

Revelation

Modified Translation of the NAS95 & Notes¹

Introduction

Rev. 1:1 The Revelation of Jesus the Messiah, 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,² 2 who testifies to the message of God and to the testimony of Jesus the Messiah, even to all that he saw.³

Rev. 1:3 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.⁴

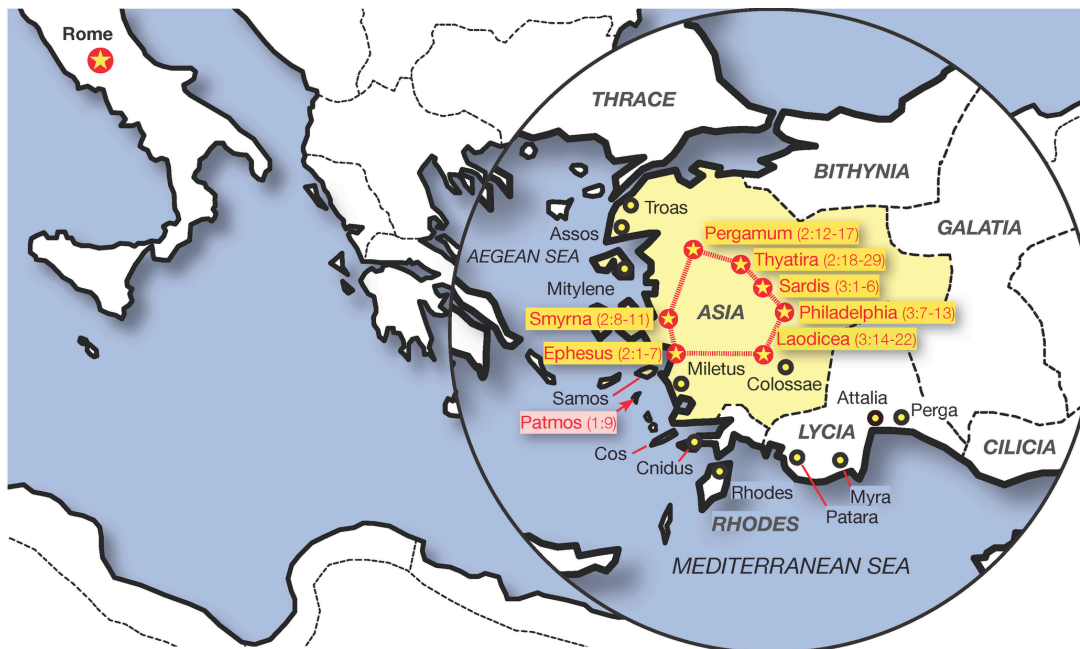
Vision of the Son of Man and Messages to the Seven Assemblies in Asia

Introduction to the Messages

Rev. 1:4 John to the seven assemblies 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,⁵ 5 and from Jesus the Messiah, 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—6 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.⁶ 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. Yes! Amen.⁷

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.”⁸

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.⁹ 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,¹⁰ 11 saying, “Write in a book what you see, and send it to the seven assemblies: to Ephesus and to Smyrna and to Pergamum and to Thyatira and to Sardis and to Philadelphia and to Laodicea.”¹¹



Rev. 1:12 Then I turned to see the voice that was speaking with me. And having turned I saw seven golden lampstands;¹² **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].¹³ **14** His head and his hair were white like white wool, like snow; and his eyes were like a flame of fire.¹⁴ **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.¹⁵ **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.¹⁶

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.¹⁷ **19** Therefore write the things which you have seen, and the things which are, and the things which will take place after these things.¹⁸ **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 assemblies, and the seven lampstands are the seven assemblies.”¹⁹

Message to the Assembly in Ephesus

Rev. 2:1 “To the angel of the assembly 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:²⁰

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.²¹ **6** Yet this you do have, that you hate the deeds of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate.²² **7** He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the assemblies. To him who conquers, I will grant to eat of the tree of life which is in the Paradise of God.’²³

Message to the Assembly in Smyrna

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

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

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.²⁵ **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.²⁶ **11** He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the assemblies. He who conquers will not be hurt by the second death.’²⁷

Message to the Assembly in Pergamum

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

The One who has the sharp two-edged sword says this:²⁸

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.²⁹

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. 15 Thus you also have some who in the same way hold the teaching of the Nicolaitans.³⁰

16 Therefore repent; or else I am coming to you quickly, and I will make war against them with the sword of my mouth.³¹

17 He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the assemblies.

To him who conquers, 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.³²

Message to the Assembly in Thyatira

Rev. 2:18 "And to the angel of the assembly in Thyatira write:

The Son of God, who has eyes like a flame of fire, and his feet are like burnished bronze, says this:³³

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.³⁴

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.³⁵ 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 assemblies 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.³⁶

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.³⁷ 25 Nevertheless what you have, hold fast until I come.³⁸

26 He who conquers, and he who keeps My deeds until the end, to him I will give authority over the nations; 27 A 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;³⁹ 28 and I will give him the morning star.⁴⁰

29 He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the assemblies.⁴¹

Message to the Assembly in Sardis

Rev. 3:1 "To the angel of the assembly 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.⁴²

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.⁴³

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.⁴⁴ 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 conquers 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.⁴⁵

6 He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the assemblies.⁴⁶

Message to the Assembly in Philadelphia

Rev. 3:7 “And to the angel of the assembly 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:⁴⁷

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.⁴⁸
 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.⁴⁹
 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.⁵⁰
 11 I am coming quickly; hold fast what you have, so that no one will take your crown [wreath].⁵¹
 12 He who conquers, 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.⁵²
 13 He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the assemblies.’⁵³

Message to the Assembly in Laodicea

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

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

Rev. 3:15 ‘I know your deeds, that you are neither cold nor hot; I wish that you were cold or hot.⁵⁵ 16 So because you are lukewarm, and neither hot nor cold, I will spit you out of my mouth.⁵⁶ 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,⁵⁷
 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.⁵⁸ 19 Those whom I love, I reprove and discipline. Therefore, be zealous and repent.⁵⁹
 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.⁶⁰
 21 He who conquers, I will grant to him to sit down with me on my throne, as I also conquered and sat down with my Father on His throne.⁶¹
 22 He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the assemblies.’”

Visions of the Seven-Sealed Scroll, the Seven Trumpets, and the Seven Bowls**Vision in Heaven Around God’s Throne, the Seven-Sealed Scroll, and the First Parenthesis
The Throne – God and Those Who Worship Him Around the Throne**

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.”⁶²

After these things, 2 I was immediately in the Spirit [spirit]; and behold, a throne was standing in heaven, and One sitting on the throne.⁶³ 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.⁶⁴ 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.⁶⁵ 5 Out from the throne come flashes of lightning and sounds and peals of thunder.⁶⁶

And there were seven lamps of fire burning before the throne, which are the seven Spirits of God;⁶⁷ 6 and before the throne there was something like a sea of glass, like crystal.

And in the middle of the throne and around the throne, four living creatures full of eyes in front and behind. 7 The first creature was like a lion, and the second creature like a young bull, and the third creature had a face like that of a man, and the fourth creature was like a flying eagle.⁶⁸ 8 And the four living creatures, 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.”⁶⁹

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 into the ages of ages, 10 the twenty-four elders will fall down before Him who sits on the throne, and will worship Him who lives into the ages of ages, and will cast their crowns before the throne, saying,⁷⁰

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 exist and were created.”⁷¹

The Lamb Takes the Scroll With the Seven Seals

Rev. 5:1 And I saw in the right hand of Him who sat on the throne a scroll written inside and on the back, sealed up with seven seals.⁷² 2 And I saw a strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice, “Who is worthy to open the scroll and to break its seals?”⁷³ 3 And no one in heaven or on the earth or under the earth was able to open the scroll or to look into it.⁷⁴ 4 Then I began to weep greatly because no one was found worthy to open the scroll or to look into it.⁷⁵ 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 conquered so as to open the scroll and its seven seals.”⁷⁶

Rev. 5:6 And I saw in the middle of the throne and the four living creatures 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.⁷⁷ 7 And he came and took the scroll out of the right hand of Him who sat on the throne.⁷⁸

The Living Creatures, Elders, Angels, and Others Around the Throne Exalt the Lamb and God

Rev. 5:8 And when he had taken the scroll, the four living creatures 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.⁷⁹ 9 And they sang a new song, saying,

“Worthy are you to take the 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.⁸⁰ 10 You have made them to be a kingdom and priests to our God; and they will reign upon the earth.”⁸¹

Rev. 5:11 And I looked, and I heard the voice of many angels around the throne and the living creatures and the elders; and the number of them was myriads of myriads, and thousands of thousands,⁸² 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.”⁸³

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 into the ages of ages.”⁸⁴

Rev. 5:14 And the four living creatures kept saying, “Amen.” And the elders fell down and worshiped.⁸⁵

The Lamb Breaks the First Six Seals of the Scroll

The First Seal – A White Horse and Political Oppression Towards the Jews

Rev. 6:1 And I saw when the Lamb broke one of the seven seals, and I heard one of the four living creatures saying as with a voice of thunder, “Come.”

2 And I looked, and behold, a white horse, and he who sat on it had a bow; and a crown was given to him, and he went out conquering and in order that he may conquer.⁸⁶

The Second Seal – A Red Horse and Wars and Lawlessness Towards the Jews

Rev. 6:3 And when he broke the second seal, I heard the second living creature saying, “Come.”⁸⁷ **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.⁸⁸

The Third Seal – A Black Horse and Economic Hardship For the Jews

Rev. 6:5 And when he broke the third seal, I heard the third living creature saying, “Come.” And I looked, and behold, a black horse; and he who sat on it had a pair of scales in his hand.⁸⁹ **6** And I heard something like a voice in the center of the four living creatures 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.”⁹⁰

The Fourth Seal – a Pale Gray Horse and Violent Death, Famine, and Sickness of the Jews

Rev. 6:7 And when the Lamb broke the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the fourth living creature saying, “Come.”

8 And 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.⁹¹

The Fifth Seal – Christian Martyrs and Their Prayers

Rev. 6:9 And when the Lamb broke the fifth seal, I saw underneath the altar the existences of those who had been slain because of the message of God, and because of the testimony which they had maintained;⁹² **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?”⁹³ **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.⁹⁴

The Sixth Seal – The Great and Terrible Day of the Lord

Rev. 6:12 And 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;⁹⁵ **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.⁹⁶ **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;⁹⁷ **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;⁹⁸ **17** for the great day of their wrath has come, and who is able to stand?”⁹⁹

First Parenthesis

Restraining the Final Forces of Evil from the Land of Israel

Rev. 7:1 After this I saw four angels standing at the four corners of the earth, holding back the four winds of the land, so that no wind would blow on the land or on the sea or on any tree.¹⁰⁰ **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 land and the sea, **3** saying, “Do not harm the land or the sea or the trees until we have sealed the bond-servants of our God on their foreheads.”¹⁰¹

Sealing the 144,000 Jews

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.¹⁰² **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.¹⁰³

All the Persecuted, Believing Jews and Gentiles Eternally Give Praise to God

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;¹⁰⁴ **10** and they cry out with a loud voice, saying,

“Salvation by our God who sits on the throne, and by the Lamb.”¹⁰⁵

Rev. 7:11 And all the angels were standing around the throne and around the elders and the four living creatures; 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 into the ages of ages. Amen.”¹⁰⁶

Rev. 7:13 And one of the elders responded, saying to me, “These who are clothed in the white robes, who are they, and where have they come from?” **14** And 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.¹⁰⁷ **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.¹⁰⁸ **16** They will hunger no longer, nor thirst anymore. Nor will the sun beat down on them, nor any heat,¹⁰⁹ **17** because 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.”¹¹⁰

The Lamb Breaks the Seventh Seal – The Millennial Kingdom

Rev. 8:1 And when the Lamb broke the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven for about half an hour.¹¹¹

The Seven Trumpets, the Second & Third Parentheses, and the Three Signs **The Seven Angels Are Given the Seven Trumpets**

Rev. 8:2 And I saw the seven angels who stand before God, and seven trumpets were given to them.¹¹²

Second Parenthesis – An Angel Throws the Fire of the Altar of Prayers to the Earth

Rev. 8:3 And 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.¹¹³ **4** And the smoke of the incense, with the prayers of the saints, went up before God out of the angel’s hand.¹¹⁴ **5** And 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.¹¹⁵

Four Angels Blow the First Four Trumpets

The First Trumpet – Hail, Fire, Blood, a Third of the Land Burned Up

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

The Second Trumpet – Burning Mountain Into the Sea, a Third of the Sea Became Blood

Rev. 8:8 And 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.¹¹⁸

The Third Trumpet – Wormwood Falls From Heaven and Poisons a Third of Rivers

Rev. 8:10 And 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.¹¹⁹ **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.¹²⁰

The Fourth Trumpet – A Third of Sun, Moon, and Stars Are Darkened

Rev. 8:12 And 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.¹²¹

And Eagle Announces That the Last Three Trumpets Are “Woes”

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

Two Angels Blow the Next Two Trumpets

The Fifth Trumpet – Demonic Tormentors for Five Months; The First Woe is Past

Rev. 9:1 And the fifth angel sounded, and I saw a star from heaven which had fallen to the earth; and the key of the pit of the abyss was given to him.¹²³ **2** And he opened the 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.¹²⁴ **3** Then out of the smoke came locusts upon the land, and power was given them, as the scorpions of the earth have power.¹²⁵ **4** They were told not to hurt the grass of the land, nor any green thing, nor any tree, but only the men who do not have the seal of God on their foreheads.¹²⁶ **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.¹²⁷

Rev. 9:7 And 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.¹²⁸ **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.¹²⁹ **11** They have as king over them the angel of the abyss; his name in Hebrew is Abaddon, and in Greek he has the name Apollyon.¹³⁰

12 The first woe is past; behold, two woes are still coming after these things.¹³¹

The Sixth Trumpet

200 Million Horsemen Invade Israel; A Third of the Jews Die

Rev. 9:13 And 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.”¹³² **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 the men.¹³³ **16** The number of the armies of the horsemen was two hundred million; I heard the number of them.¹³⁴ **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.¹³⁵ **18** A third of the men were killed by these three plagues, by the fire and the smoke and the brimstone which proceeded out of their mouths.¹³⁶ **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 And the rest of 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;¹³⁷ **21** and they did not repent of their murders nor of their sorceries nor of their immorality nor of their thefts.¹³⁸

A Strong Angel With the Little Book Announces That the Seventh Trumpet Ends God's Judgment of the Jews

Rev. 10:1 And 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;¹³⁹ **2** and he had in his hand a little scroll which was open. He placed his right foot on the sea and his left on the land;¹⁴⁰ **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.¹⁴¹ **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.”¹⁴²

Rev. 10:5 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 <Nehemiah 9:6>, that there will be delay no longer,¹⁴³ **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.¹⁴⁴

The Little Bitter and Sweet Book Which John Eats

Rev. 10:8 And 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.¹⁴⁵ **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.”¹⁴⁶ **10** And 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.¹⁴⁷ **11** And they said to me, “You must prophesy again concerning many peoples and nations and tongues and kings.”¹⁴⁸

Two Witnesses and Measuring the Temple; The Second Woe is Past

Rev. 11:1 And 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.¹⁴⁹ **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 underfoot the holy city for forty-two months.¹⁵⁰ **3** And I will grant authority to my two witnesses, and they will prophesy for twelve hundred and sixty days, clothed in sackcloth.”¹⁵¹

Rev. 11:4 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.¹⁵²

Rev. 11:7 And when they have finished their testimony, the beast that comes up out of the abyss will make war with them, and conquer them and kill them.¹⁵³ **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.¹⁵⁴ **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].¹⁵⁵

Rev. 11:11 And 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.¹⁵⁶ **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.¹⁵⁷ **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.¹⁵⁸

Rev. 11:14 The second woe is past; behold, the third woe is coming quickly.¹⁵⁹

The Seventh Angel Blows the Seventh Trumpet – The Millennial Kingdom Arrives; Praise of God

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 Messiah; and He will reign 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.¹⁶⁰ **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 land.”¹⁶¹

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.¹⁶²

Third Parenthesis – The Three Signs

The First Sign – The Woman of Israel

Rev. 12:1 And 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;¹⁶³ **2** and she was with child; and she cried out, being in labor and in pain to give birth.¹⁶⁴

The Second Sign – Satan’s Opposition to God and His People

Rev. 12:3 And 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].¹⁶⁵ **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.¹⁶⁶ **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.¹⁶⁷ **6** And the woman fled into the wilderness where she had a place prepared by God, so that there she would be supported for one thousand two hundred and sixty days.¹⁶⁸

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.¹⁶⁹ **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.¹⁷⁰

Rev. 12:10 And 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 Messiah have come, for the accuser of our brethren has been thrown down, he who accuses them before our God day and night.¹⁷¹ **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.¹⁷² **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.”¹⁷³

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 supported for a time and times and half a time, from the presence of the serpent.¹⁷⁴ **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. **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.¹⁷⁵ **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.¹⁷⁶

The Beast From the Sea – From the Gentiles

Rev. 13:1 And he stood on the sand of the seashore. And 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.¹⁷⁷ **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.¹⁷⁸ **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;¹⁷⁹ **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?”¹⁸⁰ **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.¹⁸¹ **6** And he opened his mouth in blasphemies against God, to blaspheme His name and His tabernacle, that is, those who tabernacle in heaven.¹⁸²

Rev. 13:7 And it was given to him to make war with the set apart ones and to conquer them, and authority over every tribe and people and tongue and nation was given to him.¹⁸³ **8** And 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.¹⁸⁴

Rev. 13:9 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 set apart ones.¹⁸⁵

The Beast From the Land – From the Jews

Rev. 13:11 And I saw another beast coming up out of the land; and he had two horns like a lamb and he spoke as a dragon.¹⁸⁶ **12** And he exercises all the authority of the first beast in his presence. And he makes the land and those who dwell in it to worship the first beast, whose fatal wound was healed.¹⁸⁷ **13** And he performs great signs, so that he even makes fire come down out of heaven to the earth in the presence of men.¹⁸⁸ **14** And he deceives those who dwell on the 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.¹⁸⁹ **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.¹⁹⁰ **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,¹⁹¹ **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.¹⁹² **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.¹⁹³

Jesus With the 144,000 Jews of the Millennial Kingdom

Rev. 14:1 And 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.¹⁹⁴ **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 land.¹⁹⁵ **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.¹⁹⁶ **5** And no lie was found in their mouth; they are blameless.¹⁹⁷

A First Angel Preaches the Eternal Gospel

Rev. 14:6 And I saw another angel flying in midheaven, having an eternal message of good news to proclaim as good news 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; and worship Him who made the heaven and the earth and the sea and springs of waters.”¹⁹⁸

A Second Angel Proclaims the Fall of Babylon

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.”¹⁹⁹

A Third Angel Warns of Judgment for Those Who Follow the Beast

Rev. 14:9 And 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.”²⁰⁰

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.”²⁰¹

Jesus Reaps Believers for Eternal Life When Commanded by a Fourth Angel

Rev. 14:14 And 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.²⁰²

A Fifth Angel Reaps Unbelievers for Judgment and Destruction at the Command of a Sixth Angel

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.²⁰³

The Third Sign – Heaven Prepares for the Seven Bowls of Wrath

Rev. 15:1 And 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.²⁰⁴ **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 <Psalm 22:27; 66:4; 86:9>,
 For Your righteous acts have been revealed <Psalm 19:9; 119:137,138>.”²⁰⁵

The Seven Bowls of Wrath and The Fourth Parenthesis

Seven Angels Are Given the Seven Bowls of Wrath and Told to Pour Them Out

Rev. 15:5 And after these things I looked, and the temple of the tabernacle of testimony in heaven was opened,²⁰⁶ **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** And one of the four living creatures gave to the seven angels seven golden bowls full of the wrath of God, who lives 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.²⁰⁷

Rev. 16:1 And I heard a loud voice from the temple, saying to the seven angels, “Go and pour out on the land the seven bowls of the wrath of God.”²⁰⁸

The First Bowl of Wrath – Loathsome Sores on Jews Who Worship the Beast

Rev. 16:2 And 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.²⁰⁹

The Second Bowl of Wrath – The Sea Turns To Blood and the Sea Life Dies

Rev. 16:3 And 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.²¹⁰

The Third Bowl of Wrath – The Rivers and Springs Become Blood

Rev. 16:4 And 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 <Psalm 19:9; 119:137>.”²¹¹

The Fourth Bowl of Wrath – The Sun Scorches Men With Fire and Heat

[Rev. 16:8](#) And 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.²¹²

The Fifth Bowl of Wrath – The Throne and Kingdom of the Beast Are Devastated

[Rev. 16:10](#) And 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.²¹³

The Sixth Bowl of Wrath – Armageddon

[Rev. 16:12](#) And 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.²¹⁴ [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.²¹⁵ [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.”)²¹⁶ [16](#) And they gathered them together to the place which in Hebrew is called Har-Mageddon.²¹⁷

The Seventh Bowl of Wrath – The Great and Terrible Day of the Lord

[Rev. 16:17](#) And 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.”²¹⁸ [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.²¹⁹ [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.²²⁰ [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.²²¹

The Fall of Babylon (Worldly Judaism and Secular Jews) and Global Financial Collapse

[Rev. 17:1](#) And 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.”²²² [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.²²³ [4](#) And 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 the prostitutes and of the abominations of the earth.” [6](#) And I saw the woman drunk with the blood of the set apart ones, and with the blood of the witnesses of Jesus. When I saw her, I wondered greatly.²²⁴

[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.”²²⁵ [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.²²⁶ [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 conquer them, because He is Lord of lords and King of kings, and those who are with Him are the called and chosen and faithful.”²²⁷

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.”²²⁸ **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.”²²⁹ **18** The woman whom you saw is the great city, which reigns over the kings of the earth.”²³⁰

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.”²³¹ **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.”²³²

Rev. 18:4 And 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;”²³³ **5** for her sins have piled up as high as heaven, and God has remembered her iniquities.”²³⁴

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 < Isaiah 47:7-10>, and will never see mourning.’”²³⁵ **8** For this reason in one day her plagues will come, death and mourning and famine, and she will be burned up with fire; for the Lord God who judges her is strong.”²³⁶

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.’”²³⁷

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.”

