lampstands are the seven churches.”

[Revelation 2:1](#) “To the angel of the church in Ephesus write: The One who holds the seven stars in His right hand, the One who walks among the seven golden lampstands, says this:

[Revelation 3:1](#) “To the angel of the church in Sardis write: He who has the seven Spirits of God and the seven stars, says this: ‘I know your deeds, that you have a name that you are alive, but you are dead.’

The sharp two-edged sword from Jesus’ mouth is his ability to destroy his enemies, especially the Beast and his army at the end after they have killed most of the unbelievers in Israel. Jesus is loving, but he is also executes God’s justice as God within the creation. As God destroys forever the unbelievers by eliminating them from His story, Jesus kills unbelievers on the battlefield when he returns as described in [Revelation 19](#).

[Isaiah 49:2](#) He has made My mouth like a sharp sword, in the shadow of His hand He has concealed Me; and He has also made Me a select arrow, He has hidden Me in His quiver.

[2 Thessalonians 2:8](#) Then that lawless one will be revealed whom the Lord will slay with the breath of His mouth and bring to an end by the appearance of His coming.

[Revelation 2:12](#) “And to the angel of the church in Pergamum write: The One who has the sharp two-edged sword says this:

[Revelation 2:16](#) ‘Therefore repent; or else I am coming to you quickly, and I will make war against them with the sword of My mouth.’

[Revelation 19:15](#) From His mouth comes a sharp sword, so that with it He may strike down the nations, and He will rule them with a rod of iron; and He treads the wine press of the fierce wrath of God, the Almighty.

A face that is a bright light, as bright as the sun which is impossible to look at directly, is symbolic of Jesus’ being the very repository of divine truth within the creation. Paul says in [Colossians 1:19](#) that God has had all the fullness of truth that we can know in this world and in the creation to be found in Jesus.

[Matthew 17:2](#) And He was transfigured before them; and His face shone like the sun, and His garments became as white as light.

[Revelation 10:1](#) I saw another strong angel coming down out of heaven, clothed with a cloud; and the rainbow was upon his head, and his face was like the sun, and his feet like pillars of fire.

<sup>17</sup> John was clearly stunned by the appearance of Jesus, falling inert, motionless, and speechless at his feet in a worshipful pose. What could he say to such a person? Nothing, except to bow before him in awe and perhaps a healthy amount of fear with the sword protruding from Jesus’ mouth.

However, Jesus encourages him not to be afraid of him, and on what basis? He knows that John is an authentic believer and has nothing to fear from God’s justice and wrath.

Jesus also says that he is the first and the last, which he repeats in [Rev. 22:12](#) “Behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me, to render to every man according to what he has done. [13](#) “I am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the

beginning and the end.” Even though in Revelation 22:13 Jesus uses the same words as God in 1:8 to the effect that he is the Alpha and the Omega, I do not think this is a reference to his eternality and deity. Instead, Jesus must mean that he is everything that this creation is about. Nothing within it is more important than he is. He is the first thing that a sinful human being should know, and he is the last thing also, and everything in between. Indeed, if a person knows nothing else but Jesus and believes the truth about him, then he is blessed. Cf. [Colossians 1:16](#) For by [in regard to] Him all things were created, both in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things have been created through [in view of] Him and for Him.

Jesus is also the one who was resurrected from the dead to demonstrate that God approved of his obedience to die on the cross in in order to qualify to be our champion, king, and priest. In addition, he will live forever (“into the ages”) as the ruler of the Kingdom of God, so that all who believe in him will also live eternally with him.

Hades (ᾠδης) translates שְׁאוֹל (Sheol) in the OT 61x and refers to the place of the departed dead, i.e., to their non-existence until the resurrections when Jesus returns and the end of the millennial kingdom. Therefore, “death and Hades” refer to the same thing—the end of one’s physical existence in this realm to await God’s judgment and the determination of one’s eternal state, either life or non-existence.

EBC – In the ANE, wearing a key that could open and shut places was a sign of power and status.

Here Jesus is saying that he has the power, authority, and status to bring dead people who no longer exist out of their state of non-existence and grant them either life eternal or destruction forever. Cf. Revelation 20 and the first and second resurrections.

<sup>18</sup> Jesus encourages John to write down everything that he is learning from what he is hearing and from the visions which he is seeing and will see. These describe reality as it actually is with God ruling over the creation, which is His story, in which He is demonstrating His glory and majesty through His justice and mercy. Things exist (“the things that are”), including God and Jesus, and things will exist (“the things which will take place after these things”) because God will sovereignly bring them about within the story of the creation. And nothing and no one will stop God from carrying out His eternal plans and purposes within the story. Notice the similarity of the description of things – ἃ εἰσὶν καὶ ἃ ῥηθήσονται μετὰ ταῦτα – to God in 1:4 & 8 – ὁ ὢν καὶ ὁ ἦν καὶ ὁ ἐρχόμενος in both cases – which, I think, lends credence to the description of God as the all-encompassing, independent, and transcendent Creator of the “things which are which are about to be after these things.” The vital thing for us human beings to do is to make the correct theological and causal connection between God and everything that exists in this reality which we inhabit. If we do not, we are rejecting God and will incur His wrath and condemnation.

God is a God who communicates exactly what He wants sinful human beings to know for the sake of their living their lives properly, which in the final analysis is to live a life for the purpose of acquiring eternal life in the Kingdom of God. We really do not need to know anything more or else, but God has so designed this creation that we are naturally and appropriately fascinated by different elements of it. Therefore the reason for the different subjects in schools and different people finding themselves attracted to one or other of these subjects. Nevertheless, the main subject is always God and Jesus and what God is doing vis-à-vis Jesus.

<sup>19</sup> It is interesting that these letters are to Christian communities in western Turkey (Asia in John’s day) which are probably mostly Gentile in their makeup. In other words, while Revelation mostly addresses God’s judgment of the Jews, its visions are presented to the apostle John on an island near Asia and addressed to mostly Gentiles.

The seven stars are symbolic of God’s presence in each Christian community. See notes for 1:16.

The seven lampstands are symbolic of the Christian communities to which Revelation is being written. These lampstands can either have a lamp that shines, indicating that they are embracing the truth of the gospel, or not have a shining lamp, indicating that they are off track and pursuing lies and falsehood instead. In other words, these Christian communities can either be full of the light of the truth, or that can be full of the darkness of lies. And Jesus is going to warn them of this.

<sup>20</sup> In each of these messages to the seven churches (community of believers) in the cities of Asia Minor ends, Jesus speaks to their individual and somewhat unique circumstances. The Nicolaitans seem to be false teachers who permit or even encourage immorality in the midst of belief in Jesus. Jesus also ends each message with the important statement, “To him who overcomes...” or “He who overcomes...” and includes something that is a component of eternal life. The rest of Revelation spells out how to qualify for and obtain eternal life vs. destruction. These messages are therefore immediately relevant to the Christians in Asia Minor of John’s day who are living under some kind of “beast” (government) as the Jews will just before Jesus’ return. They are also relevant to all other Christians (and would be to believers in OT times) because all people of biblical belief have lived or are living under the oppression of some kind of satanically motivated “beast” (government) in cultures that have embraced Satan’s lies and been deceived by him into demonstrating their rebellion against God beyond simply the influence of their moral depravity. It is easy to join a Christian group and believe that one is committed to God by participating in the religious life of the group. What is hard is overcoming the lies and deceptions of Satan that so easily find their way into Christian groups. Thus, the message of Revelation is not for me to use against other people, but for me to motivate me to ask myself whether I am genuinely committed to God, Jesus the Messiah, and their truth that places me in a the crosshairs of the world that is by definition hostile to God.

Jesus identifies himself as the author of this first letter by mentioning what has already been said about him in 1:12,13 & 16, that God is present in each Christian community for the sake of Jesus, and Jesus through the Spirit of God is also present among them, especially now that he is communicating these letters and the entire book of Revelation to them.

Every government which has existed in human history has been a precursor, forewarning, foreshadowing, and harbinger of the Beast of Revelation, that final government which will subjugate the Jews and eventually try to destroy them while also exercising dominion over the entire rest of the world. Every previous government has to some degree elements of the final Beast of Revelation, which will be the worst and most oppressive government in human history where Satan’s goal has been to destroy

God's chosen people, the Jews, and all followers of Jesus the Messiah. Thus all Christians are tested as to whether or not they are committed to overcoming the "beast" and his lies from Satan so that they remain true followers of Jesus and his teachings. The irony will be that while the Beast will be the worst government ever, it will immediately precede and be replaced by the best government ever, that of Jesus who will rescue and preserve the Jews and exercise dominion over the rest of the world by ruling all the other nations with a rod of iron (cf. Revelation 2:26,27; 19:15).

The components of eternal life in the messages are these –

- 1) Ephesus – To him who overcomes, I will grant to eat of the tree of life which is in the Paradise of God.
- 2) Smyrna – He who overcomes will not be hurt by the second death.
- 3) Pergamum – To him who overcomes, to him I will give some of the hidden manna, and I will give him a white stone, and a new name written on the stone which no one knows but he who receives it.
- 4) Thyatira – He who overcomes, and he who keeps My deeds until the end, TO HIM I WILL GIVE AUTHORITY OVER THE NATIONS; AND HE SHALL RULE THEM WITH A ROD OF IRON, AS THE VESSELS OF THE POTTER ARE BROKEN TO PIECES, as I also have received authority from My Father; and I will give him the morning star.
- 5) Sardis – He who overcomes will thus be clothed in white garments; and I will not erase his name from the book of life, and I will confess his name before My Father and before His angels.
- 6) Philadelphia – He who overcomes, I will make him a pillar in the temple of My God, and he will not go out from it anymore; and I will write on him the name of My God, and the name of the city of My God, the new Jerusalem, which comes down out of heaven from My God, and My new name.
- 7) Laodicea – He who overcomes, I will grant to him to sit down with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne.

<sup>21</sup> The fact that they need to repent means that their first love of righteousness and goodness in their choices and behavior has become irrelevant to them in spite of their apparent concern for the truth in contrast to error and lies. This latter concern for ideas needs to be combined with an equal concern for doing good, moral behavior and choices as that which constitutes authentic Christianity and that is a byproduct of loving God, His salvation, and promise of eternal life that will involve moral perfection. Therefore, they need to repent before God, embrace His promised mercy, and change the way they are behaving. Jesus identified himself to this church as the one who walks among the seven golden lampstands, and he warns them that he will remove theirs, i.e., he will disband their gathering of believers (or at least make their gathering an invalid one) if they do not repent of not pursuing goodness and morality. They will cease to be a gathering of authentic Christians. Notice that repentance is mentioned twice.

cf. [1 Thessalonians 5:19](#) Do not quench the Spirit. [20](#) Do not despise prophetic utterances.

<sup>22</sup> So that to reject certain immoral actions, but they need to love doing real, moral actions.

<sup>23</sup> To overcome is to shed the lack of concern for morality and regain it in the midst of their intellectual concern for truth. This will provide them with the opportunity to "eat of the tree of life...of God," which is symbolic of participating in the eternal Kingdom of God—of both Revelation 20 and Revelation 21, the millennial kingdom and the new earth respectively.

<sup>24</sup> Jesus describes himself as he did in 1:17 & 18. See above.

<sup>25</sup> These sound like the Jews of either Galatians or 1 John, either pressuring the Gentile Christians to follow the Mosaic Covenant while believing in Jesus as the Messiah or pressuring them to follow the Mosaic Covenant and abandon their belief in Jesus because he is not the Messiah, respectively. Thus, they are buying into one or the other of Satan's lies.

<sup>26</sup> Persecution at the hands of the unbelieving Jews? Probably. But persevering in belief, whether through only being imprisoned or through it and death, will result in the "award" of eternal life from Jesus at his return (cf. Revelation 19 & 20).

Jesus identified himself to this church as the one who was resurrected from the dead to life, and he promises them eternal life and escape from the second death of eternal destruction if they are faithful to their faith and belief in him until their earthly deaths.

<sup>27</sup> To overcome is to conquer Satan and his lies by persevering in belief in Jesus and the truth of the gospel that leads to the eternal Kingdom of God. The second death is the lake of fire of the Great White Throne Judgment of Revelation 21. A persevering, true believer will not be condemned and destroyed by God at this judgment. Instead, we find out that the believer is either resurrected or lifted off the earth to be eternally transformed into a morally perfect being when Jesus returns.

<sup>28</sup> Jesus describes himself as John did in 1:16.

<sup>29</sup> Satan not only dwells in Pergamum, but he also rules Asia from it. The city sounds like a hotbed of Satanic lies and influence, probably in the outward form of intense pagan idolatry, emperor worship, and accompanying sexual immorality as part of it. The king of Pergamum willed the city to Rome when he died in 133 B.C. As a result, it became the center of Roman rule in Asia. To the extent that it was tied to Rome, to the same extent it was led by Satan's lies that he was able to inject into the main government. The city was also a major location of Greek, pagan worship. Four temples—to Athena, to Zeus as Champion of all the gods, to Dionysus, and the Asclepius, the god of healing. The people also worshiped Egyptian gods, and the Roman emperor as a god.

The Jewish population was small in comparison to other Asian cities.

<sup>30</sup> This is the first problem in the Pergamum Christian community. They are divided so that some supposed Christians are actually attempting to lead people away from the truth and engage in immoral activity contrary to God's commandments. Their argument must be something to the effect that God is completely forgiving and therefore a little sin such as sexual immorality and worship of pagan gods ("eating things sacrificed to idols") to avoid persecution will not destroy a person's right to eternal life.

This is similar to the strategy that Balaam encouraged the Moabites to use to turn the Israelites away from God—cf. Numbers 25:1; 31:7-15.

<sup>31</sup> This is the second problem, which is the same as that in the first church of the Ephesians involving the Nicolaitans = conquer the people, the same meaning for Balaam.

<sup>32</sup> Jesus identified himself to this church as the one who has the sharp two-edged sword. Here it threatens to use it against those who are following the teaching of both those like Balaam and the Nicolaitans. This maybe means that they will die because of their disobedience of God, which would be in line with how this symbol is used in Revelation 19 when Jesus returns and destroys the army of the Beast on the land of Israel. But it more likely refers to their eventually incurring God's eternal judgment and condemnation.

ταχὺ = quickly, soon. In this case it may refer to Jesus' and God's judgment at the second resurrection, or it may refer to the persecution that will fully reveal these people's unbelief because they will abandon whatever belief they may pretend to have. The first option is more likely since judgment is more the idea of the sword of his mouth.

<sup>33</sup> God through His work in the world, i.e., through His Spirit, and through His work of making the angel of Jesus appear to John, is communicating all these important ideas to these seven churches. Jesus urges them all to embrace this information.

The one who overcomes is the one who perseveres in belief throughout his entire life. To this person Jesus will give "some of the hidden manna," idea the food of eternal life, which is probably eternal life itself.

A name unknown to anyone but the person refers to their special role within God's story that only the person himself fully knows, realizes, and lives.

Cf. [Revelation 19:12](#) His eyes are a flame of fire, and on His head are many diadems; and He has a name written on Him which no one knows except Himself.

<sup>34</sup> Jesus describes himself as John did in 1:14,15.

This is the only place where "Son of God" is used in Revelation.

<sup>35</sup> For the most part, these Christians are doing well and pursuing a life of truth and love that is they are engaging in with even greater commitment than when they became believers in the gospel. This sounds like what Peter exhorts his readers to do in [2 Peter 1:8](#) For if these qualities are yours and are increasing, they render you neither useless nor unfruitful in the true knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. [9](#) For he who lacks these qualities is blind or short-sighted, having forgotten his purification from his former sins. [10](#) Therefore, brethren, be all the more diligent to make certain about His calling and choosing you; for as long as you practice these things, you will never stumble; [11](#) for in this way the entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ will be abundantly supplied to you.

<sup>36</sup> Jezebel is probably not her real name, but this woman is acting like the Jezebel of the OT who was an abject rebel against God (cf. 1 Kings 16-21; 2 Kings 9 – [1 Kings 21:25](#) Surely there was no one like Ahab who sold himself to do evil in the sight of the LORD, because Jezebel his wife incited him). And it is not that those who are following her are actually eating things sacrificed to idols, or at least that this is not really the issue. The issue is that they are combining worshiping of pagan gods with worship of the one true God while thinking that this is permissible. They are not fully committed to God in their hearts. And this may include sexual immorality which they are rationalizing or denying as being immoral.

This woman is leading Christians away from their faith and moral obedience to God in the same manner as those in Pergamum who are like Balaam.

<sup>37</sup> Options – 1) physical ramifications of Jezebel's sin and those who follow her; 2) eternal judgment and condemnation for Jezebel and those who follow her so that these words are metaphorical;

At least the last statement refers to the final judgment and these sinners' incurring God's condemnation and destruction.

[Rom. 8:27](#) and He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is, because He intercedes for the saints according to the will of God.

[Psa. 62:12](#) And lovingkindness is Yours, O Lord, for You recompense a man according to his work.

[Matt. 16:27](#) "For the Son of Man is going to come in the glory of His Father with His angels, and WILL THEN REPAY EVERY MAN ACCORDING TO HIS DEEDS.

[Rom. 2:6](#) who WILL RENDER TO EACH PERSON ACCORDING TO HIS DEEDS.

<sup>38</sup> So these immoral people within the community of believers know that they are following Satan and even label their behavior as Satanic and "deep" within the lies of Satan, even while confessing that Jesus is their Lord!? This is remarkable self-deception, but it must be possible if Jesus is describing it this way.

<sup>39</sup> Jesus' exhortation to the true believers is to persevere in their faith in the truth of the gospel until he returns (τῶν ἀρχρ[ς] οὐ ἄν ἦξω).

<sup>40</sup> Jesus identifies those who will acquire eternal life and salvation to exist and rule with him—those who conquer anything and anyone who stands opposed to the truth of God and the gospel of the kingdom of God which the risen Messiah will rule. And they conquer and overcome this opposition by persevering in their belief.

[1 John 5:4,5](#) – [4](#) For whoever is born of God overcomes the world; and this is the victory that has overcome the world — our faith. [5](#) Who is the one who overcomes the world, but he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?

Options – 1) the one who guards Jesus' activities that demonstrated that he is the Messiah so as to continue to believe this until Jesus returns (or the person dies—implied as a possibility); 2) the one who guards Jesus' instructions on how to live as a Christian until Jesus returns (or the person dies—implied as a possibility) in this world that opposes the truth. I am inclined to go with #2 because Jesus just finished talking about rewarding people according to their deeds.

Jesus declares that he is going to share his authority over the world with these believers, even to the extent that they will shatter people like pottery that breaks into pieces when struck with a rod of iron. This is another ironic reversal like that of Israel, which has been the tail while the Gentile nations have been the head (cf. Deuteronomy 28). These Christians who are experiencing an implied persecution will rule over and even shatter their oppressors—the latter probably a reference to what Jesus will do in



conjunction with immortal believers to anyone who rebels against his rule during the millennial kingdom. In other words, we will participate with Jesus in disciplining and punishing those who oppose him.

But where exactly does Jesus get the notion of believers' ruling and punishing with him?

**Psalm 2:8** 'Ask of Me, and I will surely give the nations as Your inheritance, and the very ends of the earth as Your possession. 9 'You shall break them with a rod of iron, you shall shatter them like earthenware.

**Revelation 19:11** And I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse, and He who sat on it is called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He judges and wages war. 12 His eyes are a flame of fire, and on His head are many diadems [crowns]; and He has a name written on Him which no one knows except Himself. 13 He is clothed with a robe dipped in blood, and His name is called The Word of God. 14 And the armies which are in heaven, clothed in fine linen, white and clean, were following Him on white horses. 15 From His mouth comes a sharp sword, so that with it He may strike down the nations, and He will rule them with a rod of iron; and He treads the wine press of the fierce wrath of God, the Almighty. 16 And on His robe and on His thigh He has a name written, "KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS."

**Revelation 20:4** Then I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and judgment [ruling] was given to them. And I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded because of their testimony of Jesus and because of the word of God, and those who had not worshiped the beast or his image, and had not received the mark on their forehead and on their hand; and they came to life and reigned with Christ for a thousand years.

<sup>41</sup> If Jesus is the bright morning star, the light of truth that shines in the dark of night as it is about to become day, then these believers will be likewise, always bringing truth to the world as God's and Jesus' priests who instruct both believers and nonbelievers in the gospel.

**Revelation 5:9** And they sang a new song, saying, "Worthy are You to take the book [scroll] and to break its seals; for You were slain, and purchased for God with Your blood men from every tribe and tongue and people and nation. 10 "You have made them to be a kingdom and priests to our God; and they will reign upon the earth."

**Revelation 22:16** "I, Jesus, have sent My angel to testify to you these things for the churches. I am the root and the descendant of David, the bright morning star."

<sup>42</sup> A repetition of Jesus' statement at the end of his letter to the first church in Ephesus (2:7).

<sup>43</sup> Sardis was the capital of Lydia and about 30 miles south of Thyatira. Virtually impregnable, Cyrus the Great of Persia captured it in the sixth century B.C., and Antiochus, the Seleucid, did the same about two hundred years later. Eventually, because of its wealth, the city became a place of moral and religious decadence.

Jesus describes himself as John did in Revelation 1:16. In addition, he says that he has the seven Spirits of God, symbolic of God's activity on his behalf throughout the world to change people's hearts and cause them to be authentic believers. But he also comments to this group of Christians that they think that they are headed towards eternal life, but instead they are headed towards death and destruction because they must be lacking genuine belief from changed inwardness. Implicit is that the Spirit of God has not yet changed them and they should seek this from God in order to gain eternal life.

<sup>44</sup> The "things that remain" must be a modicum of truth that these "Christians" are holding on to. But they are still lacking authentic belief in them that results in bearing the fruit of loving and moral actions that exemplify the truth. Their deeds have not appropriately filled out their belief.

<sup>45</sup> Jesus exhorts these "dead" believers to wake up and live! This means to grab on to the truth of the gospel and live it with genuine love for God and others. This would make their actions "completed" (τὰ ἔργα πεπληρωμένα) in the sight of God, even Jesus' God.

Good example of this being a subjective issue. It is not that Jesus' return will be without obvious signs. It is that people will be so asleep to the truth that the signs will mean nothing to them such that they wake up and repent of their sins. While they are saying, "Peace and safety," God's judgment and condemnation will come upon them (cf. 1 Thessalonians 5).

<sup>46</sup> Again, Jesus mentions the idea of overcoming the lies, deceptions, and temptations of the world to persevere in faith and attain eternal life. These are the same people who are "worthy" of eternal life, which means that they have met the condition of God of a changed inwardness. They are "fit" for His mercy and eternal life. Not that they actually deserve it, but that they simply are the kind of people whom God requires to obtain forgiveness and life. But these genuine believers are a minority, a remnant among the religious unbelievers who claim to be Christians.

