

REVELATION

Author :

John, one of the original apostles of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Date :

Probably sometime about 96 AD, though some scholars think it was much earlier than this.

Themes :

John wrote down what Christ had revealed to him (1:1). It is "prophecy" (1:3). In it Christ appears in glory. He is the Ruler of the kings of the earth (1:5), the One who judges the churches (chapters 2,3), the "lion" of the tribe of Judah (5:5), the glorified Lamb of God (5:6), the King who will reign over God's kingdom (19:15), the Lord of lords (19:16), the Alpha and Omega, the Beginning and the End (22:13). This book contains things to take place after John wrote them (1:1). The theme in it is the second coming of Christ and the things that will occur before and after that event, things in heaven and on earth. This book is full of figurative language, of symbols, of signs given in language not always easy to understand. However, the leading themes are clear – the condition of churches in general and the promises and warnings Jesus gives to them, the end of this age when evil will develop to the full, the rule of antichrist over the whole earth and his cruel persecution of the people of God, the punishment God will mete out to those who follow the antichrist and the fearful disasters He will send on the earth, the second coming of the Lord Jesus with great power and glory to rule the world, and the glorious future that awaits His followers. Along with the revelation of these events God has given many great promises and words of encouragement to believers, and visions of heaven which are sources of joy and comfort to them.

It is only fair to say that some Bible teachers do not agree that the principal theme of this book is the second coming of Christ and events related to it. Their explanation of the things revealed in this book are quite different from the explanation given in the following notes. Some of them teach that the visions and signs John saw are related to John's own time and to a large extent have already been fulfilled. Others teach that they began to be fulfilled in John's day and have been slowly and progressively fulfilled all through this age, that this book is a sort of pre-written church history. Still others teach that for the most part the visions and symbolic language in this book were not meant to indicate literal events, but reveal spiritual principles and lessons which apply throughout this whole age. The writer of the notes given with the text of this book does not accept any of these systems of interpretation. Of course there are spiritual principles and lessons in this book, just as there are spiritual principles and lessons in every part of the Bible, whether literal history, prophecy of future events, poetry, or those portions which give direct instruction. But this does not at all mean that the things revealed in this book do not signify real events which will take place sometime in the future. Symbols are used in other parts of the Bible to indicate literal events, and there seems no good reason to think the same is not true in this book.

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1 The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave to him, to show to his servants things which must quickly take place. And he sent and signified *it* by his angel to his servant John, **2** who testified concerning the word of God, and the testimony of Jesus Christ, and everything that he saw. **3** Blessed *is* he who reads the words of this prophecy, and those who hear *it* and keep those

1:1 "Revelation" – this book is not an invention of men. It is a gift from heaven. It's source is God Himself, not the brain of any human being. John did not borrow the symbols, the pictures, the words of this book from any other literature. The Lord Jesus revealed it all to him.

"To show" – God gave this book to reveal the future, not to conceal it. It is for our understanding, not for our confusion.

"Servants" – in Rom 6:17-22 Paul says all true believers in Christ are God's servants or "slaves" (the Greek word means both).

"Quickly" – this does not have to mean that this book had its fulfillment in John's day or shortly after, or that it even began to have its fulfillment then. Compare 22:7,12, 20 – three times Jesus says He is coming "quickly," but He did not come in John's day or shortly afterwards, or even up until our day. What, then, does "quickly" mean? Commentators offer different explanations –

The word means soon from God's point of view (2 Pet 3:8 – less than two days from John's day to ours. See note at Ps 90:4).

Or the Greek word translated "quickly" may mean "suddenly" (things that must suddenly come to pass once they begin to happen – 1 Thess 5:2).

Or John was caught forward in vision to see the end of this age – from that point of view things took place very quickly.

Or God used the word "quickly" to indicate that the things in this book are always imminent ("at hand" – v 3) – they may begin at any moment and each generation of believers should be alert and prepared for the Lord's coming (Matt 24:36,42-44).

"Signified" – the English word means to make known by speech, action or signs. The Greek word has the same general meaning. The Revelation uses many signs and symbols, along with explanations in ordinary words, to reveal what God wanted us to know.

"Angel" – the words "angel" and "angels" are used about 80 times in this book, and about 300 times in the whole Bible. They are spirit beings usually unseen by men, but they may appear in human form from time to time. There are innumerable angels – 5:11.

1:2 Here the "word of God" and "testimony of Jesus Christ" refer to this book of Revelation. The Lord Jesus was the final great prophet of God – notes at Deut 18:18,19; Matt 1:1; John 7:16; Heb 1:2. In this book

things which are written in it, for the time *is* at hand.

4 John to the seven churches which are in Asia: Grace *be* to you, and peace, from him who is and who was and who is to come, and from the seven Spirits which are before his throne, **5** and from Jesus Christ, *who is* the faithful witness *and* the firstborn from the dead, and the ruler of the kings

He continued this ministry He began on earth. It comes with His full authority.

1:3 "Blessed" – this blessing will come on those who read and obey the truth in this book. Reading merely with the view of trying to understand the mysteries God has revealed will not result in blessing. See notes on "blessing" at Gen 12:1-3; Num 6:22-27; Ps 1:1-3; Matt 5:3-10; etc. Since God has promised a special blessing on this book we should all be encouraged to read it and apply its truth to our lives.

"Prophecy" – 19:10; 22:7,10,18,19. This is the only book of the New Testament called a prophecy, though every book in it (and in the whole Bible) came by God's inspiration.

"The time is at hand" – these words (like the word "quickly" in v 1) indicate that the things revealed in this book had not even begun to happen when John wrote these words down toward the end of his life.

"At hand" – compare 22:10; Rom 13:12; Matt 24:33; 1 Pet 4:7; Joel 1:15.

1:4 "John" – see the Introduction.

"The seven churches" – v 11. There were more than seven churches in the province of Asia (for example, the church at Colosse was also there). But God chose these seven to represent all the churches in Asia (and no doubt, throughout the world – note at v 20).

"Asia" – note at Acts 16:6.

"Grace and peace" – Rom 1:7; etc. John now points to the Trinity as the source of grace and peace (notes on the Trinity at Matt 3:16,17; etc). From "Him who is and who was and who is to come" means God the Father.

"Seven spirits" – 3:1; 4:5; 5:6. These seven spirits are linked with the Father and the Son in this divine benediction and are set forth as a source of grace and peace to the churches (compare 2 Cor 13:14; Matt 28:19). So we may be sure they symbolize the one Holy Spirit of God (John 14:16,17). He is the sevenfold Spirit. "Seven" in this book is often used as a symbolic number meaning perfection, fullness, completion (compare vs 11,12,16,20; 4:5; 5:1,6; 8:2; 10:3; 12:3; 13:1; 15:1,7).

1:5 "And from Jesus Christ" – the eternal Son of God. Here He is given three titles.

"The faithful witness" – a witness is one who knows the truth and reveals it. A faithful one does not bend the truth in any way, hides nothing that needs to be known. The Lord Jesus tells us exactly what we need to hear and holds back nothing that would be for our good.

of the earth. To him who loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, 6 and has made us kings and priests to His God and Father, to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.

7 Look, he is coming with clouds, and every eye will see him, and those *also* who pierced him, and all the peoples of the earth will mourn because of him. Even so, Amen.

8 "I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the Ending," says the Lord, "who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty."

9 I John, who also am your brother and companion in tribulation, and in the kingdom and patient endurance of Jesus Christ, was on the island that is called Patmos, for the word of God and for the testimony of Jesus Christ. 10 I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and heard behind me a loud

voice, as of a trumpet, 11 saying, "I am the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last. Write what you see in a book, and send *it* to the seven churches which are in Asia, to Ephesus, and to Smyrna, and to Pergamos, and to Thyatira, and to Sardis, and to Philadelphia, and to Laodicea."

12 And I turned to see the voice that spoke to me. And being turned, I saw seven golden lampstands, 13 and in the middle of the seven lampstands *someone* like the Son of man, clothed with a garment down to the feet, and with a golden sash tied around the chest. 14 His head and *his* hairs *were* white like wool, as white as snow, and his eyes *were* like a flame of fire. 15 And his feet were like fine bronze, as if they burned in a furnace, and his voice *was* like the sound of many waters. 16 And he had seven stars in his right

"Firstborn from the dead" - "firstborn" is a title of dignity, indicating pre-eminence and supremacy (Col 1:18; Ps 89:27). Christ has risen from the dead (Matt 28:6; 1 Cor 15:1-8), and has the highest position of all who will ever be raised (Phil 2:9-11).

"Ruler of the kings of the earth" - 19:16; Prov 21:1; Dan 4:34,35; 5:21. The events in this book which the kings of the earth will think they are controlling will actually be under the control of their unseen Ruler, the Lord Jesus Christ. See John 17:2; Matt 28:18.

"Loved us" - Rom 5:8; 8:37; Gal 2:20; Eph 3:18,19; 5:2. Some Greek manuscripts have the present tense of the verb.

"Washed us" - 1 Cor 6:11; 1 John 1:7.
"Blood" - Matt 26:28; Rom 3:25; Heb 9:12; 10:19.

1:6 "Kings" - 2:26,27; 3:21; 20:4; 2 Tim 2:12; Matt 19:28-30.

"Priests" - 5:10; 7:15; 1 Pet 2:5,9.
"To Him be glory" - see John 12:28; Rom 11:36; 16:27; Jude 25.

"Amen" - this word comes from the Hebrew word for truth and means "so be it."

1:7 John announces the great theme of this book - 2:25; 3:3,11; 11:15; 14:14-16; 16:15; 17:14; 19:11; 22:7,12,20.

"He is coming" - Matt 16:27; John 14:3; Acts 1:11; etc.

"Clouds"-Dan 7:13; Matt 24:30; 26:64; 1 Thess 4:16,17.

"Pierced Him"-John 19:34,37; Ps 22:16; Zech 12:10.

"Mourn" - Matt 24:30; Zech 12:10-14.

1:8 "Alpha. . .Omega" - here the Lord God speaks. In 22:13 the Lord Jesus uses the same words about Himself. In other words, He knew that He was the Lord God. Alpha was the first letter of the Greek alphabet, Omega the last. God is the beginning (the One who brought things into being) and end of all things. Compare Rom 11:36; Isa 44:6.

1:9 Observe what accompanies the kingdom of the Lord Jesus in this world.

"Tribulation" - 2:9,10; 7:14; Matt 5:10; John 16:33; Acts 14:22; Rom 8:17; 1 Pet

4:1,12.

"Patient endurance" - 2:2,3,19; 3:10; 13:10; 14:12; Rom 5:3,4; 8:25; 2 Cor 1:6; 2 Tim 2:12; Heb 6:12; 10:36; Jam 1:3.

"Patmos" - a small island near the coast of present-day Turkey, about 80 kilometers southwest of Ephesus. Evidently the Roman authorities had banished John there because of his preaching the Word of God and the gospel of Christ.

1:10 "In the Spirit" - 4:2; 17:3; 21:10. God's Spirit gave John an exceptional spiritual experience, a vision of the unseen. Compare Ezek 1:1; Dan 8:1; Acts 10:10,11.

"The Lord's day" - Sunday, the first day of the week, the day on which Jesus rose from the dead - Matt 28:1-6.

1:11 Note at v 4. "Seven" - note at v 4.

1:12 "Golden lampstands" - a fitting symbol of the seven churches (v 20; Matt 5:14). Compare Ex 25:31-40. "Lampstands" is a more accurate translation of the Greek word than "candlesticks."

1:13 "Son of man" - Dan 7:13; Matt 8:20 (note).

"Garment. . .golden sash" - probably speaks of Christ as the High Priest of His people. Compare Ex 28:4. See Heb 2:17; 4:14; 8:1; 10:21,22.

1:14 "Wool" - compare Dan 7:9.

"A flame of fire" - 2:18; 19:12; Dan 10:6 - a person's eyes tell us much about him. Here Christ's eyes speak of the fiery holiness of His character, and His ability to discern all the secrets of men.

1:15 "Bronze" - Dan 10:6. The feet that walk about in the midst of the churches are of a burning purity.

"The sound of many waters" - Ezek 43:2. Christ's voice is like the voice of the God of Israel, powerful and irresistible (compare Ps 29:3-10).

1:16 "Seven stars" - note at v 20.

"Sword" - 2:12,16; 19:15,21 - a symbol of the Word of God (Heb 4:12; Eph 6:17). It speaks of offensive warfare - the fight against evil. Christ has only to speak and judgment is executed.

hand, and out of his mouth went a sharp double-edged sword, and his face *was* like the sun shining in its strength.

17 And when I saw him, I fell at his feet as *though* dead. And he laid his right hand on me, saying to me, "Do not be afraid. I am the First and the Last. 18 I *am* he who lives. *I* was dead, and, look, I am alive for ever and ever. Amen. And I have the keys of Hades and death.

19 "Write the things which you have seen, and the things which are *now*, and the things which will take place after these things. 20 The mystery of

"Sun" – Matt 17:2. This speaks of Christ's glory and splendor. He is the radiance of God's glory (Heb 1:3; 2 Cor 4:6). This is the light that blinded Saul of Tarsus on the Damascus road (Acts 9:3,8,9; 22:11).

1:17 "At His feet" – where we should all be, and would be if we saw Him as John did. Compare Ezek 1:28.

"Do not be afraid" – Matt 17:7; 14:27.

"First and Last" – words only God can truly speak. Compare v 8; Isa 44:6; 48:12,13.

1:18 "I am he who lives" – a reference to the Living God (Ps 42:2; Jer 10:10; Matt 16:16; 2 Cor 6:16; 1 Thess 1:9. Compare John 8:24,58). Jesus here says He Himself is that one.

"Dead" – Matt 27:50; Mark 15:44,45; 1 Cor 15:3.

"Alive. . . for ever and ever" – 4:19; Matt 28:6; Acts 1:3; Rom 6:9,10.

"Keys of Hades and death" – Christ has absolute authority over the unseen realm of the dead, and no one else has any at all. See the note on the Greek word "Hades" at Luke 16:23.

1:19 John's writing is in three parts:

"The things you have seen" – the vision of Christ in this chapter

"The things which are now" – the conditions prevailing in the seven churches (chapters 2 and 3)

"The things which will take place after these things" – the things that will happen after conditions in the churches have run their full course (4:1 to 22:5)

1:20 "Mystery" – truth revealed by God which men could not know if He did not reveal it.

