

## 31. Revelation

- The author of Revelation was probably John the apostle, a prophet (22:8-9), the son of Zebedee. This is the revelation of Jesus Christ, and He is the center of the entire book (1:1). The book of Revelation is important because it is the last inspired book of the Bible to be written and is rightly positioned as the New Testament's final book. As the New Testament opens with the four Gospels relating the first coming of Christ, so the book of Revelation closes the New Testament with the general theme of the second coming of Christ. The book of Revelation is also the climax of many lines of revelation running through both Testaments, and it brings to conclusion the revelation of many prophecies yet to be fulfilled. The second coming of Christ and the years immediately preceding it and following it are revealed in Revelation more graphically than in any other book of the Bible. The final two chapters describe the new heaven and the new earth.

\*Revelation 1; Revelation of Jesus Christ, message to seven churches, John's vision (1:1-20)

- "The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave Him to show to His bond-servants, the things which must soon take place; and He sent and communicated it by His angel to His bond-servant John, who testified to the word of God and to the testimony of Jesus Christ, even to all that he saw. 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" (1:1-3). Jesus is coming with the clouds, and every eye will see Him, even those who pierced (crucified) Him (1:7). At the Second Advent (coming), all the tribes of the earth will mourn over Him. Zechariah describes the house of David mourning, as one mourns for an only son when the Messiah returns (Zechariah 12:10-14). "'I am the Alpha and the Omega,' says the Lord God, 'who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty'" (1:8). John was told to "write in a book what you see and send it to the seven churches; to Ephesus and to Smyrna and to Pergamum and to Thyatira and to Sardis and to Philadelphia and to Laodicea" (1:11). These churches are described in more detail in Revelation 2 and 3. "Therefore write the things which you have seen, and the things which are, and the things which will take place after these things" (1:19).

\*Revelation 2-3; Messages to seven churches (chapters 2 and 3)

- In Revelation 2 and 3, Christ gave a personal message to seven different first century churches in Asia (1:4), with many applications for churches today. The church in Ephesus had left her first love and needed to repent (2:1-7). A warning is given to the church in Smyrna that they are about to be tested and encourages them to "be faithful until death" (2:8-11). Believers will not be hurt by the second death, which is the lake of fire or hell (2:11, 20:14-15). Some members of the Pergamum church were holding to false teaching and were warned to repent (2:12-17). The church in Thyatira tolerated the woman Jezebel, a false prophetess. Those who followed her were told to "repent of her deeds" (2:18-29).

- The believers in Sardis were told to wake up and repent (3:1-6). "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" (3:3).

The rapture will come like a thief for Christians who are not prepared. Alert and ready believers should not be surprised by the rapture (refer to 1 Thessalonians 5:4-6). The church in Philadelphia kept God's word and did not deny His name (3:7-13). "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. I am coming quickly" (3:10-11). When the rapture occurs, believers will be delivered from the Great Tribulation which follows. The lukewarm believers of Laodicea were wealthy and thought they had "need of nothing" and did not know that they were "wretched and miserable and poor and blind and naked" (3:17). They needed to repent because God reproves and disciplines those whom He loves (3:14-22). "Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come into him and will dine with him, and he with Me" (3:20). "He who overcomes, I will grant to him to sit down with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne" (3:21).

\*Revelation 4; Description of throne in heaven, 24 elders, seven Spirits of God, four living creatures, and worship of the Creator (4:1-11)

- "After these things I looked, and behold, a door standing open in heaven, and the first voice which I had heard, like the sound of a trumpet speaking with me, said, 'Come up here, and I will show you what must take place after these things'" (4:1). "Immediately I was in the Spirit; and behold, a throne was standing in heaven, and One sitting on the throne" (4:2). John also saw 24 elders, seven lamps of fire which are the seven Spirits of God, and four living creatures. The four living creatures do not cease to say, "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God, the Almighty, who was and who is and who is to come" (4:8). Then, "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, 'Worthy are You, our Lord and our God, to receive glory and honor and power; for You created all things, and because of Your will they existed, and were created'" (4:10-11).

\*Revelation 5; The book (scroll) in heaven and the Lamb (Jesus) are described (5:1-14)

- "I saw in the right hand of Him who sat on the throne a book written inside and on the back, sealed up with seven seals" (5:1). "And I saw a strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice, 'Who is worthy to open the book and to break its seals?'" (5:2). Jesus Christ is referred to as "the Lion that is from the tribe of Judah, the Root of David" and "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" (5:5-6). The "Lamb" is referring to His first coming and His death and the "Lion" is referring to His second coming and His sovereign judgment of the world. Only Jesus will be found worthy to open the book (scroll) and to break its seven seals (5:5, 9). "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power and riches and wisdom and might and honor and glory and blessing" (5:12). The scroll may be the will or testament that contains the inheritance of the kingdom. In ancient times, a will was secured with seven seals by the seven individuals who witnessed its execution. The seals must be removed, and the scroll must be opened for the Lord Jesus Christ to inherit the kingdom that His Father has given Him. The Lord said, "I will surely give the nations as Your

inheritance, and the very ends of the earth as Your possession" (Psalm 2:8). Each of the seals represents a judgment (6:1-17). The seventh seal judgment is the distribution of the seven trumpet judgments and is also an earthquake (8:1-6). Due to this arrangement, the seventh seal judgment is not complete until the seven trumpet judgments have ended (8:7-13, 9:1-21, 11:15-19). At this point loud voices in heaven will say, "The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord, and of His Christ; and He will reign forever and ever" (11:15). It is apparently at this time that Jesus Christ will receive the inheritance of the kingdom from His Father. The seal and trumpet judgments will be followed by seven bowl judgments (15:1-8, 16:1-21).

- This event in heaven is truly a momentous occasion, accompanied by a "new song". "And they sang a new song, saying, 'Worthy are You to take the book 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'" (5:9). "'You have made them to be a kingdom and priests to our God; and they will reign upon the earth'" (5:10). "And every created thing which is in heaven and on the earth and under the earth and on the sea, and all things in them, I heard saying, 'To Him who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb, be blessing and honor and glory and dominion forever and ever'" (5:13). During the Millennium, a "new song" will be sung by the 144,000 servants of God on Mount Zion for another momentous occasion (refer to Revelation 14:1-5).

\*Revelation 6; The seal judgments, one through six (6:1-17)

- The Lamb (Jesus) begins to break the seven seals of the book (scroll; Revelation 5), one at a time. "Then 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.' 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 to conquer" (6:1-2). The rider (probably the antichrist) of the white horse has a bow but no arrows, suggesting he uses his authority and influence to conquer. A crown (authority) was given to him, probably from Babylon the Great.

- "When He broke the second seal, I heard the second living creature saying, 'Come'. 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" (6:3-4). The second seal is open warfare and the third seal is famine and inflation.

- "When He broke the third seal, I heard the third living creature saying, 'Come.' I looked, and behold, a black horse; and he who sat on it had a pair of scales in his hand. 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'" (6:5-6). A denarius is a Roman silver coin, typically earned for an entire day's work. Food will be in such short supply that an entire day's wages will only pay for a quart (liter) of wheat or three quarts of barley, the equivalent of a few meals. Nothing will be left to buy oil and wine.

- "When the Lamb broke the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the fourth living creature saying, 'Come.' I looked, and behold, an ashen 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" (6:7-8). Apparently one-fourth of the world population dies by war, famine, pestilence and wild beasts.

- "When the Lamb broke the fifth seal, I saw underneath the altar the souls of those who had been slain because of the word of God, and because of the testimony which they had maintained; 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?'" (6:9-10). "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" (6:11). The fifth seal describes how many believers will be persecuted and killed for their faith in the Lord Jesus (refer also to 7:9-17).

