



Revelation

HOW TO STUDY IT
...AND HAVE IT MAKE SENSE

PREFACE

The purpose of this booklet is to help the sincere seeker of truth find a way to study Revelation so that it provides real, reasonable, Scriptural, and historical sense in its interpretation. This booklet will not give you all of the answers. No booklet this size could possibly do that. It will give you some answers. It will also give you a reliable outline into which future answers can be placed, and it will suggest methods of study which will help in finding those other answers. It is the prayer of the publishers that this little booklet will help its readers to know, respect, love, and honor God in a way not previously possible.

Revelation - How to Study It and Have it Make Sense

CHAPTER 1: AN IMPORTANT INTRODUCTION

Why?

Why do you want to study Revelation? This *is* an important question. Some people seek this information to look knowledgeable to others. Some like to discuss it because they enjoy frightening others with colorful prognostications. Some others look into it because it is now fashionable to know about Revelation. All of these reasons are improper. Revelation was written for sincere and humble servants, called of God, who seek to learn what He has been doing, is doing, and will be doing. He will reward those who diligently seek Him in faith. (Hebrews 11:6)

The Title

The title of this last book of the Bible is taken from its first verse: “The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, to show unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass; and he sent and signified it by his angel unto his servant John.”^{*} It is important to consider the meaning and implication of this title.

When John received this message from God, Jesus had been gone from the earth for about 60 years. This was the last written message to His Church, all of whom wanted to know about his return. Revelation, while it *does* deal with Jesus’ return, also does much more. It tells about the nearly 2,000 years which would intervene *before* Jesus’ return. Note the words again in the first verse: “...things which must *shortly* come to pass.” Revelation is a history *in advance* of the events in the religious world *starting* in John’s day and leading into the time of the return of Jesus. One of the purposes of this booklet will be to lead you through that history. Many seem to think that Revelation is only about events when the Lord returns. Much of the book, however, is about history that, in our day, is already past.

^{*} This booklet will use the King James version of the Bible since it is yet the most common English Bible in use. If different translations are helpful, they will be specified.

“The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, to show unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass...” This phrase has another implication in it. If you read it carefully, it says: “This book is about the way the understanding of Jesus will *gradually* be given to his church *beginning with the time of his departure, and continuing through* many years as the events of history clarify to all of his servants the prophecies concerning him.” In other words, Revelation is *not primarily* about how Jesus will be revealed *when he returns*, but rather it is *primarily* about how he will be revealed to his Church *while he is yet absent* — how the events of history will gradually allow the church to understand Jesus’ power and presence with them *before* his personal return. Understanding this *major* concept will change the way this book is interpreted. The book does deal with his personal return, of course, but verse 1 cautions us against stressing this one event.

Does It Mean What It Says?

You may have noticed in verse 1 another peculiar phrase: “...he sent and SIGNIFIED it by his angel...”

Many people quickly fall into erroneous interpretations of Revelation because they fail to note this phrase. “SIGNIFIED” here means “PUT INTO SIGNS (OR SYMBOLS).” This booklet will help you learn how to interpret these symbols. First, however, it is mandatory that we *believe* the first verse and realize that this book is in symbols or a code language. When it says “beast,” it does not really mean a beast; when it says “heaven,” it may not *mean* heaven; when it says “angel,” it may not refer to an actual spirit-being. Difficult? Yes! Once the symbols are unlocked, however, the results are, indeed, beautiful — as we might expect from a book By God, GIVEN to Jesus, SENT through an angel, and WRITTEN by the Apostle John.

Last For a Reason

Revelation is placed last in the Bible for a reason. Not only was it the last book written, but it presupposes that its readers will have a working Familiarity with all of the other books of the Bible which come before it. Revelation does not stand alone. In it are quotations and references to other parts of the Bible. To study Revelation without a knowledge of the rest of the Bible is like trying to study calculus before learning arithmetic.

A successful appreciation of Revelation relies on a solid background of Scriptural information and principles. The next chapter will attempt to summarize the Biblical story. Without this information, going further will be fruitless. The study of Revelation will require scholarship, faith, and prayer, but “blessed is he” who knows and lives by what he finds. (Revelation 22:7)

CHAPTER II: THE OTHER HALF OF THE GOSPEL

Genesis begins with the fall of man. Revelation concludes with the restoration of man. In Genesis the curse falls on man. In Revelation the curse is “no more.” In Genesis are the promises that the “seed of the woman” and the seed of Abraham will destroy the enemy and bless all of the families of the earth. In Revelation, that seed (the Lamb and 144,000), destroys the enemy and blesses all of the families of the earth. This is the kernel of the Gospel.

In another sense Jesus (the “Lamb” of Revelation) is also the kernel of the Gospel. Many fail to see or to acknowledge the SUBSTITUTIONARY sacrifice He made. The Scriptures abound with information which demonstrates that “the man Christ Jesus ... gave himself a *ransom* (a corresponding price) for *all, to be testified in due time*. (1 Timothy 2:5, 6) It was Adam who sinned, and *in him* died the entire race. It was Jesus, the “lamb of God” which took away that *one original sin* (singular — John 1:29; 1 Corinthians 15:21, 22; Romans 5:19). This fulfilled the standard stated in God’s law: A LIFE FOR A LIFE. The death of “the man Christ Jesus” guaranteed the release of Adam (and all *in him*) from death so that they will be granted a *new trial*. Some obtain that release early — *now* in the Christian Age. (Romans 8:1) Most of mankind will obtain that release when the KINGDOM COMES (Matthew 6:10) when they will be judged as their work “shall be” (Revelation 22:12).

* * * * *

(1) Why did God create the earth and mankind? (2) What is God doing in the earth today? (3) What is the Gospel? (4) What is the Church? (5) What is the ultimate purpose of the Church? (6) Are all outside the Church forever lost? (7) What about the Jew?

Answers to these questions lay the necessary groundwork for an examination of Revelation. Without comprehending God’s overall plan for mankind, the study of a subject like Revelation certainly will bear little fruit. Because of this we devote this chapter to a consideration of the Gospel — the “good news” of the Bible. Please understand that we do not want to delay the examination of Revelation for you; but Jesus cannot be revealed to the mind which does not fully comprehend His purposes. This chapter is designed to review truths long lost sight of — truths which help Revelation make sense.

The title of this chapter, “The Other Half of the Gospel,” suggests that what we regularly hear preached as the Gospel is incomplete — and this is, indeed, the case. An examination of the Scriptural definition of the Gospel will prove that the Gospel is actually “good news” in a fuller sense than most Christians have ever dreamed.

In Galatians 3:8 the Apostle Paul makes an interesting statement. He claims that the Gospel was preached to Abraham. This is a concept not generally appreciated — that the Gospel is also in the Old Testament. Abraham and his descendants believed God and His promises, and their belief, the core of traditional Judaism, is based upon the Gospel which God preached to Abraham. What is this belief? It is basically this: Messiah will come and bless everyone on earth through the agency of Abraham's children (or seed). This blessing will include resurrecting those who died. (It was because of Abraham's faith in the resurrection that he was willing to offer his son, Isaac, as a sacrifice to God. Hebrews 11:17-19)

Paul summed up all of this belief in the words spoken to Abraham, "In thee shall all nations be blessed. *Remember*, Paul called this very promise "the Gospel." It is a beautiful Gospel, too. It promises that *all* mankind will be blessed. (See the original promise in Genesis 22:15-18.)

Christianity generally does not define the Gospel in quite the same manner. The teaching of Christendom about the Gospel has been basically this: Faithful believers in Christ will go to heaven when they die.

A chart to compare these two versions of the Gospel might be helpful:

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO:	
JUDIASM:	CHRISTENDOM:
Messiah will bless all on earth through Abraham's seed and will even raise those who have died to enjoy the blessings.	Faithful Christians go to heaven after death.

On the surface Judaism seems better, doesn't it? After all, it *includes all* men in the blessing, whereas Christendom *excludes all* except Christians. But our examination of the matter is not complete. As we took into it more, remember that we cannot immediately judge either of these definitions of the Gospel as being wrong. Judaism got its belief from God's own prophets; we would, indeed, be presumptuous to ignore that testimony. And Jesus, who was a Jew, never disputed the Gospel as preached to Abraham. But we must acknowledge that the Bible also teaches that faithful Christians will go to heaven. These two versions of the Gospel are not inharmonious. By accepting them both, we learn the full Gospel.

The Gospel is summarized in God's promise to Abraham, "In thy seed shall all nations be blessed." What does this mean? Notice that it involves two distinct and separate parts:

1. Abraham's seed
2. All nations (or families) of earth.

Abraham's seed is not totally as Abraham might have expected, for the Apostle informs us in Galatians 3:29 that "If ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed and heirs according to the promise." This is a key to our understanding. *It says that faithful Christians are counted by God as being Abraham's seed or children.* It also says that *because* of this they become "heirs" according to the "promise." *What* promise? The promise was that the seed would bless everyone else. *Now* we are at the crux of the matter. If true Christians *are* the seed, we see God's eventual purpose for them: the blessing of all the nations of the earth, and the resurrecting of all those who have died just as Abraham expected) so that they too could be blessed. Now our chart is harmonious. Those who go to heaven will be part of the great Messiah which will bless those here on earth. (Obadiah 21)

THE CORRECTED GOSPEL ACCORDING TO:	
JUDAISM:	TRUE CHRISTIANITY:
Messiah will bless all on earth through Abraham's seed and will even raise those who have died to enjoy the blessings	Faithful Christians go to heaven after death AND will be part of the promised Messiah, which will raise and bless all families of the earth. Galatians 4:28

But the chart is harmonious *only* if we retain the "other half of the Gospel" — the part Judaism believes. And that part is, not only will the "seed" be saved, but so will the rest of mankind! It is actually saying that there are *two salvations*. First, the seed (true Christians) are saved; and secondly, they (the seed) save and bless everyone else. Yes, the complete Gospel really is GOOD NEWS! (Romans 11:28-32; 1 Timothy 4:10)

The New Testament informs us that there will be two kinds of resurrection, one in heaven for the true seed (the "*first* resurrection"), and one on earth for all the rest of mankind. This is the *whole Gospel* Christendom and Judaism both have been incomplete in themselves. Each had one half of the Gospel. But now we see that those who will go to heaven in the first resurrection will not go to float on clouds and play harps, but rather to participate with Christ in the rulership of his kingdom which will bless all the families here on earth. Christ's kingdom will have two parts: heavenly and earthly. If this were not so, how could the Lord have taught the disciples to pray, "Thy Kingdom come, thy will be done in *earth*"? (Matthew 6:10) Or how could the angels have predicted "Peace on *earth*, good will toward men"? (Luke 2:12-14) Or how would it be a blessing for the meek to "inherit the earth"? (Matthew 5:5)

Paul also mentions these *two salvations* in 1 Timothy 4:10 where he says, "we trust in the living God who is the Savior of *all* men, specially of those that believe." It is clear that Paul still had in mind the *seed* and *all men* as being the two parts of the Gospel because he says that salvation is:

1. for all men
and
2. *especially* for those that believe.

The “special” salvation is, of course, the salvation of the “first resurrection” (the heavenly resurrection — Revelation 20:6). It is the salvation of true Christians, those whom God recognizes as His own true Church — “the seed of Abraham.”