"Angels" – the Greek word can be translated "messengers" (as it is in Mark 1:2; Luke 7:24; 9:52; etc). Here (and in 2:1,8,12,18; 3:1,7,14) the meaning is probably this: the messengers through whom the Lord can speak to the churches, those He counts responsible as representatives of the churches.

"Seven churches" – vs 4,11. These seven churches were literal historical churches of John's day which needed the messages of chapters 2 and 3. But they may be viewed in a different way – as churches that represent all churches both in that day and throughout this whole age. The number seven is significant. It suggests fullness and completion. Just as the seven spirits

the seven stars which you saw in my right hand, and of the seven golden lampstands *is this*: The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches, and the seven lampstands which you saw are the seven churches.

2 "To the angel of the church of Ephesus write: He who holds the seven stars in his right hand and walks in the midst of the seven golden lampstands says these things:

2 "I know your works, and your labour, and your patience, and how you cannot endure those

symbolize the one Spirit of God (v 4), so may the seven churches symbolize the one Church in the world. The picture of Christ in the midst of the lampstands holding the seven stars also suggests this. Had Christ only seven literal churches in His care? Has He none now? Is it not clear that these seven lampstands represent all churches? So we may expect to see these seven kinds of churches in our day.

Some commentators have taught that these churches have a further meaning. They think the seven churches gave a prophetic outlook of the Church from its beginning to its end. In this view the seven churches were chosen in perfect order beginning at Ephesus and ending at Laodicea to indicate seven successive eras through which the church would pass. This is a possible interpretation, and an interesting one. And there is actually some agreement between the contents of the letters which follow and church history. But there is no real proof for this interpretation. In any case, we should be more interested in what these letters say to us personally and to the churches where we worship.

2:1 "Angel" – 1:20.

"Ephesus" – Acts 18:19,14; 19:1-20; Eph 1:1.

"Write" – the Lord Jesus told John exactly what he must write to each of the churches – vs 8,12,18; 3:1,7,14. John did not fabricate any of it. He wrote to the "angel" of the church but the message was for the whole church.

"Stars. . . lampstands" – 1:12,16,20.

2:2 "I know" – the Lord says the same to each church. Compare Ps 33:13-15; 139:1-4; Prov 5:21; Jer 16:17; 23:24; Heb 4:13. He knows all about us as individuals and as churches, and stands ready either to give blessing or chastisement.

"Cannot endure those who are evil" – compare Ps 101:3-5; 1 Cor 5:13. They followed the apostle Paul's instructions in Eph 5:5-7 and refused to compromise with evil and evil people.

"Tested" – compare 1 John 4:1; 1 Thess 5:21; 1 Cor 14:29. This is very important today also.

"Liars" – Matt 7:15-20; 2 Cor 11:13-15; 2 Pet 2:1. In Acts 20:28-31 Paul had warned the elders of the Ephesian church against such people.

who are evil, and *that* you have tested those who say they are apostles, and are not, and have found them liars, 3 and *that* you have persevered, and have had patience, and for my name's sake have laboured, and have not fainted.

4 "Nevertheless I have against you *that* you have left your first love. 5 Therefore remember from where you have fallen, and repent, and do the first works. Or else I will come to you quickly,

2:3 "Laboured" - v 2 - this second reference to their hard work indicates that they were very active in the Lord's service, toiling for His "name's sake." Paul had set an example of this when he was among them - Acts 20:19,20,31,34; and he had written to them to "redeem the time" (Eph 5:16). Evidently all this they had put into practice and had strength to continue without fainting or growing weary of it.

2:4 "Against you" - in some ways they were an ideal church, hardworking, persevering, careful about evil men and evil doctrine. But they were failing in the most important matter of all - love. See 1 Cor 13:1-3,13; Matt 22:37-40. The Lord does not say they had no love at all. The meaning is that they didn't have as much as they had at their beginning as a church. Evidently they had gotten away from Paul's words to them in Eph 3:16-19.

2:5 "Fallen" - losing one's first love is sin, and no small sin at that. It is a fall in the most important of all things. If there is no sin there is no need of repentance.

"Repent" - vs 16,22; 3:3,19. Jesus began His ministry on earth with this word (Matt 4:17). He continues with it in His present ministry to His people. Here it encourages us to believe that first love once lost may be regained. Notes on repentance at Matt 3:2; etc.

"Unless" - a church or an individual who will not obey Christ's command to repent is heading for judgment. Let us understand that when love begins to go everything God values in a church begins to go with it.

"I will. . . remove" - this means either that they would cease to be a church or that He would have nothing more to do with them as a church.

2:6 "Nicolaitans" - v 15. The Bible says nothing about what these people believed and taught, but there seems to be two possible interpretations. Some have taught that they were followers of a man named Nikolaus who, after professing to adopt Christianity, became a heretic and the leader of an immoral sect. Others have taught that we should look at the meaning of the word Nicolaitans itself to understand who they were. The name could have been derived from two Greek words - nikan, which means to conquer, and laos, which means the people. Thus the Nicolaitans would be a class of people arising in the church who tried to gain power and lord it over God's flock. Perhaps they indicate the beginning

and will remove your lampstand out of its place, unless you repent. 6 But this you have *in your favor*: You hate the deeds of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate.

7 "He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes I will give *the right* to eat of the tree of life, which is in the middle of the paradise of God.

8 "And to the angel of the church in Smyrna

of a priestly class that eventually came to dominate many of the churches, and still retains its hold over much of Christianity. Whoever the Nicolaitans were, we may be sure that both their practices and teachings were contrary to the Word of God and hateful to the Lord Jesus.

2:7 "Let him hear" - Matt 11:15; 13:9,43. This word is given to each of the seven churches, and so to all churches and individuals today also.

"The Spirit" - Jesus spoke to John through God's Spirit and John, filled with the Spirit, wrote these words down.

"Overcomes" - there is a promise to overcomers in each of these letters to the churches. On overcoming see Matt 16:18; Luke 10:19; John 16:33; Rom 8:37; 1 John 2:13,14; 4:4; 5:4,5; Rev 21:7. The word means getting the victory over opposing forces (such as we see in Eph 6:10-18). This does not mean that overcomers never fail, never sin (see notes at Ps 37:24; Prov 24:16; Matt 6:12; etc). Overcoming is consistent with such experiences as Rom 7:18-25; 2 Cor 4:7-12; James 3:2; 1 John 1:8,9; etc.

Overcoming means to go on believing in Christ to the end of life, regardless of difficulties, trials, hardships, temptations and persecutions, regardless of what the world, the flesh and the devil can throw against us. Overcomers go on in faith and give evidence in their lives that they do so (compare Luke 22:32; Heb 10:39; Jam 2:14-17; 1 Pet 1:5; etc). They overcome because greater is the one who is in them than the one who is in the world (1 John 4:4). The Spirit of the great Overcomer, Christ Himself, is in them, and God has put within them a powerful conquering force - faith (Heb 10:39 - 11:1).

"Tree of life" - compare Gen 2:9; 3:22-24. God then barred sinful people from the tree of life. At last sinners forgiven and overcoming will enter into eternal life. What man lost by sinning he can have through Christ. Christ was nailed to a tree of death (Acts 5:30; Gal 3:13; 1 Pet 2:24) that we might eat of the tree of life. This tree is for those who believe in Christ and persevere in believing - on perseverance in faith see Col 1:23; Heb 3:6,14; 6:12; 10:38,39.

"Paradise" - see Luke 23:43; 2 Cor 12:4.

2:8 "Angel" - 1:20.

"Smyrna" - a city about 60 kilometers north of Ephesus and famous then for its beauty. In present-day Turkey it is called

write: The First and the Last, who was dead and has come to life again, says these things:

9 "I know your works and tribulation and poverty (but you are rich). And *I know* the blasphemy of those who say they are Jews and are not, but *are* a synagogue of Satan. 10 Fear none of those things which you are going to suffer. See, the devil will cast *some* of you into prison, that you may be tested, and you will have tribulation ten days. Be faithful even to death, and I will give you the crown of life.

11 "He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. He who overcomes will not be hurt by the second death.

12 "And to the angel of the church in Pergamos

Izmir.

"First and the Last" - 1:17.

"Has come to life again"-1:18; Matt 28:1-10.

2:9 "I know" - v 2.

"Tribulation" - the people of Smyrna, and the large community of Jews there persecuted the Christians. Though the city was beautiful its citizens were ugly in their behavior toward God's people.

"Poverty" - it would seem from this that the Christians for the most part were from the poorest classes of society (some may have willingly become poor to follow Christ). Compare Jam 2:5; Luke 6:20-22; 14:33.

"But you are rich" - 1 Cor 3:21-23; 2 Cor 8:9; Eph 1:3 - poor in material things, rich in spiritual things.

"Who say they are Jews and are not" - compare Rom 2:28,29; Phil 3:2,3.

"Synagogue of Satan" - 3:9. They no doubt thought they were a synagogue of God. For one reason why people can be so grossly deceived see Jer 17:9. Notes on Satan at 12:9; 1 Chron 21:1; Matt 4:1-10; John 8:44; etc.

2:10 "Fear none of those things" - compare Matt 10:26-28,31; Luke 12:32; John 14:27; 16:33; Heb 13:5,6; Rom 8:28.

"Tested" - the devil intended to persecute and crush them; God meant it as a test. Compare Ps 66:10-12; 1 Thess 2:4; 1 Pet 1:6,7; 2 Pet 2:9; Jam 1:2,3.

"Ten days" - God knows exactly how long to permit any test to continue and He will not ask us to endure more than we are able.

"Be faithful" - continue to trust Christ in the midst of persecution and trial and do not deny Him.

"Crown of life" - Jam 1:12. Note on "crown" at 2 Tim 4:8.

2:11 "Hear" - v 7.

"He who overcomes" - v 7.

"Second death" - 20:6,14; 21:8. This means final separation from God. Compare 2 Thess 1:8,9.

2:12 "Angel" - 1:20.

"Pergamos" - or Pergamum - a famous city in those days, about 160 kilometers north of Ephesus.

"Sword" - 1:16. Introducing Himself to

write: He who has the sharp sword with two edges says these things:

13 "I know your works and where you live: where Satan's throne *is*. And you hold fast to my name, and have not denied my faith, even in those days when Antipas *was* my faithful martyr, who was slain among you, where Satan lives.

14 "However I have a few things against you, because you have there those who hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balak how to cause the children of Israel to stumble, to *have them* eat things sacrificed to idols, and to commit fornication. 15 Also you have those who hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitans, which thing I hate.

16 Repent! Or else I will come to you quickly, and

this church in this way indicates that there was much there that He opposed.

2:13 "I know" - v 2.

"Where Satan's throne is" - Satan's throne is not in hell but on earth. Compare John 12:31; 14:30; 2 Cor 4:4; Eph 6:12; 1 Pet 5:8; 1 John 5:19. At that time he made Pergamum his headquarters, the center of his operations. Doubtless it is somewhere else now. Pergamum has completely lost the importance it had in those days. Then it was the center in Asia for the worship of the Roman emperor. It was also very near the center of the wonderful work God accomplished in the first century, being nearly equidistant from Rome and Jerusalem and close to the churches founded by Paul and others in Asia Minor, Macedonia and Greece.

"Have not denied my faith" - they continued to confess Christ as Lord and Saviour in the place that was the center of opposition to Him. This required much spiritual strength - Eph 6:10.

"Antipas" - one of the first martyrs for Christ in the province of Asia. Satan tried to destroy the church in Pergamum by persecution.

"Faithful martyr" or "witness" - compare 1:5. It was Christ the faithful witness working in him that enabled him to be one too.

"Where Satan lives" - what a world this must be when the devil himself feels at home in it. The people of Pergamum must have given him an especially wholehearted reception.

2:14 "Against you" - v 4. Christ first commends His people for the good He sees and only then speaks of their failures.

"Balaam"-Num 25:1-3; 31:16; 2 Pet 2:15; Jude 11.

"Balak" - Num 22:1-6. The two things the Lord points out here troubled the church in Corinth also. See 1 Cor 5:1,2; 6:9; 8:1-13. See also Acts 15:20,29. Satan, not being able to destroy the church by persecution from without, tried the way of corrupting it from within. And this was a greater danger.

2:15 "Nicolaitans" - compare v 6. Practices have a way of becoming teachings.

2:16 "Repent" - v 5.

will fight against them with the sword of my mouth.

17 "He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes I will give *some* of the hidden manna to eat, and will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, known to no man except he who receives *it*.

18 "And to the angel of the church in Thyatira write: The Son of God, whose eyes are like a flame of fire, and whose feet *are* like fine bronze, says these things:

19 "I know your works, and love, and service, and faith, and your patience, and your works, and *that* the last *are* more than the first.

20 "However, I have a few things against you, because you permit that woman Jezebel, who calls herself a prophetess, to teach and to seduce my

servants to commit fornication, and to eat things sacrificed to idols. 21 And I gave her time to repent of her fornication, and she did not repent. 22 Look, I will cast her onto a sickbed, and those who commit adultery with her into great tribulation, unless they repent of their deeds. 23 And I will kill her children with death, and all the churches will know that I am he who searches the minds and hearts. And I will give to every one of you according to your works. 24 But to you I say, and to the rest in Thyatira, *to* as many as do not hold this doctrine, and who have not known the depths of Satan, as they say: I will put on you no other burden. 25 But hold on to what you *already* have until I come.

26 "And he who overcomes and keeps my works to the end, to him I will give authority over the nations; 27 and he will rule them with a rod of iron.

"Fight" – compare Jer 21:5. We must be careful in matters of teaching and doctrine or we may find the Lord Himself at war with us.

2:17 "Hear. . .overcomes" – v 7.

"The hidden manna" – Christ Himself. Compare Ex 16:14-16,31; John 6:35,48-51. It is hidden from the world.

"White stone" – in those days sometimes white stones were used like tickets to festivals. This may be the meaning here – admission to the marriage supper of the Lamb (19:9).

"New name" – a name Christ gives to an individual will indicate exactly what he or she is. Compare Gen 17:5; 32:28.

2:18 "Angel" – 1:20.

"Thyatira" – a town about 70 kilometers ESE of Pergamum.

"Son of God" – notes at Matt 1:18; 3:16; John 1:14; 3:16; 5:18,19; etc.