- The sixth seal results in a global earthquake and changes to the sun, moon and stars. "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; and the stars of the sky fell to the earth, as a fig tree casts its unripe figs when shaken by a great wind" (6:12-13). "The sky was split apart like a scroll when it is rolled up, and every mountain and island were moved out of their places" (6:14). "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; and they said to the mountains and 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; for the great day of their wrath has come, and who is able to stand?'" (6:15-17).

\*Revelation 7; The 144,000 Jews (7:1-8); Great Tribulation martyrs in heaven (7:9-17)

- "After this I saw four angels standing at the four corners of the earth, holding back the four winds of the earth, so that no wind would blow on the earth or on the sea or on any tree" (7:1). This would prevent the movement of clouds and therefore no rain would fall on the earth. "And I saw another angel ascending from the rising of the sun, having the seal of the living God; and he cried out with a loud voice to the four angels to whom it was granted to harm the earth and the sea, saying, 'Do not harm the earth or the sea or the trees until we have sealed the bond-servants of our God on their foreheads'" (7:2-3). "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:" (7:4). This special forehead seal of God is mentioned in several other passages (9:4, 14:1, 22:4). In Revelation 9, demonic locusts will torment all the inhabitants of the earth except those who have the seal of God on their foreheads (9:4). The 144,000 from the 12 tribes of Israel will be chosen to perform some service for God, which may include evangelism. They may also be involved in the construction of the Tribulation temple or serving in it. Apparently, they will also play a part in Messiah's (millennial) temple (14:1-5).

- Martyrs from the Great Tribulation are standing before the throne and before the Lamb in heaven; a great multitude which no one could count, indicating that a vast number of people will be saved and will lose their lives for their faith in the Lord Jesus (Revelation 6:9-11, 20:4). A huge revival will occur during the Great Tribulation. There will be so many believers in the world that the dragon (Satan) and the antichrist will wage war against them during the last half of the Tribulation (Revelation 12:17, 13:7; Daniel 7:21). "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... '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... They will hunger no longer, nor thirst anymore; nor will the sun beat down on them, nor any heat; for the Lamb in the center of the throne will be their shepherd, and will guide them to springs of the water of life; and God will wipe away every tear from their eyes'" (7:9-17).

\*Revelation 8; The seventh seal judgment (8:1-5); trumpet judgments one through four (8:2, 6-13)

- Trumpet judgments one through four are described in this chapter (8:2, 6-13). The seven seal judgments and the first four trumpet judgments probably occur during the first half of the Tribulation. The seventh seal judgment is the distribution of the seven trumpet judgments and an earthquake (8:1-5). After Jesus broke the seventh seal, "there was silence in heaven for about a half an hour" (8:1), revealing the significance of this event. "Another angel came and stood at the altar... And the smoke of the incense, with the prayers of the saints, went up before God out of the angel's hand" (8:3-4).

- "And the seven angels who had the seven trumpets prepared themselves to sound them" (8:6). "The first sounded, and there came hail and fire, mixed with blood, and they were thrown to the earth; and a third of the earth was burned up, and a third of the trees were burned up, and all the green grass was burned up" (8:7). "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, and a third of the creatures which were in the sea and had life, died; and a third of the ships were destroyed" (8:8-9). "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. 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" (8:10-11). "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" (8:12). Verse 13 is a warning that the last three trumpet judgments are very severe. "Then I looked, and I heard an eagle flying in midheaven, saying with a loud voice, 'Woe, woe, woe, to those who dwell on the earth, because of the remaining blasts of the trumpet of the three angels who are about to sound!'" (8:13).

\*Revelation 9; Trumpet judgments five and six (9:1-21)

- The last three trumpet judgments (five through seven) and the seven bowl judgments probably occur during the second half of the Tribulation. For the fifth trumpet, apparently Satan is given the key to the bottomless pit (abyss; 9:1, 11). "Then the fifth angel sounded, and I saw a star from heaven which had fallen to the earth; and the key of the bottomless pit was given to him" (9:1). "He opened the bottomless pit, 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" (9:2). "Then out of the smoke came locusts upon the earth, and power was given them, as the scorpions of the earth have power" (9:3). "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" (9:4). Earlier in the Tribulation, the 144,000 of Israel received the seal of God on their foreheads (7:3-4). Although it is not specifically stated, it is likely that all Tribulation believers will have the seal of God on their foreheads, having already been "sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise" (Ephesians 1:13; see also 2 Corinthians 1:22). In new Jerusalem, God's name will be on the foreheads of all believers (22:4). Perhaps this seal will only be visible to believers during the Tribulation. In contrast, followers of the antichrist will have the mark of the beast on their forehead or hand, for all to see (14:9). Apparently, believers will also be spared from the first and fifth bowl judgments (16:2, 10-11).

- "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" (9:5). "And in those days men will seek death and will not find it; they will long to die, and death flees from them" (9:6). These bizarre, demonic locusts have the appearance of "horses prepared for battle", "crowns like gold", "faces of men", "hair of women", "teeth of lions", "breastplates of iron", loud wings and "tails like scorpions" (9:7-10). "They have as king over them, the angel of the abyss", and his name means "destroyer" in both Hebrew and Greek (9:11). Trumpet judgment five is also called the first woe (9:12). This event probably coincides with Satan being thrown down to earth along with his demonic angels (12:7-12). "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" (12:12).

- "Then the sixth angel sounded, and I heard a voice... 'Release the four angels who are bound at the great river Euphrates'... so that they would kill a third of mankind. The number of the armies of the horsemen was two hundred million; I heard the number of them" (9:13-16). "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" (9:17). "A third of mankind was killed by these three plagues, by the fire and the smoke and the brimstone which proceeded out of their mouths" (9:18). "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" (9:19). "The rest of mankind, who were not killed by these plagues, did not repent of the works of their hands" or of their immorality, but continued to worship demons and idols (9:20-21). The devastation of the sixth trumpet judgment (second woe) results in the death of a third of mankind (stated twice; 9:15, 18). When combined with the fourth seal judgment (6:7-8; one fourth of the earth's population is killed), these two judgments alone account for the death of half the world's population. The four angels are probably demons, since holy angels would not

be bound. The massive armies of the horsemen, 200 million strong, that accompany them, are probably demonic.

**\*Revelation 10; The strong angel and the little book (10:1-11)**

- In this chapter, a strong angel comes down from heaven with a little book (scroll) in his hand (10:1-2). John is told to "Take it and eat it; it will make your stomach bitter, but in your mouth it will be sweet as honey" (10:9). "And they said to me, 'You must prophesy again concerning many peoples and nations and tongues and kings'" (10:11). The book appears to represent the word of God because after it is eaten, John is told to prophesy again. For believers, the word of God is "sweeter than honey" (Psalm 119:103), but God's judgments will be "bitter" to unbelievers.