Rev. 18:15 “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!’”²³⁸

Rev. 18:20 “Rejoice over her, O heaven, and you set apart ones and apostles and prophets, because God has pronounced judgment for you against her.”²³⁹

Rev. 18:21 And 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;²⁴⁰ **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].²⁴¹ **24** And in her was found the blood of prophets and of ones set apart and of all who have been slain on the earth.”²⁴²

Fourth Parenthesis

A Great Multitude in Heaven Sing Hallelujah to God

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 <Psalm 19:9; 119:137>; for He has judged the great prostitute who was corrupting the earth with her immorality, and He has avenged the blood of His bondslaves on her <Deuteronomy 32:43; 2 Kings 9:7>.”²⁴³

Rev. 19:3 And a second time they said,

“Hallelujah! Her smoke rises up forever and ever <Isaiah 34:10>”²⁴⁴

Rev. 19:4 And the twenty-four elders and the four living creatures fell down and worshiped God who sits on the throne saying,

“Amen. Hallelujah!”²⁴⁵

The Bride and Marriage Supper of the Lamb – the Rise of Godly Judaism

Rev. 19:5 And a voice came from the throne, saying, “Give praise to our God, all you His bondslaves, 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.²⁴⁶ **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.”²⁴⁷ **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 set apart ones.²⁴⁸ **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.”²⁴⁹ **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.”²⁵⁰

Visions of the Return of the Messiah and Establishing the Kingdom of God

Jesus Destroys the Beast’s Armies, the Beast, and the False Prophet

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.²⁵¹ **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.²⁵² **14** And the armies which are in heaven, clothed in fine linen, white and clean, were following Him on white horses.²⁵³ **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.²⁵⁴ 16 And on His robe and on His thigh He has a name written, “King of Kings, and Lord of Lords.”²⁵⁵

Rev. 19:17 And 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.”²⁵⁶

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.²⁵⁷ 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.²⁵⁸ 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.²⁵⁹

Jesus and Former Believers Reign Over the Millennial Kingdom

Rev. 20:1 And I saw an angel coming down from heaven, holding the key of the abyss and a great chain in his hand.²⁶⁰ 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.²⁶¹

Rev. 20:4 And I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and judgment [ruling] was given to them. And I saw the souls [existences] 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 the Messiah for a thousand years.²⁶² 5 The rest of the dead did not come to life until the thousand years were completed. This is the first resurrection.²⁶³ 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 the Messiah and will reign with Him for a thousand years.²⁶⁴

The Last Battle at the End of the Millennium

Rev. 20:7 And 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 land and surrounded the camp of the set apart ones and the beloved city, and fire came down from heaven and devoured them.²⁶⁵

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 until the ages of the ages.²⁶⁶

The Great White Throne Judgment After the Millennium

Rev. 20:11 And 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.²⁶⁷ 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.²⁶⁸ 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.²⁶⁹ 14 And death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire.²⁷⁰ 15 And if anyone’s name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.²⁷¹

The Eternal Kingdom of the New Heaven and the New Earth – the New Jerusalem

Rev. 21:1 And 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.²⁷² **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.²⁷³ **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,²⁷⁴ **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.”²⁷⁵ **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.”²⁷⁶

Rev. 21:6 And 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.²⁷⁷ **7** He who conquers will inherit these things, and I will be his God and he will be My son.²⁷⁸ **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.”²⁷⁹

Rev. 21:9 And 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.”²⁸⁰ **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,²⁸¹ **11** having the glory of God. Her brilliance was like a very costly stone, as a stone of crystal-clear jasper.²⁸² **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.²⁸³ **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.²⁸⁴ **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.²⁸⁵

Rev. 21:15 And the one who spoke with me had a gold measuring rod to measure the city, and its gates and its wall.²⁸⁶ **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.²⁸⁷ **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 And I saw no temple in it, for the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb are its temple.²⁸⁸ **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.²⁸⁹ **24** The nations will walk by its light, and the kings of the earth will bring their glory into it.²⁹⁰ **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,²⁹¹ **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.²⁹²

Rev. 22:1 And he showed me a river of the water of life, clear as crystal, coming from the throne of God and of the Lamb,²⁹³ **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.²⁹⁴ **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,²⁹⁵ **4** they will see His face, and His name will be on their foreheads.²⁹⁶

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.²⁹⁷

Epilogue and Conclusion

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.”²⁹⁸

Rev. 22:8 And 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.²⁹⁹ 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.³⁰⁰ 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.”³⁰¹

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.³⁰² 13 I am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end.”³⁰³ 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.³⁰⁴ 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.³⁰⁵ 16 “I, Jesus, have sent My angel to testify to you these things for the assemblies. I am the root and the descendant of David, the bright morning star.”³⁰⁶

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.³⁰⁷

Rev. 22:18 I myself 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.³⁰⁸ 20 He who testifies to these things says, “Yes, I am coming quickly.”³⁰⁹

Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.³¹⁰ 21 The grace of the Lord Jesus be with all. Amen.³¹¹

¹ Many of these notes, 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. 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.

² The "Revelation of Jesus the Messiah," within the context of the whole book of Revelation and what it is teaching and describing, is the revealing of things pertaining to Jesus, not the revealing of things from Jesus—even though this is an aspect of the book. 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 Jesus' primacy within the creation 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. Will they believe it or reject it and ignore 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. Therefore, 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 reject it and 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—this is Jesus in vision format as his own messenger which actually is God's messenger too. At the end of Revelation, #4 is probably correct, because the angel tells John not to worship him (Revelation 22:8,9). In other words, the *angelos* is a conventional angel and not Jesus in vision format.

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 assemblies. I am the root and the descendant of David, the bright morning star."

Thus, in the first verse above, God's angel is Jesus in vision format. In the second verse, the angel is a conventional one. In the third verse, Jesus speaks of sending his angel, i.e., either himself in vision format or a conventional angel. Both are Jesus' messengers.

And this information is being "signified" (ἐσήμανεν) to John through God's and Jesus' *angelos* in the manner of revealing visions (not actual and real events in the existential history of the world) to demonstrate the truths that God wants to communicate to him.

This information is also about what must take place quickly (ἃ δεῖ γενέσθαι ἐν τάχει) (not "soon" per se), i.e., that God will fulfill in terms of His promises when He has planned. The phrase ἐν τάχει means "forthwith," which is to say "as soon as possible" once certain things happen in history and it is time for that which must take place to take place, so that once the ball starts rolling, there is no stopping it. Then, 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 [the land of Israel?]"

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.

The angel in Acts 12:7 sounds more like a theophany than a conventional angel, but it could be the latter.

³ Through the book of Revelation, John is bearing witness to God's message (τὸν λόγον τοῦ θεοῦ) 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 ("all that he saw") 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.

⁴ 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 (ὁ γὰρ καιρὸς ἐγγύς) in the sense that, subjectively, 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 ‘esus’ 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 and/or ignore the signs of the end times, thinking that they can bring themselves peace and safety instead of successfully fleeing from the wrath of God. As above, consider [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.”

And there is also [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.”

⁵ The book of Revelation is specifically for the 7 assemblies to whom the letters of chapters 2 & 3 are addressed, but it also is obviously relevant to all other believers in the rest of Christian history before and after Jesus returns. The word for “assemblies” is from ἐκκλησία, which is found 111x in the NT. In the Greek and Roman societies, it referred to a required or permitted assembly of people for a particular purpose. In the NT, the word is used to identify believers in Jesus as the Messiah in contrast to all other groups or assemblies. It comes from the Greek preposition ἐκ (=out of) and the verb καλέω (=call). Thus, here and in the rest of the NT it comprises the people who are called out of the world and its false ideas and beliefs and are called into association with God and Jesus with their true ideas and beliefs. Consequently, I have chosen to translate it as “assembly,” which means a group of people who gather together for a common purpose. In this case, the obvious common purpose is to worship God and Jesus and follow their instructions with authentic belief and obedience for the sake of obtaining eternal salvation from God’s wrath and condemnation through Jesus as their advocate. In addition, each assembly mentioned in Revelation is all the Christians within an individual city in the area of what is now western modern Turkey.

The book is from God, the transcendent Creator of all reality, which includes 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 does or can exist apart from Him. He plans what He is going to make, and then comes in to existence 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** [emphasis mine].” (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 (God’s Spirit – “the seven Spirits who are before His throne”) 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 used to refer to God’s having been in the past and now being in the present so that He will also be in the future—

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

⁶ This 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 good news 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 assembly; 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 Yahweh and against His Anointed [Messiah], 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 our propitiatory offering to God, our high priest, and our advocate and intercessor in the face of God’s judgment and condemnation.

Cf. [Romans 3:21-26](#); [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., a group who are ruled by God and Jesus, to display to the world what authentic righteousness is among sinful human beings and to evangelize the world, which we do now and will do even more intensely during the millennial kingdom.

Cf. [Exodus 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 the Messiah.

Jesus’ glory and authority to rule over the creation (ἡ δόξα καὶ τὸ κράτος) will last into the ages of ages, i.e., through the millennial kingdom and on the new earth that will last forever (‘εις τοὺς αἰῶνας [τῶν αἰώνων]).

The word “glory” or “glorify” is used 19x in Revelation, mainly to refer to God’s and Jesus’ glory, which is how majestic and awe-inspiring they are as both the transcendent creator and Messiah/main element of the creation respectively.

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 εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας τῶν αἰώνων.

⁷ Similar to the vision in [Daniel 7:13-14](#) where the Messiah comes with the clouds of heaven to appear before God and His throne, Jesus will descend out of the sky (clouds) onto the earth.

“All the tribes of the earth” refers to both Jews and Gentiles. Thus, the Jewish nation dwelling on the land of Israel whose ancestors killed and crucified Jesus will “see” him—will know that he has returned. And some of these Jews will mourn their error so as to repent and become believers on the land of Israel when the millennial kingdom arrives. These will be the 144,000 mentioned first in [Revelation 7](#). And some of these Jews will mourn their coming condemnation and destruction by God. Some of the Gentiles throughout the rest of the earth, who rebelled against Jesus and rejected him, will know that they are going to be subject to God’s judgment and condemnation. And probably some of the Gentiles will mourn in repentance and faith like the 144,000 Jews. In this way, some “mourning” is repentant, and some “mourning” is unrepentant.

[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 (וָאֵן רָאִיתִי עִם־עֲנָנִי שָׁמַיָא כְּבָר אֲנִשׁ אֲתָתָה הוּא), and he came up to the Ancient of Days and was presented before Him (ἐθεώρουν ἐν ὁράματι τῆς νυκτὸς 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” [emphasis mine].

[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 (וְכָל־בְּרִיָּה בְּכָל־מְשִׁפָּחַת הָאָרֶץ מְבָרָכָה) (καὶ ἐνευλογηθήσονται ἐν σοὶ πάσαι 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’ *πάσαι 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.”

⁸ 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 “Almighty” and all-powerful God, who exercises complete authority over the creation.

In other words, God’s being the Alpha and the Omega is not actually a reference to His eternity *per se*, but to His all-encompassing importance. The statements and visions of the book of Revelation are all about God and the creation which He has brought into existence and which He is orchestrating to His glory pertaining to the Jews first and then the Gentiles. There is no one or nothing more important than the “Lord God” (κύριος ὁ θεός), because He is eternal and the author of this story. Jesus will say the same thing in v. 17 with the words “the first and the last,” that as God’s proxy and the Messiah he is the most important element within the creation.

There are no more important persons than the transcendent Creator and His icon and proxy within the creation, Jesus of Nazareth. And the issue in the book of Revelation for the readers is whether or not they are willing to acknowledge and embrace God and Jesus as having the importance that they both deserve. If they do acknowledge and embrace them as such, then they gain God’s mercy through Jesus and eternal life. If they do not, they will incur His wrath, condemnation, and destruction.

Therefore, 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 [emphasis mine].’”

⁹ 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 (συγκοινωνός) in the tribulation (ἐν τῇ θλίψει – the only use of θλίψις in Revelation), probably meaning the Great Tribulation of Jews and Christians between Jesus’ first and second appearances as described by Jesus in the Olivet Discourse (cf. Matthew 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 with his readers who are authentic believers 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, faith, and obedience to God as do the rest of Christians during the difficult times they encounter before Jesus’ return. John is certainly 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.

In addition, 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 the Messiah.” 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 kind of proclamation of the good news of Jesus and the resultant rejection by the world and our culture is what we all should do and can expect respectively depending upon the time of history and circumstances of the surrounding unbelievers’ hostility to the truth that we encounter.

¹⁰ 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. This is like the sound of the loud shofar 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.

The trumpet announces the presence of God to communicate truth of the most vital importance. Everyone should listen—at the risk of ignoring the truth to their eternal destruction.

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 assemblies, and the events that will culminate in his return and establishment of the Kingdom of God. In other words, the word πνεύμα may refer to John’s mental condition and not the Spirit

of God. He is always “in the Spirit,” meaning in a relationship with God whereby he is oriented towards him in a committed manner, but here he is “in the spirit,” meaning that he is not seeing reality as it really is on Patmos but reality as it is in these visions that reveal truths and events that may be taking place at the moment but may be are going to take place in the future. “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 and he is Jewish. 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—the Jews first and also the Gentiles. Why does Jesus appear behind John initially and start 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 this important information from Jesus and assimilates it.

¹¹ These seven “assemblies” (ἐκκλησίαι) are seven Christian communities in the listed cities, all of which are in ancient Asia (Turkey).

Jesus wants John to write down what he “sees” (βλέπεις), i.e., these visions that will begin in chapter 4 and will finish in chapter 22. In addition, John will “see” the words which Jesus speaks in chapters 2 & 3 about the seven assemblies, so that he will write them down too. These words of Jesus are obviously just as important as the visions later in the book.

¹² As he says in v. 10, John is facing away from the person who 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.

¹³ 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 in all his humanity as a participant in this creation and the icon of 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 [Revelation 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 (צָוֶנֶת = 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 most likely being revealed in this vision as a priest.

¹⁴ 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 someone 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. [Revelation 2:18](#) “And to the angel of the assembly 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. [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; 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.

¹⁵ 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 [figures resembling four human beings] legs were straight and their feet were like a calf's hoof, and they gleamed like burnished bronze.

[Daniel 10:6](#) His [certain man dressed in linen] 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 assembly 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.”

¹⁶ The seven stars are the “*angeloi*” of the seven assemblies, i.e., the *angelos* or messenger that is present within the authentic believers of each Christian community in each of the seven cities and who is in a sense reporting to Jesus what is happening in each assembly of Christians. Thus, when Jesus has John write to these *angeloi*, he addresses each one individually so that the “you” for example in Revelation 2:2 is singular. Therefore, he is speaking to the messenger and the spiritual condition of each assembly so as to affirm or criticize it for how the people are living out their Christianity.

For Jesus to hold these *angeloi* “in his right hand” is for him to be the focal point of the people's belief and obedience 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 assemblies, and the seven lampstands are the seven assemblies.”

[Revelation 2:1](#) “To the angel of the assembly 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 assembly 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 Gentile beast of Revelation 13 and his army at the end after they have killed most of the unbelieving Jews in Israel. Jesus is loving, but he also executes God's justice as God within the creation through his participation in God's judgment and condemnation of all unbelievers, whether when he returns at the beginning of the millennial kingdom or during the White Throne Judgment at the end of the millennial kingdom. Therefore, in a similar manner to God who destroys forever the unbelievers by eliminating them from His story, Jesus kills unbelievers on the battlefield of Israel 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 assembly 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.

Having 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 reside in Jesus in the sense that whatever we learn about Jesus is to learn about the most important information in all created reality.

[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.

¹⁷ 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 in this vision.

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, which is a major theme of the book of Revelation.

Jesus also says that he is “the first and the last,” which he repeats in [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. 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 [Jesus] 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 order to qualify to be our champion, king, and priest. This is to say that he really was dead, a human being who had real human vitality, but then God revived him and brought him back to life. In addition, Jesus will live forever (εις τῶν αἰώνων τῶν αἰώνων = into the ages of ages) as the ruler of the Kingdom of God, so that all who believe in him will also live eternally with him.

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 first when Jesus returns and second at 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 (at the first resurrection for those who die before Jesus’ return) or non-existence (at the second resurrection for those who die at anytime during human history, including during the millennial kingdom).

Expositor’s Bible Commentary – In the ANE, wearing a key that could open and shut places was a sign of power and status. Therefore, Jesus is saying here 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.

¹⁸ Jesus encourages John to write down everything that he is learning from what he is hearing from him personally and from the visions which he is seeing (Jesus in vision format) and will see (starting with chapter 4 and throne room of God). These visions 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 about those things within the story of the creation—including Jesus as the protagonist and main character of the story. 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 ῥμῆλλει ῥγενέσθαι 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, and the things which are about to come into existence 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 and things to do in this world, e.g., chess, music, etc. Nevertheless, the main subject is always God and Jesus and what God is doing vis-à-vis Jesus.

¹⁹ 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 they can be full of the darkness of lies. And Jesus is going to warn them of this.

²⁰ In each of these messages to the seven assemblies (community of believers) in the cities of Asia Minor, Jesus speaks to their individual and somewhat unique circumstances. The Nicolaitans seem to be false teachers who permit or even encourage a particular kind of immorality in the midst of belief in Jesus. Jesus also ends each message with the important statement, “To him who conquers...” or “He who conquers...” 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 have in the past, are in the present (Rome), and will just before Jesus’ return (the beast of Revelation 13). 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 inherent sinfulness. 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 conquering and overcoming the lies and deceptions of Satan that so easily find their way into even 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 13, that final government which will subjugate the Jews and eventually try to destroy them while also exercising some level of dominion over the 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. Consequently, all Christians are tested as to whether or not they are committed to conquering and 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; Psalm 2).

The components of eternal life in the messages are these –

- 1) Ephesus – To him who conquers, I will grant to eat of the tree of life which is in the Paradise of God.
- 2) Smyrna – He who conquers will not be hurt by the second death.
- 3) Pergamum – To him who conquers, 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 conquers, 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 conquers 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 conquers, 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 conquers, 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.

²¹ The fact that the Christians in Ephesus 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 the 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 assembly 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.

²² These Christians in Ephesus are at least opposed to the actions of the Nicolaitans, while they also need to love doing real, moral actions themselves.

Who are the Nicolaitans (from νικολαΐτης, cf. νικάω = I conquer and λαος = people)? No one knows for sure. Possibilities are 1) Followers of a man named Nicolaus (= I conquer people) who is advocating pursuing the sexual immorality of pagan idolatry that was rampant in the worship of false gods in the Roman Empire, 2) Adherents of worldly Judaism among the Greeks that was also rather ubiquitous in the Roman Empire as a result of the dispersions of the Assyrian and Babylonian captivities of the 8th and 7th/6th centuries respectively, 3) a symbolic name for all behavior that is contrary to biblical morality Greek that overwhelms people's desires since the word Nicolaitans means "conquering people."

Because this word appears in a document that is filled with visions Greek symbolic language, I am inclined to think that the 3rd option is correct, similar to the use of Balaam and Jezebel in these letters to the seven Christian communities.

²³ To conquer and overcome (having the same Greek root (νικάω) as "Nico" of Nicolaitans) is to shed the lack of concern for biblical morality that exists in the surrounding culture and to acquire a genuine concern for biblical morality in the midst of a person's intellectual concern for truth. This will provide a person 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 the millennial kingdom of Revelation 20 and the eternal earth of Revelation 21.

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

²⁵ 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 to minimize the importance of Jesus and to denigrate him.

²⁶ Is Jesus talking about these Smyrna Christians experiencing persecution at the hands of unbelieving Jews? Probably. But the Christians' 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 also identifies himself to this community of believers 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.

Jesus also is connecting the criticism these Christians are receiving from unbelieving Jews with the devil, Satan himself. Part of the point is that we sinful human beings are followers of either God or His archenemy, Satan regardless of our religious affiliation.

²⁷ 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.

²⁸ Jesus describes himself as John did in 1:16, a person who brings judgment and destruction to God's enemies.

²⁹ Satan not only dwells in Pergamum, but he also rules Asia from it. But we have to wonder if Satan's "throne" is wherever sinful, unbelieving human beings are located. Nevertheless, this 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 (as well as worldly Judaism?).

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 central 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 to Asclepius, the god of healing. The people also worshiped Egyptian gods and the Roman emperor as a god.

The death of the man "Antipas" probably refers to this person's declaring that he was against all the lies of the Greek, pagan worship that existed in Pergamum. And his firm belief in God and Jesus got him killed in a highly charged environment of lies and falsehood that obviously permeated this city.

The Jewish population was small in comparison to other Asian cities, but my guess is that most of them were not authentic believers, which was like the rest of the Roman Empire.

³⁰ Here is the 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.

Jesus is indicating that this is similar to the strategy that Balaam encouraged the Moabites to use to turn the Israelites away from God—cf. Numbers 22-24, including 25:1 and 31:7-15.

The word Balaam could be variation of Ba'alam, which would mean "master of the people" in Hebrew (בַּלְעָם = Lord + עַם = people) and therefore the same basic meaning as Nicolaitans, "conquer the people." And it makes sense that v. 15 is saying the same thing so that the οὐτως means "Thus." The teaching of Balaam (master of the people) is the same as the teaching of the Nicolaitans (conquer the people). And, by inference in Jesus' exhortation to the Christians in Pergamum, the teaching of Balaam and of the Nicolaitans is the teaching of Satan which conquers unbelievers and leads them away from God and into His condemnation and destruction.

³¹ Jesus identifies himself to this assembly as the one who has the sharp two-edged sword. Here he threatens to use it against those who are following the teaching of both those like Balaam and the Nicolaitans, teaching whose purpose is to lead people away from God and into His destruction. 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, condemnation, and destruction at the Great White Throne Judgment of Revelation 20.

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 Jesus' mouth.

³² God through His work in the world, i.e., through His Spirit, and through His work of making the angel/messenger of Jesus appear to John, is communicating all these important ideas to these seven communities of believers. Jesus urges them all to embrace this information.

The one who conquers and overcomes the lies of Satan by embracing the truth of the good news of Jesus as the crucified Messiah is the one who perseveres in belief throughout his entire life. To this person Jesus will give "some of the hidden manna," where this is invisible food, which is referring not to physical life, which is visible, but to eternal life, which is currently invisible and hidden.

A name unknown to anyone but the person and refers to their special role within God's story that only the person himself fully knows, realizes, and lives. This will be in eternity thereby symbolizing that each authentic believer will live morally perfectly exactly as God prescribes as the author of each person's existence and story both now and into eternity. This will be the same for Jesus as stated in [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.

³³ Jesus describes himself as John did in 1:14,15.

This is the only place in Revelation where "Son of God" is used, the title for the king of Israel and God's human proxy on the earth according to the Davidic Covenant.

³⁴ For the most part, these Christians are doing well and pursuing a life of truth and love that 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 the Messiah. [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 the Messiah will be abundantly supplied to you.

³⁵ 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 Yahweh, because Jezebel his wife incited him). The basic meaning of her name [יְזַבְל](#) means “Where is the prince?” But [יְזַבְל](#) similarly was a title for Baal as the prince of the darkness and evil in this world as Jesus says in [Luke 11:18](#) “If Satan also is divided against himself, how will his kingdom stand? For you say that I cast out demons by Beelzebul (βεελζεβοὺλ)” (cf. [2 Kings 1:3](#) But the angel of Yahweh said to Elijah the Tishbite, “Arise, go up to meet the messengers of the king of Samaria and say to them, ‘Is it because there is no God in Israel that you are going to inquire of Baal-zebul ([יְזַבְל](#) = Lord of the flies) (βααλ μύιαν = Lord of the fly), the god of Ekron?’”). Then eventually in [2 Kings 9:37](#) God speaks through Elijah, “The corpse of Jezebel will be as dung on the face of the field in the property of Jezreel, so they cannot say, ‘This is Jezebel.’ In this verse, God is saying that the mighty (but evil) Jezebel will become destroyed and dung in comparison to her existence before she died. 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 their engaging in the sexual immorality of the pagans 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” before her and like the Nicolaitans before him who all get their spiritual marching orders from Satan, God’s archenemy who seeks to destroy even Christians in their faith just as much as he seeks to keep unbelievers from faith.

³⁶ Two options for how to understand what Jesus is saying here – 1) There will be physical ramifications through actual viral or bacterial fatal disease of “Jezebel’s” sin and those who follow her here in the Christian community of Thyatira because they turn away from the truth of God and the gospel; 2) eternal judgment and condemnation for Jezebel and those who follow her in Thyatira so that these words are metaphorical; 3) both physical death by means of disease and then eternal judgment and condemnation for those who turn away from God.

At least the last statement of v. 23 refers to the final judgment and these sinners’ incurring God’s condemnation and destruction, so it seems that either #2 or #3 is correct.

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

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

[Matthew 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.”

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

³⁷ Jesus refers to how these the immoral people within the community of believers in Thyatira call their religious belief “the deep things of Satan” (at least they would if they chose to label them explicitly), meaning that they actually know that they are engaged in sinful and evil activity (and would agree at some level that they are following Satan), even while confessing that Jesus is their Lord!? This is typical of human, sinful self-deception, which is entirely possible as Jesus is describing it here.

In contrast, the authentic Christians simply need to endure the “burden” of the truth in the midst of a hostile world filled with the lies of Satan and the people who follow him.

³⁸ Jesus’ exhortation to the true believers is to persevere in their faith in the truth of the gospel until he returns (ἄχρι[ς] οὗ ‘ἄν ἦξω’).

³⁹ Jesus identifies those who will acquire eternal life and salvation to exist and rule with him in the millennial kingdom (as described in [Revelation 20](#) and [Psalm 2](#)) These will be the genuine Christians who, by persevering in their faith, thus “conquer” (νικῶν) 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.

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

Two options for what Jesus means by “keeps my deeds” – 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. This is to say that “my deeds” are the Christians activities that Jesus instructs believers to engage in.

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

when accompanied by immortal believers to anyone who rebels against his rule at the beginning and during the millennial kingdom (cf. Revelation 19,20). 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 [The Message (and main point) 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" [emphass mine].

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 [message] 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 the Messiah for a thousand years.

⁴⁰ 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 assemblies. I am the root and the descendant of David, the bright morning star."

⁴¹ A repetition of Jesus' statement at the end of his letter to the first assembly in Ephesus (2:7). He encourages those who have the inward capability to grasp truth and embrace truth with genuine belief to understand, believe, and live what he is saying to these seven Christian communities in Asia.