"Fire. . .bronze" – 1:14,15.

2:19 "I know" – v 2.

"Love. . .faith" – note at Gal 5:6.

"The last are more than the first" – they were not like many churches where zeal and service for Christ decrease with passing time.

2:20 "Against you" – vs 4,14.

"You permit" – compare v 2. Toleration of evil and evil people in the church is a very serious matter indeed. It brings the church into opposition to Christ.

"Jezebel" – the literal Jezebel was one of the most wicked women in Bible history. See 1 Kings 16:30-33; 18:4; 19:1,2; 21:1-23; 2 Kings 9:7,10,22,30-37. In the church at Thyatira an equally wicked woman called herself a follower of Christ and God's prophetess, pretending that she got messages from God. What she taught was similar to "the teachings of Balaam" in the Pergamum Church – v 14.

2:21 "Time to repent" – Rom 2:4; 2 Pet 3:9.

"She did not" – 9:20; 16:9,11; Matt 23:37.

2:22 Refusal to repent will always bring God's punishment, now or later.

"Adultery" – this may mean either literal or figurative adultery (unfaithfulness to God – compare Jer 2:2; 3:6-9; Ezek 23:37; Hos 1:2; 4:15), or it may mean both.

2:23 "Her children" – those who followed her teaching.

"Death" – in the law of Moses this was the penalty of both kinds of adultery (Lev 20:10; Deut 22:22-24; Ezek 16:38-40; 23:46-49). By sending punishment on evil-doers in a church God means for other churches to learn some important truths.

"Searches the hearts and minds" – 1 Sam 16:7; 1 Kings 8:39; Ps 139:1,2; Prov 24:12; Jer 17:10; Heb 4:13.

"According to your works" – 18:6; 20:12,13; 22:12; Matt 16:27; Rom 2:6.

2:24 "Depths of Satan" – since this Jezebel called herself a prophetess she no doubt tried to pass her teaching off as God's deep secrets. But she was a servant of Satan (compare 2 Cor 11:14,15). There was a teaching in the first century that one could learn Satan's secrets by doing evil and so gain the experiences needed to defeat him. This was turning the truth completely upside down – we can never defeat Satan by giving in to Satan or conquer sin by sinning, or overcome the world by indulging in worldly things. If we try that method we become slaves not overcomers. But is it possible that people can accept teachings from Satan and think they are teachings from God? Yes, indeed. We see it everywhere.

2:25 Christ did not demand too much of this church or lay heavy burdens on them. (Compare Matt 11:29,30.) It was enough for them to hold to the truth they had heard from God's true servants and refuse the teachings of false prophets. Compare John 8:31,32; 1 Cor 15:2; 2 Thess 2:15; 1 Tim 3:9; Titus 1:9; Heb 4:14.

"Until I come" – the literal church at Thyatira would not be in existence at Christ's second coming, but see the note at 1:20. That which Thyatira represented will be on earth when Christ comes.

2:26,27 "Overcomes" – note at v 7.

Like the vessels of a potter they will be broken to pieces. This I have received from my Father. 28 And I will give him the morning star.

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

3 "And to the angel of the church in Sardis write: He who has the seven Spirits of God, and the seven stars, says these things:

"I know your works, and that you have a name that you are alive, but *you* are dead. 2 Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain, which are about to die, for I have not found your works complete before God. 3 Remember, therefore, how you have received and heard, and hold *it* firmly, and repent. But if you will not watch, I will come on you like a thief, and you will not know what hour I will come on you.

"To the end" – compare Matt 24:13; Heb 3:6,14; 6:11; 2 Tim 2:12. Perseverance in faith and service is of the utmost importance.

"He will rule them" – this is the same promise God the Father gave to Christ in Ps 2:8,9. Overcomers are united to Christ. They share His sufferings now, but will reign with Him after He comes – 3:21; 20:4,6; 2 Tim 2:12.

"I have received from my Father" – Matt 28:18; John 3:35; 17:2.

2:28 "Morning star" – Christ Himself. See 22:16.

2:29 Verse 7.

3:1 "Angel" – 1:20.

"Sardis" – a famous and wealthy city about 50 kilometers south of Thyatira.

"Seven spirits" – 1:4.

"Seven stars" – 1:16,20.

"I know" – 2:2.

"You are dead" – spiritually dead. The reputation they had for being a living church was probably based on the previous generation of believers. Or, perhaps, on much religious activity. People sometimes mistake church activity for spiritual life.

3:2 "Be watchful" – compare Eph 5:14. They were spiritually sleepy and unaware of their true condition.

"Strengthen. . .remains" – the church was not yet in a completely hopeless condition, but even what they had of truth and light was about to die among them.

3:3 "Remember" – 2:5.

"Received and heard" – the Word of God.

"Hold it fast" – it seems it was about to slip away from them – or they from it. Compare Heb 2:1. The truth must be valued, held on to, and obeyed. Otherwise the church would sink further into death. Once truth is gone, everything is gone.

"Repent" – 2:5,16,21.

"A thief" – compare Matt 24:43,44; 1 Thess 5:2-4.

3:4 "Few" – often even in dead churches there are some who are spiritually alive and

4 "You have a few names even in Sardis which have not defiled their clothes, and they will walk with me in white, for they are worthy. 5 He who overcomes will be clothed in white clothing, and I will never blot his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before my Father and his before angels. 6 He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.

7 "And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write: He who is holy, he who is true, he who has the key of David, he who opens and no man can shut and shuts and no man can open, says these things:

8 "I know your works. Look, I have set before you an open door, and no man can shut it, for you have a little strength, and have kept my word, and have not denied my name. 9 Look, I will make those *who are* of the synagogue of Satan – who say

who follow holiness (Heb 12:14; 1 John 3:3).

"White" – v 18; 4:4; 6:11; 7:9,13; 19:14.

"Worthy" – 2 Thess 1:5.

3:5 "He who overcomes" – note at 2:7.

"Book of life" – 13:8; 17:8; 20:12,15; 21:27; Phil 4:3. Compare Ex 32:32,33; Ps 69:28; Dan 12:1. The Lord Jesus here is not threatening to blot anyone out of this book, but promising He will never blot out the names of true believers.

"I will confess" – Matt 10:32.

3:6 2:7.

3:7 "Angel" – 1:20.

"Philadelphia" – a city about 50 kilometers southeast of Sardis. The name means "brotherly love."

"Holy. . .true" – 6:10; 15:4; Isa 1:4; Ps 31:5; John 14:6.

"The key of David" – Isa 22:22. Christ is the manager of God's house, God's kingdom, the treasurer who has the key to the storehouse of wisdom and grace and spiritual gifts and power.

"Shut. . .open" – Christ has absolute authority in the affairs of churches and nations. Compare Matt 28:18; John 17:2. He can open or shut doors anywhere in the world, and does so in perfect wisdom.

3:8 "I know" – 2:2.

"An open door" – Acts 14:27; 1 Cor 16:9.

"A little strength" – compare Eph 1:18,19; 6:10; Col 1:11. Evidently they could have had much more than they did have.

"Kept my word" – this is what the Christians at Sardis were urged to do – v 3.

"Not denied my name" – 2:13. From this we judge that holding fast the word of the Lord Jesus and not denying His name requires only a "little" spiritual strength. If there is any real spiritual life at all there will be this much strength. Think then what believers may do if they are "strengthened with all power" (Col 1:11; Eph 3:16).

3:9 "Synagogue of Satan" – 2:9.

"Lie" – they were Jews by physical descent, but their lives were a denial of all

they are Jews and are not, but lie – look, I will cause them to come and show reverence at your feet and to know that I have loved you. 10 Because you have kept my word about patient endurance, I will also keep you from the hour of trial which will come upon the whole world, to test those who live on the earth.

11 "Look, I am coming quickly. Hold on to what you have, so that no man takes your crown. 12 Him who overcomes I will make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he will never go out. And I will write on him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, *which is* the new Jerusalem, which comes down out of heaven from my God.

that God wanted Jews to be, so they were living a lie (compare Rom 2:28,29).

"At your feet" – compare Isa 45:14; 49:23; 60:14.

"I have loved you" – a special love for a church that was special in His eyes. Compare John 14:21,23.

3:10 "Patient endurance" – Rom 12:12; 2 Thess 3:5; 1 Pet 2:20,21.

"Keep you from" – in Greek this may mean to keep them altogether away from the presence of the coming trial, or it may mean to keep them safe even though the trial is going on around them.

"The hour of trial" – this may have a double reference – to a trial coming in the time of the early churches, and to a trial at the end of this age (possibly to the time of great tribulation spoken of in 7:14 and Matt 24:21. See also Dan 12:1). In this case, the promise of keeping believers from that hour would also refer to both times. During the time of persecution and tribulation which came on the early churches, certainly the church at Philadelphia was not removed from the earth in fulfillment of this promise. Instead, it was preserved during that time. Should we think that the promise of Jesus would be fulfilled in one manner then, and in an altogether different manner at the end of this age?

3:11 "Quickly" – 1:1,3; 22:7,12,20.

"Hold on to what you have" – 2:25.

"Your crown" – probably refers here to rewards for faithful service. Compare 2:10; 1 Cor 9:24-27; Phil 4:1; 2 Tim 2:5; 4:8; Jam 1:12; 1 Pet 5:4; 2 John 8.

3:12 "Him who overcomes" – 2:7.

"Pillar" – every believer is a part of the spiritual temple God is now building (Eph 2:19-22; 1 Cor 3:17; 6:19). Being a "pillar" signifies an important and permanent place in this temple.

"Name" – 2:17. Overcomers will have three names written on them.

"God" – God's holy character will be stamped on them, the mark of God's ownership. They will have a nature fully in tune with God's nature.

"City" – 21:2-27. Overcomers will be perfectly fitted to live in that bright, shining, golden, glorious place.

And *I will write on him* my new name. 13 He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.

14 "And to the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write: The Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God says these things:

15 "I know your works, that you are neither cold nor hot. I wish you were *either* cold or hot. 16 So then, because you are lukewarm, neither cold nor hot, I will spit you out of my mouth. 17 Because you say, 'I am rich, and have many possessions, and need nothing,' and do not know that you are wretched, and miserable, and poor,

"My new name" – compare 19:12. We do not know what this new name may be, what unknown wonders about Him we shall afterwards see.

3:13 See 2:7.

3:14 "Angel" – 1:20.

Laodicea was a city about 80 kilometers southeast of Philadelphia, and about 150 kms due east of Ephesus.

"The Amen" – 1:7. The word here means truth, faithfulness, trustworthiness. In Isa 65:16 it is used of God (in Hebrew there it is "the God of amen." It means the God who will do exactly as He says he will do).

"Witness" – 1:5.

"Beginning" – this does not mean that He was the first one whom God created. He was one of the Trinity and so was never created at all. The Greek word here means the one through whom creation came into existence, the source, the origin of creation. Compare John 1:3; Col 1:16,17.

3:15,16 "I know" – 2:2.

"Cold" – spiritually cold. Here it probably means utter rejection of the gospel of Christ or even open opposition to it. "Hot" means love for the gospel and fervent zeal for Christ.

"Lukewarm" – means not being either much for the gospel or against it, but a form of godliness lacking its power (2 Tim 3:5), no heart for Christ but not wanting to abandon the Christian religion altogether. It is the opposite of Rom 12:11; 1 Cor 15:58. This is a spiritual condition that disgusts Christ, the one consumed with zeal for God (John 2:17).

"I will spit you out" – if they will not repent (v 19), He will have nothing more to do with them; they will cease to be a church in the true sense of the word (though they may continue to have their meetings, ceremonies, etc). It is surely possible for churches who have been spit out of the mouth of Christ to carry on more or less as before as if nothing has happened!

3:17 What a contrast between Christ's view of those Christians and their thoughts about themselves! Their condition disgusted Him; it was a source of satisfaction and pride to them. Compare Luke 16:15.

"And need nothing" – compare Hosea

and blind, and naked. 18 I counsel you to buy from me gold tried in the fire, so that you can be rich; and white clothing, so that you can be covered and *that* the shame of your nakedness does not appear. And anoint your eyes with ointment, so that you can see.

19 "All those I love I rebuke and discipline. Be zealous, therefore, and repent. 20 See, I stand at the door, and knock. If anyone hears my voice, and opens the door, I will come in to him, and will eat with him, and he with me.

21 "To him who overcomes I will grant to sit with me on my throne, just as I also overcame, and

12:8; Luke 18:11,12; 1 Cor 4:8.

"Do not know" - how dangerous is self-deception and self-ignorance, and how common they are, both in the world and in the church. The reasons for them? Compare Jer 17:9; 2 Cor 4:4; 2 Thess 2:10; Heb 3:13.

3:18 "Buy" - not with money or good deeds. Compare Isa 55:1; Matt 13: 44-46.

"From me" - Jesus is the only source of the things we need for a true spiritual life and a happy eternity. There is no use trying to buy them somewhere else.

"Gold" - here signifies something of great spiritual value, true, divine riches.

"White clothes" - means righteousness (compare Isa 61:10).

"Ointment" - Christ's remedy for spiritual blindness, His power to give spiritual understanding.

3:19 "I love" - their lukewarmness disgusted Him but His loving heart was not changed because of it.

"Discipline" - Heb 12:5-11; 1 Cor 11:32; Prov 3:11,12.

"Repent" - Jesus appeals to five of these seven churches to repent (2:5,16,21,22; 3:3). Does this not suggest to us that a great many churches in our times also need to repent?

3:20 The church there as a whole had shut Christ out, and He had to knock to get into the hearts of any of its members. This indicates that the whole membership was in unbelief (compare 2 Cor 13:5).

"I stand" - who is this "I"? See in v 14 how He presents himself to this church: As the source of the whole creation, the one whose word is absolutely sure, the one of supreme authority. The picture we sometimes get of a meek Saviour standing there is not at all true to the context, though He is the Saviour as well as the universal Sovereign. (See the note at Acts 22:10).

"I will come in" - this is a promise from the Lord of glory who cannot lie. Let us all believe it, receive Him, and become the children of God in truth (John 1:12,13). Christ in the heart is all we need to have eternal life and begin a truly spiritual walk with God. To keep Him shut out of our hearts is all we need to do to perish forever.

3:21 "Him who overcomes" - 2:7.

have sat down with my Father on his throne. 22 He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches."