<sup>47</sup> Only those who have the spiritual ability to acknowledge the importance of what Jesus is saying will do so, because of the implied idea that the Holy Spirit has changed their hearts.

<sup>48</sup> Philadelphia, so named because of its founder who was given the name "brother lover," Attalus II of Pergamum who ruled from 159-138 B.C., was about 25 miles southeast of Sardis. In A.D. 17 an earthquake that destroyed Sardis and ten other cities also destroyed Philadelphia.

Jesus first describes himself as "holy," i.e., separate from all other human beings by his special role, which is implied in the entirety of the description in 1:12-18. Then he says that he "has the key of David" etc., which is probably the same as the having the "keys of death and Hades" as mentioned in 1:18. This means that as the fulfillment of the Davidic Covenant, he has the role of being an offering and priest on behalf of sinners, so that if they exercise genuine belief in him, then the door so to speak to eternal life is open for them and cannot be shut, while if they reject Jesus, that same door is shut and cannot be opened any other way.

**Isaiah 22:15** Thus says the Lord GOD of hosts, "Come, go to this steward, to Shebna, who is in charge of the royal household, 16 'What right do you have here, and whom do you have here, that you have hewn a tomb for yourself here, you who hew a tomb on the height, you who carve a resting place for yourself in the rock?' 17 'Behold, the LORD is about to hurl you headlong, O man. and He is about to grasp you firmly 18 and roll you tightly like a ball, to be cast into a vast country; there you will die and

there your splendid chariots will be, you shame of your master's house.' 19 "I will depose you from your office, and I will pull you down from your station. 20 "Then it will come about in that day, that I will summon My servant Eliakim the son of Hilkiah, 21 and I will clothe him with your tunic and tie your sash securely about him. I will entrust him with your authority, and he will become a father to the inhabitants of Jerusalem and to the house of Judah. 22 "Then I will set the key of the house of David on his shoulder, when he opens no one will shut, when he shuts no one will open. 23 "I will drive him like a peg in a firm place, and he will become a throne of glory to his father's house."

<sup>49</sup> Jesus goes on to comment that he knows and therefore evaluates their actions, that they are from genuine belief. As a result, they will be able to take advantage of the "door" which he has opened to eternal life by his death and resurrection. They have "little power," meaning no power at all to gain God's mercy and eternal life for themselves (and they know it). But they have guarded Jesus' logos, his message of the truth of the gospel, and they have not denied that they are believers in him and his "name," that his role is to be the Messiah, which implies that they have been tempted to deny him, perhaps because of persecution.

No one will be able to shut the door to eternal life for them, because they are genuine followers of Jesus as the Messiah.

<sup>50</sup> Jesus speaks of "Jews," who must be genuine descendants of Abraham through Jacob. They are not proselytes to the Jewish religion. But Jesus says that they are lying about their Jewishness and not really Jews, because they are not being obedient to God in the manner which He requires, i.e., with circumcised hearts in line with Deuteronomy 10:16 and Deuteronomy 30. They are probably committed to obeying the Mosaic Covenant, but their obedience is only external. As Paul says in Romans 2:28,29, the true Jew is the one whose heart is circumcised by the Spirit of God.

And because these Jews are not authentic believers in God, they are following Satan just as much as any pagan who rejects God and worships the forces of nature as represented by their gods. This makes them members of the "synagogue [gathering] of Satan," not of the synagogue of God. They read and study the Torah, the OT, but they lack biblical inwardness and genuine belief.

Jesus goes on to say that he will make these false Jews bow down at the feet of the Philadelphian Christians, which probably refers to their eventually acknowledging that believers in history will have ruled the earth with Jesus during the millennial kingdom, even if these Jews die before the time and are conscious to know all this only at the Great White Throne Judgment. Like the people to whom Paul refers in Philippians 2:9-11 (if Paul means all humanity), these Jews will eventually have to submit to God's and Jesus' sovereign rule over the world, even if it is to their destruction because of their lack of genuine belief. When they do this, they will in effect also be admitting that Jesus has truly loved these believers by his willingness to die for them and rescue them from God's wrath and condemnation.

<sup>51</sup> Options for the hour of testing – 1) the destruction of Jerusalem and expulsion of the Jews from the land in A.D. 70 and A.D. 132-135; 2) the great tribulation between the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70 and Jesus' return; 3) the trumpets and bowls of wrath that make up God's final earthly judgment of the Jews that will also affect many Gentiles throughout the world, both believers and non-believers.

Because Jesus refers to the hour of testing coming on the whole world (ἐπὶ τῆς οἰκουμένης ὅλης) and its purpose is to "test those who dwell on the earth (πειράσαι τοὺς κατοικοῦντας ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς)," so that he basically repeats himself, it could be that the first part refers truly to the whole world while the second part refers to only the land of Israel and the Jews. Thus, the whole world will feel the effects of God's final judgment of the Jews, and it will be mainly those Jews who are living on the land of Israel who will experience the majority of this judgment.

Because the book of Revelation focuses on #3 and the above paragraph is very possible, I'm inclined to think this is the correct interpretation.

Jesus does refer to the hour of testing as something "which is about to come." And he says in the next verse that he is coming "quickly," which seem to mean in a short amount of time. But, like Revelation 4:1, which speaks of "what must take place after these things," he is speaking apocalyptically. This is to say that the visions are certainly coming to John in a moment, and these visions describe events that will occur during the time between the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70 and Jesus' return. And most of the visions pertain to just a few decades before his return. Therefore, his return is about to take place in vision form in the book of Revelation to the effect that anyone who reads about them should live as though Jesus' return is imminent.

<sup>52</sup> Jesus is saying that he is coming "quickly," meaning forthwith, i.e., without delay when the time is right, which in the Olivet Discourse he has said that not even he knows as to its exact timing, just that it is a long way off. Nevertheless, it is important for every Christian to live with high expectations of Jesus' return, which is to say, as if it could happen in his lifetime. By doing so, Jesus encourages the readers of this letter and the book of Revelation in Philadelphia that no one will take their crown/wreath. This is victory wreath of those who have run the race of belief in life and persevered in their belief. The wreath is symbolic of God's eternal mercy and life.

<sup>53</sup> Another that Jesus states what it means for a person to hold on to his wreath is to overcome the lies and temptations of this world that would lead him to reject God and abandon his faith.

To be a pillar in the temple of God is to be a fixed member of the people of God who always enjoy His presence, because the temple was where God said that He dwelt. Being in God's presence in this way will be permanent as Jesus says with the words, "and he will not go out from it anymore."

To have God's name written on a person is like a brand. It identifies the owner of this person, and the ownership will be eternal. Because the new Jerusalem in Revelation 21 is symbolic of the people of God, having its name written on a person identifies the group of people to whom he belongs. In this case, the group is comprised of all those who will spend eternity on the new earth with God and Jesus ruling over them, all because they persevered in their faith during their existences on earth.

These people will also have Jesus' name on them, meaning that they belong to him too. All that he has done to qualify to rescue people from God's wrath and destruction will be applied to them so that they acquire the right to be ruled by him for all eternity.

<sup>54</sup> Here Jesus describes himself as 1) the Amen = he is God's instrument of faithfulness to His promises and predestining people to eternal life, and 2) the faithful = the one who is faithful to fulfill the special role of king and priest which God has given him, and 3) the true witness = the one who bears testimony to the truth of God in the most explicit and accurate way, and 4) the beginning of the creation of God = he is the foundational reason for why God has even brought the creation into existence. He is not just the "reason for the season." He is the reason there is even a creation.

<sup>55</sup> For actions to be "cold" would be for them to be of an obvious immoral nature—murder, theft, adultery, etc. that comes from a complete lack of commitment to God and the things of God. For actions to be "hot" would be for them to be of an obvious moral nature—kindness, patience, forgiveness, respect for others, etc. that comes from a wholehearted commitment to God and the things of God.

<sup>56</sup> For actions to be "lukewarm" is for them to be such that it is difficult to tell if they are ultimately moral or immoral. They may in some cases appear to come from a lack of commitment to God and in other cases appear to come from a commitment to God and the things of God. These would therefore most likely be religious actions, where the people look outwardly as those who are interested in Christianity, but they could be spiritually dead on the inside. They lack authentic belief and wholehearted pursuit of obedience to God and Jesus. This is why Jesus says that he will spit them out of his mouth, meaning that he will reject them as his followers and genuine people of God if they continue in this manner. They do not have a pure heart. They are not single-mindedly devoted to God.

<sup>57</sup> The people are physically wealthy and consider this a sign from God that they are acceptable to and blessed by Him. But Jesus says that they are spiritually impoverished and lack authentic faith and a heart for God.

<sup>58</sup> Buying gold from Jesus is to acquire real wealth, the riches of God's forgiveness and the promise of eternal life, by paying for them with authentic belief that comes from a changed heart by the Spirit of God.

White garments are forgiveness and mercy from God that will eventually result in moral purity and perfection in the eternal kingdom of God. This will cover the shame of guilt that constitutes their "nakedness."

Eye salve that anoints their eyes and allows them to see is the work of God that opens their eyes to gravity of their situation because of their sin that will result in God's condemnation and destruction if they do not repent and become fully committed to God and the things of God.

<sup>59</sup> Jesus is saying that his verbal reproof of them and anything that is happening to them that could attract their attention and motivate them to do busy with God properly is out of his love for them. And he exhorts them to light a fire under their relating to God and repent of their sin so as to be fully committed to Him and Jesus as their savior.

<sup>60</sup> Jesus uses the metaphor of someone who has approached their house and knocks on the door to be allowed to enter and relate to the inhabitants in a close and friendly manner. By letting the visitor in, they are granting him the opportunity to converse and be a part of their lives in such a way that they will affect one another. The visitor is Jesus who in this letter has been appealing to them to choose to devote themselves entirely to God and him.

<sup>61</sup> Just as Jesus overcame the world's lies, temptations, and deceptions by remaining true to his mission and calling to announce himself as the demonstrate and demonstrate this through his miracles, death, and resurrection, he encourages that Laodiceans that to imitate him in their calling from God as his followers. And just as the result for him is to rule over the world and God's people, a similar result will occur for them as they rule with him—over the world of the millennial kingdom as described in Revelation 20.

<sup>62</sup> "what must take place after these things" = the very end of this present time when God finishes His discipline of the Jews for their rejection of Jesus and brings about his millennial kingdom.

The visions of Revelation begin with the 1<sup>st</sup> coming of Jesus and segue to the signs that identify God's final judgment of the Jews on the land of Israel and around the world, starting with the Satanically motivated armies invading the land. As a result, the Jews are ruled one last time by a foreign power, the Beast, who is the most powerful force in the world. He subjugates the Jews, exercises a high level of influence throughout the rest of the world, persecutes believers, and then turns on the Jews to kill all of them. He raises another Satanically motivated army which invades the land of Israel, kills a large number of unbelieving Jews (while in conjunction a great earthquake occurs which kills the rest of the unbelieving Jews in Jerusalem, on the land of Israel, and in the rest of the world through earthquakes in all the major cities), culminating in the Battle of Armageddon when Jesus returns and destroys this army which, with the earthquake, has been God's last instrument of judgment on the unbelieving Jews. The Beast and the false prophet are destroyed, and Jesus inaugurates the millennial kingdom, which is the restoration of the Kingdom of Israel and the first stage of the eternal Kingdom of God. Remaining on the land of Israel (and as those chosen to become believers in other parts of the world) are the 144,000 Jews who have remained loyal to God and not received the mark of the beast. These become the seedbed as new believers who are the first generation of authentic Jewish believers for the rest of the existence of the millennial kingdom. At Jesus' return, previous believers even going back to the beginnings of the OT are either resurrected to eternal life and moral perfection or raptured from their positions of living on the earth to the same. They all reign with Jesus over Israel and the earth and act as instructors and priests between remaining sinners and God, urging all to escape God's wrath and destruction by believing in Jesus as their Messiah as he rules from Jerusalem. Satan is locked in the abyss during this time so that he is unable to influence people with his lies and deception. At the end of the millennial kingdom, God releases him, and he succeeds in deceiving the Gentile nations, who have enjoyed so many years of peace and prosperity, to gather their armies and march on Israel to destroy the Jews and Jesus. God destroys them with fire in the final battle on earth. Then follows the Great White Throne judgment where all unbelievers are condemned first to a measured punishment based upon the level of the immorality of their actions and finally to ultimate destruction by God. After this, God creates a new heavens and a

new earth which will exist for all eternity with all believers living on the new earth under the rule of Jesus as their king and priest. The door standing open in heaven is the vision's way of indicating that John is going to view things of a nature that they reveal who God is in His transcendence and otherwise as the author of the created reality. And this will be John's introduction to God and what He has been doing, is doing, and will do in human history with the focus on the Jews and their Messiah, Jesus.

The first voice that John heard was Jesus, and he is speaking like a trumpet, meaning that he is announcing very significant truths and events. This sound like a trumpet has been the way Jesus has been speaking from the beginning of Revelation (cf. [Revelation 1:10](#) I was in the Spirit [spirit] on the Lord's day, and I heard behind me a loud voice like the sound of a trumpet, [11](#) saying, "Write in a book what you see, and send it to the seven churches: to Ephesus and to Smyrna and to Pergamum and to Thyatira and to Sardis and to Philadelphia and to Laodicea."). So, heaven is not really a place. It is the vision's place where God and what is true about Him is revealed to John in his mind.

<sup>63</sup> John is "in the spirit" in the sense that he is seeing a vision of truth about God without his actually traveling anywhere. This is what is going on in his mind only. This particular vision is not about actual events at this point in Revelation. It is truth about God. This is a vision of "heaven" where images of God, living creatures, and people are symbolic of ideas that reveal the nature of God and the reality which He has created. John sees God but provides no detailed description of Him, because He cannot be described visually in His transcendence. He is just the "One sitting on the throne...like a jasper stone and sardius in appearance." Only His eternal character, plans, and purposes are what we can know about Him through the message of the Bible and the visions of Revelation.

Jasper = an aggregate of quartz, usually red, yellow, brown, and/or green in color. It breaks with a smooth surface and is a gemstone.

Sardius = a brownish red silica mineral used as a semi-precious gemstone.

<sup>64</sup> In Genesis 6-9 and the story of Noah God destroys the world by flood and provides the rainbow afterwards as a symbol of His commitment not to do so again. The rainbow symbolizes God's patience and mercy towards sinners throughout the rest of human history until the return of Jesus and his inaugurating the first stage of the Kingdom of God by restoring the Davidic kingdom of Israel on the land of Israel and exercising complete authority over the rest of the earth. Several times in the rest of Revelation God will make reference to His patience towards the Jews.

Emerald = a gemstone and a variety of the mineral beryl that is green in color.

<sup>65</sup> 24 = 2 x 12 to symbolize the 12 twelve tribes of Israel and 12 apostles of Jesus. These symbolize all the believers of history, both Jews and Gentiles—in both the OT and NT times, who became authentic believers either through contact or inclusion with the nation of Israel in OT times, or through contact with the apostolic message in NT times. Their thrones are around and outside God's island of the sea of glass. The thrones represent their ruling with Jesus during the millennial kingdom.

[Revelation 5:9](#) And they sang a new song, saying, "Worthy are You to take the book [scroll] and to break its seals; for You were slain, and purchased for God with Your blood men from every tribe and tongue and people and nation. [10](#) "You have made them to be a kingdom and priests to our God; and they will reign upon the earth."

Their white garments symbolize their legal cleanliness, i.e., their forgiveness and justification.

[Rev. 7:13](#) Then one of the elders answered, saying to me, "These who are clothed in the white robes, who are they, and where have they come from?" [14](#) I said to him, "My lord, you know." And he said to me, "These are the ones who come out of the great tribulation, and they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.

Their crowns or wreaths symbolize their victory over Satan and the world with their lies and deceptions as in [1 John 5:4,5 – 4](#) For whoever is born of God overcomes the world; and this is the victory that has overcome the world — our faith. [5](#) Who is the one who overcomes the world, but he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?

[Revelation 2:7](#) 'He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes, I will grant to eat of the tree of life which is in the Paradise of God.'

[Revelation 3:11](#) 'I am coming quickly; hold fast what you have, so that no one will take your crown.'

<sup>66</sup> Symbolic of God's sovereign power and majesty as at Mt. Sinai in [Exodus 19:16](#) So it came about on the third day, when it was morning, that there were thunder and lightning flashes and a thick cloud upon the mountain and a very loud trumpet sound, so that all the people who were in the camp trembled.

<sup>67</sup> Symbolic of the complete activity of God within the creation through His Spirit and is based upon the Jewish week of six days of activity and the 7<sup>th</sup> which represents the completion of work. Thus, God always completes His work within the creation as He has sovereignly planned. The fact that there are lamps of fire burning before the throne is symbolic of the Spirit's bringing the light of truth to the world in general and to those specifically whom God has chosen to receive His eternal mercy and forgiveness.

[Revelation 1:4](#) John to the seven churches that are in Asia: Grace to you and peace, from Him who is and who was and who is to come, and from the seven Spirits who are before His throne,

<sup>68</sup> A solid surface as the base of God's island is symbolic of His absolute sovereignty over created reality and the eternal shalom which will not be disturbed by sin and death once it is in place in the eternal Kingdom of God. Even during the millennial kingdom it will be impossible to prevent Jesus from carrying out his role as he rules the world. He will reign with a rod of iron, and no one will defy him and upset the shalom that he brings especially to the Jews on the land of Israel and to somewhat the same degree to the rest of the world. The latter will still contain unbelievers. So their existences will not be as peaceful and shalom-like as that of the Jews in Israel.

Two possibilities for the four living things – 1) animal like creatures who symbolize the four roles of Jesus as the Messiah, his authority as king (lion), his sacrifice (bull, ὄμιον μόσχῳ), his human existence as the icon of God on earth (face like a man), and his being the Savior and Champion of his people (flying eagle – the wings provide the ability for people to flee danger, God's wrath, and be saved (cf. [Rev. 12:14](#) But the two wings of the great eagle were given to the woman, so that she could fly into the

wilderness to her place, where she was nourished for a time and times and half a time, from the presence of the serpent).

2) animal like creatures who symbolize all living creatures who would acknowledge God's sovereign rule and goodness if they could speak.

These beings seem to be on the island with God and therefore are God along with Him who sits on the throne and the seven Spirits. So this is Jesus as the third way that God exists and who fulfills his role completely as King, sacrifice, man, and Savior/Champion. The word "creatures" is ζῷα ζῶον (ζῶω) Noun neuter plural nominative living being; animal; (zodiacal) sign; life. Therefore, these could be simply representations of a composite being, i.e., Jesus in his four roles as the Messiah.

[Heb. 9:12](#) and not through the blood of goats and calves (μόσχον), but through His own blood, He entered the holy place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption.

[Ex. 20:24](#) 'You shall make an altar of earth for Me, and you shall sacrifice on it your burnt offerings and your peace offerings, your sheep and your oxen (τοὺς μόσχους ὑμῶν); in every place where I cause My name to be remembered, I will come to you and bless you.'

<sup>69</sup> Jesus saw everything clearly that he was supposed to see as God within human history, but he also worshiped and extolled God during his ministry on earth (cf. John 17 and his prayer). Thus, here he is continuously ascribing to the transcendent Creator all the greatness and majesty that He deserves as the eternal sovereign ruler of all creation.

[Isaiah 6:3](#) And one called out to another and said, "Holy, Holy, Holy, is the LORD of hosts, The whole earth is full of His glory."

[Revelation 1:4](#) John to the seven churches that are in Asia: Grace to you and peace, from Him who is and who was and who is to come, and from the seven Spirits who are before His throne,

<sup>70</sup> Because Jesus worships the transcendent Creator and ascribes all glory to Him, those whom he saves through his priestly role do the same, recognizing that it is God and not they who has brought about their salvation through Jesus' death and the Spirit's inward work to produce authentic belief throughout their experiences as believers. Thus, they cast their crowns/wreaths, which symbolize their conquering the world through their faith, before God's throne. They are saying, "God, it is You who have saved us, and not we ourselves."

Here εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας τῶν αἰώνων means strictly into eternity in contrast to [Revelation 20:10](#) And the devil who deceived them was thrown into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are also; and they will be tormented day and night forever and ever. In this latter verse, the phrase means up to the time when their measured punishment ends, and then they are destroyed by the fire in the lake so that the effect of their sin is actually eternal.

<sup>71</sup> All believers will rightly acknowledge that every element ("all things") within the creation has been and will continue to be that which God alone as created to accomplish His eternal purposes and plans. This is His story and logos, so that nothing within the creation exists apart from His causing it to as part of His story.

The Majority Text uses εἰσὶν (is, exists) instead of ἦσαν for "existed." The former makes more sense, that everything is always exactly as God wants it to be according to His desire and plan for the story that He is telling.

cf. [Acts 4:24](#) And when they heard this, they lifted their voices to God with one accord and said, "O Lord, it is You who MADE THE HEAVEN AND THE EARTH AND THE SEA, AND ALL THAT IS IN THEM. [[Exodus 20:11](#) "For in six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth, the sea and all that is in them, and rested on the seventh day; therefore the LORD blessed the sabbath day and made it holy." Cf. Nehemiah 9:6; Psalm 146:6]

And [Acts 4:27](#) "For truly in this city there were gathered together against Your holy servant Jesus, whom You anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, along with the Gentiles and the peoples of Israel, [28](#) to do whatever Your hand and Your purpose predestined to occur."

<sup>72</sup> Options – 1) The story of all of earthly history because it is written on front and back—no room for anything else; 2) The story of the Great and Terrible Day of the Lord (cf. Malachi 4) and God's final discipline of the Jews and inauguration of Jesus' millennial kingdom.

While #2 makes more sense in the light of Jesus' words in Revelation 4:1 – "what must take place after these things", i.e., that most everything in Revelation refers to the future and final acts of God in order to bring about the millennial kingdom of Jesus' ruling over the Jews and the rest of the world, the vision in Revelation 10 of the "angel," i.e., Jesus, with the little scroll leads to the scroll of Revelation 5 being option #1, the story of all human history and the little scroll being option #2 above.

Options – 1) The seals are all along the edge of the rolled up scroll so that breaking all seven of them is required to read even the first part of what is written. 2) The seals start with one on the edge of the rolled up scroll and then six more as it is unrolled little by little to reveal all the scroll eventually.