⁴² Sardis was the capital of Lydia and about 30 miles south of Thyatira. Even though it was virtually impregnable, Cyrus the Great of Persia captured it in the sixth century B.C., and Antiochus, the Seleucid who ruled half of Alexander the Great's empire after he died, did the same about two hundred years later. Eventually, in conjunction (and probably in connection) with its wealth, the city became a place of moral and religious decadence (like most wealthy cities and countries where people rely on the use of their wealth to satisfy their sensual desires).

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 in God and in him. 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.

⁴³ The "things that remain" must be a modicum of truth that these "Christians" are holding on to. But they are still lacking authentic belief that results in bearing the fruit of loving and moral actions that exemplify the truth. Their deeds have not appropriately filled out their so-called "belief."

⁴⁴ 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), literally filled out, in the sight of God, even Jesus' God, the transcendent creator.

This is a good example of how the issue regarding genuine belief is definitely subjective. 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 instead of waking up and repenting of their sins. While they are saying, "Peace and safety," God's judgment and condemnation will come upon them (cf. 1 Thessalonians 5).

⁴⁵ Again, Jesus mentions the idea of conquering and overcoming the lies, deceptions, and temptations of the world, that come from Satan and his influence in all the cultures, to persevere in faith and attain the "white garments" of 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. Their names will be in the "book of life" so to speak, because they are genuine believers and a minority, a remnant among the religious unbelievers who claim to be Christians. It also means that Jesus will intercede for these authentic believers at the final judgment.

⁴⁶ Again, only those who have the spiritual ability and who genuinely sense to imperative to acknowledge the importance of what Jesus is saying will do so, because of the implied work of the Holy Spirit within them who has changed their hearts.

⁴⁷ 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 was implied in the entirety of the description back 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 ultimate fulfillment of the Davidic Covenant, Jesus 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. But if sinful human beings reject Jesus, this same door is shut and cannot be opened by anyone else. They are doomed to eternal condemnation and destruction.

Isaiah 22:15 Thus says the Lord Yahweh 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, Yahweh 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, and 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.”

⁴⁸ 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—since he has “the key of David.” But these same people of genuine belief 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 “kept” (guarded) Jesus’ “word,” his *logos*, which is 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.

But Jesus categorically declares that no one will be able to shut the door to eternal life for them, because they are genuine followers of him as the Messiah.

⁴⁹ Jesus speaks of “Jews,” and he most likely means those who are genuine descendants of Abraham through Jacob. These people in Philadelphia are not proselytes to the Jewish religion, because Jesus says that they are lying about their Jewishness and therefore not really genuine Jews, because they are not obedient to God in the manner which He requires, i.e., with circumcised hearts in line with Deuteronomy 10:16 and Deuteronomy 30. They probably state that they are 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, with the result that their obedience to OT Torah is just religiosity and a system which they are following.

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 acknowledging eventually that believers in history 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 at the end of the millennial kingdom.

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 eternal wrath and condemnation.

⁵⁰ There are several 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; 4) the Great White Throne Judgment as the final-final judgment that “tests” each person’s actions as coming from either a heart of belief or a heart of unbelief, as demonstrated by the first resurrection and the lifting from the earth of believers and by the second resurrection at the end of the millennial kingdom.

Because Jesus refers to the “hour of testing” coming on the whole world (ἐπι 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.

But also because Jesus speaks of keeping his message which is to persevere in faith and that believers should do what they can to hold on their “crown” and that they will be “conquerors” who dwell in the “new Jerusalem,” which is probably that of Revelation 21, the context of eternal life in these verses points to #4.

Thus, Jesus refers 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—as well as during and after the millennial kingdom into the eternal earth of Revelation 21-22. It is true that most of the visions pertain to just a few decades before Jesus’ return, but this return will precipitate a series of “testings” for human beings, culminating in the Great White Throne Judgment of Revelation 20. Therefore, Jesus could definitely be pointing to #4 and all that will occur from

#3, the final earthly judgment of the Jews (along with the earthly judgment of certain Gentiles), to and through #4 into the eternal earth.

⁵¹ 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 the victory wreath of those who have run the race of belief in life and persevered in their belief. The wreath, therefore, is metaphorical of God’s eternal mercy and life.

⁵² Another on way that Jesus states what it means for a person to hold on to his wreath is to conquer and overcome the lies and temptations of this world that would lead him to turn away from 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.

It is possible that the “new Jerusalem” here in chapter 3 is the earthly Jerusalem where Jesus will reign over the Jews on the land of Israel during the millennial kingdom. But in the context of the whole book of Revelation, the first option is more likely correct. 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.

⁵³ Again, only those who have the spiritual ability and who genuinely sense to imperative to acknowledge the importance of what Jesus is saying will do so, because of the implied work of the Holy Spirit within them who has changed their hearts.

⁵⁴ Here Jesus describes himself as

1) the Amen (אמן in Hebrew; γένοιτο in the Septuagint) = he is truly God’s instrument of faithfulness to His promises and predestining people to eternal life, and

2) the faithful (ὁ πιστός) = the one who is faithful to fulfill the special role of king and priest which God has given him, and

3) and true witness (ὁ μάρτυς ὁ πιστός καὶ ἀληθινός) = 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 (ἡ ἀρχὴ τῆς κτίσεως τοῦ θεοῦ) = 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, so that all of history as God causes it to unfold is for and in the light of Jesus and his role as the crucified and royal Messiah of the Kingdom of God.

⁵⁵ Again, Jesus uses the singular pronoun since he is speaking to the *angelos* of a Christian assembly as that “messenger” who is reporting of sorts to him what is the spiritual condition of these “Christians.”

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.

Therefore, Jesus is not saying that these “Christians” are either genuine in their faith or not, because their actions are not obviously good or evil.

⁵⁶ 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. As a result, 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. Instead, they really are like those who would be considered “cold” who lack a changed heart and authentic belief in God and Jesus as the Messiah.

⁵⁷ The people in this Christian assembly 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. They may look spiritual and godly to some people, but he knows better about what is really going on in their hearts.

⁵⁸ Buying gold from Jesus that has been “refined by fire” is to acquire real wealth that comes from Jesus’ own fiery ordeal of suffering on the cross, the riches of God’s forgiveness and the promise of eternal life, by paying for them embracing biblical truth from God and authentic belief in the truth that both come 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 the 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. We all need not only eyes that see the truth of God and of ourselves as sinners but also the inner motivation to embrace the truth and repent of our sin while pursuing moral goodness in contrast to the rest of the world who are following Satan’s lies.

⁵⁹ 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 business 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.

⁶⁰ Jesus uses the metaphor of someone who has approached a person's house and knocks on the door to be allowed to enter and relate to the person in a close and friendly manner. By letting the visitor in, the person dwelling in the house is granting Jesus the opportunity to converse and be a part of his life in such a way that they will affect one another. The visitor obviously is Jesus who in this letter to the *angelos* of Laodicea has been appealing to the "Christians" to choose to devote themselves entirely to God and him.

⁶¹ Just as Jesus overcame and conquered the world's lies, temptations, and deceptions by remaining true to his mission and calling so that he announced himself as the Messiah and demonstrated this through his miracles, death, and resurrection, he encourages that Laodiceans to imitate him in their calling from God as his followers. And just as the result for him is to rule over Kingdom of God on earth, first over the Jews on the land of Israel, and second over the world, a similar result will occur for them as they rule with him—during the millennial kingdom as described in Revelation 20.

⁶² The phrase *μετὰ ταῦτα εἶδον* = "after these things I looked" appears four times in Revelation – here, 7:9; 15:5; 18:1, and the phrase *μετὰ τοῦτο εἶδον* = "after this I looked" appears once in 7:1.

It makes more sense to me that the second "after these things" (*μετὰ ταῦτα*) at the end of the verse is the beginning of the next sentence. After John saw the door opened into heaven and he heard the voice like a trumpet instructing him to come up "what must take place" = 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 1st 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 first Beast of Revelation 13, who is the most powerful force (at least ideologically and probably religiously) 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. With a coalition of Middle Eastern nations, he raises another Satanically motivated army from all these nations, and they invade the land of Israel, kill a large number of unbelieving Jews (while in conjunction with a great earthquake which kills the rest of the unbelieving Jews in Jerusalem, on the land of Israel, so that even the unbelieving Jews in the rest of the world and in all the major cities are killed by a great earthquake in each of them). This culminates in the Battle of Armageddon when Jesus returns and destroys the foreign army, which, with the earthquake, has been God's last instrument of judgment on the unbelieving Jews.

The Beast and the false prophet, both of Revelation 13, 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 even 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 who have died, even going back to the beginnings of the OT, are resurrected to eternal life and moral perfection, while believers who are alive are lifted from their locations on the earth to the same eternal life and moral perfection. They all reign with Jesus over Israel and the earth and act as instructors and priests between God and both believing and unbelieving sinners throughout the world, thereby urging all to learn of God and escape His wrath and destruction by believing in Jesus as their Messiah as he rules from Jerusalem.

Satan is locked in the abyss and separated from the world during this time so that he is unable to influence people with his lies and deception—as he has so successfully previously in history. At the end of the millennial kingdom, God releases him from his prison in the abyss, 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 Jesus and the Jews. However, 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 sin and immorality of their actions and finally to ultimate destruction by God (in "the lake of fire and brimstone"). 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 God and Jesus as their king and priest.

Here in 4:1, the door standing open in heaven is the vision's way of indicating that John is going to view things of a nature that reveal God in His transcendence and therefore as the author of the created reality and the story which He is telling with it. And this will be John's intimate exposure 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 hears calling him up into the vision of God in heaven in His transcendence is Jesus, and he is speaking like a trumpet, meaning that he is announcing very significant truths and events that need to be heard. This sound like a trumpet has been the way Jesus has been speaking from the beginning of Revelation, e.g., [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 assemblies: to Ephesus and to Smyrna and to Pergamum and to Thyatira and to Sardis and to Philadelphia and to Laodicea."

Therefore, this "heaven" in the vision is not really a place up there somewhere above the earth, as we typically think of it. It is just the vision's place where God and what is true about Him is being revealed to John in his mind.

⁶³ John is "in the Spirit [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. At this point in Revelation, this particular vision is not about actual events. Instead, it is a description of central truths 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 in vision format 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 existence, character, plans, and purposes are what we can know about Him through the message of the Bible and the visions of Revelation.

⁶⁴ 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.

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.

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

God and His presence, plans, and purposes, along with His patience towards the Jews and other sinners for them to repent and reach eternal forgiveness and life, are as precious and valuable to know as anything in existence.

⁶⁵ 24 = 2 x 12 to symbolize the 12 twelve tribes of Israel and 12 apostles of Jesus. These further 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 most likely represent their ruling with Jesus during the millennial kingdom of the restored Kingdom of Israel.

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 whereby they stood and stand to obtain eternal salvation through God’s grace and Jesus as their high priest.

Revelation 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 accumulated lies and deceptions as in 1 John 5:4,5 – **4** For whoever is born of God conquers the world; and this is the victory that has conquered the world — our belief. **5** Who is the one who conquers 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 assemblies. To him who conquers, 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.’

⁶⁶ The “flashes of lightning” and “peals of thunder” are 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.

⁶⁷ The “seven lamps of fire” and the “seven Spirits of God” are 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 7th which represents the completion of work. Thus, God is always working in history and it is guaranteed that He will complete His work within the creation just as He has sovereignly planned. The history of the creation is the story of God which no one can change or prevent from occurring. 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 assemblies 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...

⁶⁸ A solid surface of “something like a sea of glass, like crystal” as the base of the island on which is located God’s throne 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, in the rest of the world. The latter will still contain unbelievers, so that their existences will not be as peaceful and shalom-like as that of the Jews in Israel. But it nevertheless will be radically better than before Jesus’ return and his rule over all the nations of the world.

The presence of the “four living creatures” is a bit mysterious. The question is, who or what would be “in the middle of the throne and around the throne” of God and why? Even their location seems strange. What does it look like for something to be “in the middle” of a throne on which God is pictured as sitting? And what does it look like for this same something or somethings to be “around the throne.” It seems that these creatures are as close to God as anyone can get, so that they are right there with the “seven Spirits of God” that themselves are “before the throne.”

Thus, there are two possibilities for these “four living creatures” –

1) animal-like creatures who are symbolic signs of Jesus the Messiah and his the four roles — a) his authority as king (because he is like a lion), b) his sacrifice (because he is like young bull sacrificed under the Mosaic Covenant, but obviously radically different, ὁμοιον μόσχῳ), c) his human existence as the icon of God on earth (because of his face like a man), and d) his being the Savior and Champion of his people (flying eagle – the wings provide the ability for people to flee the danger of God’s wrath and their enemies so as to be saved, even eternally (cf. **Revelation 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 "four living creatures" are also "full of eyes in front and behind," which on the same island with God would seem to indicate that they represent the ability to see everything that God Himself sees, or at least what He wants them to see. Therefore, while they are not God, they are representative of God while He sits on the throne in the midst of "seven lamps of fire" and the "seven Spirits of God." Consequently, what makes the most sense as to who these "four living creatures" are in their close proximity to God, i.e., the closest proximity to God, even in comparison to the twenty-four elders around the throne and sitting on their own thrones? I think that these creatures are symbolic signs of Jesus as the third way that God exists (in conjunction with God Himself as the transcendent creator and with Him as intimately involved in His creation through the work of His Spirit, i.e., the "seven Spirits of God"). Plus, this makes sense because these four creatures represent Jesus' fulfilling his role completely as King, sacrifice, man, and Savior/ Champion.

The word "creatures" is ζῷα, the neuter plural nominative of ζῷον, meaning living being; animal; (zodiacal) sign; living creature. The verb form is ζῶω = to live. Therefore, these could be simply representations of a composite being, i.e., Jesus in his four roles as the Messiah.

[Hebrews 9:12](#) and not through the blood of goats and calves (μόσχων), but through his own blood, he entered the holy place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption.

[Exodus 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.'

⁶⁹ Symbolized by being "full of eyes around and within," again Jesus saw and sees everything clearly that he is supposed to see as the icon of God within human history. But we know from the gospel accounts that he also worshiped and extolled the transcendent creator God during his ministry on earth (cf. John 17 and his prayer)—and, by inference, does so continuously such that his own praise of God extends into eternity. Thus, here and in line with Isaiah 6:3 he is continuously and eternally ascribing to the transcendent Creator all the greatness and majesty that He deserves as the eternal sovereign ruler of all creation. And with a total of twenty-four wings (2x12 for emphasis and that correlates to the twenty-four elders sitting on their thrones around the throne of God), he becomes the sure and only means to rescue sinners so that they can fly away from God's wrath, condemnation, and destruction.

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

[Revelation 1:4](#) John to the seven assemblies 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...

⁷⁰ Because Jesus worships the transcendent Creator and ascribes all glory to Him, those whom he saves through his priestly role, both believing Jews and believing Gentiles from all history, 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.

As a result, they cast their crowns/wreaths, which symbolize their conquering the world through their faith/belief, before God's throne. They are saying, "God, it is You who have saved us, and not we ourselves. And we have conquered the world of lies and sin through Your grace and strength."

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 for the rest of eternity by the fire in the lake, so that the effect of their sin is actually eternal even if their punishment is not and is only temporary.

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

The Majority Text uses εἶσιν (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.

[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 Yahweh made the heavens and the earth, the sea and all that is in them, and rested on the seventh day; therefore Yahweh 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."

⁷² Two options for the meaning of the scroll (book, βιβλίον) and its seals – 1) The story of all of earthly history because it is written on front and back with no room for anything else, so that the seals are intended to point to the final stage of history and discipline of the Jews which will culminate in the Great and Terrible Day of the Lord and the "great nation" of Israel on the land of Israel afterwards so that Jesus rules over the Jews and the entire world during the millennial kingdom; 2) The story of just 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 may make more sense in the light of Jesus' words in Revelation 4:1 – “what must take place,” i.e., that most everything in Revelation refers to the future and the 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 book/scroll” (βιβλαρίδιον) leads to this scroll of Revelation 5 being option #1, the story of all human history and the little scroll being option #2 above.

Two options for the seals – 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.

⁷³ To be worthy “to open the scroll” means 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), because the one who “is worthy to open the scroll” ends up being Jesus. Therefore, only he 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.

The breaking of “the seals” refers to God's manner of disciplining His people, the Jews, such that the person who breaks the seals 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. In other words, whatever God does to the Jews to discipline them results in collateral damage among the Gentiles, such as the destruction of the Assyrian Empire by the Babylonians after the former took destroyed the northern Kingdom of Israel and the destruction of the Babylonian Empire by the Persians after the former destroyed the southern Kingdom of Judah.

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, so that there never is a country or nation among the Gentiles that does not deserve the same acts of judgment and discipline that the Jews have deserved and received down through history.

⁷⁴ There is no other person in the history of the cosmos who has qualified to be the basis of God's judgment and salvation of the Jews pertaining to the millennial kingdom and of the Gentiles pertaining to participating in the millennial kingdom and obtaining eternal salvation and life (like believing Jews).

The phrase “to look into it” means the same thing as opening it in the previous verse, to be the basis of God's judgment and salvation of the Jews and of all other sinful human beings.

⁷⁵ John must sense how important are the contents of this scroll and its seals as symbolic of all human history, so that he grieves over there not being a regular human being (or other created being) to perform the tasks of opening the scroll and breaking the seals both to reveal its contents and to be the catalyst for God's fulfilling His promises of the Abrahamic Covenant to both the nation of Israel and “all the families of the earth,” which will also bring evil to an end and inaugurate the righteousness of the Kingdom of God, first during the millennial kingdom of the present earth and the eternal kingdom of the next earth.

⁷⁶ The name “Lion that is from the tribe of Judah” has its origin in 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?” Jacob is telling his twelve sons before he dies that eventually someone from the tribe of Judah will rule over them and all the peoples of the earth. (cf. Genesis 49:8-12).

The label “Root of David” has its origin in Isaiah 11:10, “Then in that day the nations (גוים) will seek the **root** of Jesse, who will stand as a signal for the peoples; and his resting place will be glorious.” Jesus as the basis of God's judgment and salvation of sinful human beings is a human being who descends from Jesse, David's father, so that he also is the king of Israel according to the Davidic Covenant.

And Jesus has conquered 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 open the scroll and break the seals.

⁷⁷ This is Jesus who is appearing as the crucified Passover “lamb” of the New Covenant, symbolizing God's release of sinners from their slavery to sin that would result in God's condemnation. He was the “Lamb” who was “slain” for the salvation of his people, both believing Jews and believing Gentiles.

Seven horns symbolize his complete strength and power as a king and ruler to have accomplished his goal of qualifying to be king and priest of God's people. As in Daniel 8 and Revelation 13-17, a horn represents a kingdom because it is the king of this kingdom. Thus, Jesus' kingdom is the Kingdom of God and the fact that he as a lamb has seven horns means that there is no more powerful king and kingdom than Jesus and his kingdom.

[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.”

[Luke 1:69](#) And has raised up a **horn** of salvation for us in the house of David His servant —

Seven eyes symbolize Jesus ability to see with complete clarity and understanding (at least for a created human being) all that God wanted him to see and involve himself in 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 activity of the transcendent God in the creation who not only worked in Jesus during his time on earth to make him capable of accomplishing all the miracles and teaching of his first

appearance, but also to make him capable of enduring all his suffering of rejection by the people of Israel and especially the crucifixion. And the Spirit also worked in sinners during Jesus' first appearance and since then throughout the whole world to cause certain ones of them to become authentic believers and to cause them to sustain their faith in the face of any hostile opposition to them and the truth of God. No one and nothing will prevent God from finishing His plans and purposes for the creation with Jesus as the central element of the creation and its history.

⁷⁸ The fact that the scroll is in God's "right hand" symbolizes His authority and power to make happen all the events of cosmic and human history as written and described in the scroll culminating in the portion of the the seals that will lead up to the end of this age and the final judgment and disciplining of the Jews.

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"—which was to execute Jesus on the cross as the central event of history that brings about eternal salvation for all believing human beings.

⁷⁹ The "four living creatures and the twenty-four elders" symbolize Jesus and all believers who come to recognize the purpose and the value of his own role and existence as the high priest of all sinners and who intercedes on their behalf to obtain God's eternal mercy. Therefore, they worship Jesus as they would and should God since he is the icon of God with the role of rescuing them from God's wrath and condemnation.

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, ...

Their "holding...golden bowls full of incense" is their holding the prayers of their brothers (and themselves) who have died during the time between Jesus' first and second appearances, so that they are ready to have them revealed so as to motivate God to avenge their deaths and finish fulfilling His promises to Israel (cf. Revelation 6:9-11; 8:3-5).

Revelation 6:9 And when the Lamb broke the fifth seal, I saw underneath the altar the souls of those who had been slain because of the 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.

Revelation 8:3 And 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. **4** And the smoke of the incense, with the prayers of the saints, went up before God out of the angel's hand. **5** And 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.

⁸⁰ 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.

This is the same idea that Paul in Hebrews is teaching, that the purpose of Jesus' death on the cross was to qualify for the entirety of rest of his role as king, priest, and savior for God's people. It is not that his death "purchases" sinners by paying all the legal penalty for people's sins against God. Instead, he metaphorically "purchases" them by making himself worthy of fulfilling all that God has planned for him within the creation. Thus, he qualifies to be king and high priest.

⁸¹ All 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 with Jesus between God and all remaining sinners on the earth while they encourage them to embrace the truth of the gospel and become authentic believers in God and Jesus. This will be their reigning upon the earth during the millennial kingdom.

Revelation 20:4 Then I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and judgment was given to them. And I saw the existences 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 the Messiah for a thousand years.

⁸² Now the vision is of all beings who have been brought into existence by God and who worship and admire Him as the one true God. Therefore, the "angels" are included with "the living creatures and the elders." The "myriads" and "thousands" are probably referring to only the angels, whereby they are expressing a magnitude of praise and worship that Jesus (and ultimately God) deserves. There are so many "angels" 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.

⁸³ If the living creatures/signs are symbolic of Jesus as in chapter 4, 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. In other words, it is not out of the realm of possibility that all created beings, including Jesus, acknowledge the central and vital role of Jesus within the creation, the creation that has been brought into existence by the transcendent God and author of its story.

⁸⁴ If animals, birds, fish, and everything in the universe 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 of rescuing His people from His wrath and condemnation and providing them with life in the eternal Kingdom of God.

And this is because God and Jesus will reign with absolute authority over this creation and the future eternal creation for all time.

⁸⁵ 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. My guess is that here these living creatures are symbolic of all conscious and sentient beings who are willing to submit to God and Jesus as the Messiah, who, along with the elders are symbolic specifically of authentic believing human beings throughout history, worship God and will do so into eternity.

The elders' falling down and worshiping is repeated from vs. 8-10. Therefore, this verse emphasizes the worship of God by all those in the past, in the present, and into the future, because this is what God has scripted for rational, moral beings forever.

⁸⁶ Rather than the first five seals being successive events one after the other, they sound more like general aspects of history from the time of Jesus' first coming to his second coming, so that these each one is a manner in which God expresses His discipline towards the Jews for primary their rejection of Jesus and for secondarily their general unwillingness to submit to God and His spiritual and moral authority.

Therefore, these first five seals involve:

- 1) authoritarian governments whose goal is to conquer and crush other peoples wars
- 2) authoritarian cultures whose goal is to sow discontent within societies in order that people are so hostile towards one another that they kill each other
- 3) unscrupulous people in the business arena whereby their activities result in economic hardship for everyone
- 4) genocide of the Jews through every means available in the midst of pogroms/persecutions, famine, and pestilence/diseases that all end of existing together because of the societal chaos that results even in decrease in people's health
- 5) the desire on the part of authentic believers for judgment against those, both Jews and Gentiles, who killed them for their faith Jesus as the Lamb killed for the sinful world breaks the first seal, and then "one of the four living creatures," i.e., a certain aspect of Jesus himself (if I am right about Revelation 4:6-11 that these four creatures are symbolic of Jesus), "with a voice of thunder" instructs the first horse to come forth and accomplish its goals.

Notice this first seal involves someone on a white horse with bow and crown. Therefore, he is symbolic of a military leader who conquers, subjugates, and rules over people. These sound like the wars and rumors of wars against the Jews of Matthew 24:6. It is important to recognize that the white horse, like that of Jesus in Revelation 19:11, is not representative of peace (yet) but of war. This, then, is a warrior horse of political entities, i.e., governments, that have subjugated and oppressed the Jews over the years, starting in the Middle East and then extending into Europe and the far reaches of the world.

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."