**\*Revelation 11; The temple (11:1-2); the two witnesses (11:3-14); the seventh trumpet judgment (11:15-19)**

- The Tribulation temple will be built during the first half of the Great Tribulation in the "holy city" (11:1-2). The "holy city" refers to Jerusalem (Nehemiah 11:1; Isaiah 52:1). It must be built quickly because the antichrist will desecrate the temple at the midpoint of the Tribulation (2 Thessalonians 2:4). The outer court of the temple will be given to the nations and they will tread under foot Jerusalem for 42 months, meaning the last half of the Tribulation (11:2; Luke 21:24). This coincides with the antichrist waging war against Jews and believers during the second half of the Tribulation. This is a strong indication that the antichrist will set up Jerusalem as the new world capital of his global empire (Babylon the Great) during the second half of the Tribulation (refer to Revelation 17 and 18), as the nations occupy and control the holy city. Why was John told to measure the temple of God and the altar and those who worship in it? Perhaps measurements show that the temple and altar will physically exist during the Tribulation. The presence of worshipers confirms that the temple will function as a place of Jewish worship. Measurements will also be taken of Messiah's temple (Ezekiel 40), Jerusalem (Zechariah 1:16, 2:1-2) and new Jerusalem (Revelation 21: 15-17). The fact that this sanctuary is called "the temple of God" indicates God's approval of the third temple. There is no indication that God's glory will return to this temple. God's glory departed from Solomon's temple (first temple; Ezekiel 10:4, 18-19) and will not return until Messiah's temple (fourth temple) is built during the Millennium (Ezekiel 43:1-5).

- The two witnesses (prophets; 11:3, 6, 10) will be appointed by God and will prophesy for 1,260 days, clothed in sackcloth during the first half of the Great Tribulation (11:3). Sackcloth is dark, coarse clothing worn as a sign of mourning (Genesis 37:34), earnest prayer and fasting (Daniel 9:3), or repentance (Matthew 11:21). Verses 2 and 3 confirm that the Great Tribulation will be seven prophetic years long, or 2,520 days (7 years x 360 days per year; Daniel 9:27; Revelation 12:6, 13:5); 1,260 days of prophesying by God's witnesses followed by 42 months, where the nations will control Jerusalem. These men are the two olive trees and two lampstands referred to in Zechariah 4:3, 11, 14 (Revelation 11:4). In New Testament times God's witnesses did not torment their enemies or avenge themselves. However, these two

witnesses will be living in times of great tribulation and judgment and will be given special judgment powers. If anyone wants to harm them, fire flows out of their mouth and devours their enemies (11:5). They have the power to shut up the sky, so that rain will not fall during the days of their prophesying (11:6), which could mean up to 1,260 days (11:3). This is similar to the miracle that occurred in the days of King Ahab. Elijah prayed earnestly that it might not rain; and it did not rain on the earth for three years and six months (James 5:17-18; 1 Kings 17:1). They also have power over the waters to turn them into blood, and to strike the earth with every plague, as often as they desire (11:6). These powers are reminiscent of those of Moses (Exodus 7:20, 8:1-12:36) and Elijah (1 Kings 18:36-40; 2 Kings 1:10-12). Apparently the witnesses will use their powers frequently to torment those who dwell on the earth because when they are dead, many will celebrate (11:10).

- After they have finished their testimony (1,260 days long), "the beast that comes up out of the abyss will make war with them, and overcome them and kill them" (11:7). Notice that no one will be able to harm them until their testimony is finished. The fact that the beast (antichrist) comes out of the abyss probably signifies that he has been resurrected (by the devil) from his fatal wound and is now possessed by Satan (13:3-8, 12). 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" (11:8). Here, Jerusalem is called "the great city", another indication that this will be the second world capital of Babylon the Great (Revelation 17-18). Why is "the great city" mystically called Sodom and Egypt? The word "mystically" is also translated spiritually, figuratively or symbolically in other translations. Sodom indulged in gross immorality, committed abominations (Isaiah 3:9; Jude 1:7) and was ultimately judged by God (Genesis 18-19). The righteous that fled (Lot and his daughters) were spared from judgment. Likewise, the Jewish remnant that flees from the antichrist will be miraculously protected for the second half of the Great Tribulation (Matthew 24:15-22; Revelation 12:6, 14). Egypt was judged by God for enslaving the Jewish people, treating them cruelly and for their idolatrous practices. Just as God sent fire and brimstone upon Sodom, and judgment plagues upon Egypt, He will send terrible judgments upon Jerusalem and the whole world for the second half of the Tribulation (11:2). This will culminate with the completion of the final desolation of Jerusalem during the war of Armageddon (Daniel 9:2).

- "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. And those who dwell on the earth 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" (11:9-10). Notice that people all around the world will look at their dead bodies and will celebrate and send gifts to each other over the course of only three and a half days. This type of global response would only be possible in light of today's rapid electronic communication. The worldwide celebration will be short-lived. After three and a half days, God will raise them from the dead and take them to heaven (11:11-12). Many people throughout the world will witness the death, resurrection and ascension of these two prophets of God; a powerful demonstration of the truth of their testimony. Those who behold them will be terrified and many will give glory to the God of heaven (11:11, 13).



- These two witnesses may be Elijah (a Jew) and Enoch (a Gentile) because these men of God are the only two people mentioned in the Bible who were taken to heaven without physically dying (Genesis 5:24; 2 Kings 2:11). Enoch was a prophet of judgment who announced the coming of the Lord in the days before Noah's flood (Jude 1:14-15). "By faith Enoch was taken up so that he would not see death; and he was not found because God took him up; for he obtained the witness that before his being taken up he was pleasing to God" (Hebrews 11:5). Like Enoch, Elijah was a bold and courageous prophet of judgment (1 Kings 18:36-40). It is prophesied in Malachi (3:1-3, 4:5-6) that Elijah will appear on the earth once again to prepare the way for the Messiah's second coming. The Lord said, "Behold, I am going to send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and terrible day of the LORD" (Malachi 4:5). In the context of this passage, the "day of the LORD" probably means Armageddon and the second coming of Christ. Moses has also been suggested as one of the witnesses because of the many plagues that he brought upon Egypt (Exodus 7:14-12:36) and his presence along with Elijah when Jesus was transfigured (Matthew 17:1-13). The problem with this is Moses would need to be resurrected at the start of the Tribulation and then die a second time (at the hand of the antichrist). This does not seem likely for the Bible says, "it is appointed for men to die once and after this comes judgment" (Hebrews 9:27). Also, resurrected bodies are immortal (1 Corinthians 15:53). After the two witnesses are raised from the dead, there will be a great earthquake, and a tenth of the city will fall and 7,000 people will be killed (11:13).

- Why are these "two prophets" (Revelation 11:10) also called God's "two witnesses" (Revelation 11:3)? A witness, in the New Testament, refers to an individual who testifies to what he has seen or perceived. What is it that they witnessed? The things that they personally witnessed will probably be shared with those who will be left behind after the rapture. Perhaps they will share what they experienced after they were taken from the earth. Elijah went to heaven (2 Kings 2:11) and God "took" Enoch (Genesis 5:24) presumably to heaven also. Is it possible they also witnessed the death, resurrection and ascension of Jesus Christ? Shortly after Jesus' resurrection, "two men" stood near the women who had come to the empty tomb and told them that Jesus had risen (Luke 24:4-7). On the Mount of Olives, when Jesus ascended into heaven, "two men" in white clothing told those who were looking into the sky that Jesus would come in just the same way as they had watched Him go into heaven (Acts 1:9-11). Just before Jesus ascended, he said, "but you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth" (Acts 1:8). What other events in all of human history would be more important to witness than the death, resurrection and ascension of Jesus Christ? Why were two witnesses chosen? Jesus said, "Even in your law it has been written that the testimony of two men is true" (John 8:17; Deuteronomy 19:15).

- The seventh trumpet judgment (third woe; 11:15-19) includes an earthquake and a great hailstorm. Loud voices in heaven will say, "The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ; and He will reign forever and ever" (11:15). The 24 elders will worship God and say, "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" (11:17). It is apparently at

this time that Jesus Christ will receive the inheritance of the kingdom from His Father (Psalm 2:8; Revelation 5:1-14).