<sup>73</sup> "to open the book [scroll]" = to be the basis for God's finishing the fulfilling of His promises to the Jews, especially of making them "a great nation" (cf. Genesis 12:1-3). Only Jesus can be such basis by his life and death by which he qualified for his roles of King, Priest, Judge, Ruler, and Prophet of both Israel and all Gentiles who have genuine, biblical faith.

"to break the seals" = to reveal God's manner of disciplining His people, the Jews, such that this person also has the right and authority to rescue them from God's wrath and to rule over them as the "great nation." But while the seals pertain mainly to the Jews, because the scroll is symbolic of all human history, there is also the effect of these same kinds of hardships from God on the Gentile nations too.

Cf. [Jeremiah 28:8](#) "The prophets who were before me and before you from ancient times prophesied against many lands and against great kingdoms, of war and of calamity and of pestilence." In other words, God holds entire nations accountable for their cultural rebellion against Him and visits them with the same kind of instruments of justice as He does the nation of Israel.

<sup>74</sup> "to look into it" = the same thing as opening it in the previous verse.

<sup>75</sup> John must sense how important are the contents of this scroll and its seals, so that he grieves over there not being a regular human being (or other created being) to perform the tasks of breaking the seals and revealing its contents—in order to bring

about the fulfillment of God's promises to the Jews so as to bring evil to an end and inaugurate the righteousness of the Kingdom of God.

<sup>76</sup> Lion of Judah – cf. Genesis 49:9, “Judah is a lion’s whelp; from the prey, my son, you have gone up. He couches, he lies down as a lion, and as a lion, who dares rouse him up?”

Root of David – cf. Isaiah 11:10, Then in that day the nations will resort to the root of Jesse, who will stand as a signal for the peoples; and His resting place will be glorious.

And Jesus has overcome death and God’s justice through his own death and resurrection. He is the basis of salvation for all authentic believers. This is what gives only him the right to break the seals and open the scroll.

<sup>77</sup> This is Jesus as the Passover lamb of the New Covenant, symbolizing God’s release of sinners from their slavery to sin that will result in God’s condemnation.

Seven horns symbolize his complete strength to have accomplished his goal of qualifying to be king and priest. Cf. [Zechariah 1:18](#) Then I lifted up my eyes and looked, and behold, there were four horns. [19](#) So I said to the angel who was speaking with me, “What are these?” And he answered me, “These are the horns which have scattered Judah, Israel and Jerusalem.” [20](#) Then Yahweh showed me four craftsmen. [21](#) I said, “What are these coming to do?” And he said, “These are the horns which have scattered Judah so that no man lifts up his head; but these craftsmen have come to terrify them, to throw down the horns of the nations who have lifted up their horns against the land of Judah in order to scatter it.”

Seven eyes symbolize Jesus ability to see all that God wanted him to do when he was on earth—much more than any normal human being in regard to what is going on in the people around him.

Seven Spirits sent out into all the earth symbolizes the Holy Spirit as the transcendent God who not only worked in Jesus during his time on earth to make him capable of enduring all his suffering of rejection by the people of Israel and especially the crucifixion, but also worked in sinners throughout the whole world after Jesus’ first appearance to cause them to become authentic believers.

<sup>78</sup> Right hand symbolizes God’s authority and power to make happen the events described in the scroll and symbolized by the seals.

Cf. [Acts 4:27](#) “For truly in this city there were gathered together against Your holy servant Jesus, whom You anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, along with the Gentiles and the peoples of Israel, [28](#) to do whatever Your hand and Your purpose predestined to occur.”

<sup>79</sup> Symbolic of all believers recognizing the purpose and value of Jesus’ role as their priest who intercedes on their behalf to obtain God’s eternal mercy.

Harpers indicate a song is going to be sung in praise of somebody, i.e., the Lamb, Jesus, in this case (cf. [Revelation 14:2,3](#); [15:2,3](#)). [Revelation 14:2](#) And I heard a voice from heaven, like the sound of many waters and like the sound of loud thunder, and the voice which I heard was like the sound of harpists playing on their harps. [3](#) And they sang a new song before the throne and before the four living creatures and the elders; and no one could learn the song except the one hundred and forty-four thousand who had been purchased from the earth.

[Revelation 15:2](#) And I saw something like a sea of glass mixed with fire, and those who had been victorious over the beast and his image and the number of his name, standing on the sea of glass, holding harps of God. [3](#) And they sang the song of Moses, the bond-servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, ...

They are “holding” the prayers of their brothers (and themselves) who have died during the time between Jesus’ first and second appearances, ready to have them revealed to help motivate God to avenge their deaths and finish fulfilling His promises to Israel (cf. [Revelation 6:9-11](#); [8:1-4](#)).

<sup>80</sup> Jesus as the Jewish Messiah is also the Gentiles’ Messiah for the purpose of interceding for them to obtain God’s eternal mercy and life, while he is also the Jews’ Messiah to defeat their earthly enemies and rule over them in the restored Davidic Kingdom. But Jesus by means of his death obtained the right to intercede for sinners who are also authentic believers.

<sup>81</sup> All the believers who are raised from the dead or lifted off the earth when Jesus returns will return with him with immortal and morally perfect bodies to rule with him over the millennial kingdom and the earth. Plus they will play a kind of mediatorial role between God with Jesus and unbelievers throughout the world while they encourage them to embrace the truth of the gospel and become authentic believers in God and Jesus.

[Revelation 20:4](#) Then I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and judgment was given to them. And I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded because of their testimony of Jesus and because of the word of God, and those who had not worshiped the beast or his image, and had not received the mark on their forehead and on their hand; and they came to life and reigned with Christ for a thousand years.

<sup>82</sup> The myriads are referring to only the angels, referring to the magnitude of praise and worship that Jesus (and ultimately God) deserves. So many living creatures that they cannot be counted, who ascribe worth and majesty to Jesus for what he has done through his life and death. Indeed, he deserves even more praise, and this is a symbolic way of saying this.

<sup>83</sup> If the living creatures/signs are symbolic of Jesus, it is a little weird that Jesus is praising Jesus the Lamb. But this is the book of Revelation, i.e., a highly symbolic and therefore somewhat weird book. But all the beings in this vision are ascribing worth and majesty to Jesus as the one who brings salvation to sinful human beings.

<sup>84</sup> If animals, birds, fish, etc. could talk, they too would praise and worship the transcendent God and Jesus for who they are and what they have done and are doing in regard to God’s eternal plans and purposes.

<sup>85</sup> Is this verse saying that the four living creatures/signs are not representative of created animals, birds, fish, etc.? Possibly, but Jesus has worshiped Jesus in vs. 8-10 if they represent Jesus. So it really depends upon what makes the most sense in the light all

the data in Revelation and the OT.

The elders' falling down and worshipping is repeated from vs. 8-10.

<sup>86</sup> The first five seals sound more like general aspects of history from the time of Jesus' first coming to his second coming that significantly affect the Jews as God's disciplining them for their rejection of Jesus. These first five seals involve wars [governments that conquer and oppress their citizens – #1] (#1 and #2), economic hardship (#3), pogroms/persecutions, famine, and pestilence/diseases (#4), and a desire on the part of authentic believers (both Jews and Gentiles?) for judgment against those who killed them for their faith (#5).

Notice this first seal involves someone on a white horse with bow and crown, i.e., a military leader who conquers and rules over people. These are the wars and rumors of wars against the Jews of Matthew 24:6. The white horse, like that of Jesus in Revelation 19:11 is not representative of goodness but of war. This is a warrior horse of political entities [governments] that have subjugated and oppressed the Jews over the years.

cf. **Zechariah 6:1** Now I lifted up my eyes again and looked, and behold, four chariots were coming forth from between the two mountains; and the mountains were bronze mountains. **2** With the first chariot were red horses, with the second chariot black horses, **3** with the third chariot white horses, and with the fourth chariot strong dappled horses. **4** Then I spoke and said to the angel who was speaking with me, "What are these, my lord?" **5** The angel replied to me, "These are the four spirits of heaven, going forth after standing before the Lord of all the earth, **6** with one of which the black horses are going forth to the north country; and the white ones go forth after them, while the dappled ones go forth to the south country. **7** "When the strong ones went out, they were eager to go to patrol the earth." And He said, "Go, patrol the earth." So they patrolled the earth. **8** Then He cried out to me and spoke to me saying, "See, those who are going to the land of the north have appeased My wrath in the land of the north."

cf. **Matt. 24:6** "You will be hearing of wars and rumors of wars. See that you are not frightened, for those things must take place, but that is not yet the end. **Matt. 24:7** "For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom, and in various places there will be famines and earthquakes. **Matt. 24:8** "But all these things are merely the beginning of birth pangs. **Matt. 24:9** "Then they will deliver you to tribulation, and will kill you, and you will be hated by all nations because of My name."

cf. **Matt. 24:21** "For then there will be a great tribulation, such as has not occurred since the beginning of the world until now, nor ever will."

EBC – The writer of this commentary tentatively suggests that the seals represent events preparatory to the final consummation. Whether these events come immediately before the end or whether they represent general conditions that will prevail throughout the period preceding the end is a more difficult question. The seals closely parallel the signs of the approaching end times spoken of in Jesus' Olivet Discourse (Matt 24:1-35; Mark 13:1-37; Luke 21:5-33). In these passages the events of the last days fall into three periods: (1) the period of false Christs, wars, famines, pestilences, earthquakes, and death, called "the beginning of birth pains" (Matt 24:8); (2) the period of the Great Tribulation (Matt 24:21; NIV, "great distress") and, (3) finally, the period "immediately after the distress of those days," when the sun, moon, and stars will be affected and Christ will return (Matt 24:29-30). This parallel to major parts of Revelation is too striking to be ignored. Thus the seals would correspond to the "beginning of birth pains" found in the Olivet Discourse. The events are similar to those occurring under the trumpets (8:2-11:19) and bowls (15:1-16:21) but they should not be confused with those later and more severe judgments. In Jewish apocalyptic literature (cf. 2 Baruch 25-30), the Great Tribulation precedes the age to come and is divided into twelve parts of various trials lasting possibly a week of seven weeks, or forty-nine years (C. K. Barrett, *The New Testament Background: Selected Documents* [New York: Harper and Row, 1961], pp. 245-48). Moreover, in the eschatological reckoning of time (cf. comments on 1:1), the events immediately preceding the end can stretch out over the whole age of the church, from John's time until now, and can still be viewed as "next" (4:1) in the sense that the "last days" began in the first century and are still continuing (cf. 1John 2:18). The first four seals are distinct from the last two in that they describe four horses of different colors with four riders who are given different powers over the earth. Background for the imagery of these four seals reflect Zechariah 1:8ff. and 6:1-8. In Zechariah's visions the horsemen and chariots are divine instruments of judgment on the enemies of God's people, while the colors represent geographical points of the compass. This may also be the best interpretation of the horses and their riders in Revelation 6, where each is sent by Christ through the instrumentality of the living creatures. The emphatic call "Come!" (vv.1, 3, 5, 7) should not be viewed as addressed either to John (some ancient Gr. MSS and many commentators, cf. Notes, v.1) or to Christ (Alford, Swete) but, rather, to the horsemen in each case. An analogy may be a first-century amphitheater or circus with various charioteers being summoned forth into the arena of the world by the call "Come!" or "Go forth!" The identification of the first rider seated on a white horse has given interpreters great difficulty. Essentially, the difficulty is whether the rider on the white horse represents Christ and the victory of the gospel (Alford, Ladd) or whether he represents the Antichrist and the forces of evil (Beckwith, Bruce, Caird, Mounce, Swete, Walvoord). In favor of the first identification is the striking similarity of this rider to the portrayal of Christ in 19:11-16, the symbolism of white throughout Revelation always being associated with righteousness and Christ (e.g., 1:14; 2:17; 3:4-5, 18; 4:4; 7:9, 13-14; 20:11), and the references in the Olivet Discourse to the preaching of the gospel throughout the world before the end. Support for the identification of the white horse with the Antichrist and his forces is the parallelism with the other three horses, which are instruments of judgment. The references in 19:11-16 to the rider on the white horse as "Faithful and True" and of whom it is said that "with justice he judges and makes war" may stand in contrast to the rider in 6:2 who is not faithful or true and who wages war for unjust conquest. As for the Lamb, he opens the seals and would not be one of the riders. Moreover, it would be inappropriate to have an angelic being call forth Christ or his servants. Again, the "bow" would most naturally be connected with the enemy of God's people (Ezekiel 39:3; cf. Revelation 20:7-8). Finally, the parallelism to the Olivet Discourse shows that the first events mentioned are the rise of "false Christs and false prophets" (Matt 24:24). It must be admitted that the problem of the identity of the rider on the white horse may be solved either way, depending on the

presuppositions one brings to the passage. The evidence, however, seems to favor slightly the second solution, which identifies the white horse with the Antichrist and his forces that seek to conquer the followers of Christ. John sensed that these persecutions were already present in his day and that they would culminate in a final, more severe form (1John 2:18; Rev 13:7). Each of the first four seals, then, represents conflict directed at Christians to test them and to sift out false disciples (6:10). This interpretation need not necessarily eliminate the fact that the seals may also refer to judgments on mankind in general. Yet since the fifth seal stresses the cry of the martyred Christians, probably the thought of Christian persecution belongs also in the first four seals (Minear, *I Saw a New Earth*, pp. 78, 266-69). Each of them unleashes events that separate false belief from true. The destruction of Jerusalem is a case in point (Luke 21:20ff.). The white horse is released to conquer. As he goes forth, judgment falls on the unbelief of Israel (Luke 21:22-23), while at the same time there is a testing of believers to separate the chaff from the wheat (cf. Luke 21:12-19).

<sup>87</sup> All four “living creatures” (aspects of Jesus’ role) speak to John to observe the effect of each of the first four seals.

<sup>88</sup> Red horse whose rider is not a militaristic himself, but he influences people to go to war against one another, and the Jews must end up being harmed during these wars.

<sup>89</sup> Black horse whose rider carries an instrument for financial use, a pair of scales to determine the correct payment for something. The voice in the center of the four living creatures [signs] is most likely God since they (as Jesus) are on His island.

<sup>90</sup> What God says, since it is negative, must indicate high inflation and economic disturbance for the people affected by it, and again probably most especially for the Jews. Thus, this seal refers to economic hardship for the Jews and that affects people worldwide.

<sup>91</sup> Death (θάνατος) towards people, especially the Jews, is the result of the elements of this fourth seal—killing with the sword = deadly persecution, famine, and pestilence (θάνατος = as metonymy for disease (?)). The geographical extent of these is a “fourth of the earth,” which could mean specifically a fourth of the land of Israel, i.e., of the Jews wherever they live.

Cf. Isaiah 51:19 These two things have befallen you [Israel]; who will mourn for you? The devastation and destruction, famine and sword. How shall I comfort you?

Hades (ᾗδης) translates שְׁאוֹל (Sheol) in the OT 61x and refers to the place of the departed dead, i.e., to their non-existence until the resurrections when Jesus returns and the end of the millennial kingdom. Therefore, “death and Hades” refer to the same thing—the end of one’s physical existence in this realm to await God’s judgment and the determination of one’s eternal state, either life or non-existence.

**Revelation 20:13** And the sea gave up the dead which were in it, and death and Hades gave up the dead which were in them; and they were judged, every one of them according to their deeds. **14** Then death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire.

**Revelation 21:4** and He will wipe away every tear from their eyes; and there will no longer be any death; there will no longer be any mourning, or crying, or pain; the first things have passed away.

<sup>92</sup> Under the altar = they have sacrificed their lives for the gospel and are situated in a sacred place in relation to God, not on the altar of sacrifice, but still intimately connected to it by being underneath it.

Slain because of the message of God = Believers, especially among the Jews, killed by unbelievers for their faith in the gospel, so that these are people who lived and died during the time of the great tribulation between the first and second comings of Jesus. Or they may include OT believers, in which case the message is the whole biblical account.

They maintained and persevered in their faith in spite of the pain of being killed for their faith in God.

<sup>93</sup> Earth = either the entire world or the land of Israel. Jesus did say that Jewish believers would be killed by their Jewish kinsmen for the gospel in Matthew 10.

It is helpful that these believers who were killed for their faith are granted the right to ask for justice from God on those who wrongly accused them of the “crime” of believing in God and Jesus. Nevertheless, God throughout the visions of Revelation remains patient towards unbelievers, especially Jewish unbelievers as implied in v. 11.

<sup>94</sup> White robe = promise of eternal mercy and forgiveness

Were told that they should rest for a little while longer = God tells them they must wait in their state of sleep, i.e., death, for justice to be finally served—until God’s patience finally runs out.

Until...also = this indicates that the fifth seal is not an individual event but an aspect of reality for believers, especially Jewish ones, between Jesus’ first and second comings. There are always more believers who will die for their faith, even among the Jews, right up to the moment of Jesus’ return and the “dead in Christ” will rise from the dead and be transformed into immortal and morally perfect beings (cf. 1 Corinthians 15; 1 Thessalonians 4; various references in Revelation itself such as the first four seals). But it is also important to recognize that God’s patience towards unbelievers is not necessarily a safe place for believers, who receive the brunt of the unbelievers’ rebellion against God.

<sup>95</sup> Unlike the first five seals, which were recurring situations in all human history, especially in regard to the Jews between Jesus’ first and second appearance, this sixth seal is an event. Its elements match what Jesus says of his second coming in Matthew 24:29-31, **Matt. 24:29** “But immediately after the tribulation of those days THE SUN WILL BE DARKENED, AND THE MOON WILL NOT GIVE ITS LIGHT, AND THE STARS WILL FALL from the sky, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken. **Matt. 24:30** “And then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the SON OF MAN COMING ON THE CLOUDS OF THE SKY with power and great glory. **Matt. 24:31** “And He will send forth His angels with A GREAT TRUMPET and THEY WILL GATHER TOGETHER His elect from the four winds, from one end of the sky to the other.”

**Joel 2:28** It will come about after this that I will pour out My Spirit on all mankind [flesh, i.e., Jews on the land of Israel during the Millennial Kingdom]; and your sons and daughters will prophesy, your old men will dream dreams, your young men will see



visions. **29** Even on the male and female servants I will pour out My Spirit in those days. **30** I will display wonders in the sky and on the earth, blood, fire and columns of smoke. **31** The sun will be turned into darkness and the moon into blood before the great and awesome day of the LORD comes.

<sup>96</sup> When Jesus returns, the topography of the Middle East (the whole world?) will change as God revamps the power structure so that power and authority are centered in Jesus who is ruling from Jerusalem.

**Isaiah 34:1** Draw near, O nations, to hear; and listen, O peoples! Let the earth and all it contains hear, and the world and all that springs from it. **2** For the LORD'S indignation is against all the nations, and His wrath against all their armies; He has utterly destroyed them, He has given them over to slaughter. **3** So their slain will be thrown out, and their corpses will give off their stench, and the mountains will be drenched with their blood. **4** And all the host of heaven will wear away, and the sky will be rolled up like a scroll; all their hosts will also wither away as a leaf withers from the vine, or as one withers from the fig tree.

**Ezekiel 38:17** 'Thus says the Lord GOD, "Are you the one of whom I spoke in former days through My servants the prophets of Israel, who prophesied in those days for many years that I would bring you against them?" **18** "It will come about on that day, when Gog comes against the land of Israel," declares the Lord GOD, "that My fury will mount up in My anger. **19** "In My zeal and in My blazing wrath I declare that on that day there will surely be a great earthquake in the land of Israel. **20** "The fish of the sea, the birds of the heavens, the beasts of the field, all the creeping things that creep on the earth, and all the men who are on the face of the earth will shake at My presence; the mountains also will be thrown down, the steep pathways will collapse and every wall will fall to the ground. **21** "I will call for a sword against him on all My mountains," declares the Lord GOD. "Every man's sword will be against his brother. **22** "With pestilence and with blood I will enter into judgment with him; and I will rain on him and on his troops, and on the many peoples who are with him, a torrential rain, with hailstones, fire and brimstone. **23** "I will magnify Myself, sanctify Myself, and make Myself known in the sight of many nations; and they will know that I am the LORD.

<sup>97</sup> Possibly all unbelievers throughout the world or only those on the land of Israel, the Jews. But mainly the armies of the Battle of Armageddon that have invaded Israel and are facing the wrath of God and Jesus.

<sup>98</sup> The fact that this seal is called "the wrath of the Lamb" indicates that this is THE event of history of the return of Jesus who destroys Israel' enemies, including unbelieving Jews, because they are actually inimical to the true Israel of changed heart and believing Jews.

What the unbelievers say here implies that they are unrepentant. They simply want to escape God's painful wrath but not by means of His mercy, only by elements in the world that supposedly can shield them from Him. But there is no place where someone can hide from God (cf. Psalm 139).

<sup>99</sup> The language here, "the great day of their wrath," reflects that of Malachi 4:5, "the great and terrible day of Yahweh," which is another indication that the sixth seal is the event of Jesus' return and God's final judgment of the Jews who have rejected Jesus as the Messiah. It is not that they want to die by the mountains falling on them, but this is hyperbole for wanting to find some way other than God's mercy to shield themselves from His judgment.

Their rhetorical question "Who is able to stand" shows that they understand their situation is basically hopeless, even though they in their delusion think that caves and mountains can save them.

Cf. 2 Peter 3 and the "Day of the Lord" in that chapter.

<sup>100</sup> Here is an interlude in the midst of the sixth seal as God is about to lower the hammer for the last time on the Jews, indicating another period of time of His patience where He demonstrates His reluctance to judge and condemn them and even other people. These four winds are destructive of the "earth" = land of Israel and therefore the people of Israel, the Jews, and of the "sea" = Gentiles, and of "trees" = agricultural source of food and sustenance for people.

<sup>101</sup> Do not harm...until = God is saying that He has not waited long enough for unbelievers to repent. He wants to be patient a while longer.

Sealed the bond-servants of God on their foreheads = marked and set aside Jews who are actually not yet believers (because they would be raptured when Jesus returns if they were) who will be protected from death during the last push by God to discipline and judge the Jews and who will become believers after Jesus' return and serve as the seedbed for "the great nation" when God finally fulfills His promise to Abraham of Genesis 12:1-3. These protected Jews include ones who live in other parts of the world who will return to the land of Israel after Jesus' return and repopulate his kingdom there for the beginning of the millennial kingdom.

Cf. **Ezekiel 28:25** 'Thus says the Lord GOD, "When I gather the house of Israel from the peoples among whom they are scattered, and will manifest My holiness in them in the sight of the nations, then they will live in their land which I gave to My servant Jacob. **26** They will live in it securely; and they will build houses, plant vineyards and live securely when I execute judgments upon all who scorn them round about them. Then they will know that I am the LORD their God."