Understanding the two salvations, the earthly and the heavenly (or the two parts of the Gospel), answers many questions about certain scriptures. For instance, consider Matthew 11:11: “Verily I say unto you, Among them that are born of women there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist: notwithstanding he that is least in the Kingdom of heaven is greater than he.” This tells us what a great man John the Baptist was. Yet in the same verse we have our Lord’s own words that John will not be a part of the heavenly resurrection! John instead will be a part of all the nations of the earth who will be raised and blessed right here on the earth by “the seed” — the Church raised to heavenly glory. (Hebrews 11:39, 40)

So then, in short, the Gospel is the beautiful promise that all men will be raised and be given an opportunity to have a perfect, everlasting life on the earth. The exception to this is those who faithfully serve the Lord during this present life since Jesus’ first advent. They will live in heaven as spirit beings, and their job will be to bless the race of man on earth. The true Gospel is a *combination* of the best basic traditional expectations of both Jews and Christians.

* * * * *

We began this chapter with a list of seven questions that are basic to an understanding of God’s plan (and hence are basic to an understanding of the details of prophecy that are found in Revelation). To close this chapter we will ask the same seven questions and this time give concise answers to cement our understanding and memory before we proceed to the principal topic.

1. Why did God create the earth and mankind?

He created because love is one of His primary attributes, and true love must *give*. Therefore, he formed the earth “to be inhabited” (Isaiah 45:18) by a perfect race of people who will love and serve Him freely and to whom He will freely give blessings and life. This creation is “not in vain.” (Isaiah 45:17, 18; Psalm 104:5)

2. What is God doing in the earth today?

He is doing several things so that His purpose as stated above is being accomplished — so that His word will “not return unto Him void but it shall accomplish that which He pleases, and it shall prosper in the thing whereunto He sent it.” (Isaiah 55:11) The Lord is permitting evil to have full sway in the earth so that man will be able fully to see its results. (Ecclesiastes 1:13; 3:10) Therefore, in the Kingdom reign of righteousness, mankind will be able to make a free and intelligent choice between good and evil after having experienced both. But God is doing more. He is choosing “a people for His name” (Acts 15:14), which we will discuss in a coming question.

3. What is the Gospel?

As we have just seen, the Gospel is God’s good news to man that His original plan has not failed — that man *will* be made alive and receive God’s blessings eternally on a perfected earth. This is all to be done by a promised “seed.”

4 & 5. What is the Church? and What is the ultimate purpose for the Church?

The true Church of the Bible is that promised seed just mentioned, and its ultimate purpose is, by God’s grace, to participate in God’s own work of accomplishing His original design for the earth and its inhabitants. One of the main things that God is doing in the earth today is choosing that Church — one member here, one there. As Acts 15:14 declares, God, having found too few Jews faithful at the first advent to constitute this Church, is also “visiting the Gentiles” — not to bless or save them now, but *to take out* from their midst “a people for His name.” This “people for His name” are those who are being called of God and who are faithfully suffering with Christ. The Greek word for “Church” (*ekklesia*) literally means “a calling out.” These called-out ones are the true Church. They will receive the first or heavenly resurrection. Then they will be “priests of God and of Christ and shall reign with Him a thousand years.” (Revelation 20:6) They will reign to bless all the nations of the earth. What a prospect! This is the very reason that James says God is taking a people for His name: that “after this ... the residue of men might seek after the Lord.” (Acts 15:13-18)

6. Are all outside the Church forever lost?

Of course not! The absurdity of this position should now be clear to us all. The whole purpose of the Church is to bless all those who are outside of the Church. God is not dealing with the world in general now. He is merely choosing out from among them those who will become members of the Church. After the Church is completely chosen and she becomes the bride of Christ at his second advent, then “the Spirit (of Christ) and the bride (the Church) say, Come; and whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.” (Revelation 22:17)

7. What about the Jew?

Although Israel (as a nation) has lost the exclusive opportunity of becoming the Church (Romans 11:25), Israel, too, shall be saved (Romans 11:26). It is through the natural seed of Abraham, the Jew, that God promises to give His New Covenant to all mankind (Jeremiah 31:31-34; Isaiah 60:5). Israel is now reestablished as a nation. God put her there. She will be the nation from whom the blessings will flow to all the world, for it is written, “Many nations shall come and say, Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord and to the house of the God of Jacob, and He will teach us of His ways, and we will walk in His paths, for the law shall go forth of Zion, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem.” (Micah 4:2-4) Likewise it is said, “Yea, many people and strong nations shall come to seek the Lord of hosts in Jerusalem and to pray before the Lord. Thus saith the Lord of hosts- In those days it shall come to pass that ten men shall take hold of the skirt of him that is a Jew, saying, We will go with you, for we have heard that God is with you.” (Zechariah 8:22, 23)

A Note Before Continuing:

Many reading this booklet might consider themselves “New Testament Christians,” and it might be noticed that we are using Old Testament texts as liberally as New Testament texts. It is, therefore, timely to point out from the New Testament that the Old Testament is as valid to us as the New, and that anyone rejecting its testimony cannot hope to understand what the Lord is doing. The Old Testament is not yet fulfilled entirely, and many of its prophecies are finding their fulfillment before our eyes today.

First, note the following New Testament texts which commend the study of the “Scriptures” and *remember* that the only Scriptures then in existence to study were the books of the Old Testament prophets: Acts 17:2, 3; Acts 17:10-13; Acts 18:24-28; Romans 1:1, 2; Romans 16:25-27; 2 Timothy 3:14-17; 2 Peter 3:15-18; Matthew 22:28-30; Galatians 3:8; Galatians 4:28-31; 1 Timothy 5:18; James 2:8; James 4:5; 1 Peter 2:5, 6.

Additionally, we have the strong testimony of Paul (Romans 15:4) that the Old Testament is for “our learning.” And Peter twice supports this view. In 1 Peter 1:10-12 he explains that the prophets did *not* minister to themselves, but to *us*, Christians. In 2 Peter 1:16-21 he points out that the Old Testament prophecies are a “*more sure*” authority to us than was Peter’s own experience on the mount of transfiguration. And he says we should listen to these prophecies “until the day dawn” — that is, they are valuable to us even up into the time of the Lord’s second coming. If, therefore, we accept the authority of the Apostles (the New Testament), we cannot reject the Old Testament’s testimony and authority.

CHAPTER III: SOME IMPORTANT BASICS

What This Booklet Is and Is Not Supposed To Do

It is not the purpose of this booklet to give an in-depth or detailed interpretation of Revelation. Instead, it will provide an outline that is generally accepted as sound by serious, enlightened students of the Bible. It also will provide the tools and processes which, if applied, will help to understand the meaning of this wonderful prophecy.

Do Not Add Or Take Away

Revelation 22:18, 19 is a warning: “If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book, And if any shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life...” Some, unfortunately, have been so frightened by this as to miss the point. No sincere Christian would want to add or subtract anything from God’s Word. Time, however, has done that very thing. Now that we live at a time when the older manuscripts and fragments of the Bible have been found, we are learning that most translations have been flawed by omissions or additions to what was originally written. In this booklet we may state that certain words or sections of Revelation are SPURIOUS — fraudulent. They have somehow been allowed to creep into the Bible over the centuries. We may also state that extra words should be added. We base these statements on the best available scholarship being done on older manuscripts. Rather than adding to or subtracting from the Bible, we are trying to *correct* the additions and subtractions which *have already been made*.

It is also of value to know that the early Bibles did not have chapters, verses, punctuation, or even spaces between Words! It is easy to understand why translators must struggle so.

Five Basic Methods In Good Bible Study

Revelation, like the rest of the Bible, is best understood when five methods of investigation are kept in mind. (There are *other* important elements in good Bible study, but these five are of fundamental importance.)

I. TOPICAL STUDY

Studying *one topic*, or even *one word*, to find its consistent meaning will help the reader to avoid jumping to conclusions which the writer did not intend. For instance, a study of IMMORTALITY in all the New Testament books will reap far greater rewards than the study of Ephesians as a unit. An exhaustive concordance (such as STRONG’S) is invaluable in this kind of study. Revelation should, thus, not only be studied by chapter, but also by subject. For instance, a study of the phrase “peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues” will reveal a great deal throughout Revelation.

II. SYMBOLISM STUDY

When topical study is used, it is possible that seeming contradictions will arise. This frequently is because a word can be used both symbolically and literally. (The Bible *usually* explains the symbol when we search.) For instance, it is possible to find texts which indicate the destruction of the earth (e.g., 2 Peter 3:10). It also is possible to find texts which state or imply the opposite (e. g., Matthew 5:5; 6:10; Ecclesiastes 1:4). Once we learn that EARTH sometimes *symbolizes the current social order*, the difficulty disappears and we have a reliable symbol to use in prophetic interpretation. The planet will remain; the social order (which is corrupt) will be destroyed and replaced with a perfect one. Revelation is a book of symbols (Revelation 1:1).

III. STUDY USING TYPES AND SHADOWS

Closely related to symbols are types and shadows; these are events which have occurred but which are prophetic of more significant events later. For instance, Paul, by saying in 1 Corinthians 5:7, “Christ, *our Passover*, is sacrificed for us,” opens up an entire new world of investigation. He is clearly telling us that the Passover experiences of Israel TYPED or FORESHADOWED something else. The deliverance of Israel *pictures* the deliverance of the whole world. Thus John the Revelator calls Jesus a “lamb” and James calls the church “firstborns.” Both terms come from the type of the Passover recorded back in Exodus.

IV. CONTEXTUAL STUDY

All serious writing is related to what has come before and to what follows after. Too many sensationalists make claims based on Bible passages which, when examined, are being used totally out of harmony with the passage from which they were lifted. This has given rise to the saying that the Bible is an old fiddle on which any tune can be played. When *properly* examined, the Bible can be used to play only one harmonious tune.

Context also includes considerations such as (1) Who is being addressed? (2) About whom are they speaking? (3) Which salvation is being mentioned? (4) Is there any peculiarity of the history of the time which affects this passage? This will all be of great import in the study of Revelation. Verses from Revelation must be studied in context *and* in the context of the *history of* the last two thousand years.

V. TIME-FRAME STUDY

Not all scriptures nor all Scriptural injunctions apply at all times. For example, there was a time when God dealt with the Jewish nation and no one else (Amos 3:2); and there is *now* a time when placing ourselves under the ten commandments of the Jewish Law is inappropriate (Galatians 3:10, 11, 24, 25). Some scriptures apply only during the Millennial Age — the thousand years of Christ’s reign. (e.g., Revelation 22:12; Ezekiel 18:2, 3; etc.) In the study of Revelation, it will be of value to keep appropriate time frames in mind. Revelation *requires an* HISTORIC/PROPHETIC approach. Events *must be* located in their proper time frames.

Annotated Chart

At the end of this chapter we have placed a CHART OF THE AGES (page 13) — an invaluable help in the study of any part of the Bible. References will be made to it from time to time in this booklet.

(For a complete discussion of this chart and its Biblical origins, please send for a copy of *THE DIVINE PLAN OF THE AGES* listed at the end of this booklet.)