4 After these things I looked, and saw a door opened in heaven, and the voice which I first heard speaking to me *was* like a trumpet which said, "Come up here, and I will show you things which must take place after these things." 2 And immediately I was in the Spirit, and saw that a throne was set in heaven, and one sitting on the throne. 3 And he who sat *there* in appearance was like a jasper and a sardius stone. And *there was* a

"Sit with me" - means to share His authority and rule - 2:26,27.

"My throne" - 5:10; 20:4,6; 2 Tim 2:12.

"I also overcame" - 5:5; Heb 2:17; 4:15; 12:2,3; Matt 4:1-10.

"His throne" - God's eternal throne. Jesus' throne is different (Luke 1:32,33). He has not yet ascended it - 2:7; Matt 19:28; 25:31.

4:1 "Door open" - suggests God is about to reveal more of heaven's secret truth to John.

"Saw" - the Greek word literally means "behold", "see", "look." See notes at Gen 1:31; Matt 1:23.

"Trumpet" - 1:10 - loud, piercing, clear.

"Come up here" - some commentators teach that John here going up to heaven symbolizes the Rapture of the Church (1 Thess 4:16,17). Unlikely as this seems to many students of God's Word, this may possibly be true. But there is no real proof for it. And we should all be careful not to teach dogmatically something lacking in real proof. In chapters 10 and 11 John is once more on earth (10:1,4,7,9,10; 11:1-3), yet who suggests he represents the Church returned from heaven? Some commentators say also that in the visions which follow, the Church is not mentioned by name as being on earth and so it must be in heaven. But it is also true that in the visions which follow, the Church is not mentioned by name as being in heaven. Should we therefore reason that it must be on earth? One argument is as good as the other.

"Things. . . after these things" - 1:19 - probably means what will occur after conditions in the churches of chapters 2 and 3 run their full course, or reach their full development at the end of this age.

4:2 "In the Spirit" - 1:10.

"Throne. . . in heaven" - 1 Kings 22:19; Ps 9:4; 47:2; 123:1. God reigns over the universe, and all the events in this book are under His control and He is working out His purposes through them. See 19:6. God's throne is referred to 40 times in this book. We may call it the central fact of the Revelation.

4:3 "In appearance" - no one has seen God in His spiritual essence (John 1:18; 1 Tim 6:16). John saw only an appearance of His splendor reflected as in precious gems. The

rainbow around the throne, like an emerald in appearance. 4 And around the throne *were* twenty-four thrones, and on the thrones I saw twenty-four elders sitting, dressed in white clothing, and they had crowns of gold on their heads. 5 And from the throne came lightning flashes and thunderings and voices. And seven lamps of fire were burning before the throne, which are the seven Spirits of God.

6 Also before the throne *there was* a sea of glass, like crystal. And in the central area of the throne and around the throne, *were* four living beings full of eyes in front and in back. 7 And the first living being *was* like a lion, and the second living being was like a calf, and the third living being had a face like a man, and the fourth living being was like a flying eagle. 8 And the four living beings each had six wings. All around and on the inside *of the wings they were* full of eyes. And they do not rest day and night, saying, "Holy, holy, holy, Lord

God Almighty, who was and is and is to come."

9 And when those living beings give glory and honour and thanks to him who sits on the throne, who lives for ever and ever, 10 the twenty-four elders prostrate themselves before him who sits on the throne, and worship him who lives for ever and ever, and cast their crowns before the throne, saying,

11 "You are worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power, for you have created all things, and for your pleasure they exist and were created."

5 And I saw in the right hand of the one sitting on the throne a scroll written inside and on the back, sealed with seven seals. 2 And I saw a strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice, "Who is worthy to open the scroll, and to break its seals?" 3 And no one in heaven, or on earth, or under the earth, was able to open the scroll, or even to look at it.

Greek word here translated jasper indicates a gem clear as a diamond (2:11). The sardius (or carnelian) is red.

"Rainbow" – suggests God's glory and faithfulness (Gen 9:13-16; Ezek 1:28).

4:4 "Elders" – vs 9-11; 5:5; 8-10; 7:11-14; 11:16; 14:3; 19:4. It seems they are different both from ordinary angels (7:11), and from God's people in heaven (5:8-10; 7:9-11,13,14; 19:4-7). But they could possibly be special angels in an exalted position in heaven (compare Eph 1:21; 3:10; Col 1:16; 2:10). It seems unlikely to the author of these notes that they represent the church already rewarded and reigning in heaven before John gets there, and before the seventh trumpet sounds (11:15-18; 1 Cor 15:52). The saved people of 7:9 are not on thrones but are "standing before the throne." And can we think the bride of Christ, the Church, is sitting enthroned in heaven before the wedding of the Lamb takes place (19:7,8), or before Christ takes His own throne at His return?

4:5 "Lightning. . .thunderings" – 8:5; 11:19; 16:18. Compare Ex 19:16-19; 1 Sam 2:20; Job 36:29,30; Ps 18:12,13; 29:3; 77:18. "Seven Spirits" – 1:4.

4:6 "Sea of glass" – 15:2. Compare 2 Chron 4:2,6,10. In Solomon's temple the "sea" was for the priests to wash in. In heaven there is a temple – 7:15; 11:19; 14:15,17; etc. But there is no need for anyone to wash in that "sea" for all people there have already been washed from all sin and defilement (1:5; 1 John 1:9; Heb 10:19-20). So the "sea" in heaven is solid.

"Four living beings" – compare Ezek 1:5-14; 10:20; Isa 6:2,3. See also Gen 3: 24. Evidently these "beings" are similar to cherubim and seraphim. There is speculation, but no proof, that they represent the Church in heaven. The above references are not in harmony with such a speculation.

"Full of eyes" – see Ezek 1:18; 10:12.

Probably speaks of great intelligence and great watchfulness.

4:7 "Lion. . .eagle" – see Ezek 1:10.

4:8 "Six wings. . .holy, holy, holy" – Isa 6:2,3.

"Is to come" – 1:4.

4:9 "Give glory and honour and thanks" – 5:12,13. This is what believers now on earth may also do, should do, and will do, if they are in tune with heaven (1:6; John 5:23; Rom 11:36; 16:27; 1 Cor 6:20; 10:31; Eph 1:12; 5:20; 1 Thess 5:18; 1 Tim 1:7; 6:16; Heb 13:15).

"Who lives forever and ever" – 1:18.

4:10 "Cast their crowns" – they thus humbly acknowledge that all their authority and the power associated with their thrones come from God the supreme authority.

4:11 They praise God as the Creator of the universe (10:6; Gen 1:1; Job 38:4-7; Ps 19:1; Isa 40:25,26; Acts 14:15; 17:24-28; Rom 11:36).

"For your pleasure" – or "because of your will" – the Greek word translated "pleasure" is usually translated "will" or "desire."

5:1 "The one. . .on the throne" – God the Father.

"A scroll" – writing material rolled up like a roll of paper. The Jews used scrolls in their synagogues – Luke 4:17; Heb 10:7.

"Seven seals" – means perfectly secure, completely sealed up.

5:2 "Angel" – one of about 80 references in this book to heavenly angels.

"Who is worthy" – breaking the seals of this scroll and opening it to view was not a matter of strength or power, but of worthiness.

5:3 "No one" – not Abraham, friend of God; not Moses, the mighty lawgiver; not David, king of Israel; not any of the prophets; not any of the elders or living creatures or angels in heaven. All in heaven and on earth and anywhere in the universe had to confess their unworthiness to break the seals. No one dared approach the throne to take

4 And I wept much, because no man was found worthy to open and read the scroll, or even to look at it. 5 And one of the elders said to me, "Do not weep. Look, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has prevailed to open the book, and to break its seven seals."

6 And I looked, and there in the center of the throne and of the four living beings, and in the middle of the elders, stood a Lamb *appearing as though* it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God the scroll.

5:4 Evidently John realized something of the importance of this scroll and longed to see what was in it.

5:5 "Lion of the tribe of Judah" – a title of Christ. Compare Gen 49:8-10. It speaks of His royalty, His right to the throne of David (Luke 1:32,33).

"Root of David" – see Isa 11:10; 53:2; Rom 15:12 (Jesse was David's father).

"Has prevailed" – the same verb in Greek as in 3:21.

"Prevailed to break its seven seals" – because He has demonstrated His worthiness (v 9).

5:6 "In the center of the throne" – the Lord Jesus is at the very center of sovereign rule in the universe. He has authority over the whole earth (1:5; Matt 28:18; John 17:2).

"Lamb" – the kingly Lion of v 5 is also a Lamb (John 1:29,35). One symbol cannot signify all that Christ is.

"Slain" – Isa 53:7,8; Matt 27:35,50; John 20:25-27; Acts 2:23; 3:15. The words "appearing like" suggests that the scars of His wounds were visible. Compare John 20:25-27.

"Seven horns" – in the Old Testament horns are sometimes a symbol of power, strength, or authority (Deut 33:17; Ps 89:17; Zech 1:18,19). Seven horns signify that Christ has these to perfection. Literal lambs are very weak and completely lacking in power and authority. But not this Lamb who is also a Lion.

"Seven eyes" – Zech 4:7.

"Seven Spirits" – notes at 1:4. The seven spirits are both before God's throne (4:5) and in all the earth. The Holy Spirit, being God, can be in more than one place at the same time. Christ has the "seven spirits" – that is, He has the Spirit of God in the fullest possible measure (compare John 3:34). In fact God's Spirit is the Spirit of Christ. See Rom 8:9.

5:7 This is one of the greatest moments in the Bible. John was weeping. Silence reigned in heaven because no worthy person was found to open the scroll. The whole world waited to see what would happen. Then the Lamb, meek and lowly, comes with full confidence to that brilliantly shining omnipotent One on the throne, reaches out and takes the scroll from His right hand. And immediately heaven is filled with praise.

5:8 "Fell down before the Lamb" – this is

sent forth into all the earth. 7 And he came and took the scroll out of the right hand of him who sat on the throne. 8 And when he had taken the scroll, the four living beings and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb, each of them having a harp and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints.

9 And they sang a new song, saying, "You are worthy to take the scroll, and to open its seals, for you were slain, and have redeemed us to God by your blood out of every tribe, and language, and

an attitude of worship. In heaven, in the presence of God the Father, worship is offered to Jesus (compare Heb 1:6). This would be impossible if Jesus is not the incarnation of God, if He did not share the divine nature. Throughout the Bible God forbids the worship of anything or anyone but Himself. See Ex 20:3-5; Deut 6:13; Matt 4:10. They know in heaven what many on earth have not yet learned – the truth of John 5:23 (see other references to Christ's deity at Phil 2:6).

"Harp" – 14:2; 15:2.

"Incense" – Ex 30:1,7,34-38; Ps 141:2.

"Prayers" – the prayers of His people are sweet-smelling to God and they are kept in heaven and offered to Him (8:3). The mention of them here indicates something of their importance in regard to the opening of the seven-sealed book.

5:9 "A new song" – 14:3; Ps 33:3; 40:3; 96:1; 144:9; 149:1; Isa 42:10.

"You are worthy. . .for you were slain" – see why the Lord Jesus alone is worthy to open the scroll. It is because He gave Himself as a blood sacrifice to take away our sins. See 1:5; Matt 26:28. No one else ever did this, and no one else ever could have done it (see note at Heb 10:4).

"Redeemed" – it is perfectly true that Christ has redeemed His people – Gal 3:13; 4:5; Eph 1:17. But here the literal meaning of the Greek word is "bought" or "purchased." Compare Acts 20:28; 1 Cor 6:20.

"Us" – some Greek manuscripts (and what a great many of even evangelical scholars consider the best manuscripts) do not have the word for "us" here, but have only "purchased to God by your blood out of every tribe", etc. The NASB adds the word "men" in italics, indicating that the word is not in the original. Other translators prefer to add the word "some." If John actually wrote the word for "us" in this phrase, this would mean that the elders (and the living beings), unlikely as other evidence makes this, are redeemed men (see note at 4:4). But even if this were so, it would not necessarily mean that the resurrection of believers had already taken place at the time this vision points to; they could be representatives of the spirits of believers who have died and gone to heaven (2 Cor 5:8; Phil 1:23).

"Tribe. . .nation" – 7:9; Matt 28:19; Mark 16:15; Luke 24:47. The gospel of Christ is

people, and nation, 10 and have made us kings and priests to our God; and we will reign on the earth."

11 And I looked, and I heard the voice of many angels around the throne and the living beings and the elders. Their number was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands. 12 *They were* saying with a loud voice, "Worthy is the Lamb who was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and praise."

13 And every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and those who are in the sea, and everything that is in them, I heard saying, "Praise, and honour, and glory, and power, *be* to him who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb for ever and ever."

14 And the four living beings said, "Amen." And the twenty-four elders prostrated *themselves* and worshipped him who lives for ever and ever.

6 And I saw when the Lamb opened one of the seals, and I heard one of the four living

for all peoples and will bear fruit among all. **5:10** "Made us kings and priests to our God; and we will reign" – according to some Greek manuscripts "made them kings and priests to our God and they will reign."

"On the earth" – 3:21; 20:4,6; 2 Tim 2:12; Matt 19:28; Luke 22:29,30.

5:12 "Slain" – v 9. The death of Christ for sinners is a matter for great praise in heaven.

"Power. . .praise" – compare 4:11; 5:12; John 5:23. Jesus is just as worthy as God the Father of having these ascribed to Him.

5:13,14 It is clear again that God the Father and the Lord Jesus are equally worthy of the praise and worship of every created being in the universe.

6:1 "Seven seals" – the scroll (5:1) was sealed in such a way that as a seal was broken a part of the scroll could be unrolled. The scroll contained what we have in the following chapters of this book. The scroll that John longed to see opened, that caused great praise and rejoicing in heaven, is now open before us. Among the Jews title deeds to property were sealed documents (see Jer 32:9-14), and the sealed scroll in this book may represent Christ's title deed to the earth, His right to possess it and reign over it (see notes at Lev 25:24-31; Ruth 2:20; Jer 32:11). At the end of this age, He will come to claim His property, His inheritance (Matt 21:38; Heb 1:2,13; 10:13), and share it with His people (Rom 8:17). This Christ does in chapters 19 and 20. Chapters 6-18 give events shortly before the end which lead up to that. Though the seals, trumpets and bowls all reveal disaster to come we should remember it is Christ the Redeemer who is in charge of events.

beings say in a voice like thunder, "Come and see."