Matthew 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. **7** For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom, and in various places there will be famines and earthquakes. **8** But all these things are merely the beginning of birth pangs. **9** Then they will deliver you to tribulation, and will kill you, and you will be hated by all nations because of My name."

Matthew 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 the Messiah 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 assembly, 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 (1 John 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).

⁸⁷ All four "living creatures" (assuming they are aspects of Jesus and his role – cf. Revelation 4:6-11) speak to John to observe the effect of each of the first four seals. Again, it is weird that Jesus is breaking the seals and then responding in the form of the four creatures to invite the horses to come and cause their Middle Eastern and even global catastrophes to occur as discipline of the unbelieving Jews.

⁸⁸ 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 a part of and harmed during these wars.

⁸⁹ 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 symbolizing Jesus] is most likely God since they (as Jesus) are on His island.

⁹⁰ 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.

⁹¹ 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 a 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. Again, these catastrophic occurrences probably start in the Middle East and then spread to the rest of the world since the Jews disperse themselves even half way around the world from the land of Israel and the Middle East where they were initially scattered from the Assyrian captivity on.

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.

⁹² Unlike the first four seals, the fifth seal does not describe a catastrophe that will cause suffering for all the unbelieving Jews. Instead, it describes the condition of deceased believers who died for their faith and who, in vision form, are looking forward to God's executing His justice on those who were obviously unbelievers and opposed God to the extent that they mistreated and

killed authentic believers. This is to say that these dead believers do not yet exist as they will when God resurrects them when Jesus returns, but the vision shows them as alive to make the point that even they can long for God's justice towards unbelievers, especially those who outwardly persecuted and even killed believers.

Like the first four seals, this probably refers specifically to NT martyrs even though there have been many OT martyrs among mostly believing Jews, e.g., certain prophets.

The fact that these deceased believers are "underneath the altar" means that they have sacrificed their lives for the gospel and are situated in a sacred place in relation to God. They are not on the altar of sacrifice as in the temple of the Mosaic Covenant, but they are still intimately connected to it by being underneath it. It is as though they are resting in their death under that on which they were symbolically offered to God for their faith to continue to symbolize that they are in a sense special to God for their faith in Jesus as the Messiah. It is also interesting that the location of the altar is not specified in this vision here. But in Revelation 8:3, it is said, "And 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." Therefore, we find out later that this altar is near God and indeed before Him so that its significance is its proximity to God as a place that is sacred and points to sacrifices and offerings to God, probably whether it is Jesus' sacrifice as the ultimate propitiatory offering or believers' sacrifice of their lives, even to the death, in imitation of Jesus' death.

The fact that they were "slain because of the message of God" means that they were authentic believers, and probably mostly among among the Jews as Jesus predicted in the Olivet Discourse, 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. Jesus did say in Matthew 10 and Matthew 24 that Jewish believers would be killed by their Jewish kinsmen for the gospel.

These deceased believers maintained and persevered in their faith in spite of the threat of and suffering death for their faith in God. They were committed to the future Kingdom of God more than to existence and happiness in the present world.

⁹³ These believers who have died are righteously anxious for God to avenge their deaths on those who killed them and who "dwell on the earth," which in the immediate context of Revelation refers most likely to the area of the Middle East and to a degree the Roman Empire.

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.

⁹⁴ The fact that that the dead believers are given a "white robe" probably means that God is promising to cleanse them legally through Jesus' advocacy which will result in God's eternal mercy and forgiveness.

And someone (Jesus? An angelos of Yahweh? A conventional angel? One of the four living creatures?) tells these deceased believers that they should rest for a little while longer in their situation of being special to God. Since this is a vision, God is saying that they must wait in their state of sleep, i.e., death, for justice to be finally served—until God's patience towards the Jews in particular finally runs out.

The phrase "until the number of their fellow servants and their brethren who were to be killed even as they had been would be completed also" indicates that's, like the first four seals, this fifth seal is not an individual event but an aspect of reality for believers, especially Jewish ones, between Jesus' first and second comings. Until Jesus returns, there will 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 the Messiah" 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).

Plus, 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.

⁹⁵ 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 the Olivet Discourse of Matthew 24:29-31—

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, 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."

This is also like what which the prophet Joel relates—

Joel 2:28 It will come about after this that I will pour out My Spirit on all mankind [literally 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, and 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 Yahweh comes.

⁹⁶ When Jesus returns, the topography of at least the Middle East and very possibly the whole world will change as God revamps the political power structure so that power and authority are centered in Jesus who is ruling from Jerusalem. And this accompanies the death of all Jewish unbelievers and many Gentile unbelievers, especially the armies which have invaded the land of Israel to subjugate and even annihilate the Jews.

Both Isaiah and Ezekiel refer to this—

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 Yahweh'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 Adonai Yahweh, "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 Adonai Yahweh, "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 Adonai Yahweh. "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 Yahweh."

⁹⁷ This verse refers to all unbelievers, possibly both Jews and Gentiles, throughout the Middle East and perhaps the rest of the world. It may refer to only Jews on the land of Israel, but the phrase "the kings of the earth" would seem to point to Gentiles and not to Jews. And these would include the heads of the armies of the Battle of Armageddon that have invaded Israel under the leadership of the individual who is leading the "beast" from the sea of Revelation 13 and are therefore facing the wrath of God and Jesus when he returns—even if the kings are not themselves present but still residing back in their respective countries in the Middle East. Therefore, these "kings" and other men, from the rich to the poor, from the free to the enslaved, are all terrified at the display of the wrath of the God on the land of Israel and in the Middle East.

⁹⁸ The fact that this seal is called "the wrath of the Lamb" indicates that it is THE event of history of the return of Jesus who destroys Israel's 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).

⁹⁹ 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 and impending destruction.

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. In other words, they have no intention to become authentic believers but only to continue to shield themselves as best they can from God and His judgment.

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

¹⁰⁰ The phrase *μετὰ ταῦτα εἶδον* = "after these things I looked" appears four times in Revelation – 4:1, 7:9; 15:5; 18:1, and the phrase *μετὰ τοῦτο εἶδον* = "after this I looked" appears once here in 7:1.

Chapter 7 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 angels" may be *angeloi* of Yahweh and manifestations of the transcendent creator since they are controlling the elements of nature, the winds.

The four winds are destructive of the "earth," which probably means the land of Israel and therefore the people of Israel, the Jews, and of the "sea," which probably means the Gentiles, and of "trees," which refers to the source of food and sustenance for people, especially for the Jews on the land of Israel. And these "winds" may be symbolic of the peoples and armies of the final leader against Israel and the Jews. They are going to come from the "four corners of the earth," from every direction against the land of Israel and the Jews, even if their location is concentrated in the Middle East. If their armies are fairly local, nevertheless the support that they are receiving is from around the world, e.g., from Russia and China.

¹⁰¹ This is a fifth "angel," again perhaps another *angelos* of Yahweh who is directing the other manifestations of God to withhold their destructive actions for a while and until God has marked and separated, at least spiritually, the remnant of the Jews who will survive His final destructive measures towards the Jews so that this group of Jews become the first generation of authentic believers on the land of Israel during the millennial kingdom.

This angel also is "ascending from the rising of the sun," meaning that he is bringing light to the world and to these other "angels." What he says is truth and completely in line with the existing truth of the Bible where God has revealed His eternal plans and purposes for the world and its inhabitants of sinful human beings.

This angel also has "the seal of the living God," meaning that He is acting in concert with God and obeying Him completely and without fail. God sanctions this angel's actions and words.

And he cries out "with a loud voice" to signify that there is no question but that his commands to the other four angels must be obeyed as part of God's sovereign will.

Thus, God is saying that He has not quite waited long enough for unbelieving Jews to repent, so that He wants to be patient a little while longer—before He unleashes the trumpets and bowls of wrath on the Jews.

To seal “the bond-servants of God on their foreheads” is to mark and set aside specific 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.

I think that 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.

Ezekiel 28:25 ‘Thus says the Adonai Yahweh, “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 Yahweh their God.”’

It is possible that the above verses from Ezekiel refer to a return to the land of Jews before Jesus returns. But I am inclined to think that they return during his return, while certainly there will be many Jews who will be marked by God for salvation who be living on the land when Jesus returns.

The forehead symbolizes that place close to a person’s mind where he demonstrates exactly what has captured his heart and to which he is committed—whether the truth of the Bible or the lies of Satan and this world.

Deuteronomy 11:18 “You shall therefore impress these words of mine (אֲנִי יְהוָה) on your heart and on your soul; and you shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontals on your forehead (בֵּין עֵינַיִם = between your eyes).”

Ezekiel 9:4 Yahweh 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.”

As a result, this angel is talking about Jews who are gaining more and more sensitivity to the truth and will eventually become authentic believers in God and in Jesus.

¹⁰² 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). How many is many when, for example, there are approximately 15 million Jews total in the world today? Hard to say, but hopefully at least a few hundred thousand, maybe even half a million.

¹⁰³ Dan is missing. Manasseh, the son of Joseph, substitutes. Why?

¹⁰⁴ The phrase μετὰ ταῦτα εἶδον = “after these things I looked” appears four times in Revelation – 4:1, 7:9; 15:5; 18:1, and the phrase μετὰ τοῦτο εἶδον = “after this I looked” appears once in 7:1.

As part of God’s patient interlude during the sixth seal that culminates in the Great and Terrible Day of the Lord 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), and especially to those who suffered for their faith and even died for their faith.

Revelation 5:9 And they sang a new song, saying, “Worthy are you to take the 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.”

These are also a group of believers who are in Abraham since it is in him that “all the families of the earth will be blessed” according to Genesis 12:3. The larger group includes authentic believers who lived before Jesus’ first appearance.

The believers’ being “clothed in white robes” is symbolic of their being eternally forgiven by God and granted the promise of complete moral transformation so that they will be morally perfect throughout the entirety of the Kingdom of God. As “one of the elders responds in Revelation 7:14, “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.”

The fact that there are “palm branches in their hands” is reminiscent of Jesus’ entrance into Jerusalem before his crucifixion, thus symbolizing their acknowledgement of Jesus as their king and priest, i.e., the basis for their eternal salvation and life from God.

¹⁰⁵ All these believers acknowledge that it is only by God’s sovereign grace and Jesus’ fulfilling his role as the crucified Messiah and king that they are rescued from God’s eternal wrath, condemnation, and destruction. As a result, they exclaim this truth “with a loud voice” as a way to emphasize how important this fact is. Indeed, it is the most important idea of their human existence. They are not shouting loudly about anything else in what they have experienced in their lives as sinful human beings. Only their salvation.

¹⁰⁶ In addition, all other created beings apart from the elders and four living creatures, i.e., the angels (I assume conventional angels), acknowledge the same thing as the believers. Thus, there is this massive extolling of God and Jesus for their majesty, grace, and mercy. Because this truth is the most important truth in all created reality.

“Amen” means truly or of course. In other words, naturally these created beings are doing what they are doing and saying what they are saying.

“Blessing” reveals their desire for God to be extolled and praised for who He is and what He has done to rescue sinful human beings from His wrath and destruction.

“Glory” reveals their desire for God to be granted a sense of awe by His creation for how majestic and awe inspiring He is.

Mouths naturally drop when people grasp who God is and what He has done and is doing.

“Wisdom” reveals their desire to acknowledge that no one is as wise and understanding as God, so that His wisdom has been revealed within the creation by means of the story which He has told and will continue to tell into eternity.

“Thanksgiving” reveals their desire to thank God for who He is and what He has done, that they are grateful for His grace and mercy to sinners, almost as much as the sinners are grateful for God’s grace and mercy.

¹⁰⁷ This is a rather weird description of how the believers end up with white robes. They wash them in red blood, the “blood of the Lamb,” and they come out white. Obviously this is symbolic of forgiveness through Jesus’ qualifying to be their High Priest when he died and shed his blood on the cross. These worshipers of God “washed” themselves by genuinely repenting of their sins in the light of Jesus’ death on the cross, and the result is that they are “clean,” i.e., forgiven for their sins, because they are believing in Jesus as the Messiah who died for them and intercedes for them before God.

The elder, i.e., one of the 24 elders who are representatives of the twelve tribes of Israel and the twelve apostles as forerunners of the believers after the first appearance of Jesus, says that these worshipers of God are “the ones who came out of the Great Tribulation.” According to Jesus in the Olivet Discourse of Matthew 24 and its parallel passages, this “Great Tribulation” is the time between his two appearances that is especially difficult for the Jews as a result of their rejection of him 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. Perhaps these believers actually were killed for their faith, or perhaps they simply struggled in their faith by groaning over their own sin or over the sin of those around them, especially those in the world who were clearly committed to rebelling against God and to flaunting their sin before Him.

¹⁰⁸ These believers are said to be “before the throne of God” and to “serve Him day and night in His temple.” This is symbolic of their immortal and perfect worship of God while living for all eternity. They will serve God for all eternity in the Kingdom of God. It 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.

And God “will spread His tabernacle over them” means that He will always be present with them wherever they are on the new earth. He will be with them as their sovereign God and author of their continued and eternal stores, having become present within them when He first changed their hearts as sinners and now present with them for the rest of their existences on the new and eternal earth.

¹⁰⁹ 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 all 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 any kind of suffering for all believers, which will only be when God creates a new heavens and new earth. It would seem that 2 Peter 3 is describing the same thing.

¹¹⁰ The “Lamb...will be their shepherd” means that Jesus will be their king and ruler and present with them for all eternity on the new earth. They will never again experience any kind of pain and suffering, because sin, disease, natural catastrophes, and especially death will have disappeared. This is what chapters 21 & 22 are describing.

God will “wipe every tear from their eyes” so that they will never experience any kind of grief-stricken loss or heartache. Instead, their experience will be one of pure joy and delight for all eternity.

¹¹¹ 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 most likely symbolizes the millennial kingdom. The silence means no more “great” tumult from sin as in the “great tribulation,” no more far-reaching rebellion by man against God, so that there are no more of God’s far-reaching responses of judgment against especially the Jews, even those who were in the midst of His far-reaching patience.

And this silence lasts for “about half an hour,” meaning that it is not forever, but only until the end of the millennium, when the last attempt by Satan to destroy Jesus and God’s plans for His people takes place according to Revelation 20.

¹¹² 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.

¹¹³ 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, which is 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 three acts of judgment—1) the destruction of the Beast and his army that has invaded Israel to destroy the Jews, 2) the death of all unbelieving Jews, who represent the Jews even in the apostles’ day who put Christians to death, and finally 3) the Great White Throne Judgment at the end of the millennial kingdom and this realm.

¹¹⁴ 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.

God always hears the mental and spoken appeals of His people for strength to persevere in their faith and for the end of the age to come that they might cease to suffer for their faith.

¹¹⁵ Once God has enjoyed the smell of the smoke of the prayers of His people, 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 first towards the Jews who have rejected Jesus as the Messiah, and then towards 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 occur in multiple locations in all the major cities around the world and will destroy all the unbelieving Jews so that only the remnant of the symbolic 144,000 from the twelve tribes of Israel will

survive this last judgment and discipline of God.

Revelation 16:19 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.

¹¹⁶ Near the end of the Great Tribulation, God ups the ante in comparison to all other judgments against the Jews between Jesus' first and second appearances by producing 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. These are the seven trumpets where the seventh one is actually the inauguration and creation of the first stage of the Kingdom of God, the millennial kingdom of Revelation 20.

¹¹⁷ This first trumpet and more intense warning sign for unbelieving Jews 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."

And it makes more sense to interpret these trumpet events and the seven bowls of wrath as astronomical and directly produced by God rather than man-made so that only God can claim responsibility for them, resulting in people's attention being drawn directly to Him to encourage them to repent of their sins before Him—if they are willing, which most of them will not be. They have to turn from ἀσέβεια to εὐσεβεία, from being unwilling to submit to God to being willing to do so. The Greek words come from σεβω, which means to worship.

Acts 16:14 A woman named Lydia, from the city of Thyatira, a seller of purple fabrics, a worshiper of God (σεβομένη τὸν θεόν), was listening; and the Lord opened her heart to respond to the things spoken by Paul.

Exodus 9:22 Now Yahweh 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 Yahweh sent thunder and **hail**, and fire ran down to the earth. And Yahweh 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**.

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 Yahweh comes.

Zechariah 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.'"

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.

Therefore, a "third" is symbolic of a large part but not the total. It may be an actual third or anywhere between a small part and most of something.

¹¹⁸ 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 boats 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 "something like a great mountain burning with fire" 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. Therefore, they are drowned, so to speak, in God's supernatural acts of judgment to the extent that much of their natural source of sustenance (fish in the Sea of Galilee, for example, and not cultivated grain) is destroyed, so that a smaller food supply gives them further notice that God is at work and encouraging them to repent.

Jeremiah 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 Yahweh. **25** "Behold, I am against you, O destroying mountain, who destroys the whole earth," declares Yahweh, "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."

¹¹⁹ Another astronomical event that affects the land of Israel in a destructive manner. This time, other elements of the "waters" that are important for the land of Israel and within the land are made so bitter and non-potable that drinking them causes people to die.

¹²⁰ ὁ Ἄρτινθος is from ἀρτινθιον, which is a plant of the genus 'Artemisia.' It is typically bitter to the taste and yielding a dark green oil. The interpretation "wormwood" derives from its association with medicinal use to kill intestinal worms.

Thus, this particular cataclysmic event renders former drinking water so bitter and toxic to the point that many people kill not only unwanted worms in their digestive systems but also themselves.

¹²¹ 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. The fourth trumpet will result in this, and it sounds as though the darkness will be more pronounced than that during a solar eclipse.

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

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.

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 Yahweh comes.

Zephaniah 1:14 Near is the great day of Yahweh, 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.

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, 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.”

¹²² 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 on the land of Israel one more opportunity to change their minds about Him and Jesus and to 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. However, we know from the rest of Revelation that they do not repent and so the story continues right into the Great and Terrible Day of the Lord.

¹²³ Up until now, the four previous trumpets involved strictly supernatural events without any actual persons involved. But the next two trumpets, the fifth and the sixth, do involve persons. In this case they are most likely demonic from the depths of the abyss. In the second case, they are most likely a human army or coalition of armies as described in later chapters.

In Luke 8:26-33, the demons 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.

Or what about **Revelation 12:7-9**? It reads, “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. **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.”

Is this “star from heaven” the same as Satan in Revelation 12, who with the “key of the pit of the abyss” opens this demonic pit of a prison and unleashes the forces of his own evil army of demons to torment the unbelieving Jews on the land of Israel (and perhaps also Jews throughout the world)?

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—as implied by the above quoted passage of Revelation 12:7-9. 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 the Jews in Israel and probably in the rest of the world. And maybe there will be an increased demonic activity within unbelieving Gentiles, too.

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,...

¹²⁴ 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. The darkness of their evil will appear among the Jews and the effects on them.

¹²⁵ 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 in Revelation 11:1-3) 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. Similarly, the prophet Joel mentions locusts invading and decimating the land of Israel, i.e., an armed invasion of Israel.

¹²⁶ 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. And these will be unbelieving Jews who have been unwilling to acknowledge and submit to God.

¹²⁷ The suffering from these demonic beings will be horrible, and yet no one will be able to escape it, even by dying. Again, the intent by God is to motivate the unbelieving Jews to repent and to obey Him as He has required since the Abrahamic and Mosaic Covenants.

¹²⁸ In the book of Revelation, what a person wears is that to which he is committed to and that gives him a certain appearance and sense of purpose. 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.

Revelation 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.

Revelation 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,...

¹²⁹ These are truly elaborately dressed and warlike beings in league with Satan to do his will and to cause suffering and pain for the unbelieving Jews on the land of Israel and probably throughout the rest of the world.

While it is tempting to identify these warrior beings with modern instruments of warfare, like attack helicopters or tanks, these are other worldly and spiritual beings, e.g., demons, who are creations of God and not of man.

¹³⁰ 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.

¹³¹ The fifth trumpet began the intense judgment of the Jews that will comprise the entirety of the Great and Terrible Day of the Lord of Malachi 4.

¹³² Here when the sixth trumpet sounds, there is a voice "from the four horns of the golden altar which is before God," the same altar, I assume, mentioned in Revelation 6:9 and 8:3. This is the place symbolizing sacrifice for the sins of the people, whether by Jesus or by his followers who simply follow in his footsteps—not that their sacrifice suffices for their eternal salvation, but only reveals that they are willing to be rejected by the world of unbelievers as he was.

This voice orders the sixth angel of the sixth trumpet to "release the four angels who are bound at the great river Euphrates." Ancient Babylon was located on this river, and in Revelation it symbolizes all that is hostile towards God within the sin of human beings—their obsession with pleasure (any kind of pleasure that is available to human beings) and with the material things of this world (as a means to feel valuable and powerful). 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 final Battle of Armageddon of the sixth bowl of wrath of Revelation 16:12-16. But it precedes the final battle.

¹³³ These four angels/messengers (and why four?) will be associated with a vast army. It is said that they will kill "a third of the men," assuming these men to be Jews on the land of Israel. And these four angels with their activities have been part of the sovereign plan of God so that they have been "prepared for the hour and day and month and year." God, who is the author of all reality, has known from eternity past exactly when these four angels would perform their divine duty in His judgment of His chosen people, the Jews.

It would seem that this event 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. In other words, this event is bringing together God's purposes for the Jews and the Jews' own rebellion against God.

¹³⁴ Two hundred million is probably not a literal number but symbolic of an army that overwhelms Israel's defenses and conquers them.

Again, this is not the Battle of Armageddon, but it is very much like the army that will be destroyed by Jesus at Armageddon (cf. Revelation 16:13-16; 19:11-21).

But John hears the number expressed, probably by the same voice who orders the sixth angel to release the four angels of the Euphrates River. In this way, John is saying, "I am not joking. This is going to be a huge and overwhelming army."

¹³⁵ Their defensive armor, their breastplates, are the same color as their weapons of the fire, smoke, and brimstone out of their mouths. This means that their defense is as good as their offense. This will be a shock and awe attack on the Jews that will be unstoppable, unleashed on them by God as He approaches the end of His judging and disciplining them.

For vision purposes and therefore for John who is observing the vision, this army is portrayed in 1st century attire, complete with horses. But since they sound more like a human army and not a supernatural one as with the locusts of the fifth trumpet, this may very well be a modern 21st century like army with modern weapons. In other words, we have here a definite human element of God's judgment and not just a supernatural one or set of supernatural ones as with the previous trumpets.

¹³⁶ 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 that is mentioned explicitly in Revelation 11:1-14 as a description of specific events before the seventh trumpet and the beginning of the millennial kingdom of Revelation 20.

¹³⁷ 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.

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

Here John continues to describe the vision, that it is a wild and crazy army with the kind of weapons that it is employing. But again, I think that this is 1st century language to describe something that may very well be a human army.

John also says that the surviving Jews continue "to worship demons," and then he describes their worship as being of "idols of gold and of silver and of brass and of stone and of wood, which can neither see nor hear nor walk." By this I think that the vision and John are indicating that at the end of this age just before Jesus returns, the Jews will be obsessed with material wealth and whatever good life they can derive from it. The vision and John are also saying that this kind of "worship" which focuses on the

things of the creation rather than the creator stems from Satan and his influence in global cultures to steer people away from God as the source of their well-being and enjoyment in life.

¹³⁸ The Jews' sins are mentioned in four categories—

- 1) “murders” (φόνοι), which probably is both literal and metaphorical, i.e., putting people to death who do not deserve it and oppressing their lives so that they are not able to flourish as they could if given the freedom to do so;
- 2) “sorceries” (φαρμάκα), which probably refer to the people interacting with the reality available to them while thinking that they can and should manipulate it as much as possible in order to gain as much wealth and satisfaction from the material world as possible (cf. Revelation 18:23; 21:8; 22:15 – we get our word pharmacy from the Greek term, which formerly was a place where medicinal drugs were prepared and dispensed);
- 3) “immorality” (πορνεία), which refers mainly to sexual morality in line with the pornography that is inherent in our world and the word of which comes from the Greek term;
- 4) “thefts” (κλεμμάτα), which broadly speaking would be all the ways that people steal from others, whether their time, their money, their reputation, etc. simply because they are selfish and not comfortable enough in themselves and how God has made them and what God has provided for them (or not).

And the bottom line here is that the remaining Jews (except for the “144,000”) do not repent of their sins in spite of the heavy-duty pressure being placed on them by God and His many judgments, especially the current trumpets and upcoming bowls of wrath.