\*Revelation 12; The woman, Israel; the red dragon, Satan; the male child, Christ (12:1-6, 13-17); war in heaven (12:7-12)

- The woman represents Israel, who gave Jesus (the male child) to the world (12:1-2, 4-6). The great red dragon represents Satan (12:3-4, 9), "having seven heads and ten horns, and on his heads were seven diadems" (12:3). This is the same description given to the beast and Babylon the Great in Revelation 13:1 and 17:9-12. The only difference is the number and placement of diadems (crowns). The dragon has seven crowns on his heads (12:3) and the beast has 10 crowns on his horns (13:1). The crowns may represent the authority given to the seven rulers (kings) during the first half of the Tribulation (17:9-11) and the authority given to the 10 rulers (kings) serving under the antichrist (beast) during the second half of the Tribulation (17:12-13, 17). The seven heads of the great red dragon probably represent the same kings (horns) of Daniel 7:7-8, 19-26. Shortly after Babylon the Great is formed, according to Daniel 7:8, 20, three kings will fall, leaving the seven kings (heads) referred to in Revelation 12:3, 13:1 and 17:9-12. The characteristics and the actions of the beast and Satan are very similar in these passages. This is an indication that the beast will be possessed by Satan, since they appear to act as one. The dragon's tail "swept away a third of the stars of heaven and threw them to the earth" (12:4). This may refer to Satan's past rebellion against God (Ezekiel 28:15-19), suggesting that a third of the angels joined Satan and were cast out of heaven with him. The dragon tried to "devour" the woman's male child (Jesus Christ) who will one day rule all the nations with a rod of iron. The statement that the child "was caught up to God" is probably a reference to the ascension of Christ (12:5).

- God will prepare a place in the wilderness where Jews will be protected from the wrath of the antichrist during the second half of the Tribulation (12:6, 14; Matthew 24:15-22). "Then the woman fled into the wilderness where she had a place prepared by God, so that there she would be nourished for one thousand two hundred and sixty days" (12:6). Verse 14 equates "time and times and half a time" (time = 1 year, times = 2 years, half a time = half a year), or three and a half years with the prophetic time of verse 6, which is 1,260 days (Daniel 9:27; Revelation 11:2-3, 13:5). Notice that God does not just provide a place, but actually prepares (12:6) a place for His people where they will be nourished (stated twice; 12:6, 14). These details show how God still loves and cares for His people. Matthew and Mark explain that the beast's persecution of the Jews will occur immediately following the abomination of desolation at the Tribulation midpoint (Matthew 24:15-22; Mark 13:14-19). Israeli Jews are instructed to flee to the mountains without hesitation (Matthew 24:16; Mark 13:14; Luke 21:21). Luke warns the Jewish people to flee when they see Jerusalem surrounded by armies and that her desolation is near (Luke 21:20). This verse connects an invasion of Jerusalem (and Israel) with the desecration of the temple at the Tribulation midpoint. The Jewish people "will fall by the edge of the sword, and will be led captive into all the nations; and Jerusalem will be trampled under foot by the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled" (Luke 21:24; Revelation 11:2). The Gentiles will take control of Jerusalem during the second half of the Tribulation. This safe

haven for the Jewish remnant may be located in modern Jordan (ancient Edom, Moab and Ammon; refer to Micah 2:12-13; Daniel 11:41; Isaiah 34:5-6, 63:1-6; Obadiah 1:15-21). Some suggest that it might be located at Petra (in Edom) or locations in the vicinity, south of the Dead Sea. This remnant could include up to one-third of the Israeli Jewish population (Zechariah 13:8-9), which will likely increase dramatically during the first half of the Tribulation. There will be much excitement in Israel as the temple is being constructed and as the nation enjoys the protection and blessing of God.

- The devil and his angels are thrown down to earth. "And there was war in heaven, Michael and his angels waging war with the dragon. The dragon and his angels waged war, and they were not strong enough, and there was no longer a place found for them in heaven. 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" (12:7-9). "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" (12:12). This event probably occurs at the midpoint of the Tribulation, just prior to the fifth trumpet judgment (9:1-12). Satan (dragon), in his great wrath will then persecute the woman (Israel; 12:13) and try to destroy her, in order to thwart the promises of God. "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. 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. 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" (12:14-16). God will miraculously deliver the Jewish remnant to their safe haven, out of Satan's reach. "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" (12:17). When the dragon (Satan) realizes that he will not be able to kill the Jewish remnant, he will make war with Jews and believers in Jesus throughout the world. The beast (antichrist) will likewise persecute the saints (13:7). The declaration of war against believers indicates that there will be a large number of believers in the world at the Tribulation midpoint.

\*Revelation 13; Beast from the sea (antichrist, Babylon the Great; 13:1-10); beast from the earth (false prophet; 13:11-18); dragon (Satan), mark of the beast (13:1-18)

- "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, and on his heads were blasphemous names" (13:1). The beast is like a leopard, has feet like a bear and a mouth like a lion (refer to Daniel 7:4-6). The dragon (Satan) gives him his power and his throne and great authority (13:2). "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; 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?'" (13:3-4). "There was given to him a mouth speaking arrogant words and blasphemies, and authority to act for forty-two months was given to him" (13:5). "And he opened his mouth in blasphemies against God, to blaspheme

His name and His tabernacle, that is, those who dwell in heaven" (13:6). "It was also given to him to make war with the saints and to overcome them, and authority over every tribe and people and tongue and nation was given to him" (13:7). "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" (13:8). "If anyone has an ear, let him hear" (13:9). "If anyone is destined for captivity, to captivity he goes; if anyone kills with the sword, with the sword he must be killed. Here is the perseverance and the faith of the saints" (13:10).

- The dragon is Satan (12:9), and the beast represents Babylon the Great, the end-time global empire, and the antichrist himself (13:1; Revelation 17 and 18). The meaning of the 10 horns and seven heads of the beast is revealed in Revelation 17:9-13. During the second half of the Tribulation period, the final 10 kings of Babylon the Great are represented by the 10 horns. Each horn has a diadem (13:1; crown), perhaps signifying the authority that has been given to these 10 rulers by Satan (13:2, 4; refer also to 12:3). The seven heads represent seven kings (and their kingdoms) of Babylon the Great from the first half of the Great Tribulation. These seven kings (heads) are probably the same kings that are described in Daniel 7. According to Daniel 7, Babylon the Great will begin with 10 kings and kingdoms, but three kings will fall shortly after the formation of this global empire (Daniel 7:8, 20), leaving the seven kings (heads) referred to in Revelation 12:3, 13:1 and 17:3, 7, 9-12. Of these seven, one will be replaced with the beast (antichrist; 17:11, 13:1-3). Satan (a great red dragon) is also described as having seven heads and 10 horns (12:3).

- The antichrist, represented by one of the beast's heads, receives a fatal wound (is slain with a sword, possibly beheaded; 13:3, 12, 14, 20:4) and then he is healed (13:3). The whole world is amazed and follows after the beast and worships him and Satan (13:3-4). These verses strongly suggest that Satan resurrects the antichrist, possesses (indwells) him and gives him authority over every tribe and people and tongue and nation (13:2-5, 7-8, 12, 14). It is likely that the antichrist is resurrected shortly before the Tribulation midpoint. Afterward, he will kill the two witnesses (11:7), desecrate the temple and put a stop to temple sacrifices and offerings (Daniel 9:27). The beast is given authority to act for 42 months (13:5; the last three and a half years of the Great Tribulation; Daniel 9:27; Revelation 11:2-3, 12:6). He will make war with the saints and overcome them (13:7). All who dwell on the earth will worship him, everyone whose name is not found in the book of life (13:8).