<sup>102</sup> Not literally 144,000 but 12 x 12,000 as a large and appropriate number of Jews whom God protects from His earthly judgment of them on the land of Israel (and also around the world since some Jews will return to the land of Israel after Jesus' return to participate in the millennial kingdom there).

<sup>103</sup> Dan is missing. Manasseh, the son of Joseph, substitutes. Why?

<sup>104</sup> As part of God's patient interlude during the sixth seal there is a vision of all believers, Jews and Gentiles, who experienced the hostility of the world to the gospel between Jesus' first and second comings and who will inhabit the eternal Kingdom of God. So this is not an event per se, but a truth of God's love and faithfulness to those whom He has chosen to become authentic believers during "Christian" history (cf. 7:14).

Clothed in white robes = forgiven (cf. 7:14)

Palm branches in their hands = reminiscent of Jesus' entrance into Jerusalem before his crucifixion, thus symbolizing their acknowledgement of Jesus as their king and priest.

<sup>105</sup> All these believers acknowledge that it is only by God's sovereign grace and Jesus' fulfilling his role as the crucified king that they are rescued from God's eternal wrath, condemnation, and destruction.

<sup>106</sup> All spiritual beings, the angels, acknowledge the same thing as the believers. Thus, there is this massive extolling of God and Jesus for their majesty, grace, and mercy.

<sup>107</sup> A rather weird description—the believers wash their robes in blood and they come out white. Obviously symbolic of forgiveness through Jesus' qualifying to be their High Priest when he died and shed his blood on the cross.

The great tribulation is the time between Jesus' two appearances that is especially difficult for the Jews as a result of their rejection of Jesus as the Messiah. But it is also a time of God's patience towards them, giving them more time to repent. But His patience also means opportunity for persecution of both Jews and Christians during this interval.

<sup>108</sup> These believers will serve God throughout all eternity.

They are before the throne = symbolic of their immortal and perfect worship of God while living for all eternity. This does not mean that they stand in one place forever, because it makes more sense that on the new earth of Revelation 21 they will enjoy all kinds of adventures and experiences that are always motivating them to keep living and discovering all that God will provide them eternally.

God will spread His tabernacle over them = He will always be present with them wherever they are on the new earth. He will be with them.

<sup>109</sup> This and v. 17 could refer to the millennial kingdom in the present realm, but they more likely are a picture of the new earth where the forgiven believers will enjoy God's shalom, a wholesome and perfect environment. Certainly they will experience immortality and moral perfection while helping to reign over the millennial kingdom, but this description seems to imply the complete absence of sin and suffering for all believers, which will only be when God creates a new heavens and new earth (cf. 2 Peter 3?).

<sup>110</sup> The Lamb will be their shepherd = Jesus will be their king and ruler in their presence for all eternity on the new earth. They will never again experience pain and suffering, because sin and death will have disappeared (cf. chapters 21,22).

<sup>111</sup> Because this "silence for about half an hour" is after the sixth seal and the Great and Terrible Day of the Lord of Revelation 6:12-17, it symbolizes the millennial kingdom. The silence means no more tumult from sin, man's rebellion against God, and God's responses of judgment even in the midst of His patience.

<sup>112</sup> During this interlude, the vision tells us that the end of the Great Tribulation is approaching as the seven angels with the seven trumpets prepare themselves. The first four trumpets will be intense, warning signs to the Jews, while the last three will actually begin the Great and Terrible Day of the Lord of Malachi 4.

<sup>113</sup> The prayers of the saints are first described in 6:9-11 after the fifth sealed was broken. It is as though those who have died for their faith during the Great Tribulation between Jesus' first and second appearance continually ask God how long He is going to wait before He avenges their deaths. And God's answer is always, "Be patient, for it will be a little while longer (6:11)."

Therefore, during the interlude of the seventh seal and the millennial kingdom, an angel approaches the altar where these and all the rest of praying Christians are found and adds to their prayers with incense, symbolic of the prayers rising up from the Christians and being "smelled," i.e., heard by God as a sweet smell that pleases Him.

Eventually God will avenge their deaths through the destruction of the Beast and his army that has invaded Israel to destroy the Jews, through the death of all unbelieving Jews, who represent the Jews even in the apostles' day who put Christians to death, and finally through the Great White Throne Judgment at the end of the millennial kingdom and this realm.

<sup>114</sup> The smoke of the incense comes from the angel's hand which is to say that it comes from the golden censer in his hand. This smoke with its sweet smell along with the prayers of all Christians for God's assistance in persevering in faith in order to obtain eternal mercy and life is what reaches God and gets His attention. The "sound" of the prayers does too.

<sup>115</sup> Once God has enjoyed the smell of the smoke, the angel fills the censer with fire from the altar, throws it to earth, and the result is symbolic of God's judgment—finally in response to the mistreatment of Christians during the Great Tribulation. This judgment will be directed towards the Jews who have rejected Jesus as the Messiah first, and then the Gentiles who have rejected Jesus and the Jews—both as part of the Great and Terrible Day of the Lord of Malachi 4:5 and Joel 2:31. It will also involve an earthquake. The final earthquake will be occur multiple ones in all the major cities around the world that destroys all the unbelieving Jews (cf. Revelation 16:19).

<sup>116</sup> Near the end of the Great Tribulation, God ups the ante and brings four astronomical and cataclysmic events on the Jews and the land of Israel, followed by three judgment events that begin the Great and Terrible Day of the Lord.

<sup>117</sup> This first more intense warning sign involves hail and fire. The "mixed with blood" is probably a reference to the color of the fire and its being mixed with brimstone, i.e., burning sulfur. With the latter, the land of Israel suffers great destruction of its vegetation as indicated by the word "third."

Cf. **Ex. 9:22** Now the LORD said to Moses, "Stretch out your hand toward the sky, that hail may fall on all the land of Egypt, on man and on beast and on every plant of the field, throughout the land of Egypt." **23** Moses stretched out his staff toward the sky, and the LORD sent thunder and hail, and fire ran down to the earth. And the LORD rained hail on the land of Egypt. **24** So there was hail, and fire flashing continually in the midst of the hail, very severe, such as had not been in all the land of Egypt since it became a nation. **25** The hail struck all that was in the field through all the land of Egypt, both man and beast; the hail also struck every plant of the field and shattered every tree of the field. **26** Only in the land of Goshen, where the sons of Israel were, there was no hail.

Cf. **Joel 2:30** "I will display wonders in the sky and on the earth, blood, fire and columns of smoke. **31** "The sun will be turned into darkness and the moon into blood before the great and awesome day of the LORD comes.

Cf. **Zech. 13:8** "It will come about in all the land," declares the Lord, "That two parts in it will be cut off and perish; but the third

will be left in it. **9** And I will bring the third part through the fire, refine them as silver is refined, and test them as gold is tested. They will call on My name, and I will answer them. I will say, ‘They are My people,’ and they will say, ‘The Lord is my God.’” Cf. **Revelation 9:4** They were told not to hurt the grass of the earth, nor any green thing, nor any tree, but only the men who do not have the seal of God on their foreheads.

<sup>118</sup> Cf. **Jer. 51:24** “But I will repay Babylon and all the inhabitants of Chaldea for all their evil that they have done in Zion before your eyes,” declares the LORD. **25** “Behold, I am against you, O destroying mountain, who destroys the whole earth,” declares the LORD, “And I will stretch out My hand against you, and roll you down from the crags, and I will make you a burnt out mountain.

Assuming these destructive signs are centered on the land of Israel, it experiences either a movement of its topography with the contamination of the Sea of Galilee so that its marine life is partially eliminated along with the ships that fish on this lake or a destruction of the people (along the lines of “mountain” being used to refer to the Babylonian Empire in Jeremiah 51:24) that causes the Sea of Galilee to become contaminated with dead bodies. Maybe this “great mountain” is the great people of the nation of Israel whose greatness is by their own devices by which they have influenced the world to follow them—as is described in chapters 17 and 18 regarding Babylon, i.e., worldly Judaism.

<sup>119</sup> Another astronomical event that affects the land of Israel in a destructive manner.

<sup>120</sup> ὁ ἄρτινθος from ἀρτίθιον = a plant of the genus ‘Artemisia’, proverbially bitter to the taste, yielding a dark green oil (the rendering *wormwood* derives from its association with medicinal use to kill intestinal worms).

Thus, the cataclysmic event renders drinking water bitter and toxic to the point that many people die on the land of Israel.

<sup>121</sup> As the OT predicts in the passages below, God’s judgment of the Jews will involve an actually darkening of the available light from the natural sources of the sun, moon, and stars. This fourth trumpet will result in this.

Cf. **Amos 5:20** Will not the day of the LORD be darkness instead of light, even gloom with no brightness in it?

Cf. **Joel 2:1** Blow a trumpet in Zion, and sound an alarm on My holy mountain. Let all the inhabitants of the land tremble, for the Day of the Lord is coming. Surely it is near. **2** A day of darkness and gloom, a day of clouds and thick darkness. As the dawn is spread over the mountains, so there is a great and mighty people. There has never been anything like it, nor will there be again after it to the years of many generations.

Cf. **Joel 2:30** “I will display wonders in the sky and on the earth, blood, fire and columns of smoke. **31** “The sun will be turned into darkness and the moon into blood before the great and awesome day of the LORD comes.

Cf. **Zeph. 1:14** Near is the great day of the LORD, near and coming very quickly. Listen, the day of the Lord! In it the warrior cries out bitterly. **15** A day of wrath is that day, a day of trouble and distress, a day of destruction and desolation, a day of darkness and gloom, a day of clouds and thick darkness, **16** a day of trumpet and battle cry against the fortified cities and the high corner towers.

Cf. **Matt. 24:29** “But immediately after the tribulation of those days **THE SUN WILL BE DARKENED, AND THE MOON WILL NOT GIVE ITS LIGHT, AND THE STARS WILL FALL** from the sky, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken. **30** “And then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the **SON OF MAN COMING ON THE CLOUDS OF THE SKY** with power and great glory. **31** “And He will send forth His angels with **A GREAT TRUMPET** and **THEY WILL GATHER TOGETHER** His elect from the four winds, from one end of the sky to the other.

<sup>122</sup> Here is another interlude symbolizing God’s patience. He has just tried to get the Jews’ attention with the four trumpets, but those were light in comparison to the final three. This is why the eagle says the word woe three times—for emphasis and to highlight how bad the last three trumpets are going to be. But God is giving the Jews one more opportunity to change their minds about Him and Jesus and repent of their sins and worship them before the last three trumpets sound to begin the Great and Terrible Day of the Lord of Malachi 4.

<sup>123</sup> In Luke 8:26-33, the demons who were inside the man who had been living in the tombs begged Jesus not to send them away into the abyss (v. 31). Probably similar to what Peter describes as “angels when they sinned,” that God “cast them into hell and committed them to pits of darkness, reserved for judgment” (2 Peter 2:4), the demons in the story of Jesus are referring to a prison where demons and Satan are restrained from carrying out their deceptive plans and purposes. This would be the same abyss into which Satan is confined during the millennial kingdom according to Revelation 20:1-3.

A “star from heaven,” symbolic of an angel, i.e., a messenger of God, is given the key to open the place of restraint for the demons. This angel has “fallen” to earth, meaning maybe only that he has come to earth.

Before and during Jesus’ first appearance, there seems to have been more demonic activity than afterwards when they were thrown into the prison of the abyss. The result is that since Jesus’ first appearance, we have lived in a time relatively free of demonic activity. But the fifth trumpet will change all this for Israel.

cf. **Jude 6** And angels who did not keep their own domain, but abandoned their proper abode, He has kept in eternal bonds under darkness for the judgment of the great day,...

<sup>124</sup> Again smoke that comes from a furnace fire that can destroy causes darkness, or more darkness, as symbolic of God’s judgment on the Jews through a resurgence of demonic activity in Israel.

<sup>125</sup> Locusts were a dreaded occurrence in the Ancient Near East that could produce absolute agricultural catastrophe for a group of people. Here there will be something or somethings that are demonically motivated to torment but not kill Jews who have not been set aside and protected by God, i.e., those outside the 144,000 (cf. vs. 4,5,10). However, they will not be allowed to harm the land itself or its vegetation.

The five months is probably symbolic of an extent of time that is not long (3½ years a little later) but also not short (3-4 months).

It will certainly be long enough though to produce great suffering among the Jews on the land of Israel.

Cf. Joel and its mention of locusts invading and decimating the land of Israel, i.e., an armed invasion of Israel.

<sup>126</sup> Only those Jews who are not set aside and protected by God to become the first generation of authentic believers in the millennial kingdom will experience the painful effects of these demonically motivated locust-like beings.

<sup>127</sup> The suffering from these demonic beings will be horrible, and yet no one will be able to escape it, even by dying.

<sup>128</sup> In the book of Revelation, what a person wears is what he is committed to and that gives him a certain . These demonic forces are wearing military attire. They are aggressively seeking to torment the people on the land of Israel and will stop at nothing to accomplish this purpose.

**Revelation 3:11** 'I am coming quickly; hold fast what you have, so that no one will take your crown.

**Rev. 4:4** Around the throne were twenty-four thrones; and upon the thrones I saw twenty-four elders sitting, clothed in white garments, and golden crowns on their heads.

**Rev. 4:10** the twenty-four elders will fall down before Him who sits on the throne, and will worship Him who lives forever and ever, and will cast their crowns before the throne, saying,

<sup>129</sup> Their leader's name means Destroyer in both languages. This is Satan who has sought to destroy God's plans and purposes for both the Jews, who speak Hebrew, and the Gentiles, who speak Greek (or in OT times and NT times). Here his followers are permitted to cause the Jews to suffer, presumably in hopes that they will repent and believe in God and His Messiah Jesus. But this will not happen for those Jews who are outside the group of 144,000 whom God is protecting.

<sup>130</sup> The fifth trumpet began the intense judgment of the Jews that comprises the entirety of the Great and Terrible Day of the Lord of Malachi 4.

<sup>131</sup> The result of the four angels will be an invasion by an army of Israel's archenemies who, as in the ANE, will come mostly from the north and northeast and have to cross the barrier of the Euphrates River as they march towards the land of Israel. This is not the Battle of Armageddon but precedes it.

<sup>132</sup> This is a linchpin in history, when a third of the Jews are killed in Israel by the invading army as part of God's judgment on them for rejecting their Messiah Jesus.

<sup>133</sup> Two hundred million is not a literal number but symbolic of an army that overwhelms Israel's defenses and conquers them. This is not the Battle of Armageddon, but it is basically the same army that will be destroyed by Jesus at Armageddon (cf. Revelation 16:13-16; 19:11-21).

<sup>134</sup> Their defensive armor, their breastplates, are the same color as their weapons of the fire, smoke, and brimstone out of their mouths. Their defense is as good as their offense. This will be a shock and awe attack on the Jews that will be unstoppable.

<sup>135</sup> Thus, the catastrophic event of a third of the Jews' being killed on the land of Israel takes place after this army invades the land. And there is no defense that is able to save them—not even the help of any other country that might want to defend them. This is a successful military campaign by a large Gentile army to subjugate Israel and begins the 3½ year period of oppression of the Jews by the Gentiles.

<sup>136</sup> Here is the key to putting together the book of Revelation, that often and in spite of God's increasing the pressure of judgment on the Jews, they refuse to repent of their rejection of God and His Messiah, Jesus of Nazareth. And this when God grants them delay after delay before He brings the Great and Terrible Day of the Lord on them to complete His judgment. This also speaks to the hardness of the human heart and the unwillingness of people to repent of their sin and humble themselves before God to receive His mercy.

Cf. Isaiah 57:17 Because of the iniquity of his unjust gain I was angry and struck him [Israel, or individual Israelites]. I hid My face and was angry. And he went on turning away, in the way of his heart (NAS95).

<sup>137</sup> This "angel," i.e., messenger of God, is most likely Jesus, being represented in a vision (cf. Revelation 1:12-16). He is strong, clothed with a cloud (God as in the desert when the theophany appeared to the Israelites?), with a rainbow on his head to symbolize God's patience and delay in judging and destroying sinful and rebellious mankind. His face shone with the light of the sun, symbolizing righteousness and truth. And wherever he walks, he carries out the fiery destruction of mankind according to God's justice.

<sup>138</sup> The little book is in comparison to the big book of the scroll of seven seals in Revelation 6. The latter is the description of all human history as determined by God with the various ways that God executes His judgment on nations (political oppression, wars, economic hardship, famines, diseases, earthquakes, and the persecution and death of authentic believers), while the former is the description of only the endtimes, especially the Great and Terrible Day of the Lord with respect to God's people, the Jews. The sea and land symbolize the Gentiles and Jews respectively, and Jesus exercises authority over both in his role as the Son of God and God's proxy on earth.

<sup>139</sup> "As a lion roars" further helps identify this messenger of God as Jesus, the lion of Judah. Thunder is symbolic of God's threat of justice and judgment. Seven refers to His perfect justice which He is in the process of executing on the Jews.

<sup>140</sup> Jesus declares that God's patience with the Jews has run out. The Great and Terrible Day of the Lord is just about to happen. After four astronomical events (the first four trumpets) and two more of demonic and human content (the fifth and sixth trumpets), there has been no repentance en masse by the Jews, so that God is now ready to complete His judgment on them. cf. Acts 4:24 and Revelation 4:11 regarding God as the Sovereign Creator of all reality, both the material things and the events that involve them.

<sup>141</sup> This is all a mystery in the sense that it is now explicitly being described so that there is no question about what is going to happen. Putting all the information together from the OT (and even NT, including the Olivet Discourse) may not have been easy, but now God is not only describing the exact events of the Great and Terrible Day of the Lord, but He is going to carry them out.

This mystery will be the Great and Terrible Day of the Lord for the Jews just before the seventh trumpet which will signal Jesus' and Israel's reign on the land of Israel and the whole earth (cf. Revelation 11:15-18).

<sup>142</sup> God's justice is good and right, so that it tastes sweet to the true believer who understands God and is willing to let Him be the sovereign ruler of all history. But God's justice is also ugly and hard to accept, because it will bring sorrow and grief to the Jews and some suffering through persecution and even death for believers, whether Jews or Gentiles. This is its bitterness in John's (and any believer's) stomach.

<sup>143</sup> The story of God's judgment on the Jews involves not just them, but also many other ethnic groups and their leaders who will be hostile towards the Jews and then judged and destroyed by God as described by God in Revelation 17-19, especially the last battle when Jesus returns in chapter 19.

<sup>144</sup> The temple of God with the altar and those who worship in the temple is symbolic of God's protective presence for the 144,000 Jews on the land of Israel and throughout the rest of the world who refuse the mark of the beast.

A measuring rod is mentioned in Ezekiel 40:3, etc. to measure the temple area. There is a measuring line in Zechariah 2:1 also to measure Jerusalem just before God says that He will be its walls to protect its inhabitants who will be so many that they will need more room than within its walls. As a result, measuring something that belongs to God, i.e., the temple or Jerusalem, is to assess it carefully for the purpose of God's protecting it.

<sup>145</sup> But in this case during the time of the Great and Terrible Day of the Lord, there are limits to God's protection. The beast is given authority over the whole world and is ruling over Israel and from Israel. But while his army has invaded Israel, taken over Jerusalem, and subjugated the people, God still protects one part of the "land." And this part is symbolic of His protecting the 144,000 from the beast and from harm and death.

The time period is 3½ years. See Jack's handout regarding Daniel 9. This is a time of God's patience, giving the Jews one more opportunity to repent of rejecting and killing their Messiah, Jesus of Nazareth. God thus demonstrates His mercy and reluctance to judge sinners, especially the Jews (cf. Ezekiel 18:23,32).

**Ezekiel 18:23** "Do I have any pleasure in the death of the wicked," declares the Lord GOD, "rather than that he should turn from his ways and live?"

**Ezekiel 18:32** "For I have no pleasure in the death of anyone who dies," declares the Lord GOD. "Therefore, repent and live."

**2 Peter 3:9** The Lord is not hesitating in regard to His promise as some consider hesitation, but He is being patient towards us. He does not desire any to be destroyed but for all to make the move to repentance [my translation].

<sup>146</sup> These witnesses will speak on behalf of God during the time that the beast rules over Israel and the world. They wear sackcloth as symbolic of their own contrition and humility while proclaiming repentance, especially for the Jews. Again this is during the final time of God's delay to give them the opportunity to repent.

<sup>147</sup> These two prophets have supernatural powers. They speak judgment, and their enemies are destroyed. Their description is that of Elijah and Moses respectively as described by their ability to keep rain from falling and to turn waters into blood (cf. 1 Kings 17 and Exodus 7 below), and maybe they are actually these two men. Or they are two ordinary Jewish dudes who are like Moses and Elijah in their power and the similar miracles which they perform.

**1 Kings 17:1** Now Elijah the Tishbite, who was of the settlers of Gilead, said to Ahab, "As the LORD, the God of Israel lives, before whom I stand, surely there shall be neither dew nor rain these years, except by my word."

**Exodus 7:19** Then the LORD said to Moses, "Say to Aaron, 'Take your staff and stretch out your hand over the waters of Egypt, over their rivers, over their streams, and over their pools, and over all their reservoirs of water, that they may become blood; and there will be blood throughout all the land of Egypt, both in vessels of wood and in vessels of stone.'"

They are olive trees and lampstands, reminiscent of Zechariah 4 where Zerubabel and Joshua the High Priest who are commissioned to rebuild the temple in the midst of opposition from the surrounding peoples. But it is the Spirit of God alone who will make it happen. Cf. **Zech. 4:6** Then he said to me, "This is the word of the LORD to Zerubbabel saying, 'Not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit,' says the LORD of hosts."

Also, God does say **Malachi 4:5** "Behold, I am going to send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and terrible day of the LORD."

Combine the above passages with **Matthew 17:11** And He answered and said, "Elijah is coming and will restore all things; 12 but I say to you that Elijah already came, and they did not recognize him, but did to him whatever they wished. So also the Son of Man is going to suffer at their hands."

Plus, there is **Matthew 11:14** "And if you are willing to accept it, John himself is Elijah who was to come."

So I wonder if there are two appearances of "Elijah." The first was John the Baptist who to a degree restored the hearts of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob to many of the Jews in his day. Then there are these two witnesses, who are not so successful among the unbelieving Jews, but maybe their restoring hearts is among the 144,000, who are encouraged by their public proclamations and miracles without acquiring completely changed hearts. This last effect will happen only after Jesus returns and the millennial kingdom begins.

<sup>148</sup> This beast that comes up out the abyss is the same political leader described in **Revelation 17:8** "The beast that you saw was, and is not, and is about to come up out of the abyss and go to destruction. And those who dwell on the earth, whose name has not been written in the book of life from the foundation of the world, will wonder when they see the beast, that he was and is not and will come." This leader finally kills the two witnesses who have had the power for 3½ years to fend off any attack—until God's patience with the Jews runs out. Then God will really start bringing about the end of the Great and Terrible Day of the Lord.