¹³⁹ 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 (like God in the desert when the theophany appeared to the Israelites, e.g., in Exodus 13:21,22, because Jesus is the very icon of God within the creation (cf. Colossians 1:15)), with a rainbow on his head from Genesis 9:12-17 and the Noahic Covenant to symbolize God's patience and delay in judging and destroying sinful and rebellious human beings (including the Jews). His face shines with the light of the sun, symbolizing righteousness and truth. And wherever he walks, he does carry out the fiery destruction of sinful human beings according to God's justice—because God is both just and merciful.

¹⁴⁰ The “little book” (βιβλαρίδιον) is in comparison to the big book (βιβλίον) of the scroll of seven seals in Revelation 5:1-8:1. The former is the description of all human history as determined by God with the various ways that God executes His judgment on nations of unbelieving human beings (political oppression, wars, economic hardship, famines, diseases, earthquakes, and the persecution and death of authentic believers), while the latter is the description of only the endtimes (from Jesus' first appearance to his second appearance), especially the Great and Terrible Day of the Lord with respect to God's people, the Jews, leading up to Jesus' rule over the Jews and the entire world during the millennial kingdom of Revelation 20.

The sea and land symbolize the Gentiles and Jews respectively, and Jesus exercises authority and eventual rule over both in his role as the crucified Messiah, Son of God, and therefore God's proxy on earth according to ANE ideas about the kings of these ancient empires.

¹⁴¹ Of course Jesus cries out “with a loud voice.” He is the very icon of God in human history. Therefore, his voice is “as a lion roars,” which further helps identify this *angelos*/messenger of God as Jesus, the lion of Judah who has the strongest voice so to speak to declare God's truth, plans, and intentions.

Thunder is probably symbolic of God's threat of justice and judgment like the thunder in Exodus 19 at Mt. Sinai when He was giving the Mosaic Covenant to the Jews. Seven refers to His perfect justice which He is in the process of executing on the Jews, and Jesus is simply announcing this on behalf of God.

Plus the sound of these “seven peals of thunder” is actual spoken language that John can understand. I assume that they must be saying something about God's judgment, especially His judgment on the Jews.

¹⁴² But whatever the “seven peals of thunder” say that John understands, God does not want him to reveal it. It is the “voice from heaven,” i.e., God Himself (?), who communicates this to John.

I wonder if this is indicative of God's desire for some people (in this case, John) to know certain things about Him and His plans and purposes while He hides these same things from others—because this is simply how God works within and among human beings, which seems to be the same as what Jesus said about his parables in Matthew 13:10-17:

Matthew 13:10 The disciples came to him and said, “Why are you speaking to them in parables?” **13:11** He answered and said to them, “To you it has been given to know the mysteries of the Kingdom of the Heavens, but it has not been given to them. **13:12** For he who has, it will be given to him, and it will be made to abound. But he who does not have, even what he has will be taken from him. **13:13** Therefore, I speak to them in parables, because while seeing, they do not see, while hearing, they do not hear, nor do they understand. **3:14** Thus the prophecy of Isaiah is being fulfilled with respect to them, ‘With hearing you will hear, but you will not understand. And while seeing you will see, but you will not see.’ **13:15** For the heart of this people has become dull, and with their ears they hear with difficulty. And they have closed their eyes. Otherwise, they would see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart and turn back, and I would heal them <Isaiah 6:9,10>.’ **13:16** But blessed are your eyes because they see and your ears because they hear. **13:17** For truly I say to you that many prophets and righteous men longed to see what you see, and they did not see it. And they longed to hear what you hear, and they did not hear it.”

¹⁴³ Jesus as the “angel” who is standing on the sea and on the land” points towards God with his “right hand” of truth and swears an oath, just as God did to Abraham in Genesis 21 in regard to His promise to fulfill His covenant with him. 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—but also only after the seven bowls of wrath. So more pain and suffering to come for the Jews, and then finally they will become the “great nation” that God has promised them since the Abrahamic Covenant.

Nehemiah 9:6 “You alone are Yahweh. You have made the heavens, the heaven of heavens with all their host, the earth and all that is on it, the seas and all that is in them. You give life to all of them, and the heavenly host bows down before You.”

There are also 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.

¹⁴⁴ 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 after the seven bowls of wrath 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 during the millennial kingdom of Revelation 20 (cf. Revelation 11:15-18).

I think it makes the most sense that the “prophets” mentioned here are those of the OT, Isaiah through Malachi, who warned the Israelites of God’s judgment on them but who also encouraged them that God would never abandon them so that He would eventually bring about the “great nation” of Jews on the land of Israel while the Messiah also rules over the entire world.

¹⁴⁵ Now “the voice...from heaven,” God Himself (?), speaks once more to John for him to do one more thing in regard to the angel, who I have suggested is Jesus. He wants him to take the little book (scroll) which is open in his hand.

¹⁴⁶ John then actually tells the angelos to give him the book—of course because the “voice...from heaven” has ordered him to take it from him.

The angel complies and as he gives John the book, he tells him to eat it with the result that it will make his stomach feel bad because of its bitterness while it will taste as “sweet as honey” in his mouth. This is a strange book.

But 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.

¹⁴⁷ John follows the angel’s (Jesus’) instructions, ate it, and lo and behold it tasted sweet in his mouth but gave him a stomach ache because of its bitterness once it reached his stomach.

What does this mean? The next verse provides a helpful clue.

¹⁴⁸ The book which John is eating is the story of human history which includes God’s judgment on the Jews specifically, because they are His chosen people who were supposed to teach the rest of the world about HIM!!! But it also involves God’s judgment on all the other “nations,” on the many ethnic groups and their leaders who will be hostile towards the Jews and then judged and destroyed by God as described by Him in Revelation 17-19, especially the last battle when Jesus returns in chapter 19.

As a result, this story is both pleasant and hard, indeed, even nauseating to a degree, to learn. It is metaphorically hard to swallow for John. God and His eternal plans and purposes are wonderful news, especially if a person grasps the majesty of God’s sovereignty, grace, and mercy through Jesus as the Messiah. But it is also difficult to hear about all the sin and evil and suffering within the human race that has come about through both man’s own decisions and God’s divine judgments, culminating in the destruction of the unbelieving Jews and Gentile armies who invade Israel just before Jesus returns.

Nevertheless, the book has been written, and its story will be told, regardless of what atheists claim.

¹⁴⁹ A measuring rod is mentioned in Ezekiel 40:3, etc. to measure the temple area. There is also a measuring line in Zechariah 2:1 to measure Jerusalem just before God says that He will be “a wall of fire around her” 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 being present and protecting it.

The temple mentioned here must be the one in the city of Jerusalem on this earth, not the “heavenly” one in Revelation 4 & 5. Here, the earthly temple of God with the altar and those who worship in the temple is probably 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—who refuse to submit to the Man of Lawlessness and his narcissism and lies. They are willing to “worship in” the temple so to speak by being inclined towards God unlike their fellow unbelieving Jews.

¹⁵⁰ 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 Middle East (with significant influence throughout the rest of the world), and he is ruling over Israel and from Israel. But while his army has invaded Israel, taken over Jerusalem, the “holy city,” and subjugated the chosen people of God, 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 of God’s protection until the final hour of the Great and Terrible Day of the Lord is 42 months / 12 = 3½ years. See my explanation of Daniel 9, especially vs. 24-27. 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.

Ezekiel 18:23 “Do I have any pleasure in the death of the wicked,” declares Adonai Yahweh, “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 Adonai Yahweh. “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 [Jews?]. He does not desire any to be destroyed but for all to make the move to repentance [my translation].

¹⁵¹ Interestingly enough, God will provide a voice for Himself in the midst of the subjugation of the Jews by the Gentiles by means of these two witnesses. They will speak on behalf of God during the time that the beast rules over Israel and the world—and no one will be able to stop them, regardless of how much they annoy unbelievers—especially Jewish unbelievers.

They wear sackcloth as symbolic of their own contrition and humility before God while proclaiming repentance, especially for the Jews. Again, this is during the final time of God's delay to grant them the opportunity to repent.

These two witnesses speak on behalf of God for 1,260 days / 365 = 3.45 (or 1,260 days / 360 = 3.5) years, the same amount of time that the Gentiles will "tread underfoot the holy city" according to v. 2. This is like the time of the apostles after Jesus' ascension. The Romans and the unbelieving Jewish leaders ruled over the land of Israel and Jerusalem, while the apostles proclaimed the good news of Jesus as the crucified Messiah—and yet most of the Jews and the Romans refused to believe.

¹⁵² These two prophets, like Moses before them and of course Jesus, have supernatural powers. They speak judgment ("fire flows out of their mouth"), and their enemies are destroyed—either literally or eternally because of their enemies' unbelief. 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.

But do they really prevent rain from falling during the entire 3½ years? Or maybe they cause period of times of drought. Either way, this would obviously put an extra strain on the Jewish people. Yet, we can assume that God sustains the 144,000 by His grace.

1 Kings 17:1 Now Elijah the Tishbite, who was of the settlers of Gilead, said to Ahab, "As Yahweh, 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 Yahweh 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.'"

Also, these two men as spokesmen for God 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.

Zechariah 4:6 Then he said to me, "This is the word of Yahweh to Zerubbabel saying, 'Not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit,' says Yahweh of hosts."

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

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." Or at least there are Elijah-like "prophets" and spokesmen for God, because they are announcing that "My God is Yahweh," the meaning of the name Elijah. So John the Baptist was an Elijah who, to a degree, restored the hearts of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob with his message by God's causing the inwardness of many of the Jews to change in his day. Then there are these two witnesses, who are not so successful among the unbelieving Jews, but maybe they are preparing the restoration of the hearts among the 144,000, who are encouraged by these men's public proclamations and miracles without their acquiring completely changed hearts. This last effect will happen only after Jesus returns and the millennial kingdom begins with the 144,000 living on the land of Israel as the first generation of believing Jews and being the beginning of the "great nation" of God's promise to Abraham in Genesis 12:1-3.

¹⁵³ This "beast that comes up out the abyss" in Revelation 11 is practically the personification of Satan, the leader of the abyss—as all the "beasts," whether an entire government or the tyrannical leader of a government, are. They are fully committed to Satan and his agenda to destroy God's people, the Jews, and God's people, the Christians. This "beast" is probably also the same as that of Revelation 13:1-10. He is the political leader of the final, evil government in the Middle East as 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."

Here in Revelation 11, as part of the book's description of the "beast," he finally kills the two witnesses who have had the power for 3½ years to fend off any attack from him and anyone else—until God's patience with the unbelieving Jews runs out. The deaths of these men is part of the final straw for God as another example of how unbelievers, both Jews and Gentiles, are hostile towards biblical truth to the point of killing authentic believers, who with their lives or their words proclaim the truth of God. Thus, the deaths of these two men seem to symbolize the end of God's patience which results in the destruction of all unbelieving Jews in the world while God heads towards the end of the Great and Terrible Day of the Lord.

¹⁵⁴ Obviously, this is Jerusalem, because it is "where also their Lord was crucified." But because the Jews have been as stubborn and hardhearted as the people of Sodom (see the description in Genesis 19) and Egypt (as described in Exodus), God labels the city with these same names. "Mystically" means that the necessary information is available, mostly through the OT prophets, such as the information regarding Jesus as the Messiah and his suffering, but it requires some thinking to understand.

Later in Revelation 16-18 Jerusalem is labelled "Babylon" because of the Jews' obsession with the material things and sinful actions that was indicative of ancient Babylon and thereby is the common mindset of all sinful human beings apart from God's changing their hearts and orienting them towards Him and His truths.

But after the "beast" kills these men (again, if they happen to be resurrected Moses and Elijah), their dead bodies are left exposed on one of the streets of Jerusalem.

¹⁵⁵ The "world," i.e., the Middle East mainly, will be filled with unbelieving, unrighteous, and rebellious people, even there in Israel among the Jews—except for the 144,000 of course. And there will be representatives of the "world" there in Jerusalem as

part of the armies of the “beast” and those who are helping to rule and oppress the Jews. They, and not necessarily those watching on television as a popular interpretation of this verse, who are “from the peoples and tribes and tongues and nations” will physically look at the dead bodies of these two prophets of God. The 3½ days constitute another (rather short, but still symbolic of God’s patience) opportunity for all of them to repent, especially the Jews.

In addition, the visiting Gentiles and the indigenous Jews there in Jerusalem “will not permit their dead bodies to be laid in a tomb,” meaning I suppose that they want to gloat (in a rather macabre manner) over their victory over these divinely sent pests who were constantly annoying them (for 3½ years with their dribble about God).

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 it is also possible that the Middle Eastern people back home in relationship to the Gentiles in Jerusalem will likewise celebrate on behalf of all those in Jerusalem.

And it may be, too, that the whole unbelieving world will celebrate their deaths. This is a rather chilling description of man’s sinfulness and rebellion against God.

¹⁵⁶ Their resurrection is another sign from God that He is alive and well urging the Jews (and the Gentiles) to repent of their rejection of the primary person who has been raised from the dead, their Messiah, Jesus of Nazareth.

And everyone else’s response is “great fear.” Why? Because this means something more than they are prepared to acknowledge and understand completely about God—that there is a much greater personal power at work that is also a judicial power with the authority to kill and raise people from the dead if He wills.

It is interesting that Jesus remained dead for three days while these men without life for the same plus another half a day. Is there any significance?

¹⁵⁷ Just as the apostles watched Jesus ascend into heaven in Acts 1, the unbelieving Jews and Gentiles in Jerusalem 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 probably are just relieved and celebrate that these two men no longer will torment them with their teaching of the truth—even if they are afraid from their rising from the dead.

Because the 7th trumpet coincides with the 6th seal and ends with the millennial kingdom of the 7th 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 7th trumpet and the Great and Terrible Day of the Lord in which Jesus will destroy Israel’s enemies and inaugurate his millennial kingdom.

¹⁵⁸ The earthquake that destroys Jerusalem is an essential element of the Great and Terrible Day of the Lord.

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 that began with chapter 9.

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.

¹⁵⁹ 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 7th trumpet that points to both the Great and Terrible Day of the Lord followed by the millennial kingdom.

¹⁶⁰ It is striking that the seventh trumpet is not a final judgment and discipline by God of the Jews but, instead, a description of the magnificence of God. Therefore, these verses of 11:15-17 are not an event. They portray God’s power as 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 during the millennial kingdom of Revelation 20.

Therefore, this sets of visions present the end product before they move on to the last movement of the seven bowls of wrath that constitute the Great and Terrible Day of the Lord towards the nation of Israel, the Jews.

The 24 elders and their praise of God represent that of all believers of all time who have longed for and looked forward to God’s fulfilling His promise to them and granting them eternal life. They express to God their thanksgiving and appreciation for His using His power to reign over the Jews and the rest of the earth. God definitely intimated this in His promise to Abraham in Genesis 12:1-3. And this is what the “loud voices” of v. 15 also state about God—that the world has now come under the complete authority of God, never to be ruled by only sinful and tyrannical human beings who, for the most part, rebel against God (even the Davidic kings of Israel up until the time of Jesus). But it takes the Great Tribulation and the Great and Terrible Day of the Lord to reach this point in human history.

¹⁶¹ 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 Christians throughout the “world” by extrapolation) 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.

¹⁶² This is a vision more likely of truth and not of an event. God is a God of justice and acts as judge of those on the earth (and the 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 eternal destruction.

¹⁶³ 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 Great and Terrible Day of the Lord when He finishes His judgment and discipline of the Jewish people because of their disobedience and rejection of Jesus as their Messiah. Therefore, the explanation in these chapters is a general truth about Satan that does not involve one specific event but, instead, a description of his plans and purposes throughout the Great Tribulation of the Jews from the time of Jesus' birth to the Great and Terrible Day of the Lord at his second appearance. Satan's plan all along has been to destroy the Jews, who are God's chosen ethnic people, and Christians, who are God's chosen spiritual people, through either direct persecution and death or through lies and deceptions.

The woman is Israel, who will ultimately be committed to light ("the sun"), i.e., truth and righteousness, ruling over the earth as the smaller, even smallest, part of the creation ("the moon") when the Jews become the great nation that God promised to Abraham (cf. Joseph's dream below). And her authority, the crown of twelve stars, resides in the twelve tribes of Israel as the fullness of Abraham's physical descendants.

The woman as Israel is a "great sign," symbolic imagery that is intended to communicate a great truth—God has a chosen, ethnic people, i.e., the Jews through whom the Messiah and Savior of both them and Gentiles comes.

Genesis 37:9 Now he [Joseph] had still another dream, and related it to his brothers, and said, "Lo, I have had still another dream; and behold, the sun and the moon and eleven stars were bowing down to me." **37:10** He related it to his father and to his brothers; and his father rebuked him and said to him, "What is this dream that you have had? Shall I and your mother and your brothers actually come to bow ourselves down before you to the ground?" **37:11** His brothers were jealous of him, but his father kept the saying in mind.

¹⁶⁴ The nation of Israel waits for the expected Messiah, and he finally arrives for the first time in the person of Jesus of Nazareth. Yet, Israel cries out in pain when he is born—either because they are not willing to accept Jesus as the Messiah or, perhaps because of Herod's murder of the young babies around Bethlehem as told in Matthew 2:16-18. My guess is that the first option is correct, that it was difficult and even painful to a degree for the Jews to have their Messiah arrive since they were not really ready for him that they should have been.

¹⁶⁵ These next verses of 3-17 describe Satan's opposition to God's people, the Jews and Christians. Here in v. 3, I think that the vision is relying on the following information from Daniel 7 and his dream of the four beasts and particularly the fourth beast, who is the Islamic Caliphate that rules (for the most part) the Middle East from the 7th century A.D. until Jesus' return. Thus, Satan is symbolized by having authority over seven empires/kingsdoms and ten kings with their kingdoms who play an important role in the history of the woman, Israel. Revelation 13 and 17 will provide helpful information for interpreting these empires and kings.

Daniel 7:6 "After this, I kept looking, and behold, another beast, like a leopard, which had on its back four wings of a bird. This beast also had four heads, and a sovereign government was given to it. **7:7** After this, I kept looking in the night visions, and behold, there was a fourth beast, dreadful, terrifying, and extremely strong. Also, it had large iron teeth, with which it devoured and grinded. Whatever was left, it trampled with its feet, so that it was different from all the beasts that were before it. Plus, it had ten horns. **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. Behold, this horn possessed eyes like the eyes of a man and a mouth uttering great boasts."

Daniel 7:11 "Then, I kept looking because of the sound of the boastful words, which the horn was speaking. I kept looking until the beast was slain, and its body was destroyed and given to the burning fire."

Daniel 7:19 "Then I desired to know the exact meaning of the fourth beast, which was different from all the others, exceedingly dreadful, with its teeth of iron and its claws of bronze, and which devoured, grinded, and trampled down with its feet whatever was left. **7:20** I also wanted to know the meaning of the ten horns that were on its head and the other horn which came up, and before which three of them fell—namely, that horn which had eyes and a mouth uttering great boasts, and which was larger in appearance than its associates. **7:21** I kept looking, and that horn was waging war with the set apart ones and overpowering them, **7:22** until the Ancient of Days came, and judgment was passed in favor of the set apart ones of the Highest One, so that the time arrived when the set apart ones took possession of the kingdom."

Daniel 7:23 "Thus he said: 'The fourth beast will be a fourth kingdom on the earth, which will be different from all the other kingdoms. It will devour the whole earth, tread it down, and crush it. **7:24** As for the ten horns, out of this kingdom ten kings will arise. Then, another will arise after them, and he will be different from the previous ones and will subdue three kings. **7:25** He will speak out against the Most High and wear down the set apart ones of the Highest One. Also, he will intend to make alterations in times and in law. Plus, they will be given into his hand for a time, times, and half a time. **7:26** However, the court will sit for judgment, and his authority will be taken away, annihilated, and destroyed forever. **7:27** Then, the sovereignty, the

government, and the greatness of the kingdoms under the whole heaven will be given to the people of the set apart ones of the Highest One. His kingdom will be an everlasting kingdom, and all the governments will serve and obey him.”

This passage in Daniel 7 tells us five things about the Islamic Caliphate—

- 1) As a beast it is a kingdom of a Satanic ideology and religion, and its “ten horns” are similar kings of kingdoms, with an eleventh horn/king who becomes dominant among the ten and destroys three of the ten.
- 2) This beast/kingdom is “dreadful, terrifying, and extremely strong” and tramples under its feet other cultures, religions, and languages.
- 3) This beast/kingdom and all its horns/king are killed and destroyed by God and His “Highest One.”
- 4) The eleventh horn wars against God’s people, probably both Jews and Christians, and almost succeeds in annihilating them.
- 5) The “Highest One,” the Messiah of the Kingdom of God, along with Jewish believers and Christians, both mortal and immortal, will rule the other kingdoms that have disappeared.
- 6) That the “head” or “heads” of the beasts/kingdoms refers to a kingdom with a king or multiple kingdoms with their individual kings that result from a single kingdom.

Therefore, I think that Revelation 12:3 here is saying that Satan will obtain and influence “seven heads,” which will be seven kingdoms with their leaders/kings, and there will also eventually be “ten horns,” which will be multiple (but not necessarily exactly ten) kings/rulers of these kingdoms.

Then Revelation 13:1 contributes likewise to this picture—

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.

This verse indicates that a Satanic beast/kingdom will arise from “the sea,” i.e., from the Gentiles, and it will eventually comprise “ten horns,” i.e., ten kings of ten kingdoms as well as “seven heads,” which are seven kingdoms with their own rulers and kings.

Then Revelation 13:11 contributes likewise to this picture—

Rev. 13:11 Then I saw another beast coming up out of the land; and he had two horns like a lamb and he spoke as a dragon.

This verse indicates that there will be another Satanic beast/kingdom that will arise from “the land,” from among the Jews on the land of Israel, and it will have “two horns,” which will be two kings or rulers of this kingdom who collaborate in pursuing Satan’s agenda for God’s people—leading them away from God by destroying their faith and/or their lives.

Then Revelation 17:3,8-14 contribute likewise to this picture—

Rev. 17:3 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...

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. **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.”

This passage indicates that Jerusalem has been and will be ruled by seven Satanic kingdoms (“mountains”), one of which is still to come in John’s day. And eventually “ten” (multiple) Satan kingdoms will rule over it. These last ones will fight against Jesus and be destroyed by him.

In this way with the help of Daniel 7, the book of Revelation unpacks the history of Satan’s opposition to the Jews and Christians from Jesus’ birth to his return.

Here is another passage that assists in interpreting the horns of visions as kings and their kingdoms, the sources of power with either a Satanic purpose and effect or the purpose and effect of God and His grace and mercy—

Zechariah 1:18 Then I lifted up my eyes and looked, and behold, there were four horns. **1:19** 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.” **1:20** Then Yahweh showed me four craftsmen. **1:21** 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.”

¹⁶⁶ Satan’s primary agenda is to destroy the Jewish Messiah, Jesus of Nazareth, because he must know that, if he can, he can foil God’s eternal plans and purposes of bringing about the Kingdom of God through Jesus’ propitiatory offering and intercession for sinful human beings.

Two options for the “stars” that are thrown “to the earth” – 1) Satan enlists the demonic forces to help him in his project of destroying the Messiah and all those associated with him, the Jews and believing Jews and Gentiles. Examples would be 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.**”), or 2) God’s chosen people, specifically the Jews, whom Satan seeks to mistreat, keep them from “heaven” and worshiping God with changed hearts, and even kills them.

Notice **Daniel 8:10** “It became great as far as the host of heaven and caused some of the host and some of the stars to fall onto the earth, and it trampled them down.” I think that this is about Antiochus IV Epiphanes and his oppressing and even killing Jews in

the Israel of his day.

There seemed to be an increase of demonic activity in Jesus' day, but the fact that no one appeared all that surprised at the level would indicate that there was already that same level of continuous and invasive demonic activity prior to Jesus' appearance. So #1 is entirely possible, but I wonder if this vision in Revelation 12, like that in Daniel 8, is highlighting the power of Satan to make life quite difficult for the Jews and influence them away from authentic belief in God. Therefore, I lean towards #2 above. Nevertheless, every government which has existed in human history has been a precursor, forewarning, foreshadowing, and harbinger of the Beast of Revelation, which will be the final, truly important government that will subjugate the Jews and eventually try to destroy them while also exercising dominion over at the least rest of the Middle East with great influence in the rest of the world.