One More Point

To save space, not all passages under consideration will be quoted. It is expected that the reader will study with an open Bible when he can and will read thoroughly the texts mentioned.

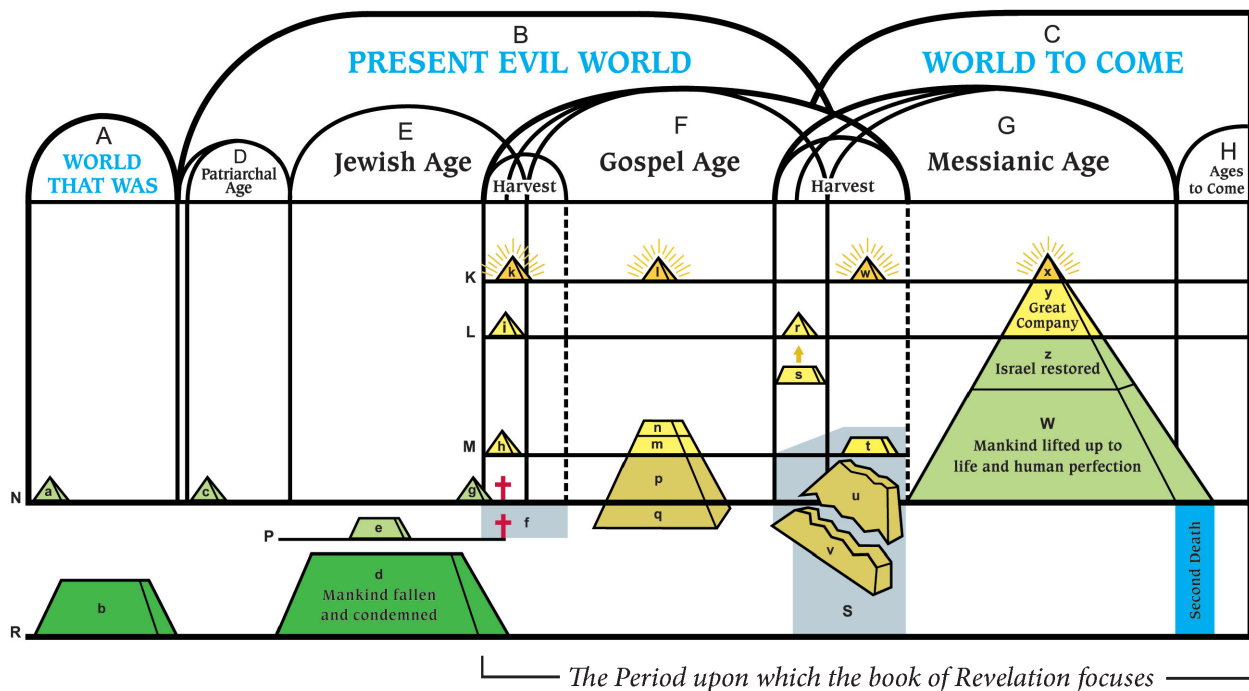


CHART OF THE AGES

An invaluable help in the study of any part of the Bible. References will be made to it from time to time in this booklet. For a complete discussion of this chart and its Biblical origins, please send for a copy of [*THE DIVINE PLAN OF THE AGES*](#) listed at the end of this booklet.

CHAPTER IV: ONCE OVER *LIGHTLY*

Despite its title, this will be a long chapter. Its purpose is to show an *overview* of the book of Revelation so that its construction will be clear to the student. Once this construction is understood, many of the problems of interpreting Revelation disappear.

The Christian Age

The chart on the preceding page shows that an age (the Gospel Age) was set apart specifically for calling out from among men a group of people referred to by various Scriptural names: The Church, The Bride, Christians, A People for His Name, The 144,000, The Little Flock, Saints, etc. (Acts 15:14; Acts 11:26; Revelation 21:29; Revelation 14:1; Philippians 1:1; 2 Corinthians 1:1; Luke 12:32) Much of the book of Revelation deals with this Christian or Gospel Age and its history written in advance.

The Messianic Age

A part of Revelation deals with the Millennial or Messianic Age which follows the Christian or Gospel Age. This Millennial Age is referred to in the Scriptures by various names also: The Kingdom, The Thousand Years, The Day of the Lord, The Day of Judgment, The Regeneration, The Times of Restitution of All Things, etc. (Matthew 26:29; Acts 1:6; Revelation 20:2, 3, 4, 6; 2 Peter 3:8, 10, 7; Matthew 19:28; Acts 3:20, 21; etc.)

The Harvest

Notice on the chart (page 13) that a transition period, called a HARVEST, is located where the Gospel and Messianic Ages meet. Jesus taught us about this period in the parable of the Wheat and Tares (Matthew 13:30, 39). "The harvest is the end of the *age*." (The King James version says "world," but this is not the best translation.) A good part of the prophecies of Revelation focus on this harvest period. Because of its placement in time, at the juncture of an old "world" going out and a new "world" coming in, it is a period of much important activity in the world's affairs and in the religious world. We are *now* living in this time, and Revelation has much to tell us about it.

Revelation's Three Main Sections

Revelation is neatly divided into three sections corresponding to the three periods of time just discussed.

1. For all practical purposes, chapters 1 through 13 deal with the Gospel Age as a whole, including references to the harvest.
2. Chapters 14 through 19 focus almost exclusively on events of the harvest.
3. Chapters 20 through 22 deal basically with the Messianic Age.

(Please remember that we are generalizing. A few words in each of the above sections might refer to other periods. We here are merely trying to draw clean lines as a basis of study.)

A Closer Look at Section I (Chapters 1-13) “... the beginning of Sorrows” — Matthew 24:4-14

The first thirteen chapters cover the long period of over 1,800 years from Jesus' first advent into the time of his second advent. These chapters accomplish primarily three objectives:

1. They prophesy the growth and power of the apostasy of which both Jesus and Paul warn. (Matthew 24:5, 11, 12; 2 Thessalonians 2:3, 4, 7)
2. They document in detail the history during this period which Jesus sums up in only a few verses in Matthew 24:4-14.
3. They predict in detail the experiences of the Christian Church (true and apostate).

Seven Churches

The Lord decided to divide the history of the Christian Church into seven periods — periods which are unique in their experiences, history, and doctrinal understandings. He gives each of these periods a symbolic name and introduces us to them in Revelation 1:11.

Jesus watches over these seven churches as symbolized by his being “in the midst of seven candlesticks.” “The seven candlesticks ... are the seven churches” (Revelation 1:20). He had said previously that His disciples were “the light of the world” (Matthew 5:14) and that they were candles on a candlestick (Matthew 5:15, 16). He continues this symbolism here in Revelation 1:12, 13.

In Revelation 1:16 we see Jesus holding seven stars in His right hand. Stars are used in Scripture to symbolize teachers — good and bad. (Daniel 12:3; Jude 13; Numbers 24:17; Matthew 24:29; Revelation 12:1) In Revelation 1:20, the seven stars are said to be the same as the seven angels mentioned in chapters 2 and 3. The implication is strong, and history has confirmed it, that during the Gospel Age God sent seven men, each at the appropriate time, to be messengers (angel *means* “messenger”) to the seven stages or periods of the church.

Three Times Seven

Between chapter 2 and chapter 11, the seven periods of church history are *repeated* three times under different symbols. The *seven churches* are listed in chapters 2 and 3; the *seven seals* are listed in chapters 5 through 8; and the *seven trumpets* are found in chapters 8 through 11. Here is a chart showing their locations:

	CHURCH	SEAL	TRUMPET
#1	2:1-7	6:1-2	8:7
#2	2:8-11	6:3-4	8:8-9
#3	2:12-17	6:5-6	8:10-11
#4	2:18-29	6:7-8	8:12-13
#5	3:1-6	6:9-11	9:1-11
#6	3:7-13	6:12-7:3	9:13-11:13
#7	3:14-22	8:1	11:15-19

Many students of Revelation believe that each period of the church has its corresponding concurrent seal and trumpet. Thus, for instance, the first church, first seal, and first trumpet all refer to events in the same historical period. This view is based both on internal evidence and historical evidence. To help understand this approach, note the following four clues:

1. FOUR ANGELS are mentioned in both the sixth seal (7:1) and the 6th trumpet (9:15).
2. THE IMPLIED RETURN OF JESUS is mentioned in both the seventh church (3:20 — where he is “standing at the door”) and the seventh trumpet (11:15 — where his “reign” begins).
3. INCREASED ENLIGHTENMENT is shown in both the seventh church (3:20 — where he promises to serve the evening meal: “sup”) and in the seventh trumpet (10:7 — where enlightenment clears up “the mystery”).
4. AN EARTHQUAKE is shown in both the sixth seal (6:12) and in the sixth trumpet (11:13).

There are many more correspondences, but this list should help to show why, for instance, the third church, third seal, and third trumpet are all likely referring to the same time period from different perspectives. We have neglected much in the first 13 chapters. Remember, however, that this chapter is called, “Once Over *Lightly*.” A subsequent chapter will seek out more details.

A Closer Look at Section II (Chapters 14-19)

“Men’s hearts failing them for fear” - Luke 21:26

Chapters 14 through 19 focus on events at the close of the Gospel Age — THE HARVEST. This is a complex period. In it the world is experiencing troubles it cannot, handle, and Christianity is faced with the kind of scrutiny that destroys everything that can be shaken. (Hebrews 12:26-29)

Perhaps we can summarize the events of this harvest as three works progressing at the same time:

1. The unseen presence of Jesus is actively maneuvering the affairs of the Church and the world in preparation for the peaceable Kingdom. (2 Peter 3:10; Revelation 16:15; Revelation 14:15)
2. All of what has called itself Christianity is being judged by God and by man based on both doctrine and conduct. (Revelation 14:8; Revelation 18:1-9)
3. A great increase of understanding of Scripture is being fed to sincere, hungry, Christians. (Revelation 14:6; 17:1; 18:4; Daniel 12:4, 9, 10)

The Wheat and Tares

A careful examination of Jesus' parable of the Wheat and Tares (Matthew 13:24-30, 36-43) will help the reader understand this harvest time and chapters 14-19 of Revelation which prophesy its details.

The parable first summarizes the Gospel Age by stating that Jesus gave a message which made real Christians (Wheat). Once the Apostles died — (verse 25: “while men slept”) — Satan gave a false message which created false Christians (Tares). The tendency toward this mixed-up Christianity was already active in the Apostles' day (2 Thessalonians 2:7). Paul calls it the “mystery of iniquity” and the “man of sin.” John calls it “The Antichrist” (1 John 4:3).

Revelation calls it “Babylon” (Revelation 14:8). Jesus (Matthew 13:30) shows that this *combination* of true and false Christianity would exist together until the harvest. Jeremiah 51:7-9 explains that God *used* Christendom (Babylon) and would have healed her, but she would not be healed. Hence Jesus prophesied the harvest separation — the work of destroying the faith and the organization of false Christianity, along with the work of gathering true Christians. These true Christians would FIRST be gathered to *truth* as Luke 17:34-37 suggests; SECONDLY, they would be gathered to heaven itself as Matthew 13:43 suggests.