<sup>149</sup> Obviously this is Jerusalem. But because the Jews have been as stubborn and hardhearted as the people of Sodom and Egypt, God labels the city with these same names. "Mystically" means that the necessary information is available, mostly through the OT prophets like that of Jesus and his suffering, but it requires some thinking to understand.

<sup>150</sup> The world will be filled with unbelieving, unrighteous, and rebellious people, even there in Israel among the Jews—except for the 144,000 of course. The 3½ years constitute another opportunity for all of them to repent, especially the Jews.

Possibly the “earth” is just the land of Israel, where the Jews in particular celebrate the death of these two prophets because they felt tormented by their message of repentance along with the drought and plagues. And they rejected this message.

But probably the whole world will celebrate their deaths. A rather chilling description of man’s rebellion against God.

<sup>151</sup> Their resurrection is another sign from God that He is alive and well urging the Jews to repent of their rejection of the primary person who has been raised from the dead, their Messiah, Jesus of Nazareth.

<sup>152</sup> Just as the apostles watched Jesus ascend into heaven in Acts 1, the unbelieving Jews watch these two men ascend. But the latter’s response is not the same, and God does not pour out His Spirit on them as in Acts 2. Instead, they celebrate are probably just relieved that these two men no longer will torment them with their teaching of the truth.

Because the 7<sup>th</sup> trumpet coincides with the 6<sup>th</sup> seal and ends with the millennial kingdom of the 7<sup>th</sup> seal, this is the resurrection of the dead of not only these two witnesses but also of all believers who have died up until this time, according to 1 Thessalonians 4 and 1 Corinthians 15. This then leads to the 7<sup>th</sup> trumpet and the Great and Terrible Day of the Lord in which Jesus will destroy Israel’s enemies and inaugurate his millennial kingdom.

<sup>153</sup> The earthquake that destroys Jerusalem is an essential element of the GTDL. Cf. Zechariah 14.

The death of 7,000 probably refers to the completeness of God’s destroying all the unbelieving Jews in the city.

The rest who are terrified and give glory to God are probably the 144,000 Jews on the land of Israel and throughout the world who are being protected by Him in order to enter into the millennial kingdom. By the words οἱ λοιποὶ the vision does not have to mean that all the rest of the people in Jerusalem. It could be “There was a remaining group” who gave glory to God, but these were not the only remaining people in Jerusalem after “7,000” were killed. Or it could be the rest in Jerusalem because all the unbelievers are finally dead because of the earthquake.

This is the end of the interlude.

**Revelation 16:17** Then the seventh angel poured out his bowl upon the air, and a loud voice came out of the temple from the throne, saying, “It is done.” **18** And there were flashes of lightning and sounds and peals of thunder; and there was a great earthquake, such as there had not been since man came to be upon the earth [land], so great an earthquake was it, and so mighty.

**19** The great city was split into three parts, and the cities of the nations fell. Babylon the great was remembered before God, to give her the cup of the wine of His fierce wrath. **20** And every island fled away, and the mountains were not found. **21** And huge hailstones, about one hundred pounds each, came down from heaven upon men; and men blasphemed God because of the plague of the hail, because its plague was extremely severe.

<sup>154</sup> The third and final intensified act of judgment by God on the Jews is coming in the form of the six bowls of wrath, which are in conjunction with the 7<sup>th</sup> trumpet that points to both the GTDL and the millennial kingdom.

<sup>155</sup> Vs. 15-17 are statements of the magnificence of God, not an event. And God’s power is embodied in Jesus because he is the one who is present as the human icon of God on earth and reigning over both the Jews on the land of Israel and the Gentiles in all the countries of the world.

<sup>156</sup> This is what led to God’s reigning over the earth and land of Israel. The Gentiles became enraged against God and the Jews and sought to destroy them by invading the land (cf. Psalm 2). But God allowed them only to subjugate them and not annihilate them. He protected the 144,000 throughout the whole world where Jews are even dispersed. The end of the present time before the millennial kingdom has come and the dead are evaluated as to whether they get the reward (wage) of being resurrected from the dead and granted eternal life and moral perfection (cf. 1 Thessalonians 4 and 1 Corinthians 15). These are all the former believers going all the way back into OT times. They are God’s bond-servants, prophets, the saints (holy ones, those whom God set apart through the inward work of His Spirit), and those who fear God’s name, i.e., who He is and what He is all about.

In addition, in His anger God destroys the Gentile armies who have wreaked havoc on the land of Israel, and, by extrapolation, these same people will incur God’s eternal condemnation at the Great White Throne of Revelation 20.

<sup>157</sup> This is a vision of truth and not an event. God is a God of justice and acts as judge of those on the earth (and land of Israel) from His position and presence in “heaven,” i.e., in His transcendence. By implication, repentance on the part of sinners is the only means of escape from His condemnation and destruction.

<sup>158</sup> The vision of Revelation 12:1-14:20 reveals Satan’s opposition to God’s purposes, starting with the birth of Jesus and leading up to the GTDL. Therefore, this is a truth about Satan that is not one specific event but a description of his plans and purposes through the Great Tribulation. His plan all along has been to destroy the Jews and Christians through either direct persecution and death or through lies and deceptions.

The woman is Israel, committed to light, i.e., truth, and righteousness, ruling over the earth as the smaller, even smallest, part of the creation when the Jews become the great nation that God promised to Abraham (cf. Joseph’s dream). And her authority, the crown of twelve stars, resides in the twelve tribes of Israel.

<sup>159</sup> The nation of Israel waits for the expected Messiah, and he finally arrives for the first time in the person of Jesus of Nazareth.

<sup>160</sup> Violent and aggressive (red), Satan has the same form as the beast of Revelation 13, so that the two are intimately connected in purpose and activity—to destroy Israel and the Messiah and thus thwart God’s eternal purposes to grant His mercy to His elect. **Revelation 13:1** And the dragon stood on the sand of the seashore. Then I saw a beast coming up out of the sea, having ten horns and seven heads, and on his horns were ten diadems [crowns], and on his heads were blasphemous names.

**Zechariah 1:18** Then I lifted up my eyes and looked, and behold, there were four horns. **19** So I said to the angel who was speaking with me, “What are these?” And he answered me, “These are the horns which have scattered Judah, Israel and Jerusalem.” **20** Then Yahweh showed me four craftsmen. **21** I said, “What are these coming to do?” And he said, “These are the

horns which have scattered Judah so that no man lifts up his head; but these craftsmen have come to terrify them, to throw down the horns of the nations who have lifted up their horns against the land of Judah in order to scatter it.”

<sup>161</sup> Satan’s primary agenda is to destroy the Jewish Messiah, Jesus of Nazareth. He enlists the demonic forces to help him on the earth. Examples were Herod’s murder of the male babies in the Bethlehem area at the time of Jesus’ birth, the temptations of Jesus in the wilderness, and finally the cross through the scheming of Judas Iscariot (cf. [John 13:27](#) After the morsel, Satan then entered into him. Therefore Jesus said to him, “**What you do, do quickly.**”)

There seemed to be an increase of demonic activity in Jesus’ day, but the fact that no one seemed all that surprised seems to indicate that there was already a level of continuous demonic activity prior to Jesus’ appearance.

Every government which has existed in human history has been a precursor, forewarning, foreshadowing, and harbinger of the Beast of Revelation, that final government which will subjugate the Jews and eventually try to destroy them while also exercising dominion over the entire rest of the world. Every previous government has to some degree elements of the final Beast of Revelation, which will be the worst and most oppressive government in human history where Satan’s goal has been to destroy God’s chosen people, the Jews, and all followers of Jesus the Messiah (cf. Revelation 12:13-15). Thus all Christians are tested as to whether or not they are committed to overcoming the “beast” and his lies from Satan so that they remain true followers of Jesus and his teachings. The irony will be that while the Beast will be the worst government ever, it will immediately precede and be replaced by the best government ever, that of Jesus who will rescue and preserve the Jews and exercise dominion over the rest of the world by ruling all the other nations with a rod of iron (cf. Revelation 2:26,27; 19:15).

<sup>162</sup> Israel gave birth to the Messiah, Jesus of Nazareth, and at his return he is protected by God to rule over the entire earth.

[Psalm 2:8](#) ‘Ask of Me, and I will surely give the nations as Your inheritance, and the very ends of the earth as Your possession. 9 ‘You shall break/rule them with a rod of iron, you shall shatter them like earthenware.’

<sup>163</sup> While during the Great Tribulation God delays His judgment of the Jews and patiently waits for them to repent and embrace Jesus as their Messiah, the Jews become scattered around the world, starting with the great persecution of the Jewish Christians by Jews after Stephen’s death. What followed eventually was the dispersion of Jews following the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple in A.D. 70 and the revolt of Simon Bar Kochba in A.D. 132-135. This scattering of the Jews around the world has resulted in their being protected from complete extinction, like the last 3½ years of the Daniel 9 prophecy.

cf. [Acts 8:1](#) Saul was in hearty agreement with putting him to death. And on that day a great persecution began against the church in Jerusalem, and they were all scattered throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, except the apostles. 2 Some devout men buried Stephen, and made loud lamentation over him. 3 But Saul began ravaging the church, entering house after house, and dragging off men and women, he would put them in prison. 4 Therefore, those who had been scattered went about preaching the word.

<sup>164</sup> For a while, before Jesus’ appearance with his death and resurrection, Satan’s power was at its peak. But then his power was reduced, indeed broken, by Jesus’ death.

<sup>165</sup> Satan’s being thrown down means that he along with his demonic allies have been stripped of much of his power.

Nevertheless, he is still influencing people and cultures so as to steer them away from God through his lies and deceptions.

<sup>166</sup> Satan has consistently complained to God that His people, the Jews, and all the rest of mankind as sinners, do not deserve to be His people. But after Jesus’ death, he can no longer make a compelling case against sinners because Jesus has qualified to be their advocate at God’s judgment and obtain His eternal mercy for them. Satan can complain all he wants about the unworthiness of sinners to be granted God’s eternal mercy, but Jesus has accomplished what amounts to a guaranteed method for making sure they are granted it through his intercession.

<sup>167</sup> Jesus’ death becomes the sinners’ victory over Satan and even death. When they genuinely believe and proclaim by their faith and their lives of obedience that Jesus has fully accomplished all that God has required of him to intercede on their behalf, they truly overcome Satan and death. And they are even willing to give up their own lives in the present realm to acquire the victory of eternal life.

[1 John 5:4](#) For whatever is born of God overcomes the world; and this is the victory that has overcome the world — our faith. 5 Who is the one who overcomes the world, but he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?

<sup>168</sup> The light of Jesus’ life and message has come into the world, and the Jews and Gentiles need to realize that Satan is not absent as will be the case in the millennium, but his power is diminished. Nevertheless, his anger towards God has actually increased so that he still intends to destroy the Jews and any believers in Jesus as the Messiah. Satan knows he has only a short time while God patiently waits for the Jews to repent. This will be the time between Jesus’ first and second appearances, a time that may seem long to us as human beings, but is short in the whole scheme of things that includes the final outcome of the story of creation of eternal life for all believers (cf. 2 Peter 3).

<sup>169</sup> Vs. 13-14 cover the time from A.D. 132-135 to the Great and Terrible Day of the Lord throughout the entire Great Tribulation when Satan tries to destroy the Jews and prevent God from being able to fulfill His promises to them. Thus, they are harassed by Satan and scattered throughout the world as a means to protect them. The “wings of the eagle” provide a means of rescue for the Jews from Satan’s completely destroying them. As a result, too, God’s judgment of them is delayed and delayed and delayed, while He waits patiently for their repentance and acceptance of Jesus as their Messiah.

<sup>170</sup> Every government which has existed in human history has been a precursor, forewarning, foreshadowing, and harbinger of the Beast of Revelation, that final government which will subjugate the Jews and eventually try to destroy them while also exercising dominion over the entire rest of the world. Every previous government has to some degree elements of the final Beast of Revelation, which will be the worst and most oppressive government in human history where Satan’s goal has been to destroy God’s chosen people, the Jews, and all followers of Jesus the Messiah. Thus all Christians are tested as to whether or not they are committed to overcoming the “beast” and his lies from Satan so that they remain true followers of Jesus and his teachings. The

irony will be that while the Beast will be the worst government ever, it will immediately precede and be replaced by the best government ever, that of Jesus who will rescue and preserve the Jews and exercise dominion over the rest of the world by ruling all the other nations with a rod of iron (cf. Revelation 2:26,27; 19:15).

A good example of Satan's powerful attempts to destroy the Jews was the holocaust during World War II, when the whole world joined together to free them from being persecuted and to preserve them by creating their own country for them through the United Nations, resulting in State of Israel on May 15, 1948.

<sup>171</sup> When Satan realizes that he may not be able to destroy the Jews, he turns his violent and destructive attention towards both Jewish and Gentile Christians who have embraced Jesus as the King, Priest, and Messiah. Thus, he goes after believing "Israel" since he cannot destroy ethnic Israel.

<sup>172</sup> This vision is of the beast, who is the Man of Lawlessness of 2 Thessalonians 2 and Gog of Ezekiel 38 & 39, is of events that take place during the same time as the trumpets, especially the last three.

As a result of the 6<sup>th</sup> trumpet, an army has assembled and invaded Israel. It is led by one supreme ruler. He comes out of the sea, meaning he is from the Gentiles, and he is the head of a complex political entity ("ten horns...names"). With this army, he subdues and subjugates Israel. The dragon, Satan, is connected with him and the political entity, providing them with the impetus and power to oppress the Jews (cf. Revelation 12:3 where the dragon is described as having seven heads and ten horns with seven crowns, one on each head).

The beast has seven heads, referring to the seven mountains (see Revelation 17:1-14 below), i.e., foreign empires, who have ruled, are ruling, or will rule over the Jewish people and Jerusalem throughout their history (Babylon, Media/Persia, Greece (Alexander the Great), Egypt (Ptolemies), Syria (Seleucids), Rome, and this political entity mentioned in Revelation). In Revelation 17:10 these seven heads are described as seven kings, such that five have fallen (Babylon through the Seleucids), one is (Rome), and one is to come which will be an eighth but among the seven. The beast as the leader of this complex political entity then becomes the eighth king.

**Zechariah 1:18** Then I lifted up my eyes and looked, and behold, there were four horns. **19** So I said to the angel who was speaking with me, "What are these?" And he answered me, "These are the horns which have scattered Judah, Israel and Jerusalem." **20** Then Yahweh showed me four craftsmen. **21** I said, "What are these coming to do?" And he said, "These are the horns which have scattered Judah so that no man lifts up his head; but these craftsmen have come to terrify them, to throw down the horns of the nations who have lifted up their horns against the land of Judah in order to scatter it."

cf. **Revelation 17:1** Then one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls came and spoke with me, saying, "Come here, I will show you the judgment of the great harlot who sits on many waters, **2** with whom the kings of the earth committed acts of immorality, and those who dwell on the earth were made drunk with the wine of her immorality." **3** And he carried me away in the Spirit into a wilderness; and I saw a woman sitting on a scarlet beast, full of blasphemous names, having seven heads and ten horns [cf. Revelation 12:3 – ... a great red dragon having seven heads and ten horns, and on his heads were seven diadems]. **4** The woman was clothed in purple and scarlet, and adorned with gold and precious stones and pearls, having in her hand a gold cup full of abominations and of the unclean things of her immorality, **5** and on her forehead a name was written, a mystery, "BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND OF THE ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH." **6** And I saw the woman drunk with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the witnesses of Jesus. When I saw her, I wondered greatly. **7** And the angel said to me, "Why do you wonder? I will tell you the mystery of the woman and of the beast that carries her, which has the seven heads and the ten horns [cf. Revelation 12:3 as above]."

**Revelation 17:8** "The beast that you saw was, and is not, and is about to come up out of the abyss and go to destruction. And those who dwell on the earth, whose name has not been written in the book of life from the foundation of the world, will wonder when they see the beast, that he was and is not and will come. **9** "Here is the mind which has wisdom. The seven heads are seven mountains on which the woman sits, **10** and they are seven kings; five have fallen, one is, the other has not yet come; and when he comes, he must remain a little while. **11** "The beast which was and is not, is himself also an eighth and is one of the seven, and he goes to destruction. **12** "The ten horns which you saw are ten kings who have not yet received a kingdom, but they receive authority as kings with the beast for one hour. **13** "These have one purpose, and they give their power and authority to the beast. **14** "These will wage war against the Lamb, and the Lamb will overcome them, because He is Lord of lords and King of kings, and those who are with Him are the called and chosen and faithful."

The beast has seven blasphemous names, meaning that he declares himself to be God. And the remarkable thing is that people will believe him and follow him.

Islam could be the beast. But just as the Roman Catholic Church was an obvious candidate to those who lived in previous centuries, Islam is for us now. The fact is, though, that because we really do not know exactly how much longer God will delay the GTDL and Jesus' return, we do not know if something else of which we are completely unaware will arise and replace Islam as the prime candidate.

<sup>173</sup> In Daniel 7, four beasts are described where the lion = Babylon, the bear = Media/Persia, the leopard = Greece, and the fourth is more terrible than the other three. It also has ten horns, meaning that it has ten kings. But another king arises among them and becomes supreme by crushing three of them (cf. **Dan. 7:8** "While I was contemplating the horns, behold, another horn, a little one, came up among them, and three of the first horns were pulled out by the roots before it; and behold, this horn possessed eyes like the eyes of a man and a mouth uttering great boasts.].

Babylon becomes the name for the archenemy of God in Revelation, i.e., unbelieving Judaism supported by western civilization. The dragon, Satan, provides this beast as the supreme ruler with his power to rule over the Jews and it seems the rest of the world.



<sup>174</sup> Two options – 1) One of the kingdoms in past history that ruled over Israel and Jerusalem was at one time defeated, and then the people are amazed that it regains its strength and power to rule over Israel and Jerusalem again. Thus people follow the beast because of its astounding recovery, while it is striking that the majority of both the Jews and Gentiles have not grasped the remarkable nature of Jesus' resurrection, i.e., his recovery of power and strength after his death on the cross, and followed him. 2) Like Jesus, this man goes through a radical crisis and survives, thus amazing both the Jews and the rest of the world. What is striking of course is that these same ethnic entities have not become amazed enough at Jesus' resurrection that they have believed in him and followed him the way they are going to do so with respect to the beast. If the beast seems worth following, how much more Jesus.

<sup>175</sup> This supreme ruler will be impressively powerful so that it will appear as though no one can challenge and defeat him. He truly reigns supreme over the Jews and the Gentiles. Whether consciously or not, the Jews and the rest of the world will submit to Satan as the power behind the beast just as they submit to the beast.

<sup>176</sup> God grants Satan and the leader of this last powerful political entity to exercise authority over Israel and the world for 3½ years, which is probably symbolic again of God's willingness to delay His final judgment of the Jews on earth so that they still have the opportunity to change their minds and embrace Jesus as their Messiah and advocate before God. This 3½ years is the same as that in which the two witnesses of Revelation 11 proclaim their message without being harmed or killed.

<sup>177</sup> During the "3½ year" rule of the beast as supreme ruler of the complex, political entity, God grants to him the right and authority to target Christians with his aggression against the Jews and to "overcome," i.e., put them to death for their faith in Jesus as the Messiah. And he does this throughout the whole earth populated by "every tribe, people, language, and nation," because he rules the world much as Jesus will do when he returns. Thus, they show that they are more afraid of physical death than of God's condemnation and destruction.

<sup>178</sup> During the beast's global rule, people will be given the choice either to worship and follow him so that he permits them to live or to deny him and worship Jesus so that he puts them to death.

Those whom God has not chosen before He brought the creation into existence, whose names are not in His "book of life of the Lamb who has been slain," i.e., who will not take advantage of Jesus' advocacy before the Father at the judgment, will naturally choose to submit to the beast in order to preserve their existences in the present realm.

<sup>179</sup> Those who persevere in their faith in Jesus as the Messiah will encounter persecution, captivity (imprisonment?), and death at the hands of unbelievers who are acting in conjunction with the rule, authority, and power of the beast. And this will happen as certainly as the fact that God has predestined all the events in their lives as the way He wants to tell His story of redemption through grace and condemnation through justice. Thus, God will remain faithful to all believers so as to ensure that they persevere in their faith.

<sup>180</sup> "Earth" may = land of Israel, so that this individual human being as another beast arises out of the Jewish nation. Therefore, he becomes a false Messiah who is Satanically inspired and looks like Jesus ("two horns like a lamb").

<sup>181</sup> This false Messiah and prophet makes the Jews worship and submit to the complex political entity and its main leader who claims to be divine and has of sorts come back to life, which all constitutes the first beast.

<sup>182</sup> This false Messiah and prophet performs miracles like the real Messiah, but it would be strange if God credentialed him by having these be authentic miracles. Perhaps he uses technology (like special effects in movies) to produce them. But he is convincing enough (maybe just through social media!) to persuade all the Jewish unbelievers in Israel to follow the first beast.

<sup>183</sup> Is this a real image, or is John writing symbolically of this false Messiah who insists that the Jews on the land of Israel consider the first beast to be like the idols of OT times, i.e., divine even though simply part of the creation?

<sup>184</sup> Probably symbolic of the false Messiah's unwavering support of the first beast, and those in Israel who refuse to worship (the 144,000?) it/him will be socially, politically, and economically ostracized ("killed" – symbolic of what follows in vs. 16-18).

<sup>185</sup> Cf. Deuteronomy 6:6 "These words, which I am commanding you today, shall be on your heart. 7 "You shall teach them diligently to your sons and shall talk of them when you sit in your house and when you walk by the way and when you lie down and when you rise up. 8 "You shall bind them as a sign on your hand and they shall be as frontals on your forehead. 9 "You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates."

As the Deuteronomy passages shows, to bind something to one's hand and forehead is to be committed to it within one's heart. Also [Ezekiel 9:4](#) The LORD said to him, "Go through the midst of the city, even through the midst of Jerusalem, and put a mark on the foreheads of the men who sigh and groan over all the abominations which are being committed in its midst." 5 But to the others He said in my hearing, "Go through the city after him and strike; do not let your eye have pity and do not spare. 6 "Utterly slay old men, young men, maidens, little children, and women, but do not touch any man on whom is the mark; and you shall start from My sanctuary." So they started with the elders who were before the temple.

<sup>186</sup> Those who refuse to follow the two beasts (the 144,000) are marginalized socially and economically. The mark does not have to be literal but only symbolic of a person's heart commitment. Yet, we can assume that God protects them and provides for them supernaturally.