- The second beast described in this chapter is the false prophet (16:13, 19:20, 20:10). He will perform great signs and even make fire come down out of heaven. The false prophet will require everyone to worship the beast and to receive the mark of the beast in order to buy or to sell. Satan, the antichrist and the false prophet can be described as the unholy trinity (16:13). "Then I saw another beast coming up out of the earth; and he had two horns like a lamb and he spoke as a dragon" (13:11). "He exercised all the authority of the first beast in his presence. And he makes the earth and those who dwell in it to worship the first beast, whose fatal wound was healed" (13:12). "He performs great signs, so that he even makes fire come down out of heaven to the earth in the presence of men" (13:13). "And he deceives those who dwell on the earth 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" (13:14). "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" (13:15). "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, 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" (13:16-17). "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" (13:18). Since the number of the beast can be calculated, this is probably a reference to the practice of gematria. Gematria is the technique of using the numeric values of words or phrases to find hidden or symbolic meanings. Each letter of the Hebrew and Greek alphabet represents a number and therefore each word has a numeric value. Much has been written about the mysterious number 666 over the years, but only the person who has understanding and wisdom will be able to calculate the number of the beast. Since the identity of the antichrist will not be known for certain until the seven-year "firm covenant" is made with Israel (Daniel 9:27; 2 Thessalonians 2:3-4), it is likely that the exact meaning of 666 will not be fully understood until that time as well.

\*Revelation 14; The 144,000 (14:1-5); three angels' messages (14:6-13); the earth is harvested (14:14-20)

- "Then I looked, and behold, the Lamb was standing on Mount Zion, and with Him one hundred and forty-four thousand, having His name and the name of His Father written on their foreheads" (14:1). The 144,000 are probably the same 144,000 of Israel that are mentioned in Revelation 7:1-8. Apparently, this passage is talking about an event that actually occurs on Mount Zion (Jerusalem) during the Millennium. The fact that Jesus is actually standing on Mount Zion means that this event must occur after the second coming of Christ, when Jesus' feet will touch the earth (Mount of Olives; Zechariah 14:4) for the first time since His ascension (Acts 1:9-11). This momentous occasion appears to be the dedication of Messiah's (millennial) temple. This would explain the presence of the Lamb, the 144,000, the four living creatures and the elders (probably the 24 elders of Revelation 4:10). A voice is heard from heaven that sounds like many waters, loud thunder and harps (14:2). The 144,000 sing a new song before the throne, the four living creatures and the elders (14:3). The "throne" on Mount Zion is probably the throne that will be in Messiah's (millennial) temple. This throne is described by Ezekiel. "He said to me, 'Son of man, this is the place of My throne and the place of the soles of My feet, where I will dwell among the sons of Israel forever'" (Ezekiel 43:7). This verse is part of a passage in Ezekiel that is apparently the dedication of Messiah's temple (Ezekiel 43:1-12). "And the glory of the LORD came into the house by the way of the gate facing toward the east. And the Spirit lifted me up and brought me into the inner court; and behold, the glory of the LORD filled the house" (Ezekiel 43:4-5). God's voice is "like the sound of many waters" (Ezekiel 43:2), just as it is described in Revelation 14:2. Zechariah explains that the Messiah will build His millennial temple and sit and rule on His throne, uniting the offices of king and priest in one person (Zechariah 6:12-13). During the Great Tribulation, a "new song" will be sung in heaven for another momentous occasion (refer to Revelation 5:9).

- When Solomon's temple (first temple) was dedicated, God's glory also filled the temple (1 Kings 8:1-66, 9:1-9). "It happened that when the priests came from the holy place, the cloud filled the house of the LORD, so that the priests could not stand to minister because of the cloud, for the glory of the LORD filled the house of the LORD" (1 Kings 8:10-11). During this magnificent occasion, Solomon was "before the altar of the LORD... on his knees with his hands spread toward heaven" (1 Kings 8:54). He offered up a long prayer and supplication to the Lord before the assembly of Israel. "Solomon offered for the sacrifice of peace offerings, which he offered to the LORD, 22,000 oxen and 120,000 sheep. So the king and all the sons of Israel dedicated the house of the LORD" (1 Kings 8:63). Over the years, God's people turned away from following Him causing the glory of God to leave the temple. God's glory did not return to Zerubbabel's temple (second temple, also known as Herod's temple) and will not return to the Tribulation temple (third temple) either. However, in the same way that God's glory departed Solomon's temple by the way of the east gate (Ezekiel 10:4, 18-19), God's glory will also return to Messiah's temple (fourth temple, also known as the millennial temple) by the way of the east gate (Ezekiel 43:4).

- Perhaps the 144,000 will be involved in the construction of Messiah's temple or serving in it. They may also play a part in the Tribulation temple. "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. And no lie was found in their mouth; they are blameless" (14:4-5).

- Three angels will proclaim three different messages to all the earth, each one following the next, probably in quick succession (14:6-13). The first angel has "an eternal gospel to preach to those who live on the earth, and to every nation and tribe and tongue and people" and says 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 sea and springs of waters" (14:6-7). People living during the Great Tribulation have only a short time to put their trust in Christ and be saved before the hour of God's judgment arrives. God does not want anyone to perish but for all to come to repentance (2 Peter 3:9). "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'" (14:8). Very similar wording is used in Revelation 18:2-3 to describe the fall of Babylon the Great. The fact that this proclamation is made before the third angel's proclamation, indicates that Babylon the Great (the great harlot and the great city), will be judged and destroyed close to the Tribulation midpoint (refer to Revelation 17 and 18). This will send a very strong message to all the inhabitants of the earth, that even the most powerful kingdom will fall if its people are consumed by immorality, greed and idolatry and are drunk with the blood of the saints. Notice that the warning of the third angel would probably occur near the Tribulation midpoint. "Then another angel, a third one, followed them, saying with a loud voice, 'If anyone worships the beast and his image, and receives a mark on his forehead or on his hand, 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'" (14:9-10). "'And the smoke of their torment goes

up forever and ever; they have no rest day and night, those who worship the beast and his image, and whoever receives the mark of his name" (14:11). It would make sense that this warning would be proclaimed about the same time that the mark was required (13:11-18), near the midpoint of the Tribulation, so that people would have an opportunity to heed the warning. The message of the three angels will be very clear; fear God, glorify and worship Him and be saved or face God's wrath for worshiping the beast and receiving his mark.

- "Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on... that they may rest from their labors" (14:13). This verse indicates extreme persecution and suffering of believers during the second half of the Tribulation, so much so that the dead who die in the Lord are called blessed.

- The earth is harvested in the following passage (14:14-20). "Then He who sat on the cloud swung His sickle over the earth, and the earth was reaped" (14:16). People, depicted as grapes, are thrown into the great wine press of the wrath of God (14:19; 19:15). "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" (14:20). The "city" mentioned is probably a reference to Jerusalem. A river of blood 200 miles (325 kilometers) long and about four feet (1.2 meters) deep represents the judgment of many millions of people, probably during the war of Armageddon.

\*Revelation 15; Prelude to the seven bowl judgments (15:1-8)

- This chapter is a prelude to the seven bowl judgments which are described fully in chapter 16. "Then I saw another sign in heaven, great and marvelous, seven angels who had seven plagues, which are the last, because in them the wrath of God is finished" (15:1). Seven angels were given seven golden bowls full of the wrath of God (15:7).