Matthew 13:

24 Another parable put he forth unto them, saying, The kingdom of heaven is likened unto a man which sowed good seed in his field: 25 But while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat, and went his way. 26 But when the blade was sprung up, and brought forth fruit, then appeared the tares also. 27 So the servants of the householder came and said unto him, Sir, didst not thou sow good seed in thy field? from whence then hath it tares? 28 He said unto them, An enemy hath done this. The servants said unto him, Wilt thou then that we go and gather them up? 29 But he said, Nay; lest while ye gather up the tares, ye root up also the wheat with them. 30 Let both grow together until the harvest: and in the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, Gather ye together first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them: but gather the wheat into my barn. 31 Another parable put he forth unto them, saying, The kingdom of heaven is like to a grain of mustard seed, which a man took, and sowed in his field: 32 Which indeed is the least of all seeds: but when it is grown, it is the greatest among herbs, and becometh a tree, so that the birds of the air come and lodge in the branches thereof. 33 Another parable spake he unto them; The kingdom of heaven is like unto leaven, which a woman took, and hid in three measures of meal, till the whole was leavened. 34 All these things spake Jesus unto the multitude in parables; and without a parable spake he not unto them: 35 That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying, I will open my mouth in parables; I will utter things which have been kept secret from the foundation of the world. 36 Then Jesus sent the multitude away, and went into the house: and his disciples came unto him, saying, Declare unto us the parable of the tares of the field. 37 He answered and said unto them, He that soweth the good seed is the Son of man; 38 The field is the world; the good seed are the children of the kingdom; but the tares are the children of the wicked one; 39 The enemy that sowed them is the devil; the harvest is the end of the world; and the reapers are the angels. 40 As therefore the tares are gathered and burned in the fire; so shall it be in the end of this world. 41 The Son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity; 42 And shall cast them into a furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth. 43 Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. Who hath ears to hear, let him hear.

Chapters 14-19 deal with the work pictured in this parable.

[From here to the end of this chapter, the reader will need a Bible in hand. We regret this inconvenience, but nothing short of reprinting Revelation could solve it.]

Poor Chapter Division
(A Parenthetical, but important, Thought)

Chapter 14 *should* begin with its sixth verse. The first five verses really are an end to chapter 13. Note that chapter 13:16, 17 speaks of some who have marks of the beast on their hands or foreheads. These are false Christians. Note that 14:1 *contrasts* this with true Christians. The true Christians have “His (the Lamb’s) name and the name of His Father written on their foreheads.” (New American Standard Translation. This is one of those places the King James Version *omits* some words which actually are a part of the Bible).

It seems clear that this contrast of names in foreheads places Revelation 14:1-5 as the true ending of chapter 13. (There are other, more complicated, reasons also.)

Chapters 14 through 19 in Brief

— Chapter 14 —

Jesus appears on the scene in 14:14. Note why. Verse 15 clearly states that the time for HARVEST is begun. As he promised in his Matthew 13 parable, there is a harvest of TWO groups: (1) The harvest of the earth (THE WHEAT) in verses 15 and 16; and (2) The harvest of the vine of the earth (THE TARES) in verses 18 and 19. This is the central feature of this chapter.

— Chapters 15 and 16 —
The Plagues On Babylon

These two chapters deal with the WAY God intends to destroy the various component parts of Babylon. In chapter 18:4, God warns the WHEAT (“my people”) that if they do not “come out” from Babylon during the harvest, they will be subject to experiencing the “plagues” that He will send on Babylon. It is the position of some excellent students of Scripture that these plagues are spread out* over a number of decades and that many of them have already been in the process of fulfillment. Because it takes a long time to undermine age-old institutions, it is said to show “the patience of the saints” (Revelation 14:12) who have to wait for its accomplishment. The experiences and discomforts of the tares during this process, and of the wheat who do not *come out*, are symbolically portrayed in Revelation 14:11.

* Many excellent students prefer to think the plagues occur rapidly at the very end of the age.

In short, God is undermining Babylon by sending a series of seven events against her which, step by step, force truths to her attention and destroy the false faith and lies upon which Babylon grew — the tare seeds which Satan sowed. Just as God wore down Pharaoh by a series of plagues which ultimately delivered Israel, so here, God wears down apostate Christianity so that all the world may be delivered from the influence of her religious falsehoods.

— Chapter 17 —

In Scripture, the true Church is always represented by virgins. (Revelation 14:4; Matthew 25:1-13) In Revelation 17, by contrast, we find Babylon pictured as a harlot. The harlotry of the apostate church is due to her having a relationship with the world. The true saints, on the other hand, strive to keep themselves separate from all entanglements with the world and its ways and aims.

In highly symbolic language, Revelation 17 shows how the apostate church throughout history has virtually ruled the Western world — that part of the earth usually called “Christendom.” This chapter shows the steps by which both the harlot *and* the “world” she ruled (the “beast”) will meet their ends in the harvest period. This prophecy is closely allied to Paul’s prophecy in 2 Thessalonians 2:8-10 which shows how the increase of truth, when Jesus’ secret presence begins, destroys the tares planted by Satan.

— Chapter 18 —

The Decline of Commerce

It would be good to note here what may not have been obvious. In both sections of Revelation which we have examined, the narrative is *not* one continuous flow. The Revelator keeps jumping back to a point in time and retelling the story from another point of view. Thus 14:5 begins at the harvest’s beginning; 15:1 jumps back to the same beginning as does 17:1 and, now, 18:1. Thus, it will be noticed, that 14:8 and 18:2 have the same statement. This jump-back in time is an imperative element in the understanding of Revelation. Some other clues to recognizing these jump-backs will be given later in this booklet.

Chapter 18 begins when Babylon is “fallen.” The thought is FALLEN FROM FAVOR. Her actual total destruction is later and is detailed in 18:21. This fall from favor (as we saw in 14:8) happened many years ago when the harvest began. As 14:12 shows, the *gradual* events leading to her total destruction are long enough to require “the patience of the saints.” Chapter 18 gives much more detail regarding this gradual decline. It focuses on its effects on various parts of society. These are symbolically called by several names:

- the kings of the earth (18:9)
- the merchants of the earth (18:11)
- every shipmaster (18:17)
- all the company in ships (18:17)
- sailors (18:17)
- as many as trade by sea (18:17)

The world, as we know it, functions on a political-commercial basis. The weakening of that international economic system, which is plain to see in current news reports, is the focus of chapter 18. According to this chapter, the world as we know it (religious, political, and economic) will soon fall apart.

— Chapter 19 —

This chapter could well be two chapters. The first ten verses deal with “the marriage of the lamb.” The remainder jumps back to the beginning of the harvest to give us yet another perspective on how the current social order will meet its end.

The “marriage of the lamb” is a symbol for the time when Jesus has (in terms of his Matthew 13 parable) gathered all of the wheat into the barn. Near the end of the harvest his entire bride of 144,000 individuals will have been selected and will have been “changed” (1 Corinthians 15:51) to “be like Him” and to “see Him as He is.” (1 John 3:2) Throughout the Gospel Age this group has been in the process of being selected to be “kings and priests” and to “reign on the earth” (Revelation 5:10) in answer, finally, to the Lord’s prayer (Matthew 6:10).

While the harvest work of completing the Church progresses, the additional work of destroying Babylon is in progress (19:11-21). Thus chapter 19 confirms what we saw in chapter 14: the harvest has two works (14:16; 14:18) — harvesting the wheat and harvesting “the vine of the earth,” Babylon. (Compare also 14:19, 20 with 19:15 — the same event.)

It might here be important to note a connection between chapters 16 and 19.

In the midst of the plagues (16:13) appear three symbolic characters united to take one last stand at deceiving the world — one last attempt to hold the old social order together. According to 16:14 they will be under the influences of demons. (Compare Jude 6.) We should, thus, expect during the sixth plague a dramatic increase in the influences and manifestations of the occult.

Who are these three symbolic entities in 16:13? Where did they come from? The “beast” and “false prophet” first occurred in chapter 13. The false prophet was not there called by the same name; but a careful comparison of 19:20 with 13:14 should convince the careful student that the same creature under a different name is meant. The third creature, the “dragon,” first appeared in chapter 12. Without an explanation of why, it will here merely be suggested that many astute students of Revelation believe the dragon to be a symbol of civil power. The beast, in this instance, appears to be the most entrenched of religious systems, the Church of Rome — “Babylon the Great, the

* The identity of the Papal system as the antichrist is common to Protestant Christianity, at least from the time of Peter Waldo. Martin Luther clearly identified it as such, as did the translators of the King James Bible in their Dedicatory Epistle. Believing that the Papal system is the antichrist does not make one prejudiced against Catholics; it shows merely that the doctrine of the Roman Church is antagonistic to true Christianity. The more modern tendency to apply the antichrist name to an individual at the end of the age is an idea invented by Roman Catholic theologians to counteract Protestant accusations. It is unfortunate that many Protestants have fallen for this deception.

MOTHER of harlots.” (Revelation 17:5) Because she is called a mother, it is manifest that she has harlot daughters. These daughters apparently combine their influence at the end of the age to be collectively called, “The False Prophet.” Together, mother and daughters are the great institutions of false Christianity which Jesus called bundles of tares. (Matthew 13:30)

Note as chapter 19 ends that *only two* — the religious two — of these creatures are destroyed. The third, the dragon of civil power, is not destroyed until a thousand years later, though he is bound (restrained from exercising power) during that period (Revelation 20:2, 3, 10). These are highly symbolic passages, but they are extremely reasonable once the symbols are understood.

The literalist has impossible problems with these texts. Consider Daniel 7:3, 7, 17, 19, and 23 where a “beast” is seen to “devour the whole earth.” What a picture! On what does it stand while it eats the earth? Are we now in its stomach? Of course not! The angel in Daniel 7:16, 17 was kind enough to interpret the symbolism. An exhaustive topical study of “beast”^{*} in the Bible will clearly show that, when the word is used symbolically, it always represents a *group of men* with unholy characteristics trying to control others.

Thus we come to the close of the second structural section of Revelation. As we prepare to look at the third and final section, it will be beneficial to look again at the chart on page 13. Note that, just as the harvest *ends* one age, it also *begins* another. The harvest, in time, is also the beginning years of the Messianic Age — the thousand years.

A Closer Look at Section III (Chapters 20-22)

“The healing of the nations” - Revelation 22:2

These chapters conclude the Bible. All of the loss suffered in the opening three chapters of the Bible is here undone in its last three. It is a glorious ending, worthy of a Glorious God.

— Chapter 20 — *The Thousand Years*

When chapter 20 opens, we again jump back to the beginning of the harvest, but only for the briefest of moments. The first three verses show the return of Jesus with the great chain of truth that will bind the errors of men and their systems (Psalm 2:1-9).

^{*} Please note: “Beast,” when associated with God, in passages such as Revelation 4:6-9, is translated from another Greek word which would be better rendered “living ones.” *These* four beasts represent the living attributes of God’s character which, in perfect balance, make Him so magnificent. The attributes are LOVE, POWER, JUSTICE AND WISDOM. The same four “living creatures” appear in the opening chapter of Ezekiel.

Many students of Revelation interpret the four-name entity of 20:2 NOT as the *personal* devil, but as the social-civil order which the personal devil has directed from the beginning. The personal devil is not excluded from this name, but it is not primarily about him. (Ezekiel 28:13-15 and Isaiah 14:12-16) This four-name appellation of verse 2 occurs originally in chapter 12 where it has the same meaning.