Every previous government has to some degree elements of the final, satanic oriented 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 the followers of Jesus the Messiah (cf. Revelation 12:13-15). Consequently, all Christians are tested as to whether or not they are committed to overcoming their particular "beast"/government and his lies from Satan, in order to remain true followers of Jesus and his teachings. The irony will be that while the Beast of Revelation 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).

¹⁶⁷ This one verse describes the whole course of events of Jesus' first appearance—his birth, his agenda and purpose to rule the world with perfect, moral conviction, and his role and life that culminated in being God's proxy on earth, ruling with the same level of power and authority as the transcendent creator since he is the Son of God like all other ANE kings with respect to their gods.

Thus, Israel gave birth to the Messiah, Jesus of Nazareth, and Satan was unable to "devour" him and prevent him from participating in God's plans to bring about the Kingdom of God. Instead, he did go through the experience of being executed on the cross (as if this was how Satan was going to "devour" him), so that God is now preserving him and protecting him for his return when he will restore the Kingdom of Israel and rule over the entire earth.

It is as though this sign is saying that the cross did not even come close to "devouring" Jesus and accomplishing Satan's goal of ridding the creation of him. Indeed, it only played into God's hands by causing him to accomplish the very responsibility that God had assigned to him in order to fulfill His own plans.

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.'

¹⁶⁸ 1,260 days / 360 = 3.5 years, which is more likely not literal because this is the time between the birth of Israel's son, the Messiah, and the fulfillment of God's promise to make them a "great nation" according to Genesis 12:1-3. Therefore, this is symbolic of a somewhat long period of time during which God is patient with the Jews and waiting for them to repent and embrace both Him and His Messiah, Jesus of Nazareth—which we know they never do en masse until Jesus returns and inaugurates the Messianic Kingdom on the land of Israel of Revelation 20.

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 ("into the wilderness," which is itself a rather inhospitable place, the very opposite of God's promised land in Israel), starting with the great persecution of the Jewish Christians by Jews after Stephen's death. What followed eventually was the dispersion of Jews after 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 experiencing less than comfortable surroundings while nevertheless being protected by God from complete extinction, like the last 3½ years of the Daniel 9 prophecy of 490 years after Jesus' death.

Daniel 9:27 "And the covenant with the many will remain strong for one week [7 years]. But in the middle of the week the sacrifice and grain offering will cease. And on the wing of abominations there will be the one who devastates, even up to a complete destruction. And that which has been determined will pour out on the one being ruined."

Daniel 7:25 'He will speak out against the Most High and wear down the saints of the Highest One, and he will intend to make alterations in times and in law; and they will be given into his hand for a time, times, and half a time.'

Daniel 12:7 I heard the man dressed in linen, who was above the waters of the river, as he raised his right hand and his left toward heaven, and swore by Him who lives forever that it would be for a time, times, and half a time; and as soon as they finish shattering the power of the holy people, all these events will be completed.

Acts 8:1 Saul was in hearty agreement with putting him to death. And on that day a great persecution began against the assembly 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 assembly, 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.

¹⁶⁹ 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.

Michael is portrayed in the book of Daniel as an angelic being who assists in the life and protection of the Jews against Satan and his demonic forces who seek to destroy the Jews. Therefore, before Jesus' first appearance, "Michael and his angels" were "waging war" against Satan "and his angels." But after Jesus ascends and leaves the earth, Satan's and his demonic forces' power was reduced as "there was no longer found a place for them in heaven."

Daniel 10:13 "But the prince of the kingdom of Persia was withstanding me for twenty-one days; then behold, Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me, for I had been left there with the kings of Persia."

Daniel 10:21 “However, I will tell you what is inscribed in the writing of truth. Yet there is no one who stands firmly with me against these forces except Michael your prince.”

Daniel 12:1 “Now at that time Michael, the great prince who stands guard over the sons of your people, will arise. And there will be a time of distress such as never occurred since there was a nation until that time; and at that time your people, everyone who is found written in the book, will be rescued.”

¹⁷⁰ Satan’s being “thrown down to the earth” means that he along with his demonic allies have been stripped of much of his and their power over people. Maybe there is not the same level of possession and torment of the Jews (and other people), through Satan’s lies and deceptions, he is still influencing people and cultures (and clearly this includes the Jews and their secular, atheistic stance) so as to steer them away from God.

Satan is also “the serpent of old” of Genesis 3 who deceived Eve in order to motivate Adam to sin and rebel against God.

¹⁷¹ Satan has consistently complained to God that His people, the Jews, and all the rest of mankind as sinners who might become authentic believers in God, 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 to 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 through his death Jesus has accomplished what amounts to a guaranteed method for making sure they are granted it through his intercession as their High Priest.

¹⁷² Jesus’ death with their authentic belief 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 eternal death. Because God’s forgiveness and His gift of eternal life in the Kingdom of God are so valuable to authentic believers, 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?

¹⁷³ 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—during the Great Tribulation between Jesus’ first and second appearances. This time may seem long to us as human beings (and especially to the Jews who continue to experience repeated mistreatment and persecution), but it 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).

The “earth and the sea” are either 1) the Jews and Gentiles, or 2) a figure of speech for the whole earth. My guess is the latter.

Satan roams far and wide on the earth to promote his agenda of destroying Jews and Christians with either death or deception and to foment suffering and pain for all human beings as his own means of making life miserable for God’s creatures. If he did not have the ability to influence people as he does, then probably there would be a lot fewer malignant narcissists who use people any way they can for their own selfish reasons.

But “the heavens” can “rejoice” with those “who dwell in them” that the permanent sealing of God’s people and their preservation for the Kingdom of God is guaranteed by God’s sovereignty and Jesus’ death and resurrection.

¹⁷⁴ Verses 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 from annihilation while God also supports 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 (for a time and times and half a time), while He waits patiently for their repentance and acceptance of Jesus as their Messiah, which never happens to the entire group of Jews until Jesus returns and the “144,000” become the first generation of all authentic believers of the millennial kingdom of chapter 20.

The expressions time and times and half a time probably means the same as the 1,260 days of v. 4 above—a long period of time when God is being patient with the Jews and waiting for them to repent genuinely and obey Him in the manner that He instructed them with the Mosaic Covenant and also the New Covenant.

¹⁷⁵ Like the flood of water in the days of Noah, Satan makes continual attempts to destroy the Jews wherever they may be living throughout the Middle East and the rest of the world.

The problem is, too, that every government which has existed in human history to some degree becomes allied with Satan and his project. This means that every human government has also 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 rest of the Middle East with probably great influence in the whole world. As a result, every previous government before the Beast of Revelation of chapter 13 has some elements of this final beast, 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 by means of their authentic faith 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. Psalm 2; 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. And a good example of God’s protecting them (but we can imagine not as much as they would have preferred) was when the rest of the world joined

together to free them from being annihilated by the Germans and then persecuted in the future and to preserve them (as much as possible) by creating their own country for them through the United Nations, resulting in State of Israel on May 15, 1948. In this way, “the earth helped the woman, and the earth opened its mouth and drank up the river which the dragon poured out of his mouth.”

I think that the situation is the same throughout the decades following the inception of the modern state of Israel with the Jews there receiving abundant help from other countries in their efforts to defend themselves from internal and external enemies whose goal is to annihilate them and eliminate their country.

¹⁷⁶ When Satan realizes that he may not be able to destroy the Jews (“the woman”), he turns his violent and destructive attention towards both Jewish and Gentile Christians (“the rest of her children”) who have embraced Jesus (her most important “male child”) as their King, Priest, and Messiah. Thus, he goes after believing “Israel” (the rest of the tree of Romans 11 that is cultivated (Jews) and wild (Gentiles)) since he cannot destroy ethnic (and mostly unbelieving) Israel. But any success that Satan has in mistreating and killing Jews I think we can attribute to God’s disciplining them as a means to encourage them to repent and obey Him as He has always required.

¹⁷⁷ This is still the same vision of Satan that began in 12:3 and described him similarly, as a dragon with “seven heads and ten horns.” He is now standing on the earth and pursuing making the Jews extinct by pouring water out of his mouth to drown them. This next part of the vision provides important information as to how he hopes to accomplish this goal by using two important governments. He is next to the sea and also next to the dry land, symbolizing, I assume, that he is influencing both the Gentiles and the Jews and therefore all of humanity towards his goal of destroying the Jews as God’s chosen people. All of a sudden a “beast” comes up out of the “sea.”

This “beast,” as in the dream of Daniel 7, is most likely a satanically influenced “kingdom” or “empire,” i.e., a political entity and government that is being led by sinful human beings and, particularly, one individual whom the apostle Paul calls the Man of Lawlessness in 2 Thessalonians 2 and who is identified as Gog in Ezekiel 38 & 39. This vision also describes events that take place during the same time as the trumpets, especially the last three. Like the “beast that comes out of the abyss” of Revelation 11:7 and 17:8 (and most likely the same as in the other two passages), this “beast” is fully committed to Satan’s agenda to destroy both Jews and Christians.

As a result of the 6th trumpet, an army has assembled and invaded Israel. It is led by one supreme ruler. He is the king of this beast which comes out of the sea, meaning his “kingdom” and he are from the Gentiles. He is also the ruler of a complex political entity (“ten horns...names”) that is most likely of an Islamic nature according to Daniel 2, 7 & 11. With this army, he subdues and subjugates Israel and the Jews. The dragon, Satan, as with any “beast,” is influencing him and the whole 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 kingdoms or 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 (the Ptolemies), Syria (the 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, during John’s receiving his vision), 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 is individualized as the eighth king and most likely the last element of this first beast of Revelation 13.

Isaiah 60:5 “Then you [Zion] will see and be radiant, and your heart will thrill and rejoice; because the abundance of the sea will be turned to you, the wealth of the nations will come to you.”

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.”

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 also has seven blasphemous names (one on each of the seven heads), meaning that he declares himself to be God—or at least as great as God by virtue of his commitment to Islam as the twelfth imam who shares all of God’s characteristics. And people will be attracted to him and follow him in his endeavor to conquer all the Middle East and subjugate the Jews in Israel. Thus, Islam and its influence over the Middle East definitely could be the beast. But just as the Roman Catholic Assembly 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 in the Middle East.

¹⁷⁸ In Daniel 7, four beasts are described where the lion = Babylon, the bear = Media/Persia, the leopard = Greece, and the fourth is more dreadful and terrifying and stronger 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 (Daniel 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, who I think is unbelieving Judaism supported by mostly western civilization which has prospered from association with them.

The dragon, Satan, provides this beast and its supreme ruler with their power to arise in the Middle East and rule over the Jews and the rest of the “world.” i.e., at least the Middle East, or it could be said mostly the Middle East.

¹⁷⁹ Two options for the “death” of one of the “heads” of this “beast” and its resurgence – 1) One of the kingdoms in past history, which ruled over the Middle East and included Israel and Jerusalem, was at one time defeated and came to an end, but then everyone is amazed that it regains its strength and power to rule over the Middle East, along with Israel and Jerusalem, again. As a result, 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, so that they would follow him.

2) Like Jesus, an individual man goes through a radical crisis (even death by “sword” – Revelation 13:14) 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 this “beast” and its demise and resurgence.

I am inclined to think that the correct option is #1 since a “head” experiences the fatal wound and then revives. Thus, the death of the Islamic Caliphate/Ottoman Empire because of World War I and then its resurgence as it is doing so now.

If the “beast” seems worth following because it has revived and gained power again, how much more Jesus, especially because of God’s purposes for him.

¹⁸⁰ This satanic “kingdom” with its supreme, individual 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 Middle East and over both the Jews and the Gentiles in that area (with probably great influence throughout the rest of the world—like Jesus when he returns and inaugurates the first stage of the Kingdom of God on this earth). Whether consciously or not, the Jews and the rest of the world (Middle East especially) will submit to Satan, who is the power behind the beast just, while they also acknowledge and submit to the beast and the revived “head,” the final foreign kingdom to rule over Jerusalem and the Jews before Jesus’ return and restoring the Kingdom of Israel and David (cf. Mark 11:10 Blessed is the coming kingdom of our father David (εὐλογημένη ἡ ἐρχομένη βασιλεία τοῦ πατρὸς ἡμῶν Δαυίδ). Hosanna in the highest!).

I think that, in accordance with Daniel 2,7,8, & 11, this supreme leader is a Muslim and leads a restored Islamic Caliphate of sorts—an aggregate of Islamic nations whose goal is to subjugate and eventually destroy the Jews and Israel, even though they will not be fully unified in their efforts. Indeed, some of them will rebel against this supreme leader. But, also, those who “worship” him will willingly submit to Islam, really worshiping Allah while following this man as a successor of sorts to Mohammed (the twelfth imam?). Thus, their worship of Satan and this supreme Islamic ruler is the same as looking to them to provide all that they think they need to experience the best experience possible on this earth.

¹⁸¹ God grants existence, power, and authority over the Jews to Satan, this last foreign government to rule Jerusalem, and its leader of this last powerful political entity to exercise authority over Israel, the Middle East, and to a degree 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. Therefore, this “beast” is the same as the one in Revelation 11 (and 17).

And this foreign government (like all governments led by sinful human beings) speaks “arrogant words and blasphemies” against God, because it thinks that it is God and is opposed to Him and His plans and purposes (see next verse).

Daniel 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. Behold, this horn possessed eyes like the eyes of a man and a mouth uttering great boasts.”

¹⁸² The last foreign government over Jerusalem before Jesus’ return speaks out (and acts out) against God and all that He is about, including the people who “tabernacle in heaven” with Him, i.e., who are His dwelling as human beings who have been and are committed in their hearts and minds to Him. They do so “in heaven” because their ultimate and eternal home is not on this earth, but is in the eternal Kingdom of God.

¹⁸³ During the “3½ year” rule of the beast and its supreme ruler of the complex, political entity that is the last foreign government to rule Israel and the Middle East, God grants to him the right and authority to target Christians with his aggression against the Jews and to “overcome” them, i.e., to 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 either he rules the Middle East with great influence over the whole world much as Jesus will do when he returns or he rules the Middle East like the previous Islamic Caliphates and has great influence over the rest of the world, thus emboldening people to mistreat Christians and Jews whom they hate (because they hate God).

Thus, people will show that they are more afraid of physical death than of God’s condemnation and destruction.

¹⁸⁴ During the beast’s Middle East and even “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. Their physical lives now are more important to them than eternal life in the Kingdom of God with Jesus, their “Lamb who has been slain” on the cross for the sake of their eternal salvations from God’s wrath and destruction.

¹⁸⁵ The last part of the Greek text is difficult to discern, but the pattern of the first part helps. It makes the most sense to see John as writing of “the perseverance and the faith of the set apart ones.” If their divine destiny is to enter into “captivity” for their faith, then this is exactly what will happen. If it is “to be killed,” then this is what they will experience—with perseverance of faith (because God is committed to making sure they persevere).

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 Satan, the beast, and its singular ruler. 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.

¹⁸⁶ This “beast” represents another government where sinful human beings rule and are heavily influenced by Satan whose goal is to destroy the people of Israel and Christians. This government comes up “out of the earth” which is more likely the “land,” which is to say the land of Israel. In other words, this is a Jewish government that is more committed to Satan than to God, and like the previous beast has one individual as its head. He becomes a false Messiah who is Satanically inspired and maybe even looks like Jesus.

In addition this government has “two horns like a lamb,” meaning either two individuals who play off of one another as both political and spiritual leaders, or one individual with a dual role, the first a political role and the second a spiritual role. The way this paragraph goes on to talk about this “beast” with the “two horns,” it seems that the second option is correct. Here we have a Jewish, satanically influenced government with one prominent leader who exercises both a spiritual role and a political role.

[Daniel 8:3](#) Then I lifted my eyes and looked, and behold, a ram which had two horns was standing in front of the canal. Now the two horns were long, but one was longer than the other, with the longer one coming up last.

¹⁸⁷ This government and its false Messiah-like leader and prophet makes the Jews on the land of Israel worship and submit to the previously described “beast,” the complex political entity and its main leader who claims to be divinely powered and has of sorts come back to life. If this final, foreign government ruling over Israel and the Jews is a revived Islamic Caliphate, then this probably means that the Jews on the land of Israel will convert to Islam (“worship” Islam by submitting to its religious requirements) in order to save their lives. Cf. v. 15.

¹⁸⁸ This false Messiah and prophet within the Jewish government that is influenced by Satan 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 (and convert to Islam! Cf. Revelation 20:4).

¹⁸⁹ 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? And if this is a real image, since it is “to the beast,” then it could be a specially constructed building like the sacred shrine of the Great Mosque in Mecca or the Dome of the Rock in Jerusalem. This is the Jews’ own monument to a revived Islamic Caliphate.

¹⁹⁰ Probably the false Messiah claims to hear the voice of God within the newly constructed building and with his unwavering support of the first “beast,” threatens to ostracize socially, politically, and economically those in Israel who refuse to worship (the 144,000?) it/him and even kills many, in not all, of them for not converting to Islam.

¹⁹¹ The people mentioned here are similar to those in Revelation 6:15 as quoted below. They represent the unbelieving world in that they worship the “beast” and are willing to receive his mark (convert to Islam? Cf. Revelation 20:4) in order to avoid being killed by this “beast.”

[Revelation 6:15](#) 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?”

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](#) Yahweh 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.

Assuming that the Beast from the Sea is an Islamic leader, the mark is the Jews' demonstrating at least outwardly that they are willing to convert to Islam and abandon either their erroneous Judaism or their secular atheism—in accord with the "crushing" of the fourth and fifth kingdoms of the Daniel 2 statue.

¹⁹² Those who refuse to follow the two beasts (the 144,000) are marginalized socially and economically and even die from starvation or, I suspect, execution. The mark does not have to be literal but only symbolic of a person's heart commitment. If the final foreign government to rule over Israel is the revived Islamic Caliphate, then the "mark" is the Jew's conversion to Islam (cf. Revelation 20:4). Yet, we can assume that God protects many of the Jews from either outwardly or inwardly submitting these final "beasts" so that he even provides food and shelter for them supernaturally.

¹⁹³ "Here is wisdom" means that it is really important to understand this as part of how to endure the beasts and their 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 first beast's domain is that 1) he is a man (a sinful, human government) and therefore no match for the transcendent God and author of this story, and 2) 6 is his number, meaning that like the 6 days of the Jewish week which finds its finish and completion in the 7th day, and like the vision of the 7 seals where the 6th seal represents the GTDL and the 7th seal represents the finish of God's promises to the Jews of the millennial kingdom, so the beast (really two beasts) will be limited by God so that he never makes it into the millennial kingdom and the Kingdom of God.

Plus, his number is 6 repeated twice more 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, then a person will most likely follow the Beast, which will result only in being destroyed by God as the beast 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 and are about to succeed in achieving their goal of annihilating the Jews and fully establishing themselves as godless people on the whole earth.

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 actually devoid 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 and its sinful, human government is the instantiation of Satan's opposition to God and His purposes. This is similar to 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. In addition, I think that we can say that beasts have always existed wherever there is a country with its government filled with sinners who exercise authority over other human beings.

¹⁹⁴ Now this part in connection with the second sign of the dragon/Satan and his relationship to the people of Israel segues to Jesus and his relationship with them. While Satan's posture towards the Jews is strictly negative and hostility (to destroy them), Jesus' posture is positive and salvific (to rescue them from God's wrath and to fulfill His and their hope of being a great people on a prosperous and safe land).

This is not an event but a vision of a truth which is being communicated by John. Jesus is present in Jerusalem/Israel, indeed on the very place of the temple and God's dwelling place, along with the remnant of the 144,000 Jews who are protected by God from the beast's army and destruction. 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 and to live in the millennial kingdom of Revelation 20.

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

¹⁹⁵ The song is most likely the gospel, the good news of God's rescuing the Jews from their enemies and establishing them on the land of Israel as the "great nation"—with all of them with changed hearts and worshiping God and Jesus appropriately. These "had been purchased from the land," gained as followers of God by Jesus' death on the cross and who have the right to the land because of God's promise to them. No one but these Jews can "learn the song" they sing because they are the only Jews of authentic belief who have the right to sing the gospel. It inwardly affects only these Jews and not unbelieving ones.

They also sing it before God and His heavenly entourage in that they properly acknowledge God and all those whom He has brought to Himself of both Jews and Gentiles (through the 12 tribes of Israel and the 12 apostles of Jesus) through the salvation process for the Jews first and their becoming a great nation and the Gentiles second as participating in the great nation (cf. Romans 1).

[Revelation 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 [wreaths] on their heads.

Plus, 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.

¹⁹⁶ Sexual purity is symbolic of spiritual purity. These Jews have authentic belief in the midst of their sinfulness. They “follow the Lamb” and are faithful to God, thus becoming earthly participants in the eternal Kingdom of God—in stark contrast to the Gentile and Jewish governments of the two beasts and their followers, even Jewish unbelievers.

They are also the first fruits of God in that 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, the millennial kingdom (cf. Acts 1:6).

¹⁹⁷ These 144,000 Jews who enter alive into the restored Kingdom of Israel are blameless, which is to say that they are justified before God through their belief in Him and Jesus the Messiah. Thus, they are not morally perfect. In addition, 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 by those who followed the beast and converted to his religion, most likely Islam (cf. Revelation 20:4). 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.

¹⁹⁸ The next part of the second sign of Satan’s hostility towards the Jews and Christians involves five angels and Jesus (of course), who are most likely conventional angels and not theophanies, and Jesus’ embracing authentic believers, most likely both Jews and Gentiles (and both those who have died already and those still alive when he returns), to himself. Here the first angel preaches the gospel, the good news of the Kingdom of God through Jesus, because God never stops evangelizing the world and encouraging all sinful human beings to repent and believe in Him and His purposes of bringing eternal life to them.

This is a vision of probably only the 3½ years when the beast from the sea is ruling over Israel and the rest of the Middle East, with great influence over the rest of the world. God’s message is still the same—proclaiming the good news of salvation to the whole world, “to every nation and tribe and tongue and people,” because “the hour of His judgment has come” and this is what He is all about with the project He has assigned Himself within the story which He is telling within the creation. God continues faithfully evangelizing and saving especially the Jews (via the two witnesses of Revelation 11 during the 3½ years) 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 proclamation of the good news of salvation through Jesus the crucified Messiah of the God of all creation, especially to Jews but also to Gentiles, is still going out to the whole world, exhorting people to “worship God” and repent and flee from His wrath and condemnation. And by the way, that angel says that this is the God who has made everything—meaning too that He is the divine determiner of the whole story of the creation.

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 when they hear this good news proclaimed to them.

¹⁹⁹ Here the second conventional angel declares another important truth for sinful human beings to know and embrace. While the good news of salvation for the Jews and even for the Gentiles 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 16-18 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, pleasure, and the material things of this creation to fulfill them and make life meaningful—instead of their counting of God to do such.

In addition, 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., from Hollywood and by means of its movies, on Wall Street with its pursuit of satisfying people’s greed, etc. Certainly, 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 because they are His special, chosen people and destroy every last unbelieving one of them in the GTDL as He inaugurates the restored Kingdom of Israel through Jesus’ return and presence. Their destruction will come 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 God had given them a unique calling as an entire ethnic group, but have rejected their unique calling from God.

EBC in their *Archaeology of the Old Testament* section of *Introductory Articles – In Babylonia* itself in the time of the exile the splendor of Nebuchadnezzar’s capital can be reconstructed from the results of the German excavations there. The northern citadel incorporated a museum, the southern was entered by the Ishtar Gate, one of eight named city gates. It incorporated a royal palace with a large throne room that might have been the one later used by Belshazzar, and the storeroom in which the ration tablets naming Jehoiachin were discovered. A sacred procession way ran from the Ishtar Gate for almost a mile to Esagila, the temple of Marduk, and its seven-staged temple tower (ziggurat). This road, named “The Enemy Shall Not Prevail,” was forty feet wide and led to a bridge with seven piers that spanned the River Euphrates to give access to the new city. Texts list more than fifty temples in this city of which Nebuchadnezzar was so proud (Dan 4:30). Fifteen of these had been built by the king himself and the city was conspicuous for its many statues (Jer 50:38). There were 180 open-air shrines dedicated to the goddess Ishtar alone.

No wonder, therefore, that God labels the Jews and Jerusalem as “Babylon” in the light of their having engaged in and promoted such immorality and rebellion against God in our world.