2 And I looked and saw a white horse, and he who sat on it had a bow. And a crown was given to him, and he went forth conquering, and to conquer.

3 And when he had opened the second seal, I heard the second living being say, "Come and see."

4 And there went out another horse, a red *one*, and he who sat on it was given *power* to take peace from the earth, and to *cause men to* kill one another. And a great sword was given to him.

5 And when he had opened the third seal, I heard the third living being say, "Come and see." And I looked and a black horse appeared. And he who sat on it had a pair of balances in his hand.

6 And I heard a voice among the four living beings say, "A measure of wheat for a day's wage, and three measures of barley for a day's wage; and *see that* you do not damage the oil and the wine."

7 And when he had opened the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the fourth living being say, "Come and see." 8 And I looked and a pale horse appeared. And he who sat on it was named Death, and Hades followed along after him. And power

"Come and see" – vs 3,5,7. John is now permitted to see the things contained in the scroll (and so are we).

6:2 "White horse" – Christ also will come on a "white horse" (19:11), but His coming will be after this event, after all the seals have been opened. When this white horse rides forth Christ is still in heaven opening the seals. The white color probably speaks of someone trying to take Christ's place and claim the earth for himself. Can this be anyone but the great impostor, the antichrist (chapter 13)?

"He who sat on it" – since the other horses and their riders (and all the rest of the seals and the trumpets and bowls) represent coming troubles or disasters, it is very likely that this one does too.

"Bow. . .to conquer" – it appears from this that toward the end of this age there will be a determined effort by someone to conquer the world. "Crown" suggests that he will be successful. Compare 13:7.

6:3,4 Toward the end of this age there will be much warfare (compare Matt 24:6-8). "Take peace from the earth" suggests that the whole world will be caught up in the coming struggle for power.

6:5,6 "Measure" – the Greek word indicates an amount the equivalent of about a liter dry measure.

"Day's wage" – in Greek "denarius" – the pay for a day's work (Matt 20:2; etc). This suggests famine conditions for the common man (compare Matt 24:7). If his daily wage all goes for a measure of wheat how will he meet other expenses? "Oil and wine" indicate things that are not basic necessities. The rich, as usual, will have plenty of everything.

6:7,8 "Hades" – see notes at Matt 16:18;

was given to 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.

9 And when he had opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of those who had been slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held. 10 And they cried out with a loud voice, saying, "How long, O Lord, holy and true, will you refrain from judging those who live on the earth and avenging our blood?" 11 And white robes were given to each one of them, and they were told that they should rest a little longer, until *the number* of their fellow servants and their brothers who would be killed, as they *had been*, was completed.

12 And I looked when he had opened the sixth seal, and immediately there was a great earthquake, and the sun became *as* black as sackcloth

Luke 16:23.

"Fourth part of the earth" – may refer either to a geographical part of the earth or, more likely, to the number of people killed (compare 8:7; 9:18). At the end of this age the powers of darkness will be let loose on earth as perhaps never before.

"Sword. . .beasts" – in Ezek 14:21 these are called God's "four dreadful judgments." They are judgments which have often come to some of the peoples of the earth, but it seems we should look for an even greater working of them at the end of this age.

6:9-11 The scene indicates persecution and martyrdom for Christ's servants, and probably points to the "great tribulation" or "great distress" at the end of this age – 7:17; Matt 24:21.

"The altar" – Ex 27:1-8. Christ's martyrs are like a sacrifice whose lives are poured out (compare Phil 2:17; 2 Tim 4:6; Lev 1:5,11,15).

"Avenging our blood" – while they live on earth Christ's servants are not to pray for vengeance on their enemies. See Matt 5:44; Acts 7:60; Rom 12:14. But the end of this age will be a time when God will rise to take vengeance on the world – 2 Thess 2:6-9; Ps 94:1-3; Deut 32:35; note on God's vengeance at Num 31:1-3. Then the prayers of those who have died will be in harmony with God's just purposes. Observe that the dead are conscious and able to pray.

"White robes" – 3:5,18; 4:4; 7:9,13; 19:14.

"Rest a little longer" – tribulation had come, but not the day of God's vengeance. We see that day coming later in this book – 14:17-20; chapters 15 and 16; 19:11-15.

6:12-17 Compare the changes in sun, moon and stars with Matt 24:29. These are events which will take place after the "great tribulation" Christ spoke of in Matt 24:21. This means that the great tribulation takes place sometime under the opening of the first five seals, before the sixth seal is opened. But these changes in sun, moon and stars take

of hair, and the moon became like blood, 13 and the stars of heaven fell to the earth, just as a fig tree drops its late figs when it is shaken by a mighty wind. 14 And the heaven receded like a scroll when it is rolled up, and all the mountains and islands were moved out of their places.

15 And the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every slave, and every free man hid themselves in the dens and among the rocks of the mountains, 16 and said to the mountains and rocks, "Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him who sits on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb! 17 For the great day of his wrath has come, and who will be able to stand?"

7 And after these things I saw four angels standing at the four corners of the earth,

place before the "Day of the Lord." See Acts 2:19,20. Therefore the Day of the Lord is not the same as the great tribulation. The Day of the Lord will bring God's anger and vengeance against the people of the world – vs 10,16,17; 1 Thess 5:2,3; 1 Pet 3:10; Isa 13:6-13; etc. The great tribulation is the anger and persecution Satan and evil men pour on God's people at the end of this age – 12:12; 13:7.

The great tribulation and the Day of the Lord are separated by these unmistakable signs in sun, moon and stars. The one comes before these signs, the other comes after them. It is very important to see this. We should not think that both the great tribulation and the Day of the Lord happen in the exact same period of time, and are the same thing. This is to confuse two things that God has separated. Those who do not distinguish between these two separate periods of time are failing to take into consideration some very important information He has given us about the time of the end. So they will inevitably make mistakes in their interpretation of the Revelation.

6:12 "Earthquake" – Isa 24:19,20; Heb 12:26-28. "Immediately" – literally "Look". **6:15-17** See Isa 2:9-21 which also speaks of the Day of the Lord.

"Wrath of the Lamb" – a lamb is a meek and harmless creature. But this Lamb is the Lion of Judah's tribe (5:5). He is meek (Matt 11:29), but will at last rise up in terrible anger to punish the world for its wickedness. Observe that the wrath of God comes after the signs at the beginning of the Day of the Lord, after the great tribulation is over. If we want our interpretation of the Revelation to be correct it is very important to see this.

"Wrath" – this is God's just anger against sin and unrepentant sinners. See notes at Num 25:3; Deut 4:25; Ps 90:7-11; John 3:36; Rom 1:18; 2:5. This is the wrath that Jesus rescues believers from – 1 Thess 1:10; 5:9.

7:1-17 Before the Lamb opens the seventh

holding back the four winds of the earth, so that wind would not blow on the earth, nor on the sea, nor on any tree. 2 And I saw another angel ascending from the east, having the seal of the living God. And he cried with a loud voice to the four angels, who had been given *power* to harm the earth and the sea, 3 saying, "Do not harm the earth, or the sea, or the trees, until we have put a seal on the foreheads of the servants of our God." 4 And I heard the number of those who were sealed, and a hundred and forty-four thousand from all the tribes of the children of Israel were sealed.

5 Of the tribe of Judah twelve thousand *were* sealed. Of the tribe of Reuben twelve thousand *were* sealed. Of the tribe of Gad twelve thousand *were* sealed.

seal there is a break in the narrative. Here Christ gives John visions which help to explain what has been going on under the opening of the six seals. Such explanatory visions appear in other parts of this book - 7:1-17; 10:1 - 11:14; 12:1 - 14:20; 17:1-19:11. It seems clear that the seals, trumpets and bowls carry the main narrative straight to the end in perfect order and sequence. These explanatory visions give added information. They are like explanations given in parentheses or brackets.

This is the view of the author of these notes. Not every scholar agrees with it. In the present portion we see two distinct groups of people, one on earth, the other in heaven. The first group has a limited number, the second has a number so large that a person cannot count it. The first group has to do with events after the six seals have been opened, the second has to do with events which took place under the first five seals. The first are to be protected against judgments to come under the seventh seal. The second group has already come through the "great tribulation" which occurs before the sixth seal is opened.

7:1 "Four winds" - these signify forces of destruction, released by God to punish sinful men. Compare Jer 49:36-38.

7:2,3 God's seal here signifies God's ownership. Compare 2 Cor 1:21,22; Eph 1:13. Seal on the "foreheads" here means to mark them out for protection in the midst of the coming judgments and disasters. Compare Ezek 9:3-6.

7:4-8 The "servants of our God" (v 3) to be sealed at the end of this age with God's seal are of the nation Israel. There are about thirty lists of the tribes of Israel in the Bible, all of them meaning literal Israel up to this list. It would be very strange if only in this one place the names of the tribes would signify something other than literal Israelites.

It is not clear, however, whether they are called servants here because they will do special service or simply to mark them out in general as believers (compare 1:1; 2:20;

6 Of the tribe of Asher twelve thousand *were* sealed. Of the tribe of Naphtali twelve thousand *were* sealed. Of the tribe of Manasseh twelve thousand *were* sealed.

7 Of the tribe of Simeon twelve thousand *were* sealed. Of the tribe of Levi twelve thousand *were* sealed. Of the tribe of Issachar twelve thousand *were* sealed.

8 Of the tribe of Zebulun twelve thousand *were* sealed. Of the tribe of Joseph twelve thousand *were* sealed. Of the tribe of Benjamin twelve thousand *were* sealed.

9 After this I looked and saw a great crowd, which no man could number, of all nations, and tribes, and people, and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, dressed in

6:11; 10:7; 19:2; 22:3,6. See Rom 6:16-18). It seems quite clear from the Word of God that Israel as a nation will turn back to God at the end of this age. Now, as a nation, they are in unbelief rejecting Christ as their Messiah. But that will change. See Rom 11:11,25-32; Jer 23:5-8; 31:31-37; 32:37-40; Ezek 20:40-44; 37:21-28; Dan 12:1; Hos 3:4,5; Zech 10:10-12; 12:9-14; 13:1,9.

The number 144,000 (v 4) may be a symbolic number indicating completeness. 144 is 12 X 12 X 1000. In the Bible twelve is a number that may signify completeness - twelve tribes of Israel, twelve apostles, twelve gates and twelve foundations and twelve crops of fruit (21:12,14; 22:2). One thousand may be 10 X 10 X 10 - a perfect cube also indicating fullness or completion. Or 144,000 may be used here to indicate a fairly large but limited number of people. Or possibly, as some think, it may be a literal number. In a book containing many symbols we must be very careful not to be dogmatic about doubtful things. If symbols are explained, as they sometimes are, then we can know what they mean. Otherwise, we should be cautious about our statements. Then "may", "perhaps", "possibly" or "might be" seems the language that best suits the case.

7:8 "Joseph" - Manasseh (v 16) was a son of Joseph. Ephraim was his other son. Since Ephraim is not in this list of tribes Joseph must represent Ephraim. The tribe of Dan is not in this list.

7:9 This great multitude is put in contrast with the 144,000 of v 4. Those are from the tribes of Israel; these are from every tribe and nation on earth. Those are comparatively few in number; these are innumerable.

"All nations. . . languages" - 5:9; 10:11; 11:9; 13:7; 14:6; 17:15. This is proof that the gospel will go into every corner of the earth before the end of this age. Compare Matt 24:14.

"Before the throne" - 4:2.

"White robes" - 6:11.

"Palm branches" - Lev 23:40; John 12:13

white robes with palm *branches* in their hands. 10 And they cried out with a loud voice, saying, "Salvation *belongs* to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb."

11 And all the angels stood around the throne and the elders and the four living beings, and they prostrated *themselves* before the throne on their faces, and worshipped God, 12 saying, "Amen. Praise, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honour, and power and might *be* to our God for ever and ever. Amen."

13 And one of the elders responded *and* said to me, "Who are these who are dressed in white robes? And where did they come from?"

14 And I said to him, "Sir, you know."

– a symbol of rejoicing and praise.

7:10 "Salvation" – 19:1; Ps 3:8; 37:39; 62:1; Isa 43:11; Hos 13:4; Jonah 3:9; Rom 1:16; Eph 2:8,9.

"And to the Lamb"–5:13; 14:4; 22:1,3.

7:11 "Elders. . .living beings" – 4:4,6-8.

"Prostrated" – 5:8.

7:12 Compare 5:12.

"Thanksgiving" – see Lev 7:12,13; Ps 7:17; 50:14,15; 56:12; Eph 5:20; 1 Thess 5:18.

7:14 "The great tribulation" – see Matt 24:21. The word for "the" is in the Greek here, but for some strange reason the KJV omits it. The tribulation called "the great" is an exceptional time of trouble coming at the end of this age. It will be similar to the troubles believers usually face in the world (John 16:33; Acts 14:22; 1 Thess 3:3,4. The same Greek word translated "tribulation" here in Rev 7:14 is in those verses. Compare also 1 Pet 4:12,13). But the trouble at the end of this age will be more severe, more widespread than ever before (13:7,8). There is no reason here to think that to "come out of" means to be rescued from. Judging from 13:7,15 the way they come out of it is by being put to death for their faith.

"Washed their robes. . .in the blood of the Lamb" – this indicates that their faith is in the gospel of Christ. Compare 1 John 1:7.

7:15 "Serve Him" – see 22:3. Service does not end when believers leave earth for heaven.

"Day and night" – their service will increase in heaven, since sleep is not needed there.

"Temple" – the Greek word here means the inner part of a temple, the Most Holy Place. See Ex 26:31-35; Heb 9:3. This service of believers in the temple shows that they are God's priesthood (1:6; 1 Pet 2:9). Their "sacrifice" of praise (Heb 13:15) will not stop when they get to heaven.

"Will dwell among them" – suggests living together in the closest sort of fellowship, and perfect protection from anything that could ever bring harm (v 16).

And he said to me, "These are those who have come out of the great tribulation, and who have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. 15 Therefore they are before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple. And he who sits on the throne will dwell among them. 16 They will hunger no more and thirst no more; nor will the sun beat down on them, or any *excessive* heat. 17 For the Lamb who is in the center of the throne will shepherd them, and will lead them to springs of living waters, and God will wipe away all tears from their eyes."