Chapter 20 has four pictures of the thousand years — the Millennium:

1. verses 1-3: the “binding of Satan”
2. verses 4-10: the reward of the church and destruction of Satan
3. verse 11: the replacement of rulership
4. verses 12-15: the learning and judgment of individuals

A few observations on Chapter 20:

1. That the *actual* devil will be bound, as well as this symbolic devil, is assured by the Lord’s parable in Matthew 12:29. The Millennium is for the *regeneration* of the race. (Matthew 19:28) All things that would make this judgment day (2 Peter 3:7, 8) difficult will be cleared out of the way (Isaiah 35:8-10). This is the reason for not only binding the literal devil, but also the influences of the beastly governments (Daniel 7:17, 18) which have made life so difficult for the human race.
2. The first sentence of verse 5 is spurious. In the best manuscripts, the words “But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished” are not found. This has confused many sincere seekers of truth. Not only do the words not occur in early manuscripts, but logic teaches that they make no sense. If, as verse 3 states, Satan is bound so as not to deceive the nations, the nations must still be alive! Read from verse 4 through verse 6 WITHOUT the spurious words and see the logical flow and the resulting sense it makes.
3. Consult the chart on page 13. The “little season” (verse 3) of Satan’s loosing (verse 7) is clearly shown as the last judgment event of history. After it, peace for evermore Verse 10 finds the destroyed religious systems (beast and false prophet from 19:20) *and* the destroyed civil power, finally gone — gone in every way except in the minds of men whose memories will forever vex or torment any reference to these undesirable parts of human history.
4. Apparently the final deception will occur when The Christ is ready to step aside (1 Corinthians 15:24-28) and turn the kingdom over to the Father. The deception will be an attempt by the devil and men of pride to reestablish a civil government. (Revelation 20:7-9) God destroys them. (See Matthew 25:46 — note that *the opposite of punishment is life*. Eternal punishment is *death*.) The everlasting “fire” is everlasting destruction. What better *symbol* of destruction exists than fire which totally consumes what it burns? Thus in 20:9, the *personal* devil and his followers are destroyed; in verse 10, the *symbolic* devil is consigned to a tormented spot in the eternal memory of the pages of history.

5. An important item: The awakened dead (not the Church) will be judged by *works* — they will be, under the mediator (Revelation 5:10; 20:6), progressing toward perfection. Perfect works will be *required* of them in the end. (See also 22:12.)

6. Another important item: In verse 13 we note that “hell” gives up its dead. Then, in verse 14, hell is destroyed in oblivion, where the beast, false prophet, and devil are (verse 10). The Bible hell is the condition of nothingness in the grave (Ecclesiastes 9:5). “Death” in verse 14 is the condition of being alive but not having received the right to continue living — i.e., “death” is the condition of DYING. Thus Jesus could say, “Let the dead bury their dead.” (Luke 9:60) Both “hell” (*being* dead) and “death” (*dying*) are consigned to oblivion. Life will reign for all who progress to perfection through the thousand years and the little season because of their faith and obedience.

— Chapters 21 And 22 —
The Glorious Ending (Really the Beginning)

Chapters 21 and 22 are ecstatic in their descriptions of the new government. (A “city” in symbolism is a government. Even today we refer to Tokyo, London, Paris or Washington when referring to the governments housed in these capital cities.)

In symbolic terms “the healing of the nations” (22:2) occurs because of the fruitage of the trees. These trees are the Church glorified (Isaiah 61:3). Jesus and His bride (22:17) offer the water (truth) of life to all who wish to avail themselves of it without the deceptions of Satan to hinder them.

It is no wonder that John’s final prayer (22:20) was, “Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus!”

CHAPTER V: OTHER LESSONS FROM SECTION I (CHAPTERS 1-13)

A Warning and An Apology

If this booklet were to go into great detail it would become a book. That is not the intent. It should be noted that the more detail which is given, the more likely that the opinions of the author will surface. The author wants to state clearly that he is not dogmatic in his views. Many fine expositors of Revelation are writing many fine things about it. It is the author's contention that the harvest saints DO UNDERSTAND the book of Revelation in its entirety, although he doubts that any *one* writer does. This is as it should be. The Lord, and not any one individual, will thus be glorified. Nevertheless, there seems to be a need for this kind of introductory text on Revelation. With the Lord's help we are trying to meet that need.

Thus, as we look closer at this great prophecy, please remember that what now follows is an attempt to build on the foundation laid in the previous four chapters. If any feel the need to improve upon the interpretations which follow, the author will be pleased to see the honest spirit of difference and searching because he believes that God encourages and rewards an honest and searching spirit. We merely supply what we believe to be sound in light of the study methods and the basic outline already suggested. (Revelation 1:3)

The Seven Periods of Church History

Over a century ago, a list of the probable seven messengers to the Church (the seven angels of Revelation 2 and 3) was suggested. It is such a good list as to need little or no adjustment a century later.

A word of caution: the religious world has had prejudice against many who have spread light. This problem was experienced even by Jesus. Therefore, should the reader look up histories of the following men, the accepted biographies may be either erroneous or prejudicial against some of them. Indeed, all of them had detractors in their day.

The likely messengers to the church are:

1. St. Paul to the Church of Ephesus
2. St. John^{*} to the Church of Smyrna
3. Arius to the Church of Pergamos
4. Peter Waldo to the Church of Thyatira
5. John Wycliffe to the Church of Sardis
6. Martin Luther to the Church of Philadelphia
7. Charles Russell^{*} to the Church of Laodicea.

^{*} Arius and Russell are two particularly maligned men. Because Christendom became blindly trinitarian, Arius has been dismissed as a heretic due to his defense of the separateness of Jesus from Yahweh. Russell has had the same treatment. Additionally, the Jehovah's Witnesses have claimed fraudulently that Russell is their founder, adding to his disrepute. While the Witnesses sect is a religious aberration which grew out of Russell's movement, Russell did NOT found them. Their practice, organization, hopes, and doctrine are repudiations of Russell's teachings.

The dates of these churches are possibly as follows:

1. Ephesus — Pentecost (33 A.D.) to about 100 (death of John)
2. Smyrna — 100 to 313 (Edict of Milan)
3. Pergamos — 313 to 1161 (ministry of Peter Waldo)
4. Thyatira — 1161 to 1371 (excommunication of Wycliffe)
5. Sardis — 1371 to 1521 (Diet of Worms)
6. Philadelphia — 1521 to 1874 (the 1335 “days” of Daniel 12)
7. Laodicea — 1874 to the completion of the church

A Biblical Key

Please note that expert Biblical scholarship over the years has virtually proven that in prophecy a day equals a year. (See Ezekiel 4:4-6 for an initial clue.) The Bible uses a 360-day year as its basis. Thus, for example, Revelation 11:2, 3 and 6 all refer to a common period of time: 42 months (verse 2) = 1,260 days (verse 3) since 42 times 30 = 1,260. Verse 6, if carefully noted, also refers to time. It is clear that Elijah (who stopped the rain) and Moses (who turned water to blood) are being mentioned. Elijah’s drought was three-and-a-half years (James 5:17). Three-and-a-half years is 1,260 days (360 days per year). Thus verse 9 must refer to three-and-a half years since it says three-and-a-half days. This principle applies throughout the Bible when symbolic time is used. With this key in mind, note the following texts regarding the seven churches, seals, and trumpets.

Revelation 2:10

“Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days: be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.”

The Smyrna church suffered especially during the *ten years* of horrid persecution prior to the Edict of Milan in 313.

Revelation 2:21

“And I gave her space to repent of her fornication; and she repented not.”

“Space” here is the Greek word for a time.” The same expression is used in 12:14 where three-and-a-half “times” are mentioned — the same 1,260 years as in 11:3 and in Daniel 12:7. So, “space” or “time” is one year symbolically which equals 360 years literally. Adding 360 years to the beginning of Thyatira (which began in 1161 with the ministry of Peter Waldo) brings us to 1521. This is the date of Luther’s condemnation by the Diet of Worms. “Fornication” is, of course, the mixture of church and state which makes Babylon a harlot.

Revelation 2:23

“And I will kill her children with death; and all the churches shall know that I am he which searcheth the reins and hearts: and I will give unto every one of you according to your works.”

The great “Black Death” (Bubonic Plague) which killed over half the population of Europe occurred from 1334 to 1354, during Thyatira.

Revelation 6:8

“And I looked, and behold a pale horse: and his name that sat on him was Death, and Hell followed with him. And power was given unto them over the fourth part of the earth, to kill with sword, and with hunger, and with death, and with the beasts of the earth.”

This text, which is part of the fourth seal, would correspond in time to the fourth church (Thyatira) and, thus, likely also refers in part to the Black Death.

Revelation 9:5, 10

“And to them it was given that they should not kill them, but that they should be tormented five months: and their torment was as the torment of a scorpion, when he striketh a man.” Vs. 10: “And they had tails like unto scorpions, and there were stings in their tails: and their power was to hurt men five months.”

This is during the fifth trumpet (and, thus, the fifth church — Sardis — and the fifth seal). It seems to define Sardis as 150 years (five months times 30 days in length — 1371 to 1521).

Revelation 6:12

“And I beheld when he had opened the sixth seal, and, lo, there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became as blood.”

“Earthquake” in Scripture is a symbol for revolution. During the sixth church (1521-1874), seal, and trumpet, occur a number of revolutions. Scripturally, the most important is the French Revolution (1789) which challenged religion, the Bible, and life as it had been lived.

Revelation 11:13

“And the same hour was there a great earthquake, and the tenth part of the city fell, and in the earthquake were slain of men seven thousand: and the remnant were affrighted, and gave glory to the God of heaven.”

The same event is shown here. France, which had been under Papal dominion for ages ceased to be under it. (Ten is a number symbolic of a complete worldly unit.) In short, the Roman Church was embarrassed by losing one of its most faithful supporters.

Revelation 11:15

“And the seventh angel sounded; and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever.”

As the last (7th) period of the church begins, the announcement is made in the religious world (“heaven”) that the invisible (“like a thief”) presence of Jesus has occurred, and he has begun to take charge in earth’s affairs – though very secretly until the time the Church will be completed. (This corresponds to Revelation 3:20.) This announcement WAS made and WIDELY promulgated beginning in the 1870s.

Chapter 12

Among the 13 chapters which form the first section of Revelation, chapter 12 is one of the most complete units. Being able to interpret it correctly is the key to interpreting the remainder of Revelation. It might even be wise for a student to begin with chapter 12 and then work both directions to understand the remainder of Revelation. Following is a relatively complete exposition of chapter 12.

Before beginning its examination in detail, however, it is VERY IMPORTANT to remember the symbolic nature of Revelation (1:1). Many interpreters will look at verse 5 and immediately assume this refers to Jesus. But Paul (2 Thessalonians 2:3, 4) tells us that another (FAKE) MANCHILD — the man of sin — would be exalted to religious superiority and, in this position, rule the religious world. Likewise, some will look at 12:7 and assume Jesus is here meant because Jesus also owns the name of Michael. But whatever Jesus owns, the man of sin (Jesus' counterfeit) *also* owns by usurpation. Verse 7 does not best apply to Jesus because heaven HAS NO WAR. If it did, how *terrible* would be the prayer, "Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven."