\*Revelation 16; The seven bowl judgments (16:1-21); Armageddon (16:13-21)

- "Then I heard a loud voice from the temple, saying to the seven angels, 'Go and pour out on the earth the seven bowls of the wrath of God'" (16:1). These are the last of the 21 judgments of God and "in them the wrath of God is finished" (15:1). The first bowl "became a loathsome and malignant sore on the people who had the mark of the beast and who worshiped his image" (16:2). The second bowl will turn the seas into blood "and every living thing in the sea died" (16:3). Rivers and springs of waters will be turned to blood from the third bowl (16:4). In judgment, the wicked will be given blood to drink "for they poured out the blood of saints and prophets" (16:6). People will be scorched with fire and fierce heat from the sun as a result of the fourth bowl (16:8). "Then the fifth angel poured out his bowl on the throne of the beast, and his kingdom became darkened; and they gnawed their tongues because of pain, and they blasphemed the God of heaven because of their pains and their sores; and they did not repent of their deeds" (16:10-11). The fifth bowl appears to be a judgment specifically applied to the beast and his kingdom, which is Babylon the Great. These are the same individuals who will be tormented with festering sores because they receive the mark of the beast and worship his image (16:2). In spite of these severe judgments, people will blaspheme the name of God and

refuse to repent (16:9, 11). "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" (16:12). This implies that the kings will come from locations east of the Euphrates River and will march toward Israel near the end of the Tribulation. These kings may represent the "rumors from the East" that will disturb the antichrist (Daniel 11:44).

- Three unclean spirits come out of the mouths of the unholy (satanic) trinity of Satan (dragon), the beast (antichrist) and the false prophet (16:13). The fact that unclean spirits come out of the mouths of the beast and the false prophet is a strong indication that they are possessed by Satan and his demons (see also Revelation 11:7). Satan entered into Judas, the one who betrayed Jesus, on two separate occasions (Luke 22:3, John 13:27). These spirits of demons go out to the kings of the whole world, to gather them together for the war of the great day of God, the Almighty, to the place called Har-Magedon (or Armageddon), in Israel (16:14, 16). The word Har-Magedon is only used once in the Bible (16:16). It is made up of two words in Hebrew: Har (mountain) and Megiddo (a city in the northern part of ancient Israel). The ancient city of Megiddo was built on a hill, and it is therefore called the mountain of Megiddo; Armageddon. The city of Megiddo overlooks a beautiful, large valley known as the Plain of Esdraelon (Jezreel Valley), the scene of many Old Testament battles (Judges 4, 7). The beast and the armies of Babylon the Great will gather in this valley and plan their final campaign against the Jews, against Jerusalem and against God (19:19).

- "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" (16:15; 3:3). Believers should be alert and ready, so that when Jesus returns, they will not be embarrassed. For believers who are not alert and for unbelievers, Jesus' return will be "like a thief" because they will not expect it.

- "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'" (16:17; John 19:30). These words are probably spoken by Jesus, signifying that the wrath of God is finished (15:1). The seventh bowl judgment is poured out during Armageddon resulting in the largest earthquake in history. "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. And every island fled away, and the mountains were not found" (16:19-20). "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" (16:21). The "great city" probably represents Jerusalem (11:8), as the final world capital of Babylon the Great (Revelation 17 and 18). Babylon the Great (the global empire) and her king (the beast) will experience God's wrath during Armageddon and at the second coming of Jesus Christ (19:19-21). During this global earthquake, the cities of the nations will fall, but the "great city" will not. It will, however, be split into three parts. This may be a result of the Mount of Olives splitting at Jesus Christ's second coming (Zechariah 14:4). This "great city" (16:19) is not the same "great city" of Revelation 17 and 18. The original great city of Babylon the Great is destroyed close to the midpoint of the seven-year Tribulation period (Revelation 17 and 18), whereas the second great



city experiences the completion of its final desolation (Daniel 9:2) at the very end of the Tribulation, but is never described as fallen or destroyed. The experiences of the original and second great cities are quite different. In Revelation 16, the second great city is struck by an earthquake, is split in three parts, is pounded with hail and is in the midst of a raging war (Zechariah 12:1-14, 14:1-21; Revelation 19:19-21). The original great city is described as "fallen" (18:2) and is devastated by plagues, pestilence, mourning, famine, and fire (18:8) and will "not be found any longer" (18:21). Since it will "not be found any longer", it cannot be the same city as the second great city. We know that Jerusalem will be rebuilt during the Millennium. "People will live in it, and there will no longer be a curse, for Jerusalem will dwell in security" (Zechariah 14:11).

\*Revelation 17-18; Babylon the Great – the harlot, the beast, the great city (chapters 17 and 18)

- "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, 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'" (17:1-2). The harlot will sit on "many waters", representing "peoples and multitudes and nations and tongues" (17:15). John was invited by the angel to witness the judgment of the great harlot, which symbolizes the global, evil, false religious system and the great city (world capital) of end-time Babylon the Great. This judgment will apparently take place close to the midpoint of the Tribulation period when the beast (antichrist) and the 10 newly appointed kings will destroy the harlot (17:16) and God will judge the great city of Babylon the Great (17:18, 18:8, 20, 19:2). The judgment of the beast is not mentioned in this passage, for that will occur when Jesus Christ returns at the end of the Great Tribulation (19:11-21). The leaders (kings) and the unsaved inhabitants of the earth will become part of this false religious system and participate in its evil practices.

- "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" (17:3). "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, and on her forehead a name was written, a mystery, 'BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND OF THE ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH'" (17:4-5). "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" (17:6). "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'" (17:7).

- The woman and the beast she rides on both represent end-time Babylon the Great. The harlot will be wealthy, materialistic, and wickedly sinful and will deceive the nations with her sorcery (17:4-5; 18:3, 7, 9-19). The fact that the great harlot sits on "many waters", which represent "peoples and multitudes and nations and tongues", and on the "scarlet beast", shows the extent of her control and power (17:1, 3, 15). The word "tribes" (descendants of the 12 tribes of Israel; Jews) is omitted from "peoples and multitudes and nations and tongues" (17:15). A

similar phrase, "peoples and tribes and tongues and nations" is used to describe all the people of the world (5:9, 7:9, 11:9, 13:7, 14:6; word order varies), but in Revelation 17:15, "tribes" has been replaced with "multitudes". This implies that the harlot will not control the Jewish people (or Israel) for the first part of the Great Tribulation and they will apparently not be persecuted. Perhaps this is due to the antichrist's seven-year peace treaty (covenant; Daniel 9:27) with them and the memory of God's divine protection of Israel during the Ezekiel 38 battle. Several verses suggest that God will place a hedge of protection (wall of fire) around Jerusalem and that she will be prosperous and blessed during the first half of the Great Tribulation (Zechariah 2:4-5; Matthew 24:21). The harlot's name, which will be written on her forehead, reveals her evil nature (17:5). Babylon the Great will be responsible for the persecution and death of many believers, to the extent that she will be "drunk with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the witnesses of Jesus" (17:6). "And in her was found the blood of prophets and of saints and of all who have been slain on the earth" (18:24). "Her sins have piled up as high as heaven" (18:5). This false religious system will be used by Satan for the first part of the Tribulation to persecute and kill the saints. At the midpoint of the Tribulation, the antichrist will break the treaty with Israel and make war with Jews and believers (Revelation 12:17, 13:7; Daniel 7:21-22).

- "The beast that you saw was, and is not, and is about to come up out of the abyss and to 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" (17:8). "Here is the mind which has wisdom. The seven heads are seven mountains on which the woman sits, 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" (17:9-10). "The beast which was and is not, is himself also an eighth and is one of the seven, and he goes to destruction" (17:11). "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" (17:12). "These have one purpose, and they give their power and authority to the beast" (17:13). "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" (17:14). "And he said to me, 'The waters which you saw where the harlot sits, are peoples and multitudes and nations and tongues'" (17:15). "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" (17:16). "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" (17:17). "The woman whom you saw is the great city, which reigns over the kings of the earth" (17:18).