8 And when he had opened the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven for about half an hour.

Compare 21:3; Ex 25:8.

7:16 "Hunger no more and thirst no more" – compare Isa 49:10; John 4:13,14; 6:35,58. Many believers during the great tribulation will suffer literal hunger (13:16,17), as some have throughout this age (1 Cor 4:11; 2 Cor 6:5; 11:27; Luke 6:21). In heaven such things will not exist.

"Excessive heat" – compare 16:8.

7:17 "In the center of the throne" – note at 5:6.

"Shepherd" – this is a more accurate translation of the Greek word than "feed." Christ's work as shepherd will not end when believers get to heaven. He will continue to be their great leader through eternity.

"Lead them" – believers follow Him on earth (John 10:3,4,27) and will follow Him in heaven. Without the one there will not be the other.

"Living waters" – John 4:10; 7:38,39. Believers have been drinking of these now and will not stop drinking them in heaven. Christ, who is the source of their spiritual life here, will be that to them there.

"All tears" – there are many reasons for tears on earth (2 Kings 20:5; Job 16:20; Ps 6:6; 42:3; 56:8; 119:136; 126:5; Jer 9:1; Matt 26:75; Luke 7:38; Acts 20:19,31; Phil 3:18; 2 Tim 1:4). There will be none in heaven – 21:4; Isa 25:8; 35:10.

8:1 "The seventh seal" – in chapter 6 most of the seven-sealed scroll was opened. The last seal is now opened and out of this last part of the scroll come all the seven trumpets and all the seven bowls of wrath. The time of the great tribulation ends before the 6th seal is broken (see the note on 6:12-17). Now in this chapter the trumpets announce the beginning of God's judgments on wicked men at the very end of this age. And under the bowls (chapters 15,16) God's wrath is fully poured out on them.

"Silence" – compare 4:8-11; 5:9-14; 7:10-12. This silence after such continual praise surely indicates that something very significant is about to happen. It is like the silence that comes before a great storm. See Zeph 1:7. The "Day of the Lord", His time to pour out His fierce anger on the

2 And I saw the seven angels who stood before God; and seven trumpets were given to them.

3 And another angel came and stood at the altar, having a golden censer; and much incense was given to him that he might offer *it*, with the prayers of all the saints, on the golden altar which was before the throne. 4 And the smoke of the incense, *together* with the prayers of the saints, went up out of the angel's hand to the presence of God. 5 And the angel took the censer and filled it with fire from the altar and threw *it* onto the earth, and there were voices, and thunderings, and lightning flashes, and an earthquake.

6 And the seven angels who had the seven trumpets prepared themselves to blow *them*.

7 The first angel blew *his trumpet*, and there followed hail and fire mingled with blood, and they were cast upon the earth; and a third part of trees was burned up, and all green grass was burned up.

8 And the second angel blew *his trumpet*, and *something* like a great mountain burning with fire was cast into the sea; and a third part of the sea became blood, 9 and a third part of the creatures

world, is very near, and He announces His judgment with a series of trumpets. The troubles which come under the trumpets are not nearly as severe as those under the bowls of wrath. It seems that the trumpet troubles are more like warnings and announcements of further troubles to come.

8:2 "Seven" – this is the number of completeness or perfection.

"Trumpets" – in other places the Bible shows the significance of the sounding of trumpets. See Ex 19:16; Lev 23:13-25; Num 10:1-8,9; Jer 4:19; 1 Kings 1:34,39; 2 Kings 9:13; Josh 6:13-16. So when the seven trumpets are sounded here in this book we may expect to see the following: The manifestation of God's majesty, war, the gathering of the people of God, the appearance of the King, and the overthrow of God's enemies. And all these do appear at the sounding of these trumpets and just afterwards.

8:3-5 "Censer" – a censer was a metal bowl containing hot coals for burning incense (Lev 16:12).

"Incense" – Ex 30:1-9,34-38.

"Prayers of all the saints" – the prayers of God's people have their importance at the opening of the seals (5:8). We see the same thing here at the blowing of the trumpets. It seems that what follows here is an answer to their prayers (especially, perhaps, prayers like 22:20; Matt 6:10; etc). True prayer is very powerful indeed – Jam 5:16 (compare Ps 18:6-9).

"Golden altar" – Ex 30:1-6; Heb 8:5; 9:4.

"Thunderings. . . earthquake" – note at 4:5. The author of these notes believes that the things which appear at the sounding of the trumpets are disasters that will strike

which were living in the sea, died; and a third part of the ships were destroyed.

10 And the third angel blew *his trumpet*, and a great star fell from heaven, burning like a lamp, and it fell upon a third part of the rivers, and upon the springs of waters. 11 And the name of the star is called Wormwood. And a third part of the waters became wormwood, and many men died from these waters, because they were made bitter.

12 And the fourth angel blew *his trumpet*, and a third part of the sun was struck, and a third part of the moon, and a third part of the stars, so that a third part of them was darkened, and a third part of the day had no light, and likewise the night.

13 And I looked and heard an angel flying through the middle of heaven, saying with a loud voice, "Woe, woe, woe, to the inhabitants of the earth because of the other trumpet blasts of the three angels who are yet to sound!"

9 And the fifth angel blew *his trumpet*, and I saw a star fallen from heaven to the earth; and to him was given the key to the pit of the

the earth very near the end of this age. Symbols and figurative language are here, but they speak of literal calamities of some sort. Interpretation of all the details is difficult and cannot be attempted in brief notes like these.

8:7 Compare Ex 9:22-26. What once happened in one country (Egypt) will happen on the earth at large. And it will be a worse disaster – fire and blood will be mixed with the hail and lightening. See also Ezek 38:22; Joel 2:30; Acts 2:19.

8:8,9 Compare Ex 7:19,21.

8:10,11 Could this blazing star be some sort of comet or asteroid or huge meteor? Possibly, but we cannot say with any certainty. In 9:1,2 "star" symbolizes a living being. In 12:4 stars symbolize angels. Could this star be an angel who is given power to poison a third of the sources of fresh water on earth? We do not know. "Wormwood" means bitterness.

8:12 Compare 6:12,13; 10:12-23; Isa 13:10; Joel 2:2; Amos 5:18.

8:13 God gives warning of terrible disasters still to come before He actually sends them.

"Woe" – the Greek word indicates some cause of great grief or pain. Two of these three "woes" are described in chapter 9. The third one comes after the seventh trumpet sounds (11:5), and actually seems to be the pouring out of the seven bowls of wrath in chapter 16 which takes place under this last trumpet.

9:1,2 The "star" here is no literal star but a living being, as can be seen from the language concerning him. He is probably an angel.

"The key" – compare 20:1,3. Luke 8:31 indicates that the Abyss is a place of punishment in the unseen world of spirits and

Abyss. 2 And he opened the Abyss, and smoke came up out of the pit like the smoke of a huge furnace, and the sun and the air were darkened because of the smoke of the Abyss. 3 And from the smoke locusts came out upon the earth, and power was given to them like the power the scorpions of the earth have. 4 And they were commanded not to harm the grass of the earth, or any green plant, or any tree, but only those people who did not have the seal of God on their foreheads. 5 And they were not given *power* to kill them, but to torment them for five months. And their torment *was* like the torment of a scorpion, when it strikes a man. 6 And in those days men will seek death and will not find it, and will desire to die, and death will flee from them.

7 And the shapes of the locusts *were* like horses prepared for battle. And on their heads *were something* like crowns of gold, and their faces *were* like men's faces. 8 And their hair was like women's hair, and their teeth like lion's *teeth*. 9 And they had breastplates like breastplates of iron, and

is much feared by demons (compare 2 Pet 2:4). In Rom 10:7 the same Greek word is used, and means the realm of the dead.

"Smoke" – contrast 8:4. The smoke in heaven is quite different from this hellish smoke.

9:3 "Locusts" – it is not plainly said that the "locusts" come out of the abyss, but out of the smoke which comes out of the Abyss, but they probably come directly from the Abyss. It is clear from what is said of them that they are not literal locusts (locusts are similar to the grasshoppers found in India, but not identical). No locust is anything like a scorpion.

9:4 Grass, plants and trees are what literal locusts feed on.

"The seal of God" – used about Israelites in 7:3. But all believers have God's seal – 22:4; Eph 1:13. Compare Ezek 9:4-6. There may be few of them left on earth when this 5th trumpet blows. This takes place after the great tribulation when a great many of them will die – see 7:9-14; 13:15.

"On their foreheads" – probably figurative language indicating God's ownership. The Lord knows those who are his and will protect them.

9:5 "Five months" – it does not seem necessary to take this also as a symbol. Because there are many symbols used in this book that does not mean that each thing in it is a symbol of something else. When a symbol appears it usually seems clear that it is a symbol. There is either a hint in the language itself, or in the context, or an explanation of the symbol is given. Compare 2:28 with 22:16; 12:5 with 19:15; 12:14 with 12:6; 12:9; 13:11 with 16:13,14; 17:15,18; etc).

9:6 Compare 6:16; Jer 8:3 – wanting to die but afraid to commit suicide.

the sound of their wings *was* like the sound of chariots with many horses running to battle. 10 And they had tails like scorpions, and there were stings in their tails, and they had power to hurt men five months. 11 And they had a king over them, the angel of the Abyss, whose name in the Hebrew language *is* Abaddon, but in the Greek language *he* has the name Apollyon.

12 One woe is past. *And* look! Two more woes are coming after this.

13 And the sixth angel blew *his trumpet*, and I heard a voice from the four horns of the golden altar which is before God, 14 saying to the sixth angel who had the trumpet, "Release the four angels who are bound in the great river Euphrates." 15 And the four angels, who had been prepared for the hour and day and month and year, were released to kill a third part of mankind. 16 And the number of the army of horsemen *was* two hundred million. And I heard their number.

17 And I saw the horses in the vision were like this: Those who sat on them had breastplates of a

9:7-10 These "locusts" are the strangest creatures ever to appear on earth, almost indescribable. "Horses and wings" speak of speed. "Crowns" suggest authority to do what they do. "Men's faces" indicate intelligence and personality. What do these "locusts" symbolize? If they come out of the abyss (vs 2,3), and this is very likely, they are evil spirits, demons. If they are only produced by the smoke which comes from the abyss, they may be another sort of plague caused by Satan and his helpers working among the nations.

9:11 Both Abaddon and Apollyon mean "Destroyer." Some think he is Satan, and he may be. We know that Satan is the great destroyer of men – John 8:44; Heb 2:14; 1 Pet 5:8. However, if he is shut up in the Abyss with the "locusts" he cannot be Satan. Satan is not thrown into the Abyss until the return of Christ – 20:1-3. Also we should observe that this horde of "locusts" will not kill people (v 5).

9:12 "Two other woes" – vs 13-19; 16:1.

9:13 "Altar" – 8:3,4. The horns are the corners which project upwards.

9:14 "Release the four angels" – evidently not the same angels seen in 7:1.

"Bound" – probably signifies only that they cannot act until God gives permission.

"Euphrates" – see also 16:12. This long river flows from Turkey through Syria and Iraq into the Persian Gulf.

9:15 "The hour. . .year" – all things are in God's control and He has an appointed time for everything. See Acts 1:7.

"To kill" – it seems from vs 16-19 that these angels use some kind of army to produce this result. This is not to suggest that four angels by themselves could not kill so many people. Compare 2 Chron 32:21.

"A third of mankind" – the death of such

fiery *colour*, and a dark blue, and sulfur *yellow*; and the heads of the horses *were* like the heads of lions, and out of their mouths came fire and smoke and sulfur. 18 By these three, by the fire, and by the smoke and by the sulfur which came out of their mouths, a third part of mankind was killed. 19 For their power is in their mouths, and in their tails; for their tails *were* like serpents and had heads, and with them they do harm.

20 And the rest of mankind which was not killed by these plagues still did not repent of the works of their hands, so that they would no longer worship

an enormous number of people speaks of terrific agents of destruction of one kind or another. The population of the world now at the beginning of the 21st Century is about six thousand million (6 billion, 600 crores). But under the 4th seal a fourth of the earth's population will perish.

9:16-19 Compare Joel 2:2-11. Two hundred million (twenty crores) make a vast army indeed. At present the armies of all the nations on earth would not add up to anything near this number.

"I heard their number" - v 16 - he knew the number was amazingly high and insisted he was not exaggerating it. But what do these strange and terrible horses with their riders symbolize? Enormous human armies equipped with frightful weapons? A horde of demons let loose on the earth? Who can say with any certainty? As with some other prophecies of future events we may not know the exact method of fulfillment until the events take place. And can we think it is necessary for us to know before then?

9:20,21 "Nor did they repent" - 16:9,11; Matt 3:2,8; Luke 13:3-5; Acts 17:30. In spite of pains, plagues and disasters of every sort men will refuse to turn to God from the sins which bring His judgment on them. They love their idols and their sinful habits, and will not give them up, even when all around great numbers of people are injured and dying. Observe what sins in particular they are wedded to, sins evidently that will be very common in the last days of this age.

"Worship demons" - see Deut 32:17; 1 Cor 10:20 (men will call them gods and think they are gods).

"Idols" - Deut 4:28; Ps 115:3-8; Isa 40:18-22; 44:12-20.

"Murders" - after the fall of mankind into sin, beginning with the first family of the human race, murders have continually stained the earth with blood. At the time of the end there may be an increase in this savagery.

"Sorceries" - Acts 8:9-11; 19:17-20; Ex 7:11,12,22; 8:7,18,19; Deut 18:10-12; Rev 21:8; 22:15.

"Sexual immorality" - a sin that grips the hearts of men very powerfully (Prov 2:16-19). The Bible very clearly reveals the evil of that way of life - 1 Cor 6:9,10; Eph 5:3-7; Heb 13:4; Rev 21:8; 22:15.

demons, and idols of gold and silver and brass and stone and wood, which cannot see or hear or walk. 21 Nor did they repent of their murders, or of their sorceries, or of their sexual immorality, or of their thefts.

10 And I saw another mighty angel come down from heaven, clothed with a cloud, and a rainbow *was* over his head, and his face *was* like the sun, and his feet like pillars of fire. 2 And he had in his hand a little scroll *which was* open. And he set his right foot on the sea, and *his* left *foot* on

"Thefts" - Ex 20:15; Jer 7:9,10; Matt 15:19; Rom 2:21; Eph 4:28. This is a sin that is so common among some people that it is almost regarded as natural shrewd behavior. God takes a different view of the matter - 1 Cor 6:10.