We recommend to you the following interpretation because it provides the only known approach to this chapter which gives a smooth consistency throughout the chapter, an accurate reference to the events of history, an appropriate context for its placement here in Revelation, a reasonable and consistent use of symbolism for the time elements mentioned (vss. 6 and 14), and a consistency of symbolism not only with the rest of Revelation, but also with the rest of the Bible. We are not *twisting* the Scriptures, but *consistently unraveling* its symbolisms.

— REVELATION 12 —
A Detailed Exposition:

v. 1 “And there appeared a great wonder in heaven; a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars:” v. 1 In the religious world (heaven) appears a sign (see margin) — a sign of a change from the Jewish Age to the Gospel Age. The sign is a woman. (A woman can be the true church if she’s a virgin, the false church if she’s a harlot, or a covenant if she is a good woman with children: Galatians 4:24.) This woman is the “Sarah Covenant” (“The New Jerusalem” covenant of Galatians 4:26; the “covenant by sacrifice” of Psalm 50:5). Some call her the grace covenant. She is the covenant under which the Church is developed. She is clothed with the sun (the gospel) but has the moon (the Jewish Law and prophets) as a foundation. Her head (the part which thinks) is crowned by the 12 light-bearers (the Apostles).

“And there appeared a great wonder in heaven; a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars:”

v. 2 She wants to be delivered of her true seed, and as we know from Jesus’ parable, there will also be a false seed (tares). That her seed is plural may be seen by reading verse 17 where it refers to the “remnant of her seed.” (*All* the descendants of this woman exist *because* God supplied this covenant for the work of the Gospel Age. All of Christianity, therefore, are her descendants — true and apostate.)

“And she being with child cried, travailing in birth, and pained to be delivered.”

v. 3 Another sign of the changing age occurs: a great red dragon. A dragon is a civil power. The red dragon actually became the official symbol of pagan Rome, replacing the symbol of the eagle. This dragon is the civil power, known as pagan Rome, on its way out of power. Paul refers to it in 2 Thessalonians 2:7 as “he who now letteth.” The New American Standard reads, “...he who now *restrains* will do so until he is taken out of the way.” In short: Pagan Rome *fought* the development of Christianity (false as well as true); but pagan Rome was to disintegrate, making way, as Paul points out, for the “mystery of iniquity” — the “tare” class which would dominate Christianity and make Babylon such an anti-Christian institution even though it would claim the name of Christ. This dragon has seven heads (*forms* of government) and 10 horns (supporting *powers*). The antichrist was eventually to dominate these 10 powers. Thus we see in 11:13 that a tenth part (France) falls in the French Revolution. The crowns upon the heads show Rome’s sovereignty during its seven stages.

“And there appeared another wonder in heaven; and behold a great red dragon, having seven heads and ten horns, and seven crowns upon his heads.”

* Many prefer simply, and with good reason, to think of the woman as the true church.

v. 4 The tail of this dragon is Constantine as he was the LAST emperor in Rome; he *moved* the Imperial capital to Constantinople thus setting up great changes in history. Constantine, *embracing* Christianity, and being chief religious ruler of the empire, called the Council of Nicea which drew to it one third of all the bishops (“stars”; i.e., teachers) of heaven (the Christian religious rulership). It is almost at this point that Babylon is born. The bishops are “cast ... to the earth” — they now become primarily embroiled in earthly power grabs and political maneuvering. Their spirituality is lost. The dragon, wishing to *use* newly-born Babylon (the wheat-tare mixture) to strengthen Rome, is ready to *devour* (assimilate) this “new” religion for political reasons.

“And his tail drew the third part of the stars of heaven, and did cast them to the earth: and the dragon stood before the woman which was ready to be delivered, for to devour her child as soon as it was born.”

v. 5 The child of the covenant (Which was *supposed* to be true Christianity) turns out to be a “manchild” — “the man of sin” which, during the Christian age, would rule all nations with total authority (a rod of iron). This is the clear history of the Roman Church during what most scholars call the Dark Ages. This “child” (the Papacy) was exalted to being “God on Earth.” (Compare 2 Thessalonians 2:3, 4.)

“And she brought forth a man child, who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron: and her child was caught up unto God, and to his throne.”

v. 6 Consequently, the true covenant (and her *true* seed) had to flee into a condition of mind-separateness, away from this symbolic “city” (government) which persecuted her (17:18). Here for 1,260 years (from 539, when the Pope had obtained dominance in the city of Rome, until 1799, when the French Revolution ended with the embarrassing capture of the Pope by Napoleon), those under the covenant (the true saints) fed on whatever truth God let be known in the midst of the darkness.

“And the woman fled into the wilderness, where she hath a place prepared of God, that they should feed her there a thousand two hundred and threescore days.”

v. 7 How did this happen? There was a great struggle (war) in the religious world (heaven) between the Papacy (“Michael” means “One Who As God”) and its followers, versus Rome’s pagan religious interests.

“And there was war in heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels,”

v. 8 The dragon did not win. Papacy did. Pagan Roman religion disappeared — no room found for it in heaven (the religious world).

“And prevailed not; neither was their place found any more in heaven.”

v. 9 Rome, and *all* subsequent civil power, now did not exercise religious authority. The emperor relinquished to the Pope the title “PONTIFEX MAXIMUS” (Chief Religious Ruler) — a title *only* the emperors had worn. Now civil power was cast to the “earth” (a secular rule only). Note the four-name entity here: “dragon, serpent, Devil, Satan.” This has been discussed in the treatment of 20:2 where this symbol also represents a purely civil power (but under the dominion of the literal devil).

“And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him.”

v. 10 The result of this rise to power of the Roman Church was the loud boast in heaven (the religious world): “We are the kingdom of God on earth! We have conquered pagan religion! They who have persecuted us are now beneath our power.”

“And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night.”

v. 11. Naturally, Papacy attributed this victory to Jesus. Papacy also attributed it to its martyrs whom it venerates. Thus they claim the victory due to the martyrdom of those “accused” (v. 10) and to their life-stories (“the word of their testimony”), and also to their willingness to love the church over life itself (“loved not their lives unto the death”). Papacy would thenceforth be willing to ask others to sacrifice for the maintenance of church power.

“And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death.”

v. 12 The rejoicing continues IF you are part of the apostate church (“ye heavens, and ye that dwell in them”). IF you are not, WOE! The false church quickly took on the power of the persecutor, and it *used* the dragon (civil power) to enforce its persecuting power. Throughout the 1,260 years of Papal dominance, the earthly princes readily obeyed Papal dictates knowing that the rule of the church seemed endless, but that of the civil princes, only a “short time” — unless, of course, they obeyed. If they did *not* obey, the Pope had the power to dethrone them.

“Therefore rejoice, ye heavens, and ye that dwell in them. Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and of the sea! for the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time.”

v. 13 From this time on, the civil power relished its job of enforcing cooperation with the man of sin by putting down all “heresies.” Many “heresies,” of course, were *truths* promulgated by the “woman” (covenant) and those being developed under her.

“And when the dragon saw that he was cast unto the earth, he persecuted the woman which brought forth the man child.”

v. 14 The Dark Ages (3-½ symbolic years) were pictured by the 3-½ Year period in the life of Elijah when there was no rain. (Water is a symbol of truth. See also Amos 8:11.) The true church was fed during this time by the two wings (Old and New Testament writings) of a great eagle. (The eagle is far-sighted and represents WISDOM. This wisdom, of course, is the Bible itself which sustained true Christians all during the 1,260 years of Papal persecution.) Notice that the woman is hidden from “the face of the serpent.” A face is a symbol of favor. She was OUT OF FAVOR with the civil authorities. (Serpent and dragon are the same character as is shown by comparing verses 15 and 16.)

“And to the woman were given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness, into her place, where she is nourished for a time, and times, and half a time, from the face of the serpent.”

v. 15 Eventually elements of society were tired of being under the thumb of the Pope. They revolted. They revolted by what history calls the “Age of Enlightenment.” There was a large and dramatic spread of TRUTH (water) — so *much* truth that it was a flood. This flood, in the eyes of the people, would do away with the oppression of religion (false or true — it made no difference) and the oppression of tyrannical kings. This movement was centered in France and erupted into what we know as the French Revolution. Among other things, it OUTLAWED RELIGION. But it was, according to this verse, the personal devil behind this flood of truths. Recognizing the decline of his church-state empire, he wanted men to see the chaos caused by much truth and thus send them running back to the old arrangement. He helped by encouraging the spread of libertarian truths.

“And the serpent cast out of his mouth water as a flood after the woman, that he might cause her to be carried away of the flood.”

v. 16 Things didn’t quite work as expected. The earth (society everywhere) *liked* the idea of truth. Revolution spread everywhere. But many also liked *religious* truth. By accepting revolutionary trends, the world actually *opened the way* for religious freedoms. This “helped” the woman even though it certainly frustrated Satan. Since 1799 Papacy has been unable to control the rapid rise of religious truth-seeking and investigation. In terms of the Elijah picture: it rained everywhere! Bibles and Biblical truth-seeking have flourished since the early 1800’s.

“And the earth helped the woman, and the earth opened her mouth, and swallowed up the flood which the dragon cast out of his mouth.”

v. 17 Religious truth is always a threat. This final verse indicates that, before the Church is completed, the civil power will yet “make war” with the remaining members of the true Church.

“And the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ.”

NOTE: The first phrase of 13:1 appears to belong in chapter 12. It reads (in its corrected translation), “And he stood upon the sand of the sea.” (Chapter 13 then begins, “And I saw a beast...”) The sand of the sea is a symbol for the great masses of humanity. The civil powers yet dominate the masses until the Lord overthrows their selfish rulerships.

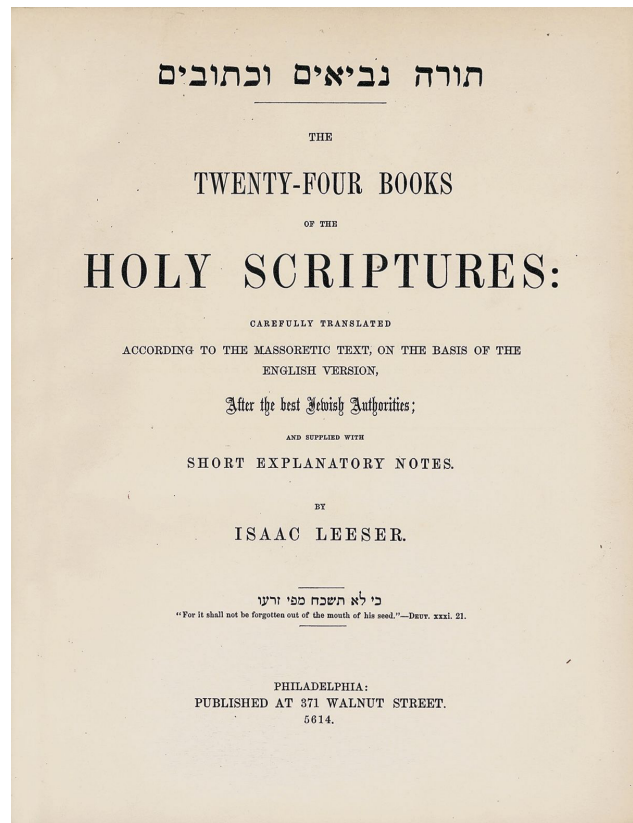
TWO MYSTERY CHARACTERS FROM CHAPTER 7

The Great Multitude

While chapter 7 is part of the sixth seal discussion (6:12), the Revelator, in verses 4 through 17, takes the opportunity afforded by the context to look forward to the time of the completion of the Church, the 144,000. In verse 9, however, it is as if he sees something he had not before noticed, a “great multitude.” This group is clearly *not* the church. The church is in the throne (3:21), whereas this great multitude is “before the throne.” The Church is a “little flock” of 144,000, whereas this multitude is great and not of a pre-set number (7:9). The true church becomes fountains of water (John 4:14), whereas this group is led to fountains of water (7:17). Just who are they?