²⁰⁰ Here the third conventional angel declares another important truth for sinful human beings to know and embrace. This vision highlights the coming judgment of God on unbelieving Jews who will be punished by God and destroyed. The angel says that these Jews “will be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb.” This is to “drink of the wine of the wrath of God.” I do not think that the angel means that these people will endure the judgment forever like the common view of hell. Instead, fire represents destruction, that certainly people will be “tormented” according to God’s justice and an appropriate measurement of punishment for their sins. And it makes more sense that God will then destroy these unbelievers. Nevertheless, “the smoke of their torment goes up into the ages of ages” so that 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, measured punishment, 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, i.e., their physical lives, by worshiping the beast and receiving his mark, but the beast is interested in only oppressing them and not raising them up and extolling them—as God would if they repented and believed in Him and in Jesus as their Messiah.

These are the Jews who submit to the “beast,” the Gentile, satanic government, and to his “image,” whatever they have built to honor this evil government, and thereby have received his “mark,” which is to commit themselves in their hearts to him and his religious requirements.

²⁰¹ On the other hand, 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, the Middle East, and to a degree the world, believing Jews (and Gentiles?) 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 and satanic government.

However, the upside is that they will rest from the hard work of persevering in their faith through being asleep until Jesus’ return and even afterwards when they are resurrected and made immortal and morally perfect to live in the Kingdom of God. Their pursuit of goodness, “their labors,” follows them into eternal life because God turns their pursuit of morality into moral perfection. The good deeds from hearts that have changed with continue with them by virtue of their being transformed into morally perfect beings.

By the way, 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 described in Revelation 14 are killed for their faith and then resurrected when Jesus returns.

The apostle Paul describes both possible, eternal ramifications of our lives as sinners, [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.

²⁰² Here there is a brief interruption, if one can really call it this, between the third and fourth angels. This part of the second sign of Satan’s relationship with the nation of Israel shows 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.

Instead of “coming...with the clouds of heaven,” Jesus is “sitting on the cloud,” and he is also “like a son of man” as in [Daniel 7:13](#). He has a golden wreath or crown on his head to demonstrate his royal role as king of the Jews and of their “great nation” which is in the process of coming about. As a result, “another angel”

Jesus is urged by the fourth angel who “came out of the temple,” i.e., from the presence of God who is the author of this story, 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? In the light of vs. 17-20, my guess is that it is only believers here whom Jesus reaps as symbolic of his role to rescue God’s chosen ones, Jews within the nation of Israel and Gentiles in other ethnic groups, from God’s wrath and bring them into the Kingdom of God when he returns.

This will be when “the harvest of the earth is ripe,” which is when Jesus returns so that those believers who are alive will be lifted from the earth to meet those who have been resurrected from death and who are with Jesus as he descends to the earth to restore the Kingdom of Israel and rule the earth (cf. [1 Thessalonians 4](#)).

The description here is of the first resurrection of [Revelation 20](#), that of believers only.

²⁰³ Now the fifth angel appears who also comes “out of the temple which is heaven” just as the fourth angel did—from the presence of God so to speak. This angel like Jesus as a sharp sickle. Following after him is a sixth angel, who is said to “have the power over fire,” which must be symbolic of God’s judgment, condemnation, and destruction of unbelievers. This sixth angel also comes “from the [sacrificial] altar,” which is where offerings are laid and burnt with fire as appeals to God for mercy. However, in this case, the sixth angel encourages the fifth angel to reap from the earth so that its “the clusters from the vine,” sinful human beings who remain committed to rebelling against God, are thrown “into the great wine press of God.” Thus, God’s destruction of unbelievers takes place “outside the city,” i.e., outside Jerusalem, where God dwells and is present with His grace, mercy, and forgiveness for the nation of Israel. The blood from the pressing of these unbelievers “came out from the wine press,

up to the horse's bridles, for a distance of two hundred miles," meaning that their punishment was complete and total, rendering them no longer in existence at all.

As I have said, 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.

And this completes the second sign that began in Revelation 12:3.

The description here is of the second resurrection of Revelation 20 and, I think, of unbelievers only.

²⁰⁴ The visions move from the great sign of the woman, who is Israel, in chapter 12 to the sign of Satan, who is defeated by Jesus starting in chapter 12, to now chapters 15-16 and chapters 17-18 where there is the description of the final destruction of worldly Judaism ("Babylon") during the sign of the seven angels with the seven bowls of wrath that constitute the Great and Terrible Day of the Lord.

Here we see that God's judgment of the Jews is finally coming to an end. His patience towards Israel has run out, and over the course of what may be weeks or months, the seven bowls of wrath of chapter 16 with their Egypt-like plagues will occur on the land of Israel.

John says that the "seven plagues" of these "seven angels" are "the last, because in them the wrath of God [God's anger towards unbelieving Israel] is in the process of being "finished." After this, Jesus will return and restore the Kingdom of Israel on the land of Israel with the Jews' finally becoming the kind of people that He has always wanted them to be.

²⁰⁵ 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 because they persevered in their faith in midst of the persecution and oppression of the final, satanic government that will rule over Israel and the Middle East.

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 satanic beast and the individual ruler's authoritarian rule and influence. These people of persevering faith are in the presence of God and singing His praises because this was their destiny as scripted by Him, the author of all reality and this story of His mercy, judgment and faithfulness to the promises He delineated in the Abrahamic Covenant. God alone is "holy" — different from all other beings and things because He is uncreated while they are created. He is eternal, uncaused, completely self-sustained, and morally perfect.

"All the nations" of the world include sinful human beings who "will come and worship" God because He has predestined and chosen them for eternal salvation from His wrath and destruction.

Thus, God's "righteous acts have been revealed" throughout history, especially through His history with Israel and His relationship with them as His chosen people. It is by Gentiles' emulating the faith of the father of the Jews, Abraham, that they enter into the "righteous" actions of God to provide eternal mercy, first for the Jews when they become the "great nation" and second for the Gentiles who participate in it as joyful observers of God's faithfulness to the Jews—in spite of their rebellion and disobedience.

[Psa. 22:27](#) All the ends of the earth will remember and turn to Yahweh, and all the families of the nations will worship before You.

[Psa. 66:4](#) "All the earth will worship You, and will sing praises to You. They will sing praises to Your name."

[Psa. 86:9](#) All nations whom You have made shall come and worship before You, O Lord, and they shall glorify Your name.

[Psa. 19:9](#) The fear of Yahweh is clean, enduring forever; the judgments of Yahweh are true; they are righteous altogether.

[Psa. 119:137](#) Righteous are You, Yahweh, and upright are Your judgments. [138](#) You have commanded Your testimonies in righteousness and exceeding faithfulness.

²⁰⁶ The phrase *μετὰ ταῦτα εἶδον* = "after these things I looked" appears four times in Revelation – 4:1, 7:9; 15:5; 18:1, and the phrase *μετὰ τοῦτο εἶδον* = "after this I looked" appears once in 7:1.

[Revelation 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.

The vision shows an actual building that is representative of God's presence, power, authority, and sovereignty. And the temple contains the "tabernacle of testimony," which is the tent that bears witness to God's presence and sovereignty.

²⁰⁷ The end of God's judgment of the Jews, the Great and Terrible Day of the Lord, is about to occur. The wording here is basically saying, especially to the Jews, "Get ready!"

No other thing will be worth mentioning until this has happened. Thus, no one is able to enter God's presence. He has fixed His mind on judgment and on finishing it. Nothing now will stop Him because it has become so clear that, for the most part, the Jews are fully committed to ignoring and rejecting Him—instead of submitting to the Mosaic and New Covenants (and the Abrahamic and Davidic Covenants) with all their hearts. Time after time they have gone their own way and been unwilling to submit to Him as He has required.

²⁰⁸ While no one can enter the temple and speak to God in it, "a loud voice" issues from it, commanding the seven angels to pour out their bowls of wrath and thereby complete His judgment of the Jews.

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. The destruction of Jerusalem and Israel that God brings upon them will be explained in Revelation 17 & 18 in regard to "Babylon," i.e., unbelieving and worldly Judaism.

These are all the Great and Terrible Day of the Lord of Malachi 4:5.

²⁰⁹ 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. **11** The magicians could not stand before Moses because of the boils, for the boils were on the magicians as well as on all the Egyptians. **12** (אֲנִי־אֵלֹהִים) And Yahweh hardened Pharaoh’s heart, and he did not listen to them, just as Yahweh had spoken to Moses.

²¹⁰ The Sea of Galilee will become useless for obtaining food by fishing.

Exodus 7:17 ‘Thus says Yahweh, “By this you shall know that I am Yahweh: 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. **18** The fish that are in the Nile will die, and the Nile will become foul, and the Egyptians will find difficulty in drinking water from the Nile.”’ **19** Then Yahweh 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.’” **20** So Moses and Aaron did even as Yahweh had commanded. And he lifted up the staff and struck the water that was in the Nile, in the sight of Pharaoh and in the sight of his servants, and all the water that was in the Nile was turned to blood. **21** The fish that were in the Nile died, and the Nile became foul, so that the Egyptians could not drink water from the Nile. And the blood was through all the land of Egypt. **22** But the magicians of Egypt did the same with their secret arts; and Pharaoh’s heart was hardened, and he did not listen to them, as Yahweh had said. **23** Then Pharaoh turned and went into his house with no concern even for this. **24** So all the Egyptians dug around the Nile for water to drink, for they could not drink of the water of the Nile. **25** Seven days passed after Yahweh had struck the Nile.

²¹¹ 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 as above.

Psa. 19:9 The fear of Yahweh is clean, enduring forever; the judgments of Yahweh are true; they are righteous altogether.

Psa. 119:137 Righteous are You, Yahweh, and upright are Your judgments. **138** You have commanded Your testimonies in righteousness and exceeding faithfulness.

Isaiah 49:26 “I will feed your oppressors with their own flesh, and they will become drunk with their own blood as with sweet wine; and all flesh will know that I, Yahweh, am your Savior and your Redeemer, the Mighty One of Jacob.”

²¹² 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.

²¹³ 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.

Exodus 10:21 Then Yahweh said to Moses, “Stretch out your hand toward the sky, that there may be darkness over the land of Egypt, even a darkness which may be felt.” **22** So Moses stretched out his hand toward the sky, and there was thick darkness in all the land of Egypt for three days. **23** They did not see one another, nor did anyone rise from his place for three days, but all the sons of Israel had light in their dwellings.

²¹⁴ 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 as His chosen ethnic group and the Christians and His spiritual and believing group.

²¹⁵ In line with Satan’s historical strategy, demonic forces deceive other leaders of nations in the rest of the world (or at least the Middle East with approval from the rest of 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.

²¹⁶ 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.

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 the Messiah, **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.

²¹⁷ 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."

²¹⁸ Here we have the completion of God's judgment against the Jews—the last one of human history (after the Assyrians, the Babylonians, the Seleucids, and the Romans).

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

²¹⁹ 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. This earthquake will be so destructive that one like it has never occurred in human history.

Ezekiel 38:18 "It will come about on that day, when Gog comes against the land of Israel," declares the Adonai Yahweh, "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.

Revelation 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.

²²⁰ Jerusalem the "great city" (Rev. 11:8) is destroyed, along with the major cities of the world, and "Babylon," i.e., unbelieving Jews of either worldly Judaism or atheistic secularism, is targeted for destruction.

²²¹ Remarkably, again, in spite of the massive suffering that will occur, the Jews (and therefore probably the Gentiles who lack authentic belief and who also suffer effects of these earthquakes) will curse God and refuse to repent of their sins in order to obtain His mercy and forgiveness.

²²² 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 according to Genesis 12:1-3 and the Abrahamic Covenant. Israel "sits on many waters" in that the Jews are scattered throughout the Gentile world, and most of them

remain unbelievers (cf. [Revelation 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 of 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.

In addition, the second use of γῆ in this verse more likely refers to the land of Israel as to say that this level and style of immorality that has spread to the Gentile peoples has been in use on the land of Israel.

²²³ See the notes for 17:9-13 below regarding the seven heads and ten horns.

The woman is Israel as in chapter 12 and is “in the wilderness,” meaning that the Jews are in an inhospitable place, which most likely is the various places in the world among the Gentiles in the latter’s cities and countries outside the land of Israel, which is the only land where they all will eventually gather and be sustained at a remarkable level by God.

[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.”

²²⁴ Here is an ironic reversal with the use of the name “Babylon the Great” since it is being applied to the Jews. In this vision, God is communicating that the Jews 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 who destroyed Jerusalem and the temple around 600 B.C., while the Jews are now their own enemy and bringing judgment and destruction on themselves from God during the Great and Terrible Day of the Lord just before Jesus returns.

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, for example in Hollywood and Wall Street, involves their encouraging unrighteousness by exploiting people’s sinful obsession with sensuality and financial gain.

Here, Israel is sitting on the same beast of the previous visions of Revelation 13 so that they are energized in their rebellion against God by Satan. The previous first beast of Revelation 13 even claimed that he is God, so that these worldly and secular Jews are in effect claiming the same of themselves. They demand to live life exactly as they desire, even if it is in opposition to God’s moral commandments. Thus, they are riding the Satanically inspired opposition to God right into the first beast’s opposing them and seeking to destroy them, culminating in their own deaths 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).

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

John is properly amazed at this vision and what it represents of his own people, the Jews.

²²⁵ The “angel” is speaking to John from their perspective in time. First, this beast “has the seven heads and the ten horns,” which will be explained in v. 9. It also “was, and is not, and is about to come up out of the abyss and go to destruction.” For this beast to come from “the abyss” is for it to be powerfully led and influenced by Satan—like all beasts and sinful, human governments in human history. But it will be as though it was existent at one time but then ceases to exist, only to arise again. Therefore, this could very well be the Islamic Caliphate that “was” in existence from the late A.D. 600’s to 1924, and then “was not” from that date until now, but will experience a resurgence just prior to and as part of God’s final judgment of the Jews immediately before Jesus’ return. Then, God will destroy this political entity that exercises power and authority over the land of Israel, Jerusalem, and the Jews and replace it with Jesus and his kingdom on the land and over the whole earth.

In addition, those who do not learn and grasp the biblical truths that pertain to God’s dealings with the Jews will look at this “beast” (the Islamic Caliphate) and “wonder,” meaning that they will be impressed with this political and religious force in the world so that many of them will be supportive of its efforts, especially its goal to subjugate and eventually destroy the Jews.

So here the “beast” and the power and goals behind it, 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.

[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.

[Revelation 1:4](#) John to the seven assemblies 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.

²²⁶ [Daniel 7:6](#) “After this, I kept looking, and behold, another beast, like a leopard, which had on its back four wings of a bird. This beast also had four heads, and a sovereign government was given to it.”

[Daniel 7:7](#) “After this, I kept looking in the night visions, and behold, there was a fourth beast, dreadful, terrifying, and extremely strong. Also, it had large iron teeth, with which it devoured and grinded. Whatever was left, it trampled with its feet, so that it was different from all the beasts that were before it. Plus, it had ten horns. [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. Behold, this horn possessed eyes like the eyes of a man and a mouth uttering great boasts.”

[Daniel 7:11](#) “Then, I kept looking because of the sound of the boastful words, which the horn was speaking. I kept looking until

the beast was slain, and its body was destroyed and given to the burning fire.”

Daniel 7:21 “I kept looking, and that horn was waging war with the set apart ones and overpowering them.”

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.”

²²⁷ It makes the most sense that this is the same “beast,” the one from the “sea,” of the previous vision in Revelation 13:1-10.

This “beast” is a sinful, Gentile government that eventually becomes a collection of beast-like nations who are led by one powerful and charismatic 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.

Rather than this vision speaking of several “heads,” i.e., empires/kingdoms, ruling over the land of Israel, Jerusalem, and the Jews at the same time, it is more likely indicating the fact that, during the course of the history of Jerusalem and the Jews, there have been and will be seven distinct empires/kingdoms which rule “the great city” (“seven mountains”), Jerusalem and Mt. Zion, 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, Medo-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, probably of Islamic type, at the very end of this age that at first simply forces the Jews to submit to it (and convert to Islam, so that this becomes the mark of the beast) (cf. Revelation 13 and the first beast and then the second beast, who makes the Jews submit to the first) and then turns on the Jews to destroy them (cf. Revelation 12:13-17; 16:13-16; 17:16-18; 19:19). But this last beast-like government that rules over Jerusalem and the Jews ends up fighting against Jesus himself who, along with resurrected and raptured believers, destroys it (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 empire/kingdom also involves the temple’s having been rebuilt. But then the Jews are 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 last “beast” is the eighth empire/kingdom, and it is also one of the seven, referring to the rise of one of the ancient empires—Babylon, Medo-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 than the others and resulting eventually in his plan to destroy all the Jews by waging war against Jesus and doing so with the other ten kingdoms (Rev. 17:16-18).

In addition, everyone in the world is surprised at the renewed power and influence of this eighth empire (cf. Revelation 13:3-6; very possibly a renewed Islamic Caliphate). As a result this eighth empire (as a kind of continuation or resurgence of the seventh of the beast who earlier ruled over only the Middle East (as the Islamic Caliphate from the late A.D. 600’s to 1924 when Turkey abolished it after the Ottoman Empire was defeated during World War I) will dominate not only the land of Israel, but also to some extent the rest of the world (at the least the world of the Middle East with rather remarkable influence and prestige in the rest of the world).

Verse 12 also speaks of an alliance of ten kings until, like those in Daniel 7. However, one of them (or really an eleventh that comes from them) eliminates three of them (because they are not enthusiastic about his dominance) and forces the others to submit to him.

This alliance of kings will then come up on the land of Israel to subjugate and then destroy the Jews, gathering at Har-Megiddo (Armageddon, Revelation 16:12-16), but Jesus will return with all historical believers and the armies of God, so that he will destroy these invading armies as described in Revelation 19:11-21.

²²⁸ Thus, the waters are peoples and nations around the world among whom the Jews have dispersed and are now living at the end of the present age before Jesus returns. Nevertheless, it is from these dispersed groups of Jews that many will return to the land of Israel both before and as a result of Jesus’ return.

Isaiah 60:5 “Then you [Zion] will see and be radiant, and your heart will thrill and rejoice; because the abundance of the sea will be turned to you, the wealth of the nations will come to you.”

²²⁹ The ten king alliance that is the beast-like coalition of satanically influenced kingdoms will turn on the Jews and seek to destroy them as God’s final judgment on them and encouragement to repent and embrace Jesus as their Messiah and obey God properly, i.e., from changed hearts. And most likely the opposition and hostility towards the Jews will exist throughout the whole world, so that God will ultimately kill all unbelieving Jews through the natural means of other sinful, human beings and through the supernatural means of his astronomic and catastrophic events. All this will bring about the fulfillment of God’s words in Deuteronomy 28:15-68 to the effect that He promises the Jews that He will punish them through exile from the land, through extreme suffering, and even through death if they are not faithful to Him and the Mosaic Covenant from their hearts. And this is all because they are His chosen people who have the responsibility to reveal His truth and the good news of salvation through Jesus the Messiah to the rest of the world—but unfortunately they have been unwilling to do so properly.

²³⁰ This great city is Jerusalem which has always had the potential to rule the entire earth if the Jews were to obey 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 are created after God destroys the present universe.

Revelation 11:7 And 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. **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.

Revelation 16:17 And 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.

Psalm 2:1 Why are the nations in an uproar and the peoples devising a vain thing? **2:2** The kings of the earth take their stand and the rulers take counsel together against Yahweh and against His Anointed, saying, **2:3** “Let us tear their fetters apart and cast away their cords from us!”

²³¹ The phrase μετὰ ταῦτα εἶδον = “after these things I looked” appears four times in Revelation – 4:1, 7:9; 15:5; 18:1, and the phrase μετὰ τοῦτο εἶδον = “after this I looked” appears once in 7:1.

There are three options for who this angel because of his “great authority” and that the earth (land?) is illumined with his “glory” – 1) A theophany as God’s messenger of Himself, 2) a truly great conventional angel to whom God has granted more authority and illuminating ability than any other angel, 3) Jesus as God’s messenger since he is slated for “great authority” over the Jews and the rest of the earth as well as being the very Light of the world because of his central role in the history of the universe and the world.

It is probably either #1 or #3, but I would lean towards #1, so that the “another voice” of v. 4 is Jesus.

²³² Thus, this great “angel” and messenger of God speaks with a “mighty voice” of the downfall of “Babylon,” i.e., of all the unbelieving Jews either in their worldly Judaism or in their atheistic secularism. God’s patience over the last two thousand years or so has run out, and He is destroying all of them—except for the remnant of the “144,000.”

These unbelieving Jews have listened to the lies and deceptions of “demons” and “unclean” spirits, including the influence of “every unclean and hateful bird,” meaning every object and action of human behavior that is immoral and evil like birds of prey who are looking out for that which they can easily devour (cf. Revelation 16:14-15).

Plus, the whole world with its socio-economic culture and obsession with material wealth and sensuality for the sake of satisfying all immoral desires so that the end justifies the means is something that the Jews have helped build and encourage—instead of being God’s beacon of light and teaching biblical righteousness and morality. And so many people, both Jews and Gentiles, have become wealthy by exploiting sinful human beings’ obsession with satisfying their evil and immoral desires and pleasing their senses.

But sinful and immoral sensuality (στυγνότης) is deadly, with people living for the now and pleasing themselves at all costs (even in the name of “God”) instead of being willing to wait for the shalom and morally perfect wholesomeness of the righteousness of the eternal Kingdom of God through Jesus in obedience to God 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 over the course of human history.

2 Kings 19:28 ‘Because of your [the Assyrian king’s] raging against Me, and because your arrogance (אָבִיזוּתָא = complacency) (στυγνότης = sensuality) has come up to My ears, therefore I will put My hook in your nose, and My bridle in your lips, and I will turn you back by the way which you came.’

²³³ If the “angel” of v. 1 is a theophany, then this other “voice” is most likely that of Jesus who is calling the believing Jews and the “144,000” Jews “my people?” He is urging all those Jews who are either completely inclined towards God or on their way to becoming so to separate their minds, hearts, and lifestyles from those of the unbelieving Jews of both worldly Judaism and secular Jewishness. If they do, then they will not only not be like them in mind, heart, and actions, but also be like them in the present and eternal consequences of God’s judgment and discipline, “sins” and “plagues” respectively.

²³⁴ This is an appeal to both authentic believers among the Jews and 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.

I think that these believing Jews and “144,000” may be concentrated in Israel but are also sprinkled throughout the unbelieving Jews who live in the rest of the world, so that it will be all the “144,000” who will be gathered back into the land of Israel and become the first generation of authentically believing Jews in the Messianic kingdom of Revelation 20.

²³⁵ The voice from heaven (Jesus himself?) quotes Isaiah 47:7-10 (cf. 2 Kings 19:28 above) where God accuses the Babylonians of arrogant complacency with respect to their position as the most powerful empire in the Middle East with their wealth and lifestyles. However, God says that soon the Babylonian Empire will be conquered and fall—exactly as it happened when Cyrus the Great and the Persians conquered them in 539 B.C.

The Jews in worldly Judaism and secularism have the same attitude as the Babylonians about themselves, that they are essentially invincible and doing the right thing by pursuing material wealth and satisfying their every sensual desire, along with helping others to do the same. But God is in the process of judging and destroying all unbelieving Jews.

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 (לְיָגֵרָא = luxuriant) (ἡ τρυφερά = gentle and free from harshness and a harsh life), 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."

²³⁶ The same voice (Jesus) from heaven calls for the judgment and destruction of "Babylon," the Jews, for her/their obsession with obtaining fame and fortune through sensual living (στηρνιάω in v. 7) 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, in the entire world, destroy every last one of them who is unbelieving. This will all come about because of God's justice and power which are both good and right.

Notice also that fire is listed as an instrument of God's judgment, and it may very well be symbolic of His destroying their physical lives by all the various means that He will use to ensure that there are no more unbelieving, living Jews left on the earth who inhabit the "great nation" of the Messianic Kingdom when Jesus returns.

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.

²³⁷ 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. Now they are watching all the Jews' and their efforts to rebel against God and maximize their sensual satisfaction go up in smoke.

This economic disaster is described in the next verses.

²³⁸ As go the Jews with all their talent, skill, and ability to create wealth, along with their ability to satisfy people's sensual desires through various and any means, 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. "As many as make their living by the sea" are those who depend upon the transportation of goods and services for their livelihood will find that global transportation by not only the sea, but also by planes in the air and trucks on the ground, will come to a screeching halt due to the astronomic catastrophes that God will produce of the Great and Terrible Day of the Lord that will target specifically the Jews. The "great city" is Jerusalem as representative of all unbelieving Jews in either worldly Judaism or abject secularism, who also initially killed Jewish Christians after the first appearance of Jesus and then Gentile Christians and Jews by extension throughout history and through their material and secular influence on the Gentile governments of world and symbolized by Babylon which was opposed to God and pursuing only wealth in the 7th century B.C.