10:1 As between the 6th and 7th seals so here between the 6th and 7th trumpets we have a break in the narrative. This is a pause to reveal matters not directly caused by the sounding of the 6th trumpet, a parenthesis to look at other events to take place at the end of this age. This break for these explanatory visions goes on to 11:15. It seems some of these events (11:1-6) will actually take place before any of the trumpets sound, or even before the 6th and 7th seals are opened.

10:1-3 The description of this mighty angel suggests the Lord Jesus. In this book both a cloud and a rainbow are associated with the divine presence - 1:7; 4:3; 14:14.

"Face. . .like the sun", "feet like pillars of fire" reminds us of the vision of Christ in 1:15,16. The word "lion" (v 3) suggests the Lion of the tribe of Judah (5:5).

"Set his. . .foot on" - this phrase suggests victoriously claiming possession. Compare Deut 11:24; Josh 1:3. If that is the meaning here (some scholars deny it), again it may cause us to think this angel is Christ. Who but He has a right to claim the world as a possession? But is Christ called an angel any other place in this book? No, but He is called an angel (which means "messenger") in other parts of the Bible - see Gen 16:7. However, is it really possible to refer to Christ as merely "another mighty angel" (v 1)? It does not seem very likely, so we cannot say with any certainty that the angel is Christ. He may (or may not) be the mighty angel of 5:2.

10:2 "A little scroll" - this can hardly be the same as the seven-sealed scroll of 5:1. This is not called "the" scroll, as it might well have been if it were the same as the one previously referred to. Also it is not called the "scroll" but a "little scroll." Moreover, the scroll of 5:1 was in heaven and was not yet completely unrolled. But the angel tells John to eat this scroll. It seems that this little scroll contains additional visions and prophecies (such as those in chapters 12 to 14 and 17,18), that do not come under the orderly opening of seals or blowing of the

the land, 3 and cried out with a loud voice like the roar of a lion, and when he had cried out, seven thunders spoke *with* their voices. 4 And when the seven thunders had spoken *with* their voices, I was about to write; and I heard a voice from heaven saying to me, "Seal up those things which the seven thunders spoke, and do not write them down."

5 And the angel which I saw standing on the sea and on the land lifted up his hand to heaven, 6 and swore by him who lives for ever and ever, who created heaven and the things that are in it, and the earth and the things that are in it, and the sea and the things that are in it, that there would be delay no longer, 7 but in the days when the seventh angel sounds *his trumpet*, when he begins to sound *it*, the mystery of God will be completed, as he declared to his servants the prophets.

8 And the voice which I had heard from heaven spoke to me again, and said, "Go *and* take the little

scroll that is open in the hand of the angel standing on the sea and on the land."

9 And I went to the angel and said to him, "Give me the little scroll." And he said to me, "Take *it*, and eat it. It will make your stomach bitter, but be in your mouth be as sweet as honey." 10 And I took the little scroll out of the angel's hand and ate it, and it was as sweet as honey in my mouth, but as soon as I had eaten it, my stomach became bitter.

11 And he said to me, "You must prophesy again before many peoples, and nations, and languages, and kings."

11 And I was given a reed like a rod. And the angel stood by, saying, "Get up and measure the temple of God, and the altar, and the worshipers there. 2 But exclude the court that is outside the temple, and do not measure it, for it is given to the Gentiles, and they will trample the holy

trumpets or pouring out of the bowls. See what the angel tells John after he eats this scroll - v 11.

10:4 What did these seven thunders say? No man now knows, and it is useless to speculate about it. Compare Deut 29:29.

"Seal up" - compare Dan 12:4,9.

10:5,6 Here is a very solemn moment in this very solemn book. It indicates that what the angel says is of great importance in understanding this book and the events recorded in it.

"Delay no longer" - a little delay was announced at 6:10,11. Here the delay is over - the time now comes for God to judge the inhabitants of the earth and avenge the blood of His people.

10:7 This age will come to its end in the days of the 7th trumpet. The word "days" suggests a brief time - not years or an indefinite long period. These "days" will give time for the outpouring of the bowls of wrath (chapters 15,16).

"Mystery of God"-in the New Testament a mystery means truth which God has revealed and which no one could know if He did not reveal it. Several such mysteries are revealed in the New Testament. See Matt 13:11; Rom 11:25; 1 Cor 15:51,52; Eph 3:3-10; 5:22; Col 1:24-27; 2 Thess 2:7; 1 Tim 3:16. Which of these mysteries will be finished at the 7th trumpet? Or are several of them included in this phrase "the mystery of God?" Are they perhaps gathered together in a greater and more inclusive mystery - the one Paul speaks of in Eph 1:9,10? It seems quite possible; see the things that happen when the 7th trumpet sounds - 11:15-18.

10:9 "Eat it" - compare Ezek 3:1,2.

"Bitter. . .sweet" - it was sweet to his taste because it contained words from God. Compare Ps 19:9,10; 119:103; Jer 15:16; Ezek 3:3. It was bitter in his stomach - when understood and digested prophecies of

coming judgment seem painful and bitter to those with a heart of love and compassion. Compare Ezek 21:6,12; Jer 9:1; 10:19; 13:17; Isa 22:4; Ps 119:5,136. This is the character of God's true prophets.

10:11 "Prophesy" - 1:2,3.

"Again" - this may mean that John must cover the same ground here briefly covered before and give further prophecies about the same people and events (note at v 2).

11:1,2 "Temple" - not the one in heaven (7:15), but one on earth. Its location is Jerusalem "the holy city" (v 8; Matt 4:5; 27:53). It is a Jewish temple dedicated to God and so is God's temple. The fact that Gentiles (a word used in the Bible for peoples other than Jews) occupy the outer court indicates that the worshipers in the inner part are Jews. Today there is no Jewish temple in Jerusalem, and there was none in John's later years. The temple that was standing during Christ's time on earth was destroyed in 70 AD (Matt 24:2; Luke 19:41-44). It seems this message to John indicates that before the end of the age a new temple will be built in Jerusalem. See also Matt 24:15; 2 Thess 2:4.

"Measure" - a symbol indicating a marking out a place for either destruction or protection. Compare 2 Kings 21:13; Isa 34:11; Lam 2:8; Zech 2:1-5.

"Given to the Gentiles. . .trample" - at this time (2003) the Jews control Jerusalem and have done so for several years. But judging from this there will be a brief time at the end of this age when other people will take the city. Compare Zech 14:2.

"Forty-two months" - 13:5. This same period is said to be 1260 days (v 3; 12:6), a time, times and half a time (12:14. This seems to mean 3 1/2 years), and "one hour" (17:12). So it seems clear that this period is a very limited time. The author of these notes can find no reason in the Bible not to take these 42 months as literal. See also

city underfoot forty-two months. 3 And I will give *power* to my two witnesses, and they will prophesy for a thousand two hundred *and* sixty days, clothed in sackcloth. 4 These are the two olive trees, and the two lampstands standing before the God of the earth. 5 And if anyone wants to harm them, fire comes out of their mouth and devours their enemies. If anyone wants to harm them, this is how he must be killed. 6 These *witnesses* have power to shut heaven, so that it does not rain during the days when they prophesy, and they have power over waters to turn them to blood and to strike the earth with all *kinds of* plagues, as often as they will.

7 And when they have finished their testimony, the beast that comes up out of the Abyss will fight

against them, and will defeat them and kill them. 8 And their dead bodies *will lie* in the street of the great city, which is figuratively called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified. 9 And *some* from the people and tribes and languages and nations will see their dead bodies *for* three and a half days, and will not allow their dead bodies to be put in graves. 10 And those who live on the earth will be glad about them, and celebrate, and will send gifts to one another, because these two prophets tormented those who lived on the earth."

11 And after three and a half days the Spirit of life from God entered into them, and they stood on their feet, and great fear fell on those who saw them. 12 And they heard a loud voice from heaven

Dan 7:25; 9:27; 12:7.

11:3,4 "Two witnesses" – some teach these two symbolize a group of Jewish believers who witness during the time of the great tribulation at the end of this age. Others think that because they are called "two lampstands" they may symbolize witnessing churches (compare 1:20). Still others teach they are two individuals. The language of vs 5-12 makes this last view more likely. Some Bible teachers seem sure they will be Moses and Elijah (who appeared together at Christ's transfiguration—Matt 17:3). There is no word in the Bible about Moses returning to earth to die again. Concerning Elijah (who did not die – 2 Kings 2:11) see Mal 4:5; Matt 17:11. The only other person in history who went to heaven without dying is Enoch (Heb 11:5) who prophesied about the end times (Jude 14,15). Will he return to earth and die here? Who can say with any certainty?

"Two olive trees"— see Zech 4:3-14.

"Two lampstands" – the seven lampstands are the seven churches (1:20); however it does not seem impossible that the two lampstands refer to witnessing groups or individuals other than churches. Lampstands suggest those who are a light for God and who point to Christ who is the light.

11:5 "Fire comes out of their mouths" – this is obviously a symbol, but a symbol of what? Compare 2 Kings 1:9-12. They have but to speak and God acts in their defense.

"Devours their enemies" – this seems to rule out the interpretation that these two witnesses are any of the churches of this age. It is not the work of the Church to destroy its enemies.

11:6 "Shut heaven", or "shut up the sky" – compare 1 Kings 17:1; Jam 5:17.

"Blood. . . plagues" – Ex 7:20; 8:5,6,16; etc. Since these things literally happened in history is there any Scriptural reason for thinking they will not literally happen again?

11:7 "Finished their testimony" – God will appoint a specific time period for their work and will protect them until that work is

finished. Once a servant of God in India said, "If He has work for me to do I cannot die." This is a true word.

"The beast" – see 13:1-8; 17:3,7-11. Compare 2 Thess 2:3,4; 1 John 2:18.

"Abyss" – note at 9:1. "Up from the Abyss" suggests that the "beast" comes from the realm of the dead. See also 13:3; 17:8.

"And kill them" – compare 13:7. Antichrist (another name for the "beast") will have great power and will be permitted to put a great many of God's people to death. But God will still be in control of His universe and will have a wise purpose in all that happens. The fact that the two witnesses are in Jerusalem and that the "beast" kills them is not evidence that up until then he has his headquarters there (see notes on 17:9,10, 18). He could be at a distance and have them killed. Or he may, perhaps, come personally to Jerusalem at this time.

11:8 The words here seem to clearly identify this great city with Jerusalem. That, of course, is the city where the Lord Jesus was crucified. And Jerusalem is figuratively called Sodom in Isa 1:8-10. In the Bible "Egypt", figuratively speaking, means spiritual slavery. And that is what Jerusalem represents (compare Gal 4:25).

11:9 How will so many in such a brief time be able to see this? In these days of television can we think this will be difficult? The words "dead bodies" and "put in graves" seem plainly to indicate literal individuals who die.

11:10 See here what mankind by nature is like. The death of God's prophets is good news. Men in general do not want the truth of God. It tends to torment them and they feel only relief when they don't have to hear it. Compare John 3:19,20; Rom 8:5-8.

11:11 The devilish glee of wicked men will be short-lived (compare Job 20:5). The language seems clearly to mean a physical resurrection, a coming to life of dead bodies.

11:12 This, too, seems to speak clearly of a literal event, an ascension of those who

saying to them, "Come up here." And they went up to heaven in a cloud, and their enemies saw them go.

13 At that very hour there was a great earthquake, and a tenth part of the city fell, and seven thousand people were killed in the earthquake, and the rest were frightened and gave glory to the God of heaven.

14 The second woe is past, *and* now the third woe is coming quickly.

15 And the seventh angel blew *his trumpet*, and loud voices in heaven said, "The kingdoms of this world have become *the kingdoms* of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he will reign for ever and ever."

die and live again.

"Cloud" – compare Acts 1:9.

11:13 The fact that this severe earthquake kills only 7,000 people in "the city" is evidence that the city (vs 2,8) is the literal city of Jerusalem. This earthquake is not a worldwide disaster but a local one. It will have a good result among those who remain alive (compare 16:9,11).

11:14 "The second woe" – the events that happen under the 6th trumpet. See 8:13; 9:12. "Now" – literally, "Look".

"The third" – the long break in the narrative that began at 10:1 is over. The 7th trumpet is about to blow, and out of the 7th trumpet come the 7 bowls of wrath. They are the third (and last) "woe."

11:15 The 7th trumpet is the last trumpet in this series, the last in this book, the last before the return of Christ. Compare Matt 24:30,31; 1 Cor 15:51,52; 1 Thess 4:16. Judging from what has been revealed in earlier chapters and what is said in the following verses this trumpet sounds after the rise of the antichrist and after the great tribulation.

"Kingdoms of the world have become the kingdoms of . . . Christ" – 19:15,16; Matt 6:10; 13:40-43; 19:28; 25:31; Luke 1:32,33; Acts 1:6,7; Ps 2:1-12; Isa 11:1-9; Dan 2:44,45. One of the principal themes of the Revelation is this: God will openly establish His kingdom on earth. This book reveals the way all other rule and authority is destroyed and the coming of Christ to rule the world takes place. Note on kingdom of God at Matt 4:17.

"Has become" – the elders seem to be standing at the last event that takes place under the 7th trumpet (19:11-16) and looking back at all the things that take place under it. Or else they are here uttering a prophecy of future events using the past tense of the verb (as in Isaiah chapter 53; note at Isa 55:10,11).

"Forever and ever" – Isa 9:7; Dan 7:14,27. It appears that His rule will be in two phases. See 20:4,6; 1 Cor 15:24,25. The thousand years reign will be the beginning of His eternal reign.

11:16 "Elders" – 4:4.

16 And the twenty-four elders who had been sitting on their thrones in the presence of God, prostrated *themselves* and worshipped God, 17 saying, "We give you thanks, O Lord God Almighty, who are and was and are to come, because you have taken your great power and reigned. 18 And the nations were angry, and your wrath has come, and the time when the dead should be judged and for you to give rewards to your servants the prophets, and to the saints, and to those who fear your name, small and great, and to destroy those who destroy the earth."