- In the last part of this chapter (17:8-18), the angel tells John the "the mystery of the woman and of the beast that carries her, which has seven heads and ten horns" (17:7). The angel begins by first describing the beast. Almost the identical phrase is used twice in the same verse (17:8) to describe the beast that "was and is not and will (is about to) come", emphasizing its importance. A shorter version of this phrase, "was and is not" is used in 17:11. In this passage, the beast is a man (the antichrist, referred to as "he") and is also a "king" (17:10-11). The tense

of 17:8 suggests that the beast "was" just recently present but now "is not", but will be coming soon. This observation, then, must occur just before the midpoint of the Tribulation. The beast (antichrist), which "was" one of the seven kings (17:11) has apparently been killed because he currently "is not". It appears that the antichrist will be raised to life because he will come out of the abyss (17:8; 11:7). The beast would probably not be in the abyss unless he had been killed because the abyss is the prison for demons, and Satan is their king (9:11, 20:1-3). Satan will apparently raise the antichrist from the dead and possess him during the second half of the Tribulation (17:8). Unbelievers will "wonder" when they see that the antichrist has come back to life (17:8). At the return of Christ, the beast will "go to destruction" (17:8, 11) as he is thrown alive into the lake of fire (19:20). Even though the angel tells John the mystery, "wisdom" is still required to understand (17: 9). "Wisdom" is also required to "calculate the number of the beast" (13:18). The beast in this chapter (Revelation 17) not only describes the antichrist, but also describes Babylon the Great, the end-time global kingdom (17:7, 9, 16:19, 19:19). Babylon the Great also represents the great harlot (woman; 17:5) and the great city of Babylon the Great (17:18).

- Revelation 17 and 18 is one of the main passages in the Bible explaining the mystery of the beast, the woman (great harlot), Babylon the Great and the great city and how they are all connected. The beast has seven heads (17:3, 7), which represent seven mountains and seven kings (17:9-10). The seven mountains are probably a reference to the seven kingdoms that the seven kings rule. The mountain described in Daniel 2:35, 44-45 represents the eternal kingdom of God. This passage is probably describing the same 10 kings (horns) of Daniel 7, who rule the end-time global kingdom called Babylon the Great. According to Daniel 7, three kings will fall shortly after Babylon the Great is formed, leaving the seven kings (heads) referred to in Revelation 17:9-10, 12:3 and 13:1. Only the remaining seven kings and their kingdoms will be subject to the control and influence of the woman. Of these seven, five more will fall (17:10), leaving just two kings, one of them being the antichrist, and then the antichrist will be killed (13:3). Actually, of the original seven kings, six of them must fall because the beast becomes one of the seven (17:11). After the antichrist is killed, one king will remain. Perhaps this last, lone king will become the false prophet. This beast is one of the seven kings, yet is also an eighth (17:11), perhaps signifying that after he comes out of the abyss, he is fundamentally different from the other kings, even his former self. He will also be an eighth king in the sense that he becomes a king after the first 10 kings (or first seven kings) are already established and after the first three kings have been "pulled out by the roots" (Dan 7:8). The eighth king, then, probably represents the king of Babylon the Great. In order to fulfill Jeremiah's prophecy (Jeremiah 25:11), the nations (including the Jewish people) must serve the king of Babylon for approximately the last four years of the Great Tribulation (refer to Jeremiah 25 commentary and section 54, The 70-Year Bible Prophecies). This implies that the antichrist will become the king and supreme ruler of Babylon the Great about three years after the start of the Great Tribulation. It is very interesting that the antichrist is not one of the original 10 kings of Babylon the Great, yet he has the authority to make a firm covenant with Israel at the very beginning of the Great Tribulation (Daniel 7:19-25, 9:27; Revelation 17:8-18).

- The 10 horns are 10 kings who have "not yet received a kingdom, but they receive authority as kings with the beast for one hour. These have one purpose, and they give their power and authority to the beast" (17:12-13). Ten kings will be chosen to rule over the 10 kingdoms (regions) of the world and to serve under the beast. The beast and his new rulers will "wage war against the Lamb, and the Lamb will overcome them" (17:14). They will also "hate the harlot and will make her desolate and naked, and will eat her flesh and will burn her up with fire" (17:16). This verse describes the demise of the global false religious system. Notice how intense the beast's hatred for the great harlot is and how extremely severe her judgment. The beast will proclaim himself as god and demand that the world worship him alone (2 Thessalonians 2:3-4). He will be given power and authority by Satan and will continue to strengthen his position as the supreme ruler (king; Daniel 11:36) of the world and Babylon the Great.

- Babylon the Great is also described as a great and strong city which reigns over the kings of the earth (17:18, 18:10, 21). This implies that this great city is the world capital of a global government and a global empire and resides in a powerful, wealthy and influential nation. The city will have a bustling seaport (18:17-19) and will be characterized by the "sound of harpists and musicians" and craftsmen of many trades (18:22). The merchants of the earth will become rich from her and by the wealth of her sensuality (18:3, 11-19), and all the nations will be deceived by her sorcery (18:23).

- An angel, having great authority, will come down from heaven and cry out, "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. 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" (18:1-3). The second angel of Revelation 14 will also announce, "Fallen, fallen is Babylon the great, she who has made all the nations drink of the wine of the passion of her immorality" (14:8). These proclamations are a strong indication that Babylon the Great (the great harlot and the great city), will be judged and destroyed near the Tribulation midpoint. Refer to Revelation 14:6-13 for further details. The great harlot must be destroyed by the beast and his 10 kings (17:16) so that the beast can command the worship of himself. Demons and unclean spirits will dwell in the great city, which is known for its immorality and materialism (18:2-3). God's people are warned by a voice from heaven, saying, "Come out of her, my people, so that you will not participate in her sins and receive of her plagues; for her sins have piled up as high as heaven, and God has remembered her iniquities" (18:4-5). In a similar fashion, Lot and his family were warned to leave Sodom before it was destroyed by God for its wickedness (Genesis 19:12-13).

- Babylon the Great will be judged severely by God and will be paid back "double according to her deeds" with "torment and mourning" (18:6-7). In one day "her plagues will come, pestilence and mourning and famine, and she will be burned up with fire; for the Lord God who judges her is strong" (18:8). The kings of the earth will "weep and lament over her when they see the smoke of her burning, 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'"

(18:9-10). The phrase "one hour" is used three times in chapter 18 to emphasize how swiftly and unexpectedly her judgment will come (18:10, 17, 19). The merchants of the earth will weep and mourn over her because they became rich by her wealth and "no one buys their cargoes any more – cargoes of gold and silver and precious stones... and slaves and human lives" (18:3,11-13). They "will stand at a distance because of the fear of her torment, weeping and mourning, 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; 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, and were crying out as they saw the smoke of her burning, saying, 'What city is like the great city?'" (18:15-18). "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!'" (18:19). Believers will rejoice because God has pronounced judgment for them against her (18:20). In judgment, the great city is pictured as disappearing into the sea; "Then a strong angel took up a stone like a great millstone and threw it into the sea, saying, 'So will Babylon, the great city, be thrown down with violence, and will not be found any longer'" (18:21). Since the great city is a seaport city (18:17-19), perhaps it will literally be overcome by waves as it is judged and will disappear into the sea forever. Jeremiah appears to be describing judgment on the great city of Babylon the Great when he says, "The sea has come up over Babylon; she has been engulfed with its tumultuous waves" (Jeremiah 51:42). "For the LORD is going to destroy Babylon, and He will make her loud noise vanish from her. And their waves will roar like many waters; the tumult of their voices sounds forth" (Jeremiah 51:55). Musicians, craftsmen and merchants will no longer be found in the city (18:22). All the nations will be deceived by her sorcery (18:23). In her will be found the blood of prophets and of saints "and of all who have been slain on the earth" (18:24).