The 24 Elders

“*Just who are they?*” is the very question asked in verse 13 by “one of the elders.” Identifying this “elder” first will help answer the question. We have photographed at the right a copy of the title page of a Jewish Bible. Please note carefully the reference to the TWENTY-FOUR BOOKS. To the Jewish mind (and a large portion of the early church was Jewish), the mention of 24 likely would have brought to mind the Old Testament writings — the Prophets. The 24 elders are first introduced in Revelation 4:4, commonly called The Throne Scene. It is likely that these 24 represent the prophecies of the Hebrew Bible which always magnify God’s name — especially as their prophecies come true.



From Whence Comes the Great Multitude?

In verse 13, one of the elders asks John, WHO ARE THESE? John’s answer (verse 14) is revealing. In essence, he asks the prophet to stop and think: “Sir, thou knowest.” This answer indicates that this great multitude has been prophesied from olden times — but not very obviously, not easily discerned without rethinking through the prophecies.

This group was typified in the Hebrew Scriptures by the tribe of Levi, as opposed to the priests (Exodus 28:1; 38:21); by the scapegoat, as opposed to the Lord’s goat (Leviticus 16:8); by Lot

(Genesis 19; Luke 17:28, 29; 2 Peter 2:7); and by several other types. The group also appears in such Old Testament prophecies as Jeremiah 8:20; Zephaniah 3:17, 18; Isaiah 66:7, 8; and numerous others. New Testament references also abound. Consider the foolish virgins of Jesus' parable (Matthew 25); the man whose flesh was to be destroyed but his spirit saved (1 Corinthians 5:3-5); and those less-than-adequate servants of Luke 12:47, 48.

When God accepts a man to become a part of the body of Christ and begets that man with the Holy spirit, a binding contract has been negotiated. These embryo "new creatures" (2 Corinthians 5:17) have, by God's arrangements in the Gospel Age, given up their rights to a resurrection on earth as human beings. They have had Jesus' blood applied to them the *one* time allowed (Hebrews 10:26). Thus, typically, the tribe of Levi had no inheritance in the land: Thus (1 Corinthians 9:27) the Apostle Paul feared that, unless he suppressed his flesh, he could lose his place in the body of Christ. Thus John cautioned that we could receive less than "a *full* reward" (2 John 8). Thus the Corinthian man's flesh would perish, but he would yet have his spirit saved (1 Corinthians 5:3-5). And thus (Psalm 45:14) these secondary virgins enter heaven but not as part of the bride. Probably millions of consecrated Christians will enter heaven as parts of the Great Multitude, having fallen short of the mark for the prize (Philippians 3:14). They will be part of the "resurrection of the just" (Acts 24:15), but they will not be a part of the first resurrection (Revelation 20:4-6). They will, no doubt, have some tearful regrets, but "God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes." (Revelation 7:17)

CHAPTER VI: OTHER LESSONS FROM SECTION III (CHAPTERS 20-22)

Change of Scene

Earlier, in the examination of Revelation 20, it was suggested that that chapter had four pictures of the Messianic Age. A look at verses 1, 4, 11, and 12, shows that each begins with the phrase, “And I saw...” This expression, and others like it such as “And I heard...,” “And after these things..., etc., all mark natural divisions throughout the book of Revelation. Their occurrence indicates a jumping backward or forward in time. This and other structural elements so helpful in the interpretation of Revelation, become obvious as the book grows more and more familiar through study.

Transition to Another Salvation

Section III of Revelation (chapters 20-22) concludes the business of the Gospel Age and introduces the business of the Messianic Age: the blessing of all the families of the earth as was promised in the covenant with Abraham.

The focus of these last three chapters is now on the world of mankind: The Church is become, with their Lord, kings and priests (Revelation 20:6). Satan (both personal and symbolic) is stripped of power so as not to deceive the nations during the thousand years. (Revelation 20:1-3) The old earth (society) and heaven (religious world) are gone (20:11). Those which have previously died are awakened to join the nations which have survived the transition trouble; they are all yet *reckoned* “dead” (20:12) because they have not yet availed themselves of the benefits of the Millennium to obtain full and perfect life. This process of gaining life during the thousand years is called the “resurrection of the unjust” (Acts 24:15) and the “resurrection of judgment” (John 5:29 — New American Standard translation). The understanding (“books”) is opened (20:12). The permission to live (“book”) is made available (20:12). Those who obey (works) will be entered into this “book” of permission to live (20:12).

While heaven and earth (religious and social organization) have disappeared (20:11), the sea (restless masses of mankind who have never been a part of “heaven” or “earth”) *repents* and is converted (Isaiah 60:5). Thus the sea gives up its dead (20:13). That is, in finally finding the Lord and the truth, these people LOSE their restlessness and become part of the new earth (17:15; 21:1). Thus, there will be no more sea.

The new government (city) of Jesus and His bride (Isaiah 9:6; Revelation 21:2) rules this mediatorial age among men (5:10; 21:3). The results will be glorious (21:4-7). The incorrigible will be destroyed ultimately (Acts 3:23; Revelation 20:7-9; 21:8, 27). The faithful will inherit the earth as promised (Matthew 5:5; Revelation 21:7). The whole world will gladly fall into line with this new life-giving arrangement (Isaiah 14:7; Revelation 21:24, 26).

The Church, who are the fountain and trees of this prophecy, will share life abundantly with all the willing. (Revelation 21:6; John 4:14; Revelation 22:1, 17; Isaiah 61:3; Revelation 22:2)

The Astounding New Jerusalem

Consider for a moment some of the beautiful numerical symbolisms the Lord built into his description of the New Jerusalem, the new government for this earth.

This city is symbolically a cube, a Greek symbol for perfection (21:16). It has equal access from all directions (21:13). Because its gates have the names of the tribes of Israel (21:12), we see that access to life (22:14) is dependent on accepting the terms of the New Covenant which is made only with Israel and those who accept Israel's prominence. (Jeremiah 31:31; Acts 15:14-17; Zechariah 8:23; Isaiah 60:11, 12, 5)

A cube has twelve edges (21:14). Thus this symbolic city is founded or framed on the teachings of the twelve apostles (Matthew 18:18; Ephesians 2:20). Because each edge is 12,000 furlongs (21:16), the size of the "foundations" is 144,000 furlongs (twelve edges at 12,000 furlongs each), thus showing the entire Church of 144,000 (7:4; 14:1). The area of one side ($12,000 \times 12,000 = 144,000,000$) is 1,000 times 144,000, indicating the Church (the 144,000) will be a wall of protection for the world for 1,000 years.

A furlong is one-eighth of a mile (5,280 divided by 8 = 660 feet). Therefore, one side of the "city" is 7,920,000 feet ($12,000 \text{ furlongs} \times 660 \text{ feet}$). What an interesting correspondence with the earth itself which has a diameter of 7,920 miles! Is this saying that the new government forms a box which can perfectly hold the earth? that the Church is the protection and salvation of the earth? It is worthy of note that the city described in Ezekiel 48:16 measures 4,500 cubits square. This measurement seems to be based on the "great cubit" which is apparently a cubit plus one hand-breadth, or 1.76 feet. (See Ezekiel 41:8; 40:5; 43:13.) Ezekiel's city, then, also is earth-measured in that 4,500 cubits is 7,920 feet.

The area of the entire surface of the New Jerusalem ($12,000 \times 12,000 \times 6 \text{ sides}$) is 864,000,000. This number is 1,000 times the diameter of the sun in miles (864,000 miles), thus seeming to say that the Church will "shine as the sun" for 1,000 years (Matthew 13:43).

The beauties go on and on. We have only begun to scratch the surface!

CHAPTER VII: EPILOGUE

Here we bring this brief booklet to a close. It is our prayer that it will open for many readers a door to fruitful study, appreciation, and application of the “mysteries” of Revelation.

Many things have been left unexplained. It needed to be thus. It was not intended that this be an exhaustive explanation. A skeleton for study has, however, here been provided so that the parts of Revelation not herein treated can be approached with a Scriptural logic and an historical basis. The interpretation of the smaller parts is not so difficult if they can be viewed consistently with the large picture.

Should the student desire to study the so-called “Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse” (6:2-8), it should now be helpful to know that these are part of the seven seals. Thus the first horse should have historical evidences found between the years 33 and 100, the second among 100 and 313, etc. Horses are symbols of doctrine. The changes of color show the deterioration of doctrine. First it was white — pure. As the tares multiplied, it became red colored with the sin of harlotry. Next it turned to black the beginning of the Dark Ages, in which truth in doctrine was nearly obscured. Lastly it was “pale” — dead, drained of all life during the constant ascendancy of the Roman counterfeit church. History will confirm the symbols.

Thus the wild, imaginative language of Revelation becomes a rational (though colorful) symbolic treatise on the history of the Christian age. Revelation becomes a book which the sincere and faithful Christian can honor. It can be defended before agnostic questioners who previously have heard only unrealistic and absurd interpretations guaranteed to bolster their agnosticism.

Following is an appendix which is a glossary of symbols and their suggested meanings for your further study and consideration. May God bless you in your search.

Revelation 1:3

— APPENDIX A —

A GLOSSARY OF SYMBOLS USED IN REVELATION

AN IMPORTANT PREFACE:

This glossary is only superficial although it can prove very helpful in decoding some of the hidden meanings of Revelation. The student should remember that many things not included in this glossary are of symbolic import. Among these are the meanings of proper names. It is also imperative to realize that Revelation uses some words in both a literal and a symbolic usage. Only the context can help determine whether or not a literal or symbolic usage is intended. Examples of such words are heaven, earth, death, angel, ten, etc.

— A —

AIR: powers of spiritual control; demons

ALTAR: the condition of full dedication to God

AMEN: used as a noun to represent Jesus

ANGELS: messengers (spirit, human, inanimate objects, events)

ARK: the new covenant arrangement under Christ and His Church

ARMAGEDDON: condition of ripeness for destruction (pictured by this ancient battleground of the forces of good and evil)

ASIA: mud, boggy; condition of being earthbound

— B —

BABYLON: primarily the Roman Church — extends to “daughter” denominations

BARLEY: basic Christian character truths

BEAST: a group of men (institution or government) with unholy characteristics

BEASTS (FOUR): God’s four attributes: wisdom, justice, love, and power. Should be translated “living ones.”