<sup>187</sup> Here is wisdom = it is really important to understand this as part of how to endure the beast and his effects.

The number is not the identity of the beast but the limits to which God permits him to act. In Revelation 11:1, a measuring rod is given to John to measure the temple and altar so as to leave out the court outside the temple, thus signifying that the invading army is limited to all of the land of Israel and Jerusalem except the temple and altar where God dwells [symbolic of the 144,000 and their protection, not only in Israel or Jerusalem proper, but also in the rest of the world?].

Thus, the boundary of the beast's domain is that 1) he is a man and therefore no match for the transcendent God, and 2) 6 is his number, meaning that like the 6 days of the Jewish week which finds its finish and completion in the 7<sup>th</sup> day, and like the vision

of the 7 seals where the 6<sup>th</sup> seal represents the GTDL and the 7<sup>th</sup> seal represents the finish of God's promises to the Jews of the millennial kingdom, so the beast will be limited by God so that he never makes it into the millennial kingdom and the Kingdom of God. Then, his number is this 6 repeated twice for a total of three 6's, which is a Hebraism for emphasis. Never ever will the Beast achieve the completion of God's plans for only believers of enjoying His kingdom and blessings, but he will come to end when Jesus squashes him and defeats him.

The wisdom of 666 is that if one does not understand this about the Beast, especially when it appears as though he is winning and will truly defeat God's plans and purposes, a person might follow the Beast, which will result only in being destroyed by God as he will be. We have to get it into our bones that God and Jesus will win, even when it appears that Satan and his followers have conquered truth and its light in the world.

It is so tempting to be seduced and deceived by the values of ungodly and unbelieving cultures so that a person conforms to the world. These values may be subtle (good, honest religion that is devoid though of complete truth and authentic belief) or not so subtle (the pressure to accept all of a culture's immoral values and pursuits).

Thus the beast is the instantiation of Satan's opposition to God and His purposes. Different from the "antichrist" of 1 John which has always been in existence as the spirit within sinners of opposition to God. The beast is not just a complex political entity, but also a particular man who is a special manifestation of the spirit of antichrist.

<sup>188</sup> This is not an event but a vision of a truth which is being communicated by John. Jesus is present in Jerusalem/Israel along with the Jews who are protected by God from the army and beasts. Unlike those who follow the beast, these do not have his mark. Instead, their "mark" is that they are committed in their hearts to God and all that He is about with His eternal project that features Jesus at its center. Therefore, in Israel, there will be those who follow God and not the beast. Their destiny is to be claimed by the Messiah.

See above for 13:16 about the mark on the forehead.

<sup>189</sup> The song is the gospel. God never stops evangelizing the world and Israel, and these are the only ones who have embraced the gospel and know it as their belief system.

<sup>190</sup> Sexual purity is symbolic of spiritual purity. These Jews have authentic belief in the midst of their moral depravity. They are faithful to God and follow him into the eternal Kingdom of God—in stark contrast to the beast and his followers.

They are also the first fruits of God in that the God/Jesus has dedicated them to God as an Israelite would dedicate the first portion of his harvest to the one who provided it, i.e., God. They will be the first generation of authentic believers in the restored Kingdom of Israel.

<sup>191</sup> They are blameless = justified (not morally perfect). And they do not lie in that they are committed to the truth in spite of the consequences of being marginalized and ostracized socially and economically. They reject the lies and deception of the beasts' culture and have had the courage to face into themselves and their sin before God so as to seek His mercy and the blessing of Abraham of eternal life. Obviously this takes the grace of God to cause it to happen, because sinful human beings are completely inadequate in and of themselves to resist Satan and remain faithful to God.

<sup>192</sup> This is a vision of the 3½ years when the beast is ruling over Israel and probably the rest of the world. What is God up to during this time? He is all about evangelizing the Jews especially (via the two witnesses of Revelation 11) and then the rest of the world too that contains cities with large populations of Jews and of course mostly Gentiles.

At this point in Revelation, we are on the threshold of God's completing His judgment against the Jews, and the gospel of the God of all creation, especially Jewish and Gentile human beings, is still going out to the whole world, exhorting people to repent and flee from the wrath and condemnation of God. This should always be our mindset, that with both our words and our actions we should "preach" the gospel so that current unbelievers may be saved. We never know whom God has chosen so that He changes their hearts and they acquire eternal life in the Kingdom of God.

<sup>193</sup> Here is another truth. While the gospel continues to go out to the whole world during the 3½ years of God's final patience towards the Jews, it is also true that unbelieving Judaism and the unbelieving Jews who participate in it will be destroyed. This is the first mention of Babylon to introduce it to the reader, but without a detailed and clear explanation as to what it is. Revelation 17 provides this explanation – Jews who follow the beast and rebel against God in line with their having rebelled against Him from long ago as evidenced especially by their rejection of Jesus as the Messiah. This label refers to their being just as immoral as the ANE Babylon which was obsessed with sensuality and pleasure. And the Jews have participated and encouraged the Gentile world to reject God and pursue immorality just as much as the Gentile world have encouraged themselves, e.g., Hollywood and its movies, Wall Street and its pursuit of satisfying people's greed, etc. The Jews are not to blame for the world's immorality. They have simply participated in it and encouraged it just as much as anybody has. But God will judge the Jews and destroy every last unbelieving one in the GTDL as He inaugurates the restored Kingdom of Israel through Jesus' return and presence. And their destruction comes in the light of God's having called them to be a people of priests and teachers to the world of sin, repentance, God's mercy, and God's morality. Thus, they are not more immoral than Gentiles. But they have rejected their unique calling from God.

<sup>194</sup> Here is another truth. This vision highlights the coming judgment of God on unbelieving Jews who will be punished by God and destroyed. It is not the people who endure the judgment forever. It is the smoke of their destruction. In other words, their destruction will have a ripple effect into eternity whereby it will be common knowledge even among eternal believers that their counterparts in human history, unbelievers, incurred God's judgment and destruction.

In addition, just as long as day and night lasts for them on the land of Israel under the thumb of the beast, their lives will be hard and arduous such that they never feel at rest. They are trying to save their lives by worshiping the beast and receiving his mark, but because the beast is interested in only oppressing them and not raising them up and extolling them.

<sup>195</sup> In the midst of the carnage being perpetrated on the unbelieving Jews by the beast at some point near the end of the 3½ years of his hegemony over Israel and the world, believing Jews are also being persecuted and killed by him. These are the ones who guard in their hearts and lives the “instructions” (τὰς ἐντολάς) of God and Jesus and end up dying for their faith because they are unwilling to be coerced into following and worshiping the beast. But the upside is that they will rest from the hard work of persevering in their faith through being asleep until Jesus’ return and even after when they are resurrected and made immortal and morally perfect. Their pursuit of goodness follows them into eternal life as Paul says in [Romans 2:5](#) But because of your stubbornness and unrepentant heart you are storing up wrath for yourself in the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God, [6](#) who WILL RENDER TO EACH PERSON ACCORDING TO HIS DEEDS: [7](#) to those who by perseverance in doing good seek for glory and honor and immortality, eternal life; [8](#) but to those who are selfishly ambitious and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, wrath and indignation. [9](#) There will be tribulation and distress for every soul of man who does evil, of the Jew first and also of the Greek, [10](#) but glory and honor and peace to everyone who does good, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. [11](#) For there is no partiality with God.

These believing Jews are different from the 144,000 who are set apart but not yet full-blown believers. Their belief will follow the return of Jesus so that they are not raptured at his return. These believing Jews are killed for their faith and then resurrected when Jesus returns.

<sup>196</sup> Here we have the return of Jesus as described according to the language of [Daniel 7:13](#) I kept looking in the night visions, and behold, with the clouds of heaven one like a Son of Man was coming, and he came up to the Ancient of Days and was presented before Him. [14](#) And to him was given dominion, glory and a kingdom, that all the peoples, nations and men of every language might serve him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion which will not pass away; and his kingdom is one which will not be destroyed.

Jesus is urged by the angel to reap from the land of Israel (or the whole earth perhaps). Is he reaping only believers to rapture them at his return, or unbelievers to judge and destroy them?

<sup>197</sup> Clearly this is a reaping of unbelievers, most likely Jews, even from those scattered around the world who incur God’s wrath and judgment for rejecting their Messiah Jesus. With hyperbolic language, the vision describes the complete destruction of these unbelievers. This is outside the city of Jerusalem in the sense that it does not detract from its sacred status as the city of God.

Therefore, this probably refers ultimately to the Great White Throne Judgment at the end of Revelation 20.

<sup>198</sup> God’s judgment of the Jews is finally coming to an end. His patience has run out, and over the course of what may be weeks or months, the seven bowls of wrath with their Egypt-like plagues will occur on the land of Israel.

<sup>199</sup> Here is another eternal truth. In conjunction with God’s bringing His wrath against the Jews to an end, there is also the fact that He has rescued from His wrath many who will praise Him forever for His majesty, mercy, and their salvation.

This vision also highlights (again) (and this is not an actual event) the marvelous nature of the perseverance of the faith of those who resisted the pressure to submit to the beast and his authoritarian rule. They are before God and singing His praises because this was their destiny as scripted by God the author of all reality and this story of His mercy, judgment and faithfulness to His promises.

<sup>200</sup> The end of God’s judgment of the Jews is about to occur. Get ready!

No other thing will be worth mentioning until this has happened. Thus no one is able to enter His presence. God has fixed His mind on judgment and finishing it.

<sup>201</sup> These seven acts of God’s judgment will take place on the land of Israel and are God’s final demonstrations of his judgment towards the Jews for rejecting Jesus as their Messiah and for continuing to rebel against God in other ways too—as explained in Revelation 17 & 18 in regard to Babylon, i.e., unbelieving Judaism.

<sup>202</sup> A plague of boils.

[Exodus 9:9](#) “It will become fine dust over all the land of Egypt, and will become boils breaking out with sores on man and beast through all the land of Egypt.” [10](#) So they took soot from a kiln, and stood before Pharaoh; and Moses threw it toward the sky, and it became boils breaking out with sores on man and beast.

<sup>203</sup> The Sea of Galilee will become useless for obtaining food by fishing.

[Exodus 7:17](#) ‘Thus says the LORD, “By this you shall know that I am the LORD: behold, I will strike the water that is in the Nile with the staff that is in my hand, and it will be turned to blood.”’

<sup>204</sup> Literally (?), the sources of water in Israel become unusable.

Unbelieving Jews have directly or indirectly (by encouraging the Gentile nations to persecute Christians) shed the blood of authentic believers, even among their own kinsmen (cf. Matthew 10 and John 13-16). And just in case anyone is wondering if God’s judgment of unbelieving Jews is fair, the angel who represents these water sources explicitly declares that the Jews deserve this judgment by God—just as they did when Assyria, Babylon, and Rome destroyed the kingdoms of Israel and Judah along with the city of Jerusalem. Their obedience, as much as it was, lacked the proper inwardness that God has always required of sinners, even of Abraham.

Again, cf. Exodus 7.

<sup>205</sup> An astronomical event that intensifies the heat of the sun in Israel. Not necessarily global warming, but local warming of a severe kind that causes great suffering among the Jews. But instead of recognizing that this is God’s judgment and repenting, they will curse God, demonstrating just how stubborn and hard the heart of man is in his defiance against God (and therefore how magnificent and miraculous is God’s mercy when He changes a heart and a sinful human being genuinely worships and submits to God). This is both so sad that the Jews are as stubborn as they are and so awesome that God is as merciful as He is in changing the hearts of sinners who would reject him completely if it were not for His inward, loving action through His Holy Spirit (cf. Romans 5).

Notice that they recognize that God is the source of their suffering, and therefore they direct their anger and blasphemes towards Him.

<sup>206</sup> The first four bowls of wrath and plagues are directed towards the Jews. This fifth is directed towards Gentiles.

The judgment of unbelieving Jews will include the judgment of the Gentiles whom God has used as His instrument of justice against them, just as God did with Assyria and Babylon (cf. Isaiah 10:5-19 regarding Assyria and Isaiah 13 regarding Babylon). As in the case of the unbelieving Jews who are experiencing God's judgment, the beast and his political associates will curse God when He brings the same kind of pain and suffering on them. Their stubborn hearts will prevent them from repenting. As with the Jews, the beast and his government of Gentiles recognize that God is behind their suffering, and they direct their anger and curses towards Him.

<sup>207</sup> These must be additional military forces summoned by the beast (and Satan and the false prophet, the second beast of Revelation 13) to destroy the Jews because the beast has turned completely against them with this intent that is in line with the "mystery of lawlessness" and Satan's plans to destroy all of God's people—the Jews and the Christians.

<sup>208</sup> In line with Satan's historical strategy, demonic forces deceive other leaders of nations in the world to take up arms against Israel, but this will lead only to their destruction (Satan has been a murderer from the beginning – John 8). These "signs" are probably artificially produced as God would not want to credential these demons as He did Jesus and the apostles.

These armies are being drawn towards "the great day of God" (the GTDL) when God will complete His judgment of the Jews and include these armies to be destroyed after they have killed many of the unbelieving Jews.

<sup>209</sup> As in 1 Thessalonians 5:1-11, the vision speaks of Jesus' coming as a thief, not because there are no objective and obvious signs that he is returning, because there are plenty of these, but because people subjectively are completely blind to the signs. Their hearts are so hard and stubborn that they are unwilling to face into the truth of God and His approaching judgment of the Jews and the nations.

cf. **1Thessalonians 5:1** Now as to the times and the epochs, brethren, you have no need of anything to be written to you. **2** For you yourselves know full well that the day of the Lord will come just like a thief in the night. **3** While they are saying, "Peace and safety!" then destruction will come upon them suddenly like labor pains upon a woman with child, and they will not escape. **4** But you, brethren, are not in darkness, that the day would overtake you like a thief; **5** for you are all sons of light and sons of day. We are not of night nor of darkness; **6** so then let us not sleep as others do, but let us be alert and sober. **7** For those who sleep do their sleeping at night, and those who get drunk get drunk at night. **8** But since we are of the day, let us be sober, having put on the breastplate of faith and love, and as a helmet, the hope of salvation. **9** For God has not destined us for wrath, but for obtaining salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, **10** who died for us, so that whether we are awake or asleep, we will live together with Him. **11** Therefore encourage one another and build up one another, just as you also are doing.

<sup>210</sup> This is the broad plain beneath the hill of Megiddo in the northern area of Galilee. This is only where the armies gather. The battle against them takes place as far inland as Jerusalem where they complete their task of killing unbelieving Jews as the final execution of God's judgment on them for having rejected Jesus as the Messiah. The movement of these armies into the rest of Israel and Jerusalem is not described until the vision of Revelation 19:17-21 when Jesus appears on a white horse and destroys them with a word from his mouth.

**Rev. 19:17** Then I saw an angel standing in the sun, and he cried out with a loud voice, saying to all the birds which fly in midheaven, "Come, assemble for the great supper of God, **18** so that you may eat the flesh of kings and the flesh of commanders and the flesh of mighty men and the flesh of horses and of those who sit on them and the flesh of all men, both free men and slaves, and small and great." **19** And I saw the beast and the kings of the earth and their armies assembled to make war against Him who sat on the horse and against His army. **20** And the beast was seized, and with him the false prophet who performed the signs in his presence, by which he deceived those who had received the mark of the beast and those who worshiped his image; these two were thrown alive into the lake of fire which burns with brimstone. **21** And the rest were killed with the sword which came from the mouth of Him who sat on the horse, and all the birds were filled with their flesh.

Also **Revelation 17:12** "The ten horns which you saw are ten kings who have not yet received a kingdom, but they receive authority as kings with the beast for one hour. **13** "These have one purpose, and they give their power and authority to the beast. **14** "These will wage war against the Lamb, and the Lamb will overcome them, because He is Lord of lords and King of kings, and those who are with Him are the called and chosen and faithful."

<sup>211</sup> Here we have the completion of God's judgment against the Jews—the last one of human history (after the Assyrians, the Babylonians, and the Romans).

This accompanies the return of Jesus as described in the vision of Revelation 19.

<sup>212</sup> Earthquakes were common in the OT prophets as signs of God's judgment. This particular one devastates not only Jerusalem, but also all the major cities of the world that contain Jewish communities, i.e., communities that contain unbelieving Jews.

Nothing like this earthquake has ever occurred in human history it will be so destructive.

cf. **Ezekiel 38:18** "It will come about on that day, when Gog comes against the land of Israel," declares the Lord GOD, "that My fury will mount up in My anger. **19** In My zeal and in My blazing wrath I declare that on that day there will surely be a great earthquake in the land of Israel."

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

the great day of their wrath has come, and who is able to stand?"

**Revelation 11:11** But after the three and a half days, the breath of life from God came into them, and they stood on their feet; and great fear fell upon those who were watching them. **12** And they heard a loud voice from heaven saying to them, "Come up here." Then they went up into heaven in the cloud, and their enemies watched them. **13** And in that hour there was a great earthquake, and a tenth of the city fell; seven thousand people were killed in the earthquake, and the rest were terrified and gave glory to the God of heaven.

**Rev. 11:19** And the temple of God which is in heaven was opened; and the ark of His covenant appeared in His temple, and there were flashes of lightning and sounds and peals of thunder and an earthquake and a great hailstorm.

<sup>213</sup> Jerusalem the "great city" (Rev. 11:8) is destroyed, along with the major cities of the world, and "Babylon," i.e., unbelieving Judaism and Jews, is targeted for destruction.

<sup>214</sup> Remarkably, again, in spite of the massive suffering that will occur, the Jews (and therefore probably the Gentiles who lack authentic belief and suffer effects of these earthquakes) will curse God and refuse to repent of their sins and to obtain His mercy and forgiveness.

<sup>215</sup> This is a new vision which alludes to the prophet Hosea who was required by God to marry a prostitute who continued her trade while Hosea remained faithful to her. In the same manner, the faithless wife of God, Israel, continues in rebellion against Him, while He remains faithful to her and His promises to make of Israel a great nation. Israel "sits on many waters" in that the Jews are scattered throughout the Gentile world, and most of them remain unbelievers (cf. **Rev. 17:15** And he said to me, "The waters which you saw where the harlot sits, are peoples and multitudes and nations and tongues.)

Together with the kings of the earth, Israel worships the same gods as the Gentiles and even encourages everyone to do so. Thus, the Jews are not more immoral than the Gentiles. Nor are they to blame for the Gentiles' rebellion against God. But God had called them to be unique and set apart by virtue of their worship of Him through the Mosaic Covenant, and they have rejected their calling and special role and instructing the nations in who the one, true God is.

Thus, the Jews have actually encouraged the Gentiles to rebel against God when they were supposed to lead them into righteousness. This level and style of immorality has even been imported into the land of Israel.

<sup>216</sup> See below for 17:9 regarding the seven heads and ten horns.

**Zechariah 1:18** Then I lifted up my eyes and looked, and behold, there were four horns. **19** So I said to the angel who was speaking with me, "What are these?" And he answered me, "These are the horns which have scattered Judah, Israel and Jerusalem." **20** Then Yahweh showed me four craftsmen. **21** I said, "What are these coming to do?" And he said, "These are the horns which have scattered Judah so that no man lifts up his head; but these craftsmen have come to terrify them, to throw down the horns of the nations who have lifted up their horns against the land of Judah in order to scatter it."

<sup>217</sup> Here is an ironic reversal with the use of the name Babylon the Great since it is being applied to the Jews. They are just as evil and godless as ancient Babylon, the very pinnacle of immorality and sensuality in the ANE. Plus, they were Israel's great enemy and destroyed Jerusalem and the temple, while the Jews are their own enemy and bringing judgment and destruction on themselves from God.

The Jews are clothed in purple and scarlet with fine jewelry to demonstrate their special relationship to God, that they should even be ruling over the world with righteousness. But their present rule in Hollywood and Wall Street for example is to encourage unrighteousness and exploit people's sinful obsession with sensuality for financial gain. Israel is sitting on the same beast of the previous vision who is energized in his rebellion against God by Satan, even claiming that he is God. The Jews are riding the Satanically inspired opposition to God right into the beast's opposing them and seeking to destroy them, culminating in their own destruction by the beast, his armies, and God through these earthquakes, etc. Thus, ironically, after all their allegiance to the beast, this same beast will turn around and seek to destroy them (Rev. 12:13-17; 16:13-16; 17:16-18; 19:19).

Plus, the 1<sup>st</sup> century Jews especially persecuted and killed their own kinsmen who were believers in Jesus the Messiah (cf. Matthew 10 and John 13-16).

<sup>218</sup> This beast comes up out of the abyss in the sense that he is so powerfully led and influenced by Satan.

**Revelation 11:7** When they [the two witnesses] have finished their testimony, the beast that comes up out of the abyss will make war with them, and overcome them and kill them.

cf. **Revelation 1:4** John to the seven churches that are in Asia: Grace to you and peace, from Him who is and who was and who is to come, and from the seven Spirits who are before His throne,

So here the beast and his ruler, Satan, are said to be like God but obviously only a dim parody of Him for comic effect. Satan will appear as though he beats God, but he will fail miserably and ultimately be destroyed.

<sup>219</sup> **Zechariah 1:18** Then I lifted up my eyes and looked, and behold, there were four horns. **19** So I said to the angel who was speaking with me, "What are these?" And he answered me, "These are the horns which have scattered Judah, Israel and Jerusalem." **20** Then Yahweh showed me four craftsmen. **21** I said, "What are these coming to do?" And he said, "These are the horns which have scattered Judah so that no man lifts up his head; but these craftsmen have come to terrify them, to throw down the horns of the nations who have lifted up their horns against the land of Judah in order to scatter it."

<sup>220</sup> This is the same beast, the one from the sea, of the previous vision in Revelation 13:1-10 that is a complex, Gentile political entity led by one powerful individual (the Man of Lawlessness of 2 Thessalonians 2; Gog of Ezekiel 38,39), who himself is powerfully led and influenced by Satan, the king so to speak of the abyss of demons and evil.

During the course of the history of Jerusalem and the Jews, there are seven distinct empires which rule "the great city," Jerusalem and Mt. Zion ("seven mountains"), which all either fade into history at some time or are destroyed by God. In John's day, five of them have come and gone (Babylon, Medes, Persia, Greece, Egypt (Ptolemies), Syria (Seleucids)), one is (Rome), and the seventh is yet to come which will remain for only a little while. This last will be the tyrannical government at the very end of this

age that at first simply forces the Jews to submit to it (cf. Revelation 13 and the beast and the false prophet who makes the Jews submit to him) and then turns on them to destroy them (cf. Revelation 12:13-17; 16:13-16; 17:16-18; 19:19) and ends up fighting against Jesus himself who, along with resurrected and raptured believers, destroys them (cf. Revelation 17:14 (“the called and chosen and faithful”); 19:11-21 (“the armies which are in heaven...horses”); 1 Corinthians 15; 1 Thessalonians 4; 2 Thessalonians 2).