- After the first great city is destroyed, a new world capital must be chosen for the second half of the Tribulation. It is possible that the antichrist will choose Jerusalem (see also Revelation 16:19 commentary). There are several reasons to propose this. First, the outer court of the Tribulation temple will be given to the nations, "and they will tread under foot the holy city for forty-two months" (11:2), which represents the second half of the Tribulation. Second, Babylon the Great and Jerusalem are both referred to as "the great city" (11:8, 16:19, 17:18, 18:10, 21). Third, the antichrist will make numerous appearances in Israel during the end times. He will be in Israel at the beginning of the Tribulation, at the midpoint, during the second half and at the close of the Tribulation (Daniel 9:27, 11:41; Revelation 19:19-21). Fourth, Jerusalem (especially the Temple Mount) is the most important place on earth and is the center of the world (Psalm 87:1-3; Ezekiel 5:5, 38:12). Since the antichrist wants to be like God, it would make sense that he would also want to rule God's land (Israel) and rule from God's holy city (Jerusalem) and from the Tribulation temple. At the midpoint of the Great Tribulation, he will take "his seat in the temple of God, displaying himself as being God" (2 Thessalonians 2:4), and will require all to worship him and his image (13:12-15).

- The destruction of the great harlot and the great city does not mean the end of Babylon the Great, for new Babylon the Great will continue on, more powerful than ever for the second half

of the Great Tribulation, but with a more sinister and satanic nature. New Babylon the Great will have new leadership, a new false religion, a new world capital and a new purpose. For additional information about new Babylon the Great, refer to Revelation 16:19, 17:8-18, 19:19 and for the original Babylon the Great, refer to Revelation 14:8, 17:1-11, 15-18, 18:1-24. New Babylon the Great will be under the leadership of the beast (antichrist), empowered by Satan and his 10 newly appointed kings. The beast, Satan, the false prophet and new Babylon the Great will become almost one in their purpose and nature. The beast will claim to be God, will demand worship, will wage war against Jews and believers, and "will devour the whole earth and tread it down and crush it" (Daniel 7:23). Satan will be in control of the entire world, as the beast becomes the supreme ruler and king of new Babylon the Great. Satan's goal is not only to rule the world, but to be like God; to be worshipped like God (13:4, 12, 15) and to defeat God. Babylon the Great will not be destroyed until the last day of the Great Tribulation, during the war of Armageddon (16:19). The "beast and the kings of the earth and their armies" will assemble to make war against Jesus Christ at His second coming (19:19). The beast and false prophet will be thrown alive into the lake of fire and the rest will be killed when Jesus Christ returns (19:20-21).

\*Revelation 19; Fourfold hallelujah (19:1-6); Lamb's marriage and marriage supper (19:7-10); second coming of Christ and Armageddon (19:11-21)

- Four hallelujahs are proclaimed in the beginning of chapter 19 (19:1-6). "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; because His judgments are true and righteous; for He has judged the great harlot who was corrupting the earth with her immorality, and He has avenged the blood of His bond-servants on her'" (19:1-2). "And a second time they said, 'Hallelujah! Her smoke rises up forever and ever'" (19:3). God will judge the great harlot (Babylon the Great) because of her immorality and wickedness (17:1-6, 18:1-8, 20). God is praised in the heavens; "Hallelujah! For the Lord our God, the Almighty, reigns" (19:4-6).

- "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" (19:7). Jesus' bride is all believers and her fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints (19:8). The marriage supper of the Lamb will probably take place on earth toward the beginning of the 1,000 year (Millennium) reign of Jesus Christ. "Blessed are those who are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb" (19:9).

- At the second coming of Jesus Christ to earth, during the war of Armageddon, all who oppose Him will be defeated. "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" (19:11). "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" (19:12). "He is clothed with a robe dipped in blood, and His name is called The Word of God" (19:13). Jesus' robe is dipped in blood signifying He is coming to judge. "And the armies which are in heaven, clothed in fine linen, white and clean, were following Him on white horses" (19:14). "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" (19:15). "And on His robe and on His thigh He has a name written, 'KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS'" (19:16). "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" (19:19). During the war of Armageddon, Babylon the Great, led by the antichrist, will try and defeat Jesus Christ at His second coming (16:13-16, 19). "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" (19:20). "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" (19:21).

\*Revelation 20; Satan bound (20:1-3); saints resurrected (20:4-6); Satan and unbelievers judged (20:7-15)

- Satan is bound for a thousand years and thrown into the abyss, "so that he would not deceive the nations any longer, until the thousand years were completed" (20:1-3). Believers that lose their life after the rapture and during the Tribulation days will come to life and reign with Christ in the millennial kingdom on earth. "And I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded because of their testimony of Jesus and because of the word of God, and those who had not worshiped the beast or his image, and had not received the mark on their forehead and on their hand; and they came to life and reigned with Christ for a thousand years" (20:4). Unbelievers will be resurrected after the Millennium for the purpose of judgment (20:5).

- Satan will be released after the thousand years are completed to deceive the nations. The nations will then gather together for war against Jesus; "the number of them is like the sand of the seashore" (20:7-8). Fire will come down from heaven and devour them. Satan will then be thrown into the lake of fire (20:9-10).

- Unbelievers will be judged at the great white throne judgment (20:11-15). "Then death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire" (20:14). "And if anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire" (20:15).

\*Revelation 21; New heaven, new earth and new Jerusalem (21:1-27)

- God will reveal a new heaven and a new earth, unstained by sin. "Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth passed away, and there is no longer any sea" (21:1). "And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, made ready as a bride adorned for her husband" (21:2). "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, 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.' And He who sits on the throne said, 'Behold, I am making all things new'" (21:3-5).

- "Then one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls full of the seven last plagues came and spoke with me, saying, 'Come here, I will show the bride, the wife of the Lamb'" (21:9). "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, having the glory of God. Her brilliance was like a very costly stone, as a stone of crystal-clear jasper" (21:10-11). "The city is laid out as a square", and its length and width and height are each 1,500 miles (2,400 kilometers; 21:16). "And the street of the city was pure gold, like transparent glass" (21:21). "I saw no temple in it, for the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb are its temple" (21:22). "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" (21:23). "The nations will walk by its light, and the kings of the earth will bring their glory into it" (21:24). "In the daytime (for there will be no night there) its gates will never be closed; and they will bring the glory and the honor of the nations into it; 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" (21:25-27).

\*Revelation 22; New Jerusalem (22:1-5); final words (22:6-21)

- New Jerusalem is described in the beginning of this chapter (22:1-5) and then final words are given (22:6-21). "Then he showed me a river of the water of life, clear as crystal, coming from the throne of God and of the Lamb, 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" (22:1-2). "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; they will see His face, and His name will be on their foreheads" (22:3-4). "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" (22:5).

- The angel said to John, "'Do not seal up the words of the prophecy of this book, for the time is near'" (22:10). "'Behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me, to render to every man according to what he has done'" (22:12). "'I am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end'" (22:13). "'I, Jesus, have sent My angel to testify to you these things for the churches. I am the root and the descendant of David, the bright morning star'" (22:16). "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" (22:17). "He who testifies to these things says, 'Yes, I am coming quickly.' Amen. Come, Lord Jesus. The grace of the Lord Jesus be with all. Amen" (22:20-21).