BED: A place of affliction

BEHEADED: having given up personal will to do God's will

BELLY: effects of having taken in and assimilated information

BIRD (UNCLEAN): demon, selfish profiteer, or person pushing personal ideologies

BITTER: difficult and painful

BLACK: devoid of light (truth)

BLOOD: life or its value; can mean death, as in blood spilled

BOOK: a plan with its information, or a record. (See also "little book.")

BOOK OF LIFE: the record of those found worthy of life (in either Gospel or Messianic Ages)

BOTTOMLESS PIT: condition of powerlessness or dormancy

BRIDE: The church of Christ; the 144,000.

BRIDEGROOM: Jesus

BRIDLES: a controlling element

BRIMSTONE: deadly poison (added to symbol of fire to show no way of escape)

BURNED: disillusioned or destroyed in profession

— C —

CALF: justice (because the calf was the principal animal sacrificed to satisfy justice)

CAMP OF THE SAINTS: the Messianic Age's earthly government consisting of the faithful pre-Christ ancients

CANDLESTICKS: (7) churches (see also "two candlesticks")

CHAIN: connection of truths

CITY: government (religious or secular)

CLOTHING/CLOTHED: status; one's standing before God

CLOUDS: trouble or obscurity

COURT: the condition of justification

CROWN: authority (when from diadema), victory (when from stephanos)

CUP: experiences

— D —

DARKNESS: erroneous and superstitious teachings

DAY: a year; a period of time with certain characteristics

DAY AND NIGHT: in perpetuity

DEATH: loss of spiritual life; condition of being alive but not having received eternal life; loss of previous belief or condition; having sacrificed earthly life-rights

DENS: secret societies, hiding places, conditions of subterfuge

DEVIL: civil power or Rome (papal or pagan)

DEVOUR: see “eat”

DOGS: Gentiles; ultimately, anyone refusing to acknowledge Israel's place in God's plan

DOOR: opportunity; proximity

DRAGON: civil power or pagan Rome

DRAGON, SERPENT, DEVIL, SATAN (as 4-part name): civil power under control of personal devil

DUST: mourning

DWELL ON THE EARTH: having strong ties to earthly or worldly interests (i.e., the establishment)

— E —

EAGLE: wisdom; Bible

EARTH: society; the established way of doing things; the social order

EARTHQUAKE: revolution

EAT: absorb, appropriate, come into harmony with

EGYPT: type of Western, Christian world

ELDERS: Old Testament prophecies

EUPHRATES: people who support Babylon

EYES: foresight; wisdom

— F —

FACE: favor or displeasure

FALSE PROPHET: a confederation of Protestant denominations

FAMINE: lack of truth

FIG AND FIG TREE: Israel

FIRE: destruction or judgment

FIRSTFRUITS: products of the Gospel Age, i.e., the Church and great multitude

FLOOD: great amount of truths

FOREHEAD: the sum total of character

FORNICATION: a Christian dabbling in affairs of this earth, thus unfaithful to Jesus, the espoused bridegroom

FOUNTAINS: the Church (true or false) as a source of religious truths

FOUR: the component parts

FOWLS: discontents

FROGS: unclean and boastful

FURNACE: heated experiences for proving or judging

— G —

GARMENTS: justification

GIRDLE: representative of service or servitude

GLASS: purity; transparency; calmness

GOD: position of highest authority (including its counterfeits)

GOG & MAGOG: symbolism for a rebellious civil power at the end of both Gospel and Millennial Ages

GOLD(EN): of Divine things

GOSPEL: the totality of God's Word including its judgment message

GRAPES: evil fruitage

GRASS: humanity in general, or a specific segment of it; when green is specified, right-heartedness or justification is implied

GREAT MULTITUDE: Christians who will receive a heavenly reward but not be part of the 144,000 in the body of Christ

GREEN: alive in spirit (in the sense of having inclinations toward righteousness); justified

— H —

HAIL: hard truths

HAIR: wisdom, venerableness

HAND: works; cooperation; responsibility

HARP: harmonious set of doctrines

HARVEST: end period of the Gospel Age; beginning of the Messianic Age; results of prior activities

HEAD: place of ideas; forms of government

HEAT: adverse effects from enlightenment

HEAVEN: the religious world or its leadership

HELL: the condition of oblivion when men die, but from which there will be a release

HORNS: powers

HORSE: doctrine

HORSEMEN: followers or promoters of doctrines

HUNGER: lack of spiritual food

— I —

IMAGE: federated Protestantism

INCENSE: prayers, sacrifices

IRON: strength

ISLAND: small nation or republic

ISRAEL: the people of God (i.e., the true Church)

— J —

JERUSALEM: the Millennial Divine government by the Church

JEWS: Christians

JEZEBEL: the Roman Church

JOHN: Church in the flesh

— K —

KEYS: ability to control access

KILLED: discredited; having lost prior belief

KINGS OF THE EARTH: men of influence

KINGS OF THE EAST: probably the church who will shine as the sun

— L —

LAKE OF FIRE: the second death: i.e., perpetual extinction

LAMB: Jesus

LEAVES: professions

LEFT: position of disfavor

LIFE: justification; spiritual vitality

LIGHTNING: bright flashes of truth which tend to confuse rather than enlighten

LINEN: the righteousness of saints (or its counterfeit)

LION: power; Jesus

LITTLE BOOK: Daniel

LIVING SOUL: Christian

LOCUSTS: devouring force as a plague to false Christianity

LORD'S DAY: Millennial Age

— M —

MAN (FACE OF): love

MANCHILD: man of sin; Papacy

MANNA (HIDDEN): immortality

MARK: indication of agreement or sympathy or cooperation

MARRIAGE: the uniting of Christ and His complete Church in the spirit realm

MEN: Christians, nominal or true

MERCHANTS: capitalists

MICHAEL: “One who as God” = Papacy

MILLSTONE: a place which prepared spiritual food

MONTH: 30 years (a day for a year)

MOON: Old Testament writings; Jewish Law

MORNING STAR: Jesus

MOUNTAIN: large kingdom

MOUTH: message

MURDERERS: character assassins

— N —

NAKED: without justification

NAME: sum of character; reputation

NATIONS, KINDREDS, PEOPLE(S), & TONGUES (4-name entity): the “sea” class; people without strong roots or commitments to the present order of things

NEW JERUSALEM: the spiritual government of the peaceable kingdom: Christ's Church glorified

NICOLAITANS: people who lord it over others

— O —

ODOURS: prayers

OIL: Holy spirit

OLIVE: Holy spirit

OLIVE TREES: see "two olive trees"

— P —

PALMS: symbol of salvation

PEARL: character developed through trials

PILLAR: stalwart

PIT: see "BOTTOMLESS"

PLACES: conditions

PLAGUES: truths to weaken false Christianity

PRIEST: a mediator between God and men

PRISON: death or restraint

PURPLE: royalty (real or assumed)

— R —

RAIMENT: justification or righteousness

RAIN: blessings of truth

RAINBOW: covenant

RED: sin

REED: standard of judgment

RIGHT: position of favor

RIVER(S): people who support something; source of refreshment

ROCKS: stable institutions

ROD: strong rule; a standard of measurement

— S —

SACKCLOTH: mourning or humiliation

SAILORS: workmen

SAND OF THE SEA: those ultimately of the earthly kingdom

SAT: controlled

SATAN: Papacy--or civil government (each under the influence of the personal devil)

SCORPIONS: tormentings

SEA: restless humanity without strong ties to the social or religious order of things

SEA OF GLASS: pure water of God's truths for cleansing purposes

SEAL: events which reveal once they occur; guarantee

SEAT: center of power

SECOND DEATH: extinction from which there is no hope of return

SEVEN: a complete number with reference to spiritual things

SHIPMASTER: businessman

SHIPS: commerce

SICKLE: truths to do a separating work

SMOKE: remembrance, obscuration, or evidence

SODOM: type of Babylon

SONG: praise coming from harmonious truths

SORE: a perpetual, threatening problem

SOUL(S) (see “LIVING SOUL”): Saints who have died and await resurrection

SPIRITS: teachings

STARS: teachers (true or false)

STINGS: painful irritations due to unwanted truths

SUN: Gospel [improperly received, can burn: see 7:16; 16:8, 9]

SWORD: Bible; any cutting message

—T—

TABERNACLE: dwelling place, i.e., presence; God’s plan pictured by a building

TAIL: last part; a lying prophet (Isaiah 9:15)

TALENT: sum total of the Gospel

TEARS: disappointment

TEMPLE: God’s plan, including the church itself, The Most Holy room of the Tabernacle

TEN: a complete number in reference to earthly or civil things

THIEF: quietly secretive and unexpected

THIRST: craving for truth which leads to life

THRONE: office of rulership including judgment

THUNDER(INGS): results of lightning; i.e., resulting activities or philosophies or controversies

TIME: (chronos) 360 years; a period of certain characteristics

TORMENTED: vexed to the point of great discomfort

TREE: important individuals or small nations or institutions

TREE OF LIFE: promise of continued existence

TRIBES OF ISRAEL: divisions of the glorified Church

TRUMPET: important and timely message

TWO CANDLESTICKS: Old and New Testament writings — as GIVERS OF LIGHT

TWO OLIVE TREES: Old and New Testament writings — as functions of the HOLY SPIRIT

TWO PROPHETS: Old and New Testament writings — as TEACHERS

TWO WITNESSES: Old and New Testament writings — as TESTIFIERS (in advance) of God's purposes

— V —

VIALS: mechanisms to deliver plaguing truths

VINE OF THE EARTH: Babylon, the fruitage of Satan's planting

VIRGINS: true Church or great multitude; undefiled by illicit cooperation with the world and its ways

— W —

WAR: a struggle or persecution

WATER: truth

WATERS: people/truths

WHITE: pure or justified

WHORE: a church which has compromised itself with politics and worldly involvement

WILDERNESS: condition of separation (in mind and attitude) from accepted standards of doctrine and practice

WIND: war

WINDS: powers of demonic control

WINE: gospel (pure or polluted); doctrine; experiences coming out of teachings

WINEPRESS: the last trouble of the harvest which squeezes life out of false religion

WITNESSES: see "TWO WITNESSES"

WOMAN: Church (true or false); covenant

WORMWOOD: Arius, as poisonous and bitter to the apostasy

— Y —

YEAR: 360 years (a day for a year)

If the reasonableness and logic of the view of the Bible herein presented has appealed to you, you will want to consider it further. THE DIVINE PLAN OF THE AGES is the key to understanding vital topics such as why God permits evil, the purpose of our Lord's return, the day of judgment, the kingdoms of the present evil world, the kingdom of Christ, the distinction between human and angelic natures, and much more. At the turn of the century, it was the third best seller; the Bible and the Chinese Almanac being first and second. This topical Bible study aid (including a fold-out chart of the Scriptures chronologically diagrammed) is an invaluable tool for any student of the Scriptures. A paperback edition will be sent to you without charge if you send your request by e-mail OaklandCountyBibleStudents@yahoo.com. You may also read the book at [THE DIVINE PLAN OF THE AGES](http://www.bibletoday.com/free_downloads.htm) at the following link: http://www.bibletoday.com/free_downloads.htm