This seventh also involves the temple’s having been rebuilt and then conquered again by the locusts of the fifth trumpet who deceive the armies of the sixth trumpet to go up against Israel. But this attack as described in Revelation 17-19 does not last very long, because Jesus comes and destroys them.

The beast is the eighth but also one of the seven, referring to the rise of one of the ancient empires—Babylon, Medes, Persia, Greece, Egypt (Ptolemies), Syria (Seleucids), or Rome. Literally, he is “of the seven,” possibly meaning he is like the seven in that he rules over Jerusalem and the Jews, even subjugating them even more and resulting eventually in his plan to destroy them all by his waging war with the ten kings against Jesus (Rev. 17:16-18). And everyone in the world is surprised at their renewed power and influence (cf. Revelation 13:3-6). This eighth empire (as a kind of continuation of the seventh of the beast who earlier only wanted to subjugate the Jews) will dominate not only the land of Israel, but also to some extent the rest of the world. There will also be an alliance of ten kings until, a la Daniel 7, the beast eliminates three of them and forces the others to submit to him.

These kings will then come up on the land of Israel to destroy the Jews, gathering at Har-Megiddo (Armageddon), but Jesus will return with all historical believers and destroy them as described in Revelation 19.

<sup>221</sup> Thus, the waters are peoples around the world among whom the Jews are dispersed.

<sup>222</sup> The ten king alliance with the beast will turn on the Jews and seek to destroy them as God’s final judgment on them. And it will be worldwide, so that all unbelieving Jews will be killed. This will bring about the fulfillment of God’s words in Deuteronomy 28 to the effect that He promises the Jews that He will punish them through exile and death if they are not faithful to Him and the Mosaic Covenant from their hearts.

<sup>223</sup> The great city is Jerusalem which has always had the potential to rule the entire earth if the Jews had obeyed God in the manner which He has required. And the city will finally reach its potential and do so when Jesus returns and restores the Kingdom of Israel, i.e., the first stage of the Kingdom of God which will exist in the present age and realm until the new heavens and the new earth of Revelation 21.

<sup>224</sup> Could this be Jesus as a messenger of God with great authority and whose glory illumines the earth [the land of Israel?]?

<sup>225</sup> The whole world with its socio-economic culture is something that the Jews have helped build, and so many people have become wealthy by exploiting human beings’ obsession with satisfying their desires and pleasing their senses. But sensuality (σρηνησ) is deadly, living for the now and pleasing ourselves instead of being willing to wait for the shalom and morally perfect wholesomeness of the righteousness of the eternal Kingdom of God in obedience to Him and His moral commandments. The problem is that a person can make a lot of money pandering to people’s senses while not only destroying them but also himself—eternally! And both the Jews and the Gentiles have done a good job of this.

<sup>226</sup> Or is this other voice that of Jesus so that he calls the believing Jews “my people?”

<sup>227</sup> This is an appeal to the 144,000 to be different from the completely unbelieving Jewish kinsmen and from the rest of the world which pursues immorality and sensuality with reckless abandon in disobedience to God. These 144,000 may be concentrated in Israel but are also sprinkled throughout the unbelieving Jews who live in the rest of the world.

<sup>228</sup> **Isaiah 47:7** “Yet you [Babylon] said, ‘I will be a queen forever.’ These things you did not consider nor remember the outcome of them. **8** “Now, then, hear this, you sensual one, who dwells securely, who says in your heart, ‘I am, and there is no one besides me. I will not sit as a widow, nor know loss of children.’ **9** “But these two things will come on you suddenly in one day: loss of children and widowhood. They will come on you in full measure in spite of your many sorceries, in spite of the great power of your spells. **10** “You felt secure in your wickedness and said, ‘No one sees me.’ Your wisdom and your knowledge, they have deluded you; for you have said in your heart, ‘I am, and there is no one besides me.’ **11** “But evil will come on you which you will not know how to charm away; and disaster will fall on you for which you cannot atone; and destruction about which you do not know will come on you suddenly.

<sup>229</sup> The same voice from heaven calls for the judgment and destruction of Babylon, the Jews, for her/their obsession with obtaining fame and fortune through sensual living (σρηνησ) and promoting it.

The result will be that during a short amount of time, plagues, pestilence, disease, and grievous suffering will afflict the Jews and destroy every last one who is unbelieving in the entire world. This will all come about because of God’s power and justice which is good and right.

Notice that fire is an instrument of God’s judgment.

Cf. **2 Peter 3:7** But by His word the present heavens and earth are being reserved for fire, kept for the day of judgment and destruction of ungodly men.

<sup>230</sup> The Gentile nations as represented here by the mention of their leaders will lament the destruction of Jerusalem and unbelieving Judaism, not because they are so attracted to the Jews, but because it means global, economic disaster for them who tied their sense of well-being to the same greedy and sensual pursuits as the Jews. This economic disaster is described in the next verses.

<sup>231</sup> As go the Jews with all their talent, skill, and ability to create wealth, so goes the rest of the world. Consequently, when God’s judgment destroys all the unbelieving Jews during the Great and Terrible Day of the Lord, He ends up destroying the entire world’s economy, and it completely collapses with greater and wider effects than any economic downturn in the past. The “great city” is Jerusalem as representative of all unbelieving Jews, the killing of Jewish Christians originally and then Gentile Christians

throughout history, and symbolized by Babylon as opposed to God and pursuing only wealth.

All the merchants of the world who engage in the buying and selling of not only appropriate commodities and items but also inappropriate ones, e.g., human trafficking, become absolutely distraught over the loss of their trades and their wealth. They have nothing in life to fall back on to give them a sense of joy and purpose, such as God with repentance and obedience for the sake of life beyond this realm and its materialism and sensuality.

Since this involves Jesus' return and the resurrection and rapture of all believers in history, the only people left in the world are the 144,000 on the land of Israel and unbelieving Gentiles throughout the rest of the nations. All the unbelieving Jews have been killed (v. 21). And then Jesus will rule over the 144,000 in Israel and exercise hegemony over the Gentiles in the rest of the world as the beginning of the restored Kingdom of Israel, the first stage of the Kingdom of God. The resurrected and raptured believers will become transformed into morally perfect and immortal people who will reign with him during the millennial kingdom, while the mortal 144,000 Jews become the first converts of the millennial kingdom and the seedbed for the restored Kingdom of Israel which is the fulfillment of God's promise to Abraham of making his descendants a great nation.

<sup>232</sup> Here is another heavenly vision which announces that finally it can be said that God is avenging the deaths of all authentic believers who lost their lives because of their faith, where opposition to them was centered in Jerusalem which killed the prophets, the apostles, and ordinary Christians—as described by the NT.

**Revelation 6:9** When the Lamb broke the fifth seal, I saw underneath the altar the souls of those who had been slain because of the word [message] of God, and because of the testimony which they had maintained; **10** and they cried out with a loud voice, saying, "How long, O Lord, holy and true, will You refrain from judging and avenging our blood on those who dwell on the earth?" **11** And there was given to each of them a white robe; and they were told that they should rest for a little while longer, until the number of their fellow servants and their brethren who were to be killed even as they had been, would be completed also.

<sup>233</sup> This is to say that none of these kinds of people will appear again in Jerusalem under the banner of unbelief and rebellion against God, because coming right around the corner with the return of Jesus is the millennial kingdom of only *believing* Jews.

<sup>234</sup> The mindset of sorcery, "magic" (*φαρμακεία*), i.e., if I do this, such and such will occur (a cause and effect perspective that rejects and ignores God's sovereign rule over the creation whereby He may make things happen that are different from the expectations of sinful human beings with their atheistic planning), is what has driven the Jews and the rest of the world in imitating them. But events that follow from this mindset and manner of living will not exist in Jerusalem anymore after the return of Jesus and the hearts of all Jews will be changed.

<sup>235</sup> This vision of 18:20-19:4 is not of an event but of a truth. The heavens simply rejoice that God is faithful to His promises, one of which is to destroy godlessness. And He does so by eliminating the world's culture and economy that has been built by the Jews and Gentiles as an alternative to the righteous kingdom which the Jews were always intended to promote. And this is taking place only after God has waited patiently for the Jews to repent.

They have even opposed God by killing His prophets and authentic believers in Jesus the Messiah, who are invited in this vision to realize that God is bringing about His judgment partly for their sake because of their being killed for their faith.

The Jews basically said to the rest of the world not to worry about God and His judgment, that they all could participate in trying to magically make life worth living for themselves apart from Him.

<sup>236</sup> **Psalm 19:9** The fear of the LORD is clean, enduring forever; the judgments of the LORD are true; they are righteous altogether.

**Deuteronomy 32:43** "Rejoice, O nations, with His people; for He will avenge the blood of His servants, and will render vengeance on His adversaries, and will atone for His land and His people."

<sup>237</sup> **Isaiah 34:8** For the LORD has a day of vengeance, a year of recompense for the cause of Zion. **9** Its streams will be turned into pitch, and its loose earth into brimstone, and its land will become burning pitch. **10** It will not be quenched night or day; its smoke will go up forever. From generation to generation it will be desolate; none will pass through it forever and ever.

<sup>238</sup> This is a continuation of the previous vision that is not an event but a truth and which began in 18:20.

It is as if all the cosmos acknowledges the greatness and rightness of God to judge the Jews for their rejection of their Messiah and avenge the deaths of Christians which the Jews have not stood up and objected to when they should have as God's chosen people and a beacon of light on the earth. Thus Jerusalem and Israel are destroyed by God except for the 144,000.

Therefore, it is not as though the smoke of Jerusalem's destruction by God's fiery anger never ceases to go up into the sky, because right around the corner is the restored Kingdom of Israel with a Jerusalem in which only believing Jews live. Instead, this is symbolic of God's finally destroying that which was offensive to him in the immorality of unbelieving Jews and which will never happen again.

<sup>239</sup> Now a vision of the truth of the coming of Jesus into God's sovereign rule over Israel and the rest of the world. Because Jesus is the embodiment of God, his presence on earth in Jerusalem means the Kingdom of God exists. All of heaven rejoices in God's finally reigning as King over believing Jews and the rest of the world, with the Jews proclaiming the truth of God in the manner in which they were always intended by God, even through the Mosaic Covenant and now also through their obedience to their Messiah Jesus. This involves another ironic reversal whereby the Jews up to this point have mostly been subjugated by the Gentiles with Jerusalem trod under foot by them. However, with Jesus' return and establishing his kingdom, the Jews will rule the whole rest of the world.

<sup>240</sup> The bride is going to be the 144,000 Jews with the rest of believers from all history invited to the marriage supper. Cf. Revelation 19:7-10.

<sup>241</sup> These righteous acts are those of the 144,000 Jews either before they became complete believers before the return of Jesus (otherwise they would be raptured) or after they become complete believers during the first part of the millennial kingdom. These

Jews were definitely “saints” (holy in their behavior and adherence to God) during the most difficult time of God’s judgment on the Jews, but they will also truly be “saints” after Jesus’ return, because God will finally circumcise their hearts completely. Thus, the fine linen clothing that is symbolic of the righteous acts of the saints is what the 144,000 receive when Jesus returns and their hearts are changed and they become the first generation of authentic believers of the Jews on the land of Israel during the millennial kingdom who perform deeds of love, etc. in conjunction with authentic faith.

<sup>242</sup> Just as the great harlot was unfaithful Israel, the bride who has made herself ready are the 144,000 Jews who have chosen to pursue obedience to God rather than succumb to the coercion of the beast and the false prophet to follow and worship the beast. Those who are invited to the marriage supper are clearly different from the bride and are believers from the past and present, i.e., both those who have died in faith and are living in faith from the beginning of the OT to the moment of Jesus’ return (cf. 1 Corinthians 15 & 1 Thessalonians 4).

<sup>243</sup> John is so excited about this vision that he falls down and worships the one who is speaking. However, he is not Jesus but only his fellow servant. And he says that the testimony about Jesus is the essential information from God to know and believe.

<sup>244</sup> Jesus’ primary target is the invading armies under the leadership of the Beast who are all trying to destroy the Jews. He comes as a ruler of the world to wage war against and destroy all his enemies who are gathered on the land of Israel to destroy the Jews and defeat him.

<sup>245</sup> Jesus is the very message of God, that which everyone should learn and know and which leads them to God’s eternal mercy and life.

<sup>246</sup> These armies are most likely resurrected and raptured believers mentioned in 1 Thessalonians 4 and 1 Corinthians 15.

<sup>247</sup> Cf. [Revelation 2:26](#) ‘He who overcomes, and he who keeps My deeds until the end, TO HIM I WILL GIVE AUTHORITY OVER THE NATIONS; 27 AND HE SHALL RULE THEM WITH A ROD OF IRON, AS THE VESSELS OF THE POTTER ARE BROKEN TO PIECES, as I also have received authority from My Father; 28 and I will give him the morning star. Thus, Jesus had said near the beginning of Revelation that his followers will rule with him over the whole earth during the time of the millennial kingdom.

And all Jesus has to do is speak, and the soldiers of the army invading the land of Israel die.

<sup>248</sup> A repetition of previous visions which have alluded to the inauguration of the Kingdom of God. Here a military vision where Jesus comes and destroys the armies gathered at Har-Magedon and marching into Jerusalem to destroy the Jews and him.

Like Habakkuk who complains about God’s using immoral and godless Babylon to bring judgment on OT Israel/Judah, it could be complained about the armies that invade Israel before the return of Jesus that God is again using immoral and godless people as His instrument of justice against His own people, the Jews. But God turned around and destroyed the Babylonians with the Medes, and God will destroy with Jesus’ return these endtimes armies who are bringing about the final judgment of the Jewish nation.

<sup>249</sup> The carnage from the destruction of the invading army is massive. And these soldiers were from all walks of life who desired to participate in annihilating the Jews and in rebelling against God in this manner.

<sup>250</sup> This is to say that the beast and collection of rulers with their armies are committed to destroying Jesus’ people, the Jews. But they will have to fight against Jesus and his armies of soldiers (transformed believers) in order to accomplish their goal. And they will fail miserably as Jesus destroys them simply by speaking (Revelation 19:15,21).

<sup>251</sup> The final eternal destruction of the beast and false prophet may take place at the end of the battle of Armageddon and before the Great White Throne Judgment because of their superior rebellion against God, or this may be speaking of the certainty of what will happen as a result of the judgment at the end of Revelation 20. This is a vision. So I think that it is more likely the latter.

This is also not a picture of eternal suffering but of eternal destruction. Fire destroys and not just torments. So it is not that they are tormented eternally. Instead, it is until it is appropriate that their conscious punishment end according to God’s measured justice. It could be said that the smoke of their torment (cf. Revelation 14:11;19:3) goes up into eternity as symbolic of everyone’s recognizing that it is good and right that they be destroyed as the archfollowers of God’s archenemy, Satan. No human beings will have been greater opponents of God than these two—greater even than Hitler.

<sup>252</sup> Here the whole scene of the invading armies and Jesus’ defeat of them is put together. This may be speaking simply of the destiny of the beast and false prophet, so that the event of their being thrown into the lake of fire is actually at the end of Revelation 20 and the Great White Throne Judgment. Or it is that God destroys them without even their going through the judgment.

The rest of the army is described as being killed and defeated by Jesus’ speaking for this to occur. And the scavenger birds feed on their flesh. Obviously, those who were members of the army will also suffer complete and eternal destruction as a result of the Great White Throne Judgment of Revelation 20.

<sup>253</sup> An angel has the key to unlock and lock the abyss, and he carries a chain in order to bind Satan and prevent him from moving, even though he will be locked in the abyss.

<sup>254</sup> While the number 1,000 is probably symbolic, Satan, the serpent of Genesis 3, will be unable to spread his lies and deceptions among the cultures of the world for a long, long time. This will be the first time in human history that the only impetus towards evil will be man’s sinfulness.

Nevertheless, as will be told in vs. 7-10, Satan will be released at the end of the millennial kingdom and permitted one last time to try to deceive the world’s population into fighting against and defeating God by destroying the Jews and Jesus. And the unbelieving sinners will once again buy into his lies and deceptions.

<sup>255</sup> Who are the “they” of this verse? In the light of 20:5 that mentions how the “rest of the dead did not come to life until” after the millennial kingdom, these are representative of all believers who have died during human history who become co-rulers of



Israel and the world with Jesus.

Probably the thrones are a reference to the apostles who will help reign over and judge, i.e., instruct and guide with respect to moral issues and issues of truth, the nation of Israel during the millennial kingdom. Cf. [Matthew 19:28](#) And Jesus said to them, “Truly I say to you, that you who have followed Me, in the regeneration when the Son of Man will sit on His glorious throne, you also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging [ruling?] the twelve tribes of Israel.

The verse also mentions those who were beheaded for their faith in Jesus and who did not receive the mark of the beast because of their faith in Jesus, both which will take place during the reign of the beast over the Jews in Israel. But these probably are intended to represent all believers throughout all time as a stark contrast between them and the unbelievers whose destiny is destruction in the lake of fire (cf. Revelation 20:15). These believers take part in ruling over the millennial kingdom of Jesus (cf. v. 6). In other words, the focus in this vision is on those who lost their lives because of their faith, but we know from 1 Thessalonians 4 and 1 Corinthians 15 that all believers will be gathered to Jesus when he returns and will reign with him over the millennial kingdom.

[Revelation 5:9](#) And they sang a new song, saying, “Worthy are You to take the book [scroll] and to break its seals; for You were slain, and purchased for God with Your blood men from every tribe and tongue and people and nation. 10 You have made them to be a kingdom and priests to our God; and they will reign upon the earth.”

<sup>256</sup> It is not only those who have died in their faith who participate in reigning with Jesus, but it will also be those who are alive when Jesus returns (cf. 1 Thessalonians 4 and 1 Corinthians 15). However, only those who are resurrected from the dead are mentioned here to contrast the first resurrection which involves only believers with the second resurrection which seems to involve only unbelievers (cf. Revelation 20:11-15).

<sup>257</sup> This last verse of the paragraph emphasizes that to take part in the first resurrection means that God will not condemn and destroy the person, This destruction is named “the second death.”

In addition, these resurrected (and raptured) believers will act as priests on earth, i.e., mediators between God and sinners, urging the latter who are unbelievers throughout the world to change their minds and repent before God in order to receive His mercy and eternal life. And this will go on for the entire duration of the millennial kingdom. They as priests will also act as instructors of truth and morality, i.e., the gospel, to believers in both Israel and the rest of the world. This is the role that the Jews were intended to fulfill as a nation under the Mosaic Covenant, but they are not successful in doing so until the millennial kingdom. [Isaiah 59:21](#) “As for Me, this is My covenant with them,” says the LORD: “My Spirit which is upon you, and My words which I have put in your mouth shall not depart from your mouth, nor from the mouth of your offspring, nor from the mouth of your offspring’s offspring,” says the LORD, “from now and forever.

<sup>258</sup> This is Armageddon II where the names Gog and Magog from Ezekiel 38,39, which refer there to Armageddon I, are used to signify that this second battle will be just like the first. Unfortunately, whatever success the resurrected and transformed believers have in convincing the Gentiles to repent will not be enough to prevent Satan from being able to deceive all the nations around the world to try one more time to destroy the Jews and their leader Jesus. And this even will be after everyone enjoys the most peaceful and prosperous period of human history which will take place during the millennial kingdom. This demonstrates just how foolish morally depraved human beings are. There is still war in the hearts of the unbelievers even though they have enjoyed such remarkable peace among one another because Jesus has ruled them the whole time with a rod of iron.

These peoples’ efforts will be short-lived. God will destroy them quickly and move on to the Great White Throne Judgment followed by the destruction of the present realm and creation of a completely new universe.

<sup>259</sup> After the destruction of the armies of the Gentiles who try to destroy the Jews and Jesus for the last time, there is one more thing for God to do in regard to these people and Satan, and this is to vindicate justice and punish those who have rebelled against Him during human history.

This vision mentions first that Satan is thrown into the lake of fire and destroyed, which is the same lake of fire where the beast and false prophet have “already” been thrown, i.e., probably already been slated for destruction during the Great White Throne Judgment (cf. Revelation 19:20). It is not that they are tormented eternally. Instead, it is until it is appropriate that their conscious punishment end according to God’s measured justice, and then the fire of the lake destroys them. In this way, the effect of their rebellion against God is eternal, but just not with eternal torment, but with eventually eternal destruction—even for Satan.

It could be said that the smoke of their torment (cf. Revelation 14:11;19:3) that goes up into eternity is symbolic of everyone’s recognizing that it is good and right that they be destroyed completely as God’s archenemies and his archfollowers. No human beings will have been greater opponents of God than these two—greater even than Hitler. And no created being will have been a greater opponent of God than Satan.

We can probably assume that the same fate awaits all the demons too.

<sup>260</sup> “Earth and heaven” may be the people who have rejected God during their lives and cannot stomach being in His presence because they immediately recognize that He is their judge and they stand to be condemned and destroyed by Him. They do not belong in a long term relationship with God.

Or (and I think this makes more sense in the light of vs. 12-15 about unbelievers), they are symbolic of the present cosmos with its characteristics of sin, deterioration, decay, and death that, in the long term, do not belong in God’s plans of an eternal and morally perfect realm where there is no death. This is to say that “no place [can be] found for them” in God’s eternal plans so that they must disappear and be replaced with the new heaven and a new earth that have a completely new set of laws of physics, etc. where decay and death will never have any part (21:1 – οὐρανὸν καινὸν καὶ γῆν καινὴν).

<sup>261</sup> At this Great White Throne judgment are all those who did not qualify for the first resurrection (cf. Revelation 20:5,6). God now raises them from the dead at the end of the millennial kingdom, i.e., those who were unbelievers and the ungodly during their lives. Another option is that this group includes those who became believers during the millennial kingdom, died, and now

are raised from the dead also. If the latter option is the case, then it gives an additional meaning to why the book of life is present at this judgment. It is not simply a point of truth to emphasize that the unbelievers do not qualify for eternal life. It is also evidence that the millennial kingdom believers do qualify.

The books which are opened are those that list the choices and actions of the people before the judgment throne. The question will be whether their choices and actions derive from a heart that has been changed by God and therefore are in line with authentic belief, which is one of the choices. If they are not in line with genuine belief, then the people rightly deserve God's eternal punishment that is measured and proportionate to their actions. In other words, God will punish some more than others according to His properly executed justice and then destroy all of them in the lake of fire.