Therefore, all the merchants of the world who engage in the buying and selling of not only appropriate commodities and items, e.g., gold, silver, fine linen, wood, bronze, etc., but also inappropriate items, e.g., human slaves and human trafficking, etc., become absolutely distraught over the loss of their trades and their wealth. Three times in vs. 15-19 they cry out in anguish over the destruction of "the great city," modern, unbelieving Jewry. These merchants and businessmen have nothing in life to fall back on to give them a sense of meaning, joy, and purpose. They do not even have God, to whom they should have always been approaching with repentance and obedience for the sake of life beyond this realm and its moral and eternal "materialism" and "sensuality" that believers will pursue appropriately by means of their moral perfection.

Since this destruction of the Jews by means of the Great and Terrible Day of the Lord involves Jesus' return and the resurrection and rapture of all believers in history, the only Jews left in the world are the "144,000" on the land of Israel and in various places in the world along with 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. In addition, the resurrected and raptured believers will become transformed into morally perfect and immortal human beings 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" (cf. Genesis 12:1-3).

²³⁹ 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 first (from the perspective that they were the first to persecute and even kill authentic Christians after Jesus' ascension) and Gentiles (from the perspective that they followed the lead so to speak of the Jews who were the first to persecute and kill authentic Christians after Jesus' ascension) as an alternative to the righteous kingdom which the Jews were always intended to be and promote among the Gentiles. And this destruction of unbelieving Jews and their economic successes, in conjunction with the Gentiles who pursued the same materialistic and sensual goals, is taking place only after God has waited patiently for the Jews to repent.

Here in v. 20 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 began and thereby became centered in Jerusalem with its worldly Judaism and eventually secular Jews who 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.

²⁴⁰ 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 who will inhabit the land of Israel and Jerusalem as their capital city with Jesus ruling over them.

²⁴¹ 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 their choices and the rest of the world in imitating them with their choices. But events that follow from this “magical” and thoroughly human centered mindset and manner of living will not exist in Jerusalem anymore after the return of Jesus and after the hearts of all the Jews have been changed by God so that they pursue obedience to Him with genuine repentance and belief.

²⁴² The unbelieving Jews and Gentiles have 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 (cf. v. 20).

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 make life worth living for themselves apart from Him by performing the “magic” (φαρμακεία) so to speak of their own human efforts to create wealth and satisfy their sensual desires, even those that have led them to succumb to the most obvious immoral pursuits.

²⁴³ **Psalm 19:9** The fear of Yahweh is clean, enduring forever; the judgments of Yahweh are true; they are righteous altogether.

Psa. 119:137 Righteous are You, Yahweh, and upright are Your judgments.

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.”

2 Kings 9:7 ‘You shall strike the house of Ahab your master, that I may avenge the blood of My servants the prophets, and the blood of all the servants of Yahweh, at the hand of Jezebel.’

²⁴⁴ **Isaiah 34:8** For Yahweh 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.

²⁴⁵ These verses of 19:1-4 are a continuation of the vision that is not an event but a truth and which began in 18:20.

It is as if all the cosmos (and certainly the entire collection of righteous angels and believers from all history) acknowledges the greatness and rightness of God to judge the Jews for their disobedience and rejection of their Messiah so as to avenge the deaths of Christians, which the Jews have not objected to when they should have as God’s chosen people and a beacon of light on the earth. Thus Jerusalem and Israel except for the “144,000” are going to be destroyed by God.

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 when Jesus returns 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, disobedience, and sensuality of unbelieving Jews and which will never happen again—because from this point on only believing Jews will live on their land.

²⁴⁶ 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 (in spite of most Gentiles remaining unbelievers throughout the millennial kingdom), with the Jews proclaiming the truth of God in the manner in which they were always intended by God, even through their obedience to 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.

²⁴⁷ 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.

²⁴⁸ 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 their lives in the first part of the millennial kingdom. These Jews were definitely “saints” (set apart and 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 “set apart ones” after Jesus’ return, because God will finally circumcise their hearts completely so that they exhibit genuine belief and obedience to God.

Thus, the fine linen clothing, that is symbolic of the righteous acts of those who are set apart, 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 as they perform deeds of love, etc. in conjunction with authentic faith.

²⁴⁹ 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). The former will be resurrected from the dead, while the latter will be lifted from the earth, so that both groups are invited to celebrate with God and the Jesus the coming into existence of the “144,000” believing Jews on the land of Israel.

²⁵⁰ John is so excited about this vision that he falls down and worships the one who is speaking. However, this messenger of good news is not Jesus but only a servant like John. And he says that the testimony about Jesus is “the spirit of prophecy,” meaning that it is the essential information from God to know and believe—which we have in the Bible.

²⁵¹ This is a vision of the event of Jesus’ return. He is both “faithful” to his role as God within the creation and “true” because he is the very center of God’s truth about Himself and the creation which He has brought into existence.

Jesus’ role at second appearance will be to “rule” Israel and the world and to “wage war” against God’s and Israel’s enemies. Therefore, his primary target is the invading armies under the leadership of the individual who is at the head of the first “beast” of Revelation 13, the collection of hostile countries in the Middle East who are now all trying to destroy the Jews. But Jesus comes as a ruler of the world to wage war against and destroy all these enemies who are gathered on the land of Israel to destroy the Jews and defeat him—so that they may take over the world for themselves.

²⁵² By the transcendent God’s power and will, Jesus is “fire” and destruction in regard to God’s and Israel’s enemies. He also rules over the nation because he wears “many crowns,” multiple crowns that symbolize his great power and authority to rule over all of God’s creation.

By having a name that is unknown to anyone else, Jesus is unique. He is the only permanent, eternal, and morally perfect Son of God and king of Israel—unlike David, Solomon, and the rest of the Davidic kings.

Plus, his “robe” is “dipped in blood,” meaning either that he is the embodiment on earth of God’s judgment and destruction of His enemies, or that he himself is known for shedding his own blood in order to qualify for his role of interceding before God on behalf of sinful human beings.

And Jesus is the very *logos* and message of God, that which everyone should learn and know and which leads them to God’s eternal mercy and life.

²⁵³ These armies are most likely believer who have been resurrected and lifted from the earth when Jesus returns as mentioned in 1 Thessalonians 4 and 1 Corinthians 15. They are “in heaven” in that they have been slated to be permanent and eternal subjects of God and Jesus even though they had died and temporarily did not exist until their resurrection at Jesus’ return.

²⁵⁴ Jesus had said in Revelation 2:26-28 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 he will “strike down the nations,” i.e., the soldiers of the army invading the land of Israel, so that they die. Thus, he “treads the wine press of the fierce wrath of God, the Almighty, by destroying his and Israel’s enemies who are seeking to annihilate them.

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.

²⁵⁵ 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-Mageddon 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, with Jesus’ return, God will destroy these end times armies who are bringing about the final judgment of the Jewish nation.

Revelation 17:14 “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.”

²⁵⁶ The carnage from the destruction of the army which has invaded Israel and been defeated at Har-Mageddon 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.

²⁵⁷ 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 who have been resurrected and lifted from the earth) in order to accomplish their goal. And they will fail miserably as Jesus destroys them simply by speaking (Revelation 19:15,21).

²⁵⁸ 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 forever as the arch-followers of God’s archenemy, Satan. No human beings will have been greater opponents of God than these two men, one who is a Gentile and the other who is a Jew. They will more rebellious in their minds and hearts than even Hitler and Stalin. Nero will look like a complete wimp in comparison to them.

²⁵⁹ Here the whole scene of the invading armies and Jesus’ defeat of them is put together. This scene 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.

Nevertheless, here in v. 21, the rest of the beast's 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 willing to be members of the army and invade and destroy the Jews of Israel will also suffer complete and eternal destruction as a result of the Great White Throne Judgment of Revelation 20. In other words, they will have been just as committed to opposing God and His chosen people, the Jews, as their leaders.

It is certainly striking that the false prophet, the unbelieving Jewish leader of the second beast of Revelation 13, remains just as opposed to God as ever even while his country is being invaded by an army whose goal is most likely to kill him, too.

²⁶⁰ 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.

²⁶¹ 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, which, in spite of how rebellious against God man's sin is, will mean a lot less evil and suffering, pain, and grief on the earth during the Messianic Kingdom with Jesus's ruling over the Jews on the land of Israel and over the Gentiles, even many unbelieving Gentiles, in the rest of the world.

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 and then quickly and completely be destroyed.

²⁶² 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.

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 satanically influenced Gentile government with their supreme ruler, the Man of Lawlessness 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, like the apostles, 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 this Messianic Kingdom of Israel and the world.

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."

²⁶³ It is not only those who have died in their faith who participate in reigning with Jesus after they are resurrected, but it will also be those who are alive when Jesus returns after they are lifted from the earth (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 who will go through the Great White Throne Judgment of 20:11-15.

²⁶⁴ 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 lifted from the earth) believers will act as priests on earth, i.e., mediators between God and sinners, urging the latter who are Gentile unbelievers throughout the world to change their minds and repent before God in order to receive His mercy and eternal life and urging the latter who are Jewish believers to persevere in their faith and obedience on the land of Israel. 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.

Exodus 19:3 Moses went up to God, and Yahweh called to him from the mountain, saying, "Thus you shall say to the house of Jacob and tell the sons of Israel: **4** 'You yourselves have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and how I bore you on eagles' wings, and brought you to Myself. **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."

Isaiah 59:21 "As for Me, this is My covenant with them," says Yahweh: "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 Yahweh, "from now and forever."

Revelation 5:8 And when He had taken the scroll, the four living creatures [signs symbolizing Jesus] 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. **9** And they sang a new song, saying, "Worthy are You to take the 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."

²⁶⁵ 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, lifted from the earth, 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. Again, this may be right on the land of Israel, which is striking that God and Jesus will allow them to get this close to Jerusalem, unless “the broad plain” means on the earth in a strategic location where such a large number of unbelieving soldiers, i.e., “like the sand of the seashore,” can gather and be destroyed all at once.

And this will even be after everyone enjoys the most peaceful and prosperous period of human history, which will take place during the millennial kingdom. Clearly, this demonstrates just how foolish sinful and 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,” that has limited their evil and immoral pursuits but also brought an unparalleled level of safety and security.

But these peoples’ hostile efforts towards God will be short-lived. God will destroy them quickly as “fire” will come “down from heaven” so to speak and annihilate them wherever they have gathered. Perhaps this is real fire, or perhaps it is symbolic of another onslaught by God’s heavenly armies on Satan’s ill-advised army.

Then the creation moves on to the Great White Throne Judgment followed by the destruction of the present realm and creation of a completely new universe—“a new heaven and a new earth” (cf. Revelation 21).

²⁶⁶ 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 all human history.

This vision mentions first that Satan is “thrown into the lake of fire and destroyed,” which it is said is the same lake of fire where the beast and false prophet have “also” 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 definitely eternal—but just not with eternal torment. Instead, God eventually gives them eternal destruction, and this is the case for even Satan. He just disappears from all existence.

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 arch-followers. 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.

²⁶⁷ Here begins the description of the final act of pure justice by God before He creates a new universe in which only righteous and morally perfect human beings live as a result of His eternal grace and mercy. This is the Great White Throne Judgment. “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. As a result, they do not belong in a long-term relationship with God. This group of persons may even include demonic angels who are just as afraid of God and His justice as sinful and unbelieving human beings. Thus, the phrase “earth and heaven” may represent all personal beings who have moral capability but have irrevocably chosen to rebel against God.

Or (and I think this makes more sense in the light of vs. 12-15 about those who are unbelievers and will be eternally condemned and destroyed), the phrase “earth and heaven” are together symbolic of the present cosmos (that includes angelic beings who are either obedient or disobedient towards God) 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 will be 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” of Revelation 21-22 that will 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).

²⁶⁸ At this Great White Throne judgment are all those who did not qualify for the first resurrection (cf. Revelation 20:5,6) and therefore by inference those Gentiles who were unbelievers and died during the millennium. God now raises from the dead all these ungodly unbelievers from all human history at the end of the millennial kingdom. 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 this 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 and will inhabit the new earth with all other resurrected and lifted from the earth authentic believers in history.

The books which are opened are those that list the choices and actions of the people who are standing before the judgment throne. The question will be whether their choices and actions derive from a heart that had been changed by God and therefore are in line with authentic belief, which is one of the choices of a changed heart. 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 for all eternity in the lake of fire. The word that is translated “judged” in the NAS95 is ἐκρίθησαν, which could refer instead 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 who are standing before the throne as unbelievers from the 2nd 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. Because of the next three verses, I am inclined to interpret these people as only unbelievers from all history.

²⁶⁹ 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 former unbelievers 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 (ἄδης) 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. But in this case, they are only unbelievers throughout history.

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 unchanged and unbelieving hearts along with their deeds that God will evaluate.

²⁷⁰ 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, which will take place after the first death that was physical for people at the end of their lives on earth. Never again will people have to fear dying that potentially includes strict judgment and punishment from God.

²⁷¹ Depending on what happens to believers who die during the millennial kingdom, the way this paragraph reads leads me to think that no one's name at the Great White Throne judgment will be found in the book of life—because they will all be those who were unbelievers. Therefore, if the GWTJ involves only unbelievers, then this statement about the "book of life" is added for emphasis—that what the unbelievers are missing out on is LIFE, eternal life in the Kingdom of God where only moral perfection will exist without there ever being even a hint of sin and evil among its inhabitants!

²⁷² 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 2nd 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, therefore, means new laws of physics, etc. and an environment where order will never tend towards chaos, but towards even greater or the same order of eternal and stable existence that does not regress or can result in decay and death.

Cf. 2 Peter 3:3-13 (possibly, unless Peter is talking about the millennial kingdom, but currently I am inclined to think that he is talking about the same thing as Revelation 21-22).

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 in Revelation 13 arose out of the sea, i.e., the Gentile nations that were mostly unbelieving and, for some, committed to destroying the Jews—especially those in the Middle East.

²⁷³ 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 was 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 and Messianic kingdom of the previous earth. These will live on the new and eternal earth of Revelation 21-22.

²⁷⁴ These people belong to God because they believed in Him and Jesus (after his first appearance) 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 them as an ethnic group who were His chosen people and who have finally arrived on the eternal earth.

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

Exodus 25:8 "Let them construct a sanctuary (שְׁכֵנִי) (ἀγίασμα) for Me, that I may dwell among them."

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

Leviticus 26:11 "Moreover, I will make My dwelling among you, and My soul (שְׁפָרְתִּי) (ἡ ψυχή μου) will not reject you. 26:12 I will also walk among you and be your God, and you shall be My people."

Ezekiel 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 Yahweh who sanctifies (שְׁבַלְתֵּי) (ὁ ἀγιάζων) Israel, when My sanctuary (שְׁכֵנִי) (τὰ ἁγία μου) is in their midst forever (עַד עוֹלָם) (εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα)." [But this probably refers to the millennial kingdom.]

²⁷⁵ The human beings who are now morally perfect and immortal because God has transformed all previous, authentic believers 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 where there existed 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 for all eternity when the eternal realm comes into existence.

Isaiah 25:8 [Yahweh] will swallow up death for all time, And the Adonai Yahweh will wipe tears away from all faces, And He will remove the reproach of His people from all the earth; for Yahweh 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 will first be the "great nation" of Genesis 12 and then members of all eternal human beings on the new earth of

Revelation 21-22.]

Plus, there will be immortal Jews taking part in the millennial kingdom, because these Jews lived as authentic believers before and during Jesus' return. 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."

²⁷⁶ 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, which says, "Therefore if anyone is in the Messiah, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come." The newness in life in the present realm is a reoriented heart in the midst of continued sinfulness while eagerly awaiting eternal life when Jesus returns. The newness on the new earth after Jesus returns and after the millennial kingdom will be moral perfection.

²⁷⁷ 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 His grace, salvation, and eternal life. 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 on the new earth of Revelation 21-22.

²⁷⁸ 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. These who "overcome" and conquer all existential forces that would lead them away from authentic belief in God do definitely 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 2:13 I am writing to you, fathers, because you have known that which was from the beginning. I am writing to you, young men, because you have conquered the evil one (ὅτι νενικήκατε τὸν πονηρόν). **2:14** I write to you, children, because you know the Father. I write to you, fathers, because you know that which was from the beginning. I write to you, young men, because you are strong, and the message of God (ὁ λόγος τοῦ θεοῦ) remains in (ἐν) you. And you have conquered the evil one (καὶ νενικήκατε τὸν πονηρόν).

1 John 5:4 For whatever is born of God overcomes the world (πᾶν τὸ γεγεννημένον ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ νικᾷ τὸν κόσμον); and this is the victory that has overcome the world — our belief (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 'δέ 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 assemblies. 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 assemblies. 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.

²⁷⁹ 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).

²⁸⁰ Here there is 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. But I do not think that this angel (messenger of God or possibly a theophany) is Jesus, i.e., Jesus in vision format who is mentioned and speaks at the beginning of Revelation. Instead, this is a conventional angel.

This "bride" of the Messiah comprises all believers, Jews and Gentiles, from all history (as is the comparison to a bride in 21:2) and is different from the bride of the "144,000" Jews in Revelation 19 who live within the millennial kingdom.

²⁸¹ Again, this is not an actual "city" but 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—the importance of God and His relationship with His people, whether the Jews initially

or believing Jews and Gentiles eventually who are the people of the new and eternal earth.

Exodus 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**.

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

Isaiah 2:3 And many peoples will come and say, "Come, let us go up to the **mountain of Yahweh**, 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 Yahweh from Jerusalem."

²⁸² 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 and mercy.

²⁸³ 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 their becoming the "great nation" of Genesis 12:1-3 and His granting the blessing of eternal life to any of them who demonstrated the same faith as Abraham as all symbolized by the names of the gates as the names of the twelve tribes of Israel.

²⁸⁴ These people who inhabit the new earth 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 to make them the "great nation" of Genesis 12 during the previous millennial kingdom of Revelation 20.

²⁸⁵ 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).

Therefore, 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.

²⁸⁶ **Revelation 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.

²⁸⁷ Notice all the references to 12 in this paragraph. The eternal people of God cannot be more perfect than what God will make them. The city is a perfect "cube" of 12,000 stadia on each side, made of pure gold, the most valuable metal of the time for commercial purposes. Its wall is 144 cubits thick. And "the foundation stones of the city wall" has 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.

²⁸⁸ 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.

Nevertheless, God's immediate presence is not all that much different from before, because God has to be immediately present in every element of the creation in order for it to exist and play out its role as God has designed it to do so. Therefore, the vision here is saying that God's immediate presence means that no other elements of creation, such as a temple, is necessary to worship Him properly. Again, this is not all that much different from authentic Christianity which does not require any humanly built things in order to be a follower of Jesus as the Messiah.

²⁸⁹ Light = truth, wisdom, understanding, and illumination that leads to perfect moral being and behavior. God and His moral character will ensure that His people are always enlightened and wise. They will know the truth about Him and Jesus as their Messiah so that they never make any unwise decision, because they will have a direct, constant intellectual infusion of knowledge and understanding of reality from God, the very author of the reality.

²⁹⁰ 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 equally able to speak knowledgeably to one another. This is a bit different from before where the Jewish people were considered THE source of truth as the only chosen, ethnic group through the Abrahamic and Mosaic Covenants.

As a result, the eternal people of God will comprise both Jews and Gentiles, so that the "kings" in this verse represent the Gentile people within their nations and countries.

²⁹¹ These are all the "nations" who bring their "glory and honor" to the new Jerusalem of the eternal Kingdom of God. As a result, 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).

This means, too, that 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. They will not have other people's sinful, tyrannical, and oppressive pursuits of authority and power over them restricting their creative endeavors, because only God will rule them and they will all be morally perfect besides.

²⁹² 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. Sin, immorality, violence, deception, hypocrisy, death, suffering, pain, hurt, sorrow, and grieving will be all gone forever—for all eternity!

The only people who will live on the new and eternal earth will be those “whose names are written in the Lamb’s book of life,” meaning those whom God predestined to salvation through Jesus’ intercession as their high priest before the Father.

²⁹³ Here is an additional vision of eternal life for God’s people. The river of the water of life is symbolic of the source of an eternal existence of moral purity and shalom that 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., sinful or 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. It also comes from “the Lamb” because Jesus through his death became their very means to attain God’s eternal mercy and gift of eternal life.

²⁹⁴ 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 sinful human beings 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 eternal life and existence from God.

²⁹⁵ 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. Therefore, option #1 is more likely correct. The threat of physical and eternal death will no longer exist for God’s people on this new and eternal earth.

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—and all in a perfectly moral manner.

²⁹⁶ 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 Yahweh may be in your mouth; for with a powerful hand Yahweh 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. And having Jesus’ instructions on their forehead also means that they will be fully committed to him and following him for all eternity, as the unbelievers did in regard to the beast of Revelation 13. In addition, Jesus’ name on their forehead is in contrast to the “mark” of the Beast of Revelation 13 on the foreheads of those who follow him (probably by converting to Islam and the renewed Islamic Caliphate).

Cf. [Revelation 13:16](#) 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, [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.

²⁹⁷ There will no longer be a lack of truth, understanding, wisdom, and knowledge that leads to moral perfection 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 (εις τούς αιώνας τών αιώνων = into the ages of ages), and no one will defy God and Jesus 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?

²⁹⁸ 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 (ταχύ = with haste) 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.

²⁹⁹ It seems strange that this paragraph is between vs. 6-7 and 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.

³⁰⁰ The angel is encouraging John to make the message of Revelation available to everyone. It 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 and motivation to persevere in belief, faith, and trust in God through the hard (and the easy) times of experience this side of Jesus’ return to usher in the Kingdom of God on earth.

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. The angel here does not want John to hide this message but instead to reveal it to all other believers as much as possible. Thus, in both cases of Daniel and John, 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.

³⁰¹ 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.

³⁰² καὶ ἰδοὺ, ἔρχομαι ταχύ, καὶ ὁ μισθός μου μετ’ ἐμοῦ. ἀποδοῦναι ἐκάστω ὡς τὸ ἔργον αὐτοῦ ἔσται – Here, 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. From the OT and into the NT, the Bible speaks of God’s paying the appropriate wage to us human beings, whether the strictly just wage of condemnation, punishment, and eternal destruction or the strictly merciful wage of justification, forgiveness, and eternal life.

Psalm 28:4 Requite them according to their work and according to the evil of their practices. Requite them according to the deeds of their hands. Repay them their **recompense**.

Psalm 62:12 And lovingkindness is Yours, O Lord, for You **recompense** a man according to his work (תְּשַׁלֵּם לְאִישׁ כְּמַעֲשָׁהוּ) (Πῶς ἄποδώσεις ἐκάστω κατὰ τὰ ἔργα αὐτοῦ).

Rom. 2:6 ^awho WILL RENDER TO EACH PERSON ACCORDING TO HIS DEEDS (ὃς ἀποδώσει ἐκάστω κατὰ τὰ ἔργα αὐτοῦ):

³⁰³ Jesus is saying that he is the beginning and endpoint of all God’s created reality. He is the reason the entirety of what God has made and is created exists because God has made it all for him and in light of him. Jesus in a visible and tangible way 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].

³⁰⁴ I think that 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 high priest and advocate before God.

³⁰⁵ “Outside” here is symbolic for saying that eventually sinful human beings on the present earth never attain forgiveness from God and eternal life. Indeed, they end up not existing at all. They have been destroyed in the “lake of fire” and “the second death.”

³⁰⁶ 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 assemblies at the beginning of Revelation (and by extrapolation anyone else, especially those of authentic faith who truly desire eternal life and God’s mercy), who must be nearby John because he has probably been at Ephesus and is now on the island of Patmos because he has been exiled from Ephesus because of his faith in Jesus as the Messiah. 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.

³⁰⁷ 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 to come to this truth in Revelation (and therefore to him) 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.”

³⁰⁸ 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.

³⁰⁹ John repeats that Jesus has said that his return will be expedient and will accomplish all that God has planned for him.

³¹⁰ John agrees, “Come, Lord Jesus.”

³¹¹ And he pronounces Jesus’ grace on all those who embrace the truth of Revelation.