The word that is translated judged in the NAS95 is ἐκρίθησαν, which could refer more to the punishment of the unbelievers after they are judged. And if this is the case, then it makes more sense to see all these before the throne as unbelievers from the 2<sup>nd</sup> resurrection rather than both millennial believers and all unbelievers from all history. And the reason they are called "the dead" is because these are the ones who were destined by God to punishment and eternal destruction.

<sup>262</sup> The sea as in other places in Revelation is the conglomeration of Gentile nations which have been populated mostly with unbelievers. Thus, they give up in the second resurrection those who will incur God's measured punishment and destruction in the lake of fire.

Death and Hades are probably the same thing, the non-existence of unbelievers who have died prior to the end of the millennial kingdom. Hades (ᾗδης) translates שְׁאוֹל (Sheol) in the OT 61x and refers to the place of the departed dead, i.e., to their non-existence until the resurrections when Jesus returns and the end of the millennial kingdom respectively. Therefore, "death and Hades" refer to the same thing—the end of one's physical existence in this realm to await God's judgment and the determination of one's eternal state, either life or non-existence.

The "great and the small" refers to God's impartiality in judging human beings. Their social, political, and economic status in this world will make no difference. It is their unbelieving hearts alone with their deeds that God will evaluate.

<sup>263</sup> The most negative aspects of the current created reality, death and Hades (the non-existence of unbelievers after they die physically in the present realm), will be destroyed by God forever—because no one will ever die again! This is what constitutes the second death, after the first death which was physical for people at the end of their lives on earth. Never again will people have to fear dying, along with judgment and punishment from God.

<sup>264</sup> Depending on what happens to believers who die during the millennial kingdom, no one's name at the Great White Throne judgment will be found in the book of life. If the GWTJ involves only unbelievers, then this statement is added for emphasis—that what the unbelievers are missing out on is LIFE!

<sup>265</sup> Two possibilities—1) a renovation of the existing universe (as Jehovah's Witnesses believe), or 2) a completely new and eternal universe where the old universe has gone away (ἀπῆλθαν) and disappeared completely (cf. v. 4, "the first things have passed away (gone away – ἀπῆλθαν). The 2<sup>nd</sup> Law of Thermodynamics of the existing universe would require the renovation to be such that order still moves towards chaos, and entropy would require everything to decay. Therefore, #1 does not make sense if this vision refers to the eternal existence of human beings as described in the rest of it. #2 means new laws of physics, etc. and an environment where order will never tend towards chaos, but towards even greater order. Cf. 2 Peter 3:3-13 (possibly, unless Peter is talking about the millennial kingdom).

1 John 2:17 The world is **passing away** (παράγεται), and also its lusts; but the one who does the will of God lives forever.

Also two possibilities for there not being any sea – 1) evil, Gentile nations who are hostile to the Jews, or 2) any distinction between Jews and Gentiles, because everyone will be simply a member of God's people. I'm leaning towards #1 in that the beast before in Revelation arose out of the sea, i.e., the nations that were mostly unbelieving and for some, committed to destroying the Jews.

<sup>266</sup> This is not a place *per se* but a people like the bride of the marriage supper of the Lamb in Revelation 19:6-8. While the bride of Revelation 19 were the 144,000 Jews who became the first of new Jewish believers of the millennial kingdom, this bride comprises all believers from all history who are now eternal and morally perfect human beings after the millennial kingdom.

<sup>267</sup> These people belong to God because they believed in Him and Jesus and were committed to serving them during their stay on earth in the first universe.

It is interesting that it is "the tabernacle (σκηνή) of God" and not "the temple of God" that is mentioned. Why a temporary building? Probably to highlight God's faithfulness to the Jews in the desert as a way to underscore God's faithfulness to His people that have finally arrived on the eternal earth.

Ex. 25:9 "According to all that I am going to show you, as the pattern of the tabernacle (שְׁכֵנִתִּי) (σκηνή) and the pattern of all its furniture, just so you shall construct it.

Ex. 25:8 "Let them construct a sanctuary for Me, that I may dwell among them."

Ex. 29:45 "I will dwell among the sons of Israel and will be their God."

Lev. 26:11 "Moreover, I will make My dwelling among you, and My soul will not reject you. 26:12 'I will also walk among you and be your God, and you shall be My people.'

Ezek. 37:27 "My dwelling place also will be with them; and I will be their God, and they will be My people. 28 "And the nations will know that I am the LORD who sanctifies Israel, when My sanctuary is in their midst forever." [But this probably refers to the millennial kingdom.]

<sup>268</sup> They also will experience eternal life that is never marred by evil, death, and suffering in the next and eternal universe. The "first things" comprised all that God planned and brought about in the temporary realm that caused pain and suffering, especially death and the loss that it produces in the hearts and minds of those who are still living. All these will disappear forever when the eternal realm comes into existence.

Is. 25:8 He will swallow up death for all time, And the Lord GOD will wipe tears away from all faces, And He will remove the reproach of His people from all the earth; for the LORD has spoken, [But this also is probably a reference to the millennial kingdom and how God through Jesus as the crucified Messiah has made provision for eternal life among the believing Jews who are now a “great nation” according to Genesis 12. Plus, there will be immortal Jews taking part in the millennial kingdom. Cf. 1 Corinthians 15:54 But when this perishable will have put on the imperishable, and this mortal will have put on immortality, then will come about the saying that is written, “DEATH IS SWALLOWED UP in victory.”]

<sup>269</sup> God (cf. Revelation 4:9; 20:11) categorically states that He has created a brand new universe, and he wants John to write that this is absolutely true. This is a different newness from that of 2 Corinthians 5:17, Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come. The newness in this life is a reoriented heart in the midst of continued sinfulness. The newness on the new earth will be moral perfection.

<sup>270</sup> God states that He is the All of all, the source of the existence of all reality. In addition, He provides eternal life for those who long for it more than anything else within the creation and who understand that they cannot make themselves worthy of it. Indeed, God is the one and only source of eternal life and gives it to His chosen people strictly by means of His grace. There is nothing they can do to “pay” for it. And God will provide it to them continually and forever.

<sup>271</sup> With the perseverance of their faith, authentic believers overcome and conquer (ὁ νικῶν) not only their innate rebellion against God, but also all attempts by Satan to deceive them with his lies so that they abandon their faith in Jesus, whether explicitly by consciously declaring themselves opposed to Jesus or implicitly, i.e., even while declaring they believe in Jesus, by following the cultural movements that ultimately deny the truth of God as presented in the Bible. They prevail in their faith in the face of all the obstacles that could destroy their faith.

The result is that they become God’s children, sons and daughters adopted into His family when He changes their hearts during the temporary realm and they become authentic believers and committed to obedience to God in spite of their continued sinfulness.

John 16:33 “These things I have spoken to you, so that in Me you may have peace. In the world you have tribulation, but take courage; I have overcome the world (ἐγὼ νενίκηκα τὸν κόσμον).”

1 John 2:13 I am writing to you, fathers, because you know Him who has been from the beginning. I am writing to you, young men, because you have overcome the evil one (ὅτι νενικήκατε τὸν πονηρόν). I have written to you, children, because you know the Father. 14 I have written to you, fathers, because you know Him who has been from the beginning. I have written to you, young men, because you are strong, and the word of God abides in you, and you have overcome the evil one (καὶ νενικήκατε τὸν πονηρόν).

1 John 5:4 For whatever is born of God overcomes the world (πάν τὸ γεγεννημένον ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ νικᾷ τὸν κόσμον); and this is the victory that has overcome the world — our faith (αὕτη ἐστὶν ἡ νίκη ἢ νικήσασα τὸν κόσμον, ἢ πίστις ἡμῶν). 5 Who is the one who overcomes the world, but he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God (Τίς ἔδε ἐστιν ὁ νικῶν τὸν κόσμον εἰ μὴ ὁ πιστεύων ὅτι Ἰησοῦς ἐστὶν ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ θεοῦ)?

Revelation 2:7 ‘He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes (Τῷ νικῶντι), I will grant to eat of the tree of life which is in the Paradise of God.’

Revelation 2:11 ‘He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. He who overcomes (ὁ νικῶν) will not be hurt by the second death.’

Rev. 3:21 ‘He who overcomes (Ὁ νικῶν), I will grant to him to sit down with Me on My throne, as I also overcame (ὡς καὶ γὰρ ἐνίκησα) and sat down with My Father on His throne.

Revelation 20:14 Then death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire.

<sup>272</sup> As before in Revelation 19 and 20, this lake of fire symbolizes God’s utter destruction of unbelievers who have exhibited all these behaviors in rebellion against God. The first death was physical for these people, which resulted in a temporary state of non-existence (even for believers), while the second death is annihilation and non-existence for them that will last into eternity (and pertains to only unbelievers).

<sup>273</sup> The reappearance of a previous angel, one who had helped bring God’s final judgment on the Jews and now who provides more details about the eternal people of God. This angel is doing double duty—revealing and executing God’s justice and condemnation before and now His mercy and forgiveness. And this is not the angel of Jesus, i.e., Jesus in vision format who is mentioned and speaks at the beginning of Revelation. This is a conventional angel.

This “bride” of the Messiah comprises all believers, Jews and Gentiles, from all history and is different from the bride of the 144,000 Jews in Revelation 19 who live within the millennial kingdom.

<sup>274</sup> Here are a people who are the greatest of all history with the greatest and most powerful government, i.e., God Himself through Jesus the Messiah. Mountains have always been an important place for God—Mt. Sinai where He gave the Mosaic Covenant to the people of Israel and Mt. Zion where He commanded the Israelites to build His temple, His dwelling place among them on the land of Israel. Therefore, the great and high mountain and the holy city as Jerusalem which is from heaven symbolize all this.

Ex. 3:1 Now Moses was pasturing the flock of Jethro his father-in-law, the priest of Midian; and he led the flock to the west side of the wilderness and came to Horeb, the mountain of God.

Psa. 48:1 Great is the LORD, and greatly to be praised, in the city of our God, His holy mountain.

Is. 2:3 And many peoples will come and say, “Come, let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob; that He may teach us concerning His ways And that we may walk in His paths. For the law will go forth from Zion And the word of the LORD from Jerusalem.

<sup>275</sup> The people of God share the glory of God, His immortality and moral perfection, and their moral and eternal glory is symbolized by a brilliantly shiny stone that is priceless and that no one can buy because they participate in this only by God's unmerited grace.

<sup>276</sup> The great and high wall symbolizes God's protection from any further affect from sin and death, because these will be destroyed by God when He brings the new and eternal realm into existence. And God will have fulfilled all His promises to Israel, including granting the blessing of eternal life to any of them who demonstrated the same faith as Abraham as symbolized by the names of the gates as the names of the twelve tribes of Israel.

<sup>277</sup> These people come from the four directions of the earth.

Twelve symbolizes the completeness of this group of people. Not one of them whom God predestined is left out, just as God has been faithful to the twelve tribes of Israel.

And the twelve apostles' names on the foundation stones symbolize the basis for the mercy and eternal life of all these people as the apostolic message of Jesus as the Messiah.

<sup>278</sup> God has also announced the gospel through the twelve apostles of Jesus, who are the foundation of these eternal people through their having faithfully brought the message of Jesus as the Messiah. Thus, these are the people who firmly and genuinely believed the apostles for what they proclaimed through their spoken words and written words of the NT (cf. v. 14).

<sup>279</sup> *Rev. 11:1* Then there was given me a measuring rod like a staff; and someone said, "Get up and measure the temple of God and the altar, and those who worship in it. 2 "Leave out the court which is outside the temple and do not measure it, for it has been given to the nations; and they will tread under foot the holy city for forty-two months."

The measuring rod symbolizes that God is "building" His people exactly as He has planned. Not one more and not one less than what He has predestined from before the creation.

<sup>280</sup> Notice all the references to 12 in this paragraph. The eternal people of God cannot be more perfect than what God will make them. A perfect "cube" of 12,000 stadia on each side, made of pure gold, the most valuable metal of the time for commercial purposes. And its foundation is 12 precious stones, with its street also made of pure gold, so pure that it looks like transparent glass. Nothing is more glorious than God's immortal and morally perfect people, except God Himself.

<sup>281</sup> God will be immediately present in His eternal people, not indirectly present through some sort of building like the temple of the Mosaic Covenant. Thus, God will ensure that everyone remains morally perfect and does only that which is morally perfect throughout all eternity.

<sup>282</sup> Light = wisdom, understanding, and illumination. God and His moral character will ensure that His people are always enlightened and wise. They will never make any unwise decision, because they will have a direct infusion of knowledge and understanding of reality from God, the very author of the reality.

<sup>283</sup> The Gentiles will still be in a sense outside the Jewish people, but they will live by the same wisdom and illumination as the eternal people who come from the Jewish nation. Thus, the eternal Gentiles will bring their glory, i.e., their wisdom which is the same as that of the Jews, into the midst of the eternal Jewish people. As a result, both groups will be equally infused with wisdom and able to speak knowledgeably to one another. This is a bit different from before where the Jewish people were considered THE source of truth through the Abrahamic and Mosaic Covenants.

<sup>284</sup> The honor of being a morally perfect and eternal Gentile will join with the honor of the same kind of Jews. Athens (philosophy) will be fully compatible with Jerusalem (theology).

As a result, human creativity will be alive and well throughout eternity as everyone pursues exciting and fulfilling adventures of their own making. And their adventures will be a reflection of their moral purity and wisdom and a reflection of God's moral purity and wisdom.

<sup>285</sup> Once again the point is made that nothing and no one which can inject anything negative into the experience of the eternal people of God will ever exist or come in contact with them. Immorality, death, suffering, pain, hurt, sorrow, and grieving are all gone forever.

<sup>286</sup> Here is an additional vision of eternal life for God's people. The river of the water of life is symbolic of an eternal existence of moral purity and shalom will flow continuously from God into His people. He will never withhold life from them. This life is clear as crystal, meaning it is completely free of any impurity, i.e., immoral impurity. Coming from the throne of God means that it is God alone who can supply and does *constantly* supply His people in eternity with their ongoing existence of moral perfection.

<sup>287</sup> The river flows down the middle of the street of the holy city, Jerusalem, symbolizing that it flows directly into God's people wherever they walk and live and carry out their eternal existences on the new and eternal earth.

The presence of the Tree of Life from Genesis 3 in the vision symbolizes the constant availability now of life and a morally pure existence to all of God's people in the eternal realm. God had cut off access to life for Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden when they ate of the forbidden fruit—until God would reinstate eternal life as that which constitutes man's existence because of God's grace and love through Jesus and man's belief and obedience as morally depraved sinners in the midst of the first heavens and earth.

Of course there are twelve kinds of fruit that appear on the tree twelve months of the year, i.e., without interruption, in that "12" has been symbolic throughout Revelation of God's bringing about His perfect and eternal plans for His own glory and the benefit of those who have believed Him for His truth throughout all human history.

The tree is said in this vision to be on both sides of the river. Regardless of how God's people are carrying out their existences in the eternal realm, LIFE is always theirs for the taking. It is never out of their reach with the perfect fruit of the tree that is part of the symbolism of this vision for life from God.

<sup>288</sup> Two possibilities for the curse – 1) The threat of death will never exist in eternity for God’s people, because they will always remain morally perfect. They will never, never, never sin as they had on the first earth, or 2) the threat of working by the sweat of one’s brow a la Genesis 3 will not be a part of anyone’s practical experience. Curse is the opposite of blessing, and the NT uses blessing to refer to eternal life. So taking curse here as death and destruction, similar to the use in the Mosaic Covenant (“cursed is the one who hangs on a tree” (Deuteronomy 21:23) – because he has been executed and is dead!), makes a lot of sense. God’s people will serve Jesus as their ruler, king, and priest as a slave would his master. This is to say that God’s rule will always be in their midst so that He will ensure everything takes place according to His sovereign plans and purposes.

<sup>289</sup> If “His” refers to Jesus, which is more likely than the transcendent God, then the vision is declaring that all of God’s people will have access to Jesus and visibly see him as most of them did not during their tenures on the first earth. Cf. [1 Peter 1:8](#) and though you **have not seen** Him, you love Him, and though you do not see Him now, but believe in Him, you greatly rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory,

If “His” refers to the transcendent God, then “see” is metaphorical for fully and accurately grasping God’s truth so as to embrace it in the midst of one’s moral perfection.

Jesus’ name (more likely than God’s name it seems) on their foreheads is a reference to the Mosaic Covenant and God’s requirement that the Jews plant His instructions in their heads and embrace and follow them consistently. Cf. [Exodus 13:9](#) “And it [God’s requirement of the Passover and Feast of Unleavened Bread] shall serve as a sign to you on your hand, and as a reminder on your forehead, that the law [Torah = instructions] of the LORD may be in your mouth; for with a powerful hand the LORD brought you out of Egypt.

Now it will be Jesus and his instructions that will guide all immortal and morally perfect people in the eternal Kingdom of God.

<sup>290</sup> There will no longer be a lack of understanding, wisdom, and knowledge within mankind in eternity. God will constantly illumine the minds of all His people. While the NAS95 leads the reader in the direction of thinking that John is saying that the bond-slaves of Jesus will reign on the new earth (presumably with Jesus), it makes more sense that John is referring to God and Jesus’ whose throne will be on the new earth so to speak. Thus, it will be they who reign forever and ever, and no one will defy or rebel against their rule. And all the people will serve the Lamb/Jesus (cf. 22:3), and their pursuits will always have a morally perfect quality in contrast to now in the present realm where so much a man’s efforts are selfish and evil and simply make a mess of things in this world, both in regard to other people and in regard to the things of this world.

Therefore, this last statement would be better translated, “In this manner, they [God and Jesus] will reign into the ages of ages.” And is not this last prepositional phrase implying that the “ages” of God’s creation go on into eternity and never end?

<sup>291</sup> This is the angel of Jesus, i.e., Jesus as the messenger in this vision to John (cf. Revelation 1:1). Who else would say that he is coming quickly, i.e., with alacrity when God sends him to destroy the invading army in Israel and reestablish the Davidic kingdom? And Jesus declares that embracing the truth of Revelation with authentic belief will result in the blessing of eternal life as it is described in these last visions.

<sup>292</sup> It seems strange that this paragraph is between vs. 6-7 and vs. vs. 12-21. Could they have been inadvertently transposed in the transmission and copying of Revelation? Possibly.

This is the angel who started speaking of the visions to John at the beginning of Revelation. It is not Jesus, but a created being who serves God and believes the truth of Revelation just as much as John or any sinner should.

<sup>293</sup> The angel is encouraging John to make the message of Revelation available to everyone is because it is so highly relevant to John and his contemporaries that they need the encouragement of this book in order to persevere in their faith. Everyone needs to see this book as one of vital instruction.

The speaker in Daniel 12:4 encourages Daniel to seal up his book for the sake of the end time, which is to say that he should guard that no one change what he has said. Here, the meaning of “sealing” is different in that it refers to keeping people from encountering the message. In both cases, the intent is that as many people as possible face into the truth of what God is saying and respond to it appropriately.

In addition, “the time is near” in the sense that everyone who comes in contact with this information should take advantage of the opportunity to embrace the truth and flee from the wrath of God. This makes for sense in the light of Jesus’ indicating in the Olivet Discourse of Matthew 24, etc. that the time between his first and second appearances will be a rather long one.

<sup>294</sup> Within the script and story of history, every human being’s destiny is set and established by God according to His predestined plans and purposes. Therefore, God’s sovereignty will continue to rule over John, his contemporaries, and the rest of human history even as the book of Revelation exhorts all to repent and escape God’s wrath and destruction.

<sup>295</sup> The vision of the angel of Jesus continues. His reappearance will trigger eventually the judgment of all mankind on the basis of their actions, i.e., evaluating whether they came from a genuinely changed inwardness and were in line with this and God’s moral commandments or they stubbornly rebelled against God so that they never humbly submitted to God’s truth and His call to repentance and faith.

<sup>296</sup> Jesus is saying that he is the beginning and endpoint of all reality. He is the reason the created reality exists because God has made it for him and in light of him. Jesus fulfills God’s ultimate purpose for bringing the creation into existence.

Cf. [Colossians 1:15](#) He is the icon of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation, **16** because all things in the heavens and on the earth were created in him, all things visible and invisible, whether thrones, lordships, rulers, or authorities. All things have been created with him in view and for him [my translation].

<sup>297</sup> I think Jesus continues speaking here and explicitly emphasizes the vital importance of repentance for the sake of cleansing oneself, i.e., of obtaining God’s eternal forgiveness, so that a person qualifies to receive God’s blessing of eternal life and dwelling in the holy city of the eternal Jerusalem, which is to say in the midst of God’s people. Obviously cleansing and forgiveness take place through belief in Jesus as one’s priest and advocate before God.

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<sup>298</sup> “Outside” is symbolic for saying that at least eventually they do not exist at all. They have been destroyed in the lake of fire, the second death.

<sup>299</sup> Jesus says that he is the impetus behind the angel’s appearing to John and conveying all these visions and information to him for the sake of the seven churches at the beginning of Revelation (and by extrapolation anyone else, especially those of authentic faith who truly desire eternal life and God’s mercy).

Jesus declares himself to be the final Davidic king of Israel and, as the “bright morning star,” the light of truth that illumines intellectually all those who embrace God’s truth about him. There is no greater information to encounter, learn, and absorb than that of Jesus and his role within the creation.

<sup>300</sup> Jesus comments that God’s Spirit and God’s people both explicitly urge him to come and fulfill his role as champion of the Jewish people in the millennial kingdom and all God’s people in both the millennial kingdom and the new heavens and new earth which will be eternal. He himself then urges those who are “thirsty” for eternal life come to this him and this truth in Revelation so as to take advantage of God’s grace and mercy whereby He freely grants life to those who genuinely long for it.

cf. John 4:13 Jesus answered and said to her, “Everyone who drinks of this water will thirst again; 14 but whoever drinks of the water that I will give him shall never thirst; but the water that I will give him will become in him a well of water springing up to eternal life.”

<sup>301</sup> John is speaking here (notice the “I” in this verse and the “He” in the next verse) and is saying that it is vital that all who come in contact with the message of Revelation must embrace it in its entirety. To reject any part, as difficult to swallow as certain parts are, is an act of unbelief and ultimately reveals a heart that is not committed to God and truth, thus disqualifying the person from obtaining eternal life and God’s mercy.

<sup>302</sup> John repeats that Jesus has said that his return will be expedient and will accomplish all that God has planned for him.

<sup>303</sup> John agrees, “Come, Lord Jesus.”

<sup>304</sup> And he pronounces Jesus’ grace on all those who embrace the truth of Revelation.