19 And the temple of God was opened in heaven, and in his temple the ark of his covenant appeared. And there were lightning flashes, and voices, and

11:17 "Thanks" – it will be a reason for great thanksgiving – the reign of sin in the earth will be over and Christ will reign. On thanksgiving see Lev 7:12,13; Ps 7:17; 50:14,15; 56:12; Eph 5:20; 1 Thess 5:18.

"Who are . . . are to come" – compare 1:4,8; 4:8. Under the 7th trumpet He will come. The days of the 7th trumpet (10:7) extend to the great event described in 19:11-16.

"Reigned" – God has always been a great King over the earth (Ps 47:2; etc). Though his reign before the 7th trumpet is hidden from the eyes of earth's people, all along He has been ruling over events. After the 7th trumpet He begins to reign openly.

11:18 "The nations were angry" – indicates the anger which Satan will stir up among nations against one another, and against God and God's people. See 12:12. This anger will be fully displayed in the reign of antichrist – 6:4,10; 13:7; 16:9,11; 19:19.

"Your wrath has come" – 6:17; 14:19; 15:1,7; 16:19; 19:15; Ps 2:4,5. All the bowls of wrath in chapter 16 come under this 7th trumpet.

"Time when the dead should be judged" – there are three possible interpretations of the meaning of "the dead" here: those who have died unsaved, or those who are still alive physically but dead in sin (Eph 2:1), or believers in Christ who have died. The first interpretation is unlikely – judging from chapter 20 the unsaved dead will not face the final judgment until the thousand year reign of Christ is over (20:7-15). The second interpretation, though not impossible, seems unlikely in this context. The third interpretation seems the most likely.

"Time . . . for rewarding" – the Lord Jesus will reward His servants on His return to earth – 22:12; Matt 16:27; 25:19-21; Luke 19:15-17.

"Fear your name" – Heb 12:28; 2 Cor 7:1; Gen 20:11; Ps 34:11-14; 111:10; Prov 1:7.

"Who destroy the earth" – a new name for sinners. They are destroyers of what God made good, and the time will come when God will destroy them.

11:19 "Temple" – 7:15; 16:1.

thunderings, and an earthquake, and great hail.

12 And a great sign appeared in heaven: a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and on her head a crown of twelve stars. 2 And she was pregnant and labored *to give* birth and cried out in pain. 3 And another sign appeared in heaven: a great red dragon that had seven heads and ten horns appeared, with seven crowns on his heads. 4 And his tail dragged away a third part of the stars of heaven, and

"Ark" – Ex 25:10-22; Heb 9:4. The ark on earth was only a copy of the true one in heaven (Heb 8:1,2,5). The ark of the "covenant" spoke of the covenant God made with the nation Israel at Mount Sinai (Ex 25:15; Deut 10:1-5). The mention here of the heavenly ark of the covenant may cause us to think of Israel and God's faithfulness to that people. It seems that in the next chapter He reveals His faithfulness toward them at the end of this age.

"Lightning. . . hail" – compare 4:5; 8:5; 16:18.

12:1-5 This begins another break in the narrative before the seven bowls of wrath in chapters 15,16. The end of this age comes with the 7th trumpet, but it seems clear that chapters 12-14 look back at events before the 7th trumpet sounds, and give us additional information about those days.

"Woman" – as with many of the other symbols in this book there has been a variety of interpretation about the meaning of this one too. Let us note the facts given about her.

She is seen here immediately after the mention of the ark of the covenant in 11:19.

She is a "sign" – this may suggest that we are not to regard her as a literal individual woman but as a representation of something else. This interpretation of her seems to be confirmed by the use of other symbols in the description of her.

She appears in "heaven" – "in the sky" is also a possible translation. This suggests her heavenly calling – she is in a higher position than the nations of the earth (compare Deut 7:6).

The symbols of sun, moon and stars are associated with her (compare Gen 37:9,10).

She wears a crown, which indicates authority to reign (compare Matt 19:28; Acts 1:6,7; Isa 2:1-5; etc).

She gave birth to a son who will rule the world (v 5. Compare 19:15,16).

She will face a time of great persecution at the end of this age (vs 6,13-15. Compare Jer 30:7-9; Dan 12:1).

She has other offspring besides her son who will rule (v 17).

For these reasons the author of these notes believes the woman represents the people of Israel. In the Old Testament the nation of Israel is called the "wife" of Jehovah God. See Isa 54:5; Jer 3:14; 31:32. This accounts for her splendid appearance

threw them down to the earth. And the dragon stood before the woman who was about to give birth, so that he might devour her child as soon as it was born. 5 And she bore a male child, who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron, and her child was caught up to God and his throne. 6 And the woman fled into a desolate area, where she has a place prepared by God, that they should feed her there for a thousand two hundred *and* sixty days.

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

in the sky.

12:2 Evidently this verse looks back to the birth of Christ two thousand years ago.

12:3 "Dragon" – Satan (v 9). One of several symbols explained in this book (note at 9:5).

"Seven heads and ten horns" – compare 13:1. The seven heads may speak of completeness of evil intelligence and leadership; the ten horns the fullness of worldly power (17:12; etc).

"Seven crowns" – complete authority to rule in the realm of darkness and evil (Eph 6:12). Note on "seven" at 1:4.

12:4 This seems to look back to the original fall of Satan and the fall of many of God's angels with him.

"Stars" – compare 9:1. Satan too now has angels – v 7. Or perhaps this picture may only indicate that Satan is so huge and powerful that he can brush a third of the stars in the sky from their natural positions. But the first interpretation seems the better one.

"Devour her child" – Satan wanted to destroy Christ if possible as soon as He was born. Surely he was behind the attempt of king Herod (Matt 2:13-16).

12:5 Jesus was born as a son of Israel of the tribe of Judah (5:5; Rom 1:3; Gal 4:4).

"Rod of iron" – 19:15; Ps 2:9.

"Caught up. . . to His throne" – 3:21; 5:6; 7:17; Acts 1:9; 2:32-36; Heb 1:3,4. Could this be said of any other person or any group of persons?

12:6 "A thousand two hundred and sixty days" – v 14; 11:3; 13:5 (note at 11:2). There seems no good reason for thinking this time period is not literal. And it seems to point to a time at the end of this age after Satan is cast out of heaven (vs 9-13). This period of 1,260 days did not take place immediately after Christ ascended into heaven. The things said of the woman in vs 1-5 were given that we might identify her. After these facts were given, it was not necessary to say any more about her history, so the next great event in the woman's future is given to us. All the time in this age from the first century to the last is passed over in silence because it has no direct bearing on the purpose of this book. The Revelation is not a history of the past but a prophecy of the future.

12:7 "War in heaven" – Satan and evil spirit beings who are with him are now in "the

and his angels fought, 8 but did not win. *And* no longer was a place found for them in heaven. 9 And the great dragon was thrown out, that old serpent called the Devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world. He was thrown down to the earth, and his angels were thrown down with him.

10 And I heard a loud voice in heaven saying, "Now salvation and strength and the kingdom of our God, and the authority of his Christ have come, for the accuser of our brethren, who accused them before our God day and night, has been thrown down. 11 And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they did not love their lives even to death. 12 Therefore rejoice, *you* heavens, and you who live in them. Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and the sea! For the devil has come down to you

heavenly realms" – Eph 6:12 (note at Eph 1:3). This expression may be the equivalent of "heaven" here. Satan now has access to heaven itself, into God's presence – v 10; Job 1:6,7 (notes on Satan at 1 Chron 21:1). It seems that this war to expel him comes at the very end of this age. When Satan is cast out it is said that the kingdom of God comes (v 10) and that he knows "he has only a short time left" (v 12). Also, we should note he is able to persecute the woman for only 1260 days.

"Michael" – see Dan 10:13,21; 12:1; Jude 9. This great angel is the protector of the nation of Israel.

12:8 "Could not win" – then surely Satan could have been cast out of heaven (or the heavenly realms) long ago. Yes – if it had been God's wise purpose to do so.

"No longer was a place found for them in heaven" – the plan of God for the future age will move to its complete fulfillment, and Satan will have no part in it.

12:9 "Serpent" – Gen 3:1-5; Isa 17:1; 2 Cor 11:3.

"Devil" – Matt 4:1-5; John 8:44.

"Who deceives the whole world" – Satan is the great deceiver (20:3,8,10). For the two other great deceiving powers in the world see Jer 17:9; Heb 3:13. We can see from all this that the possibilities of deception are almost without limit (but compare Matt 24:24).

12:10 "Now" – does not mean at that exact moment, because Satan will still be permitted to work on earth for a little while (vs 13-17). Here "now" means that the coming of God's kingdom is very near, even at the door (11:15).

"Accuser of our brethren" – examples of this at Job 1:9-11; 2:3-5; Zech 3:1. This has been one of Satan's works throughout this age. The word "Satan" means opponent, "devil" means accuser.

"Before our God" – evidently in heaven.

"Day and night" – Satan is very zealous in pointing out the faults and sins of believers. Fortunately believers have an advocate with the Father to speak for them (1 John

with great wrath, because he knows that he has only a short time left."

13 And when the dragon saw that he was thrown to the earth, he persecuted the woman who bore the male *child*. 14 And the woman was given two wings of a great eagle that she might fly into the desolate area, into her place, from the presence of the serpent, where she is nourished for a time, and times, and half a time. 15 And the serpent spewed water out of his mouth like a flood after the woman, that he might cause her to be carried away by the flood. 16 And the earth helped the woman, for earth opened its mouth, and swallowed up the flood that the dragon spewed out of his mouth. 17 And the dragon was angry with the woman and went to make war with the rest of her offspring, who keep the commandments of God and have the testimony

2:1).

12:11 "Overcame" – 2:7. Heaven tells us how to get the victory over Satan.

"Blood" – 1:5; 5:9; 7:14; Matt 26:28; Heb 9:14; 1 John 1:7-9.

"Testimony" – Matt 10:32; Rom 10:9,10. A Christian who does not confess Christ is defeated.

"Did not love their lives" – Matt 10:37-39; Luke 14:26,27; Acts 20:24. True disciples are the ones who conquer the devil.

12:12 "Rejoice" – because of Satan's banishment.

"Woe" – indicates grief, pain and trouble.

"With great wrath" – this will result in the great tribulation (7:4; Matt 24:21). That coming time will not be the outpouring of the wrath of God on men, but the wrath of Satan and evil men against God's people.

"Only a short time left" – vs 6,14.

12:13 Satan will try to destroy Israel.

12:14 We do not know what exact things "wings of an eagle" and "desolate area" may mean here. We do know that somehow, somewhere God will enable Israel to escape and will protect her (v 6; Jer 30:7).

"Time, times and half a time" – v 6; 11:2,3. See also Dan 7:25; 12:7.

12:15,16 For an understanding of the details of this we await the fulfillment. Satan will do all in his power to destroy the people of God, but will be unable to do so.

12:17 "The rest of her offspring" – these are distinct from the woman herself and so signify another group of people. If the "woman" is Israel what can this group be? Can we not say that Christians united to Christ have also sprung from Israel? That believers now have their roots in the Old Testament? That the godly in Israel gave birth to the New Testament church? If the "rest of her offspring" are not Christians living at the end of this age, it is very difficult indeed to say who they might be.

"Testimony of Jesus" – this also seems strong evidence that the "rest of her offspring" are believing, practicing Christians. And Satan at the end of this age will make

of Jesus Christ.

13 And I stood on the sand of the sea and saw a beast rise up out of the sea. *He* had seven heads and ten horns, and ten crowns on his horns, and a blasphemous name on his heads. 2 And the beast that I saw was like a leopard, and his feet were like a bear's *feet*, and his mouth like a lion's mouth. And the dragon gave him his power and his throne, and great authority. 3 And I saw one of his heads as if it had received a fatal wound, and his fatal wound had been healed. And the whole world was amazed *and went* after the beast. 4 And they worshiped the dragon who gave

a special attempt to destroy them too.

13:1 "Beast" - 11:7 - called by this name nearly 40 times in this book. In Daniel "beasts" are symbols which signify literal kingdoms and their rulers (Daniel chapters 7 and 8). Doubtless "beast" here has the same meaning. See 17:9-13. Observe how in some respects this beast resembles the red dragon of 12:3. But the dragon has seven crowns on its heads, this beast has ten on its horns. The dragon has complete authority in his realm. The beast's authority is derived from ten kings (17:12,13) and from the dragon.

"Ten horns" - see also Dan 7:7.

"A blasphemous name" - v 5. Compare 2 Thess 2:4; 1 John 2:18,22. Note on blasphemy at Matt 9:3.

13:2 "Leopard. . . lion's mouth" - this beast combines some of the features of all four beasts of Dan 7:2-8, but must be identified with the fourth beast. It seems clear that this beast is some sort of revived Roman Empire. See notes on Dan 2:32-45; 7:7. It will be the final form of Gentile power in the world. And it will be a dreadfully evil power because the dragon will be behind it. What Satan is in the unseen world of darkness and opposition to God, the beast will be openly and visibly on earth. See 2 Thess 2:9,10.

13:3 See 17:8-11. In Daniel's visions of beasts "heads" signify parts of a kingdom and/or their rulers. Here "a fatal wound" seems to mean that either a part of the coming world empire, or one of its rulers is destroyed or dies. See 11:7 - the "beast" will come up "from the Abyss." The Abyss is the realm of dead individuals. It seems clear that the "beast" sometimes indicates a man who will be the ruler of the empire which is also called the "beast" (see v 18; 17:8-13; 19:19,20; 20:10). He represents the empire and sums up all of its "beastly" characteristics in his own person. 2 Thess 2:3,4 and 1 John 2:18,22 speak of a person called "the man of sin" and the "antichrist". Can we doubt that the "beast" is that person?

"Healed" - evidently this will be a miracle so great that the "whole world" will be amazed. This miracle could be the resurrection of a dead individual. One of the

authority to the beast, and they worshiped the beast, saying, "Who *is* like the beast? Who can make war against him?"

5 And he was given a mouth speaking big things and blasphemies, and he was given power to continue for forty-two months. 6 And he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme his name, and his tabernacle, and those who live in heaven. 7 And it was granted to him to make war with the saints and to overcome them, and he was given power over all tribes, and languages, and nations. 8 And all who live on the earth will worship him, *those* whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb *who was* slain, from the

former rulers of the Roman Empire is a possibility. See 17:10,11.

13:4 "Worshipped the dragon" - men will be worshipers of Satan at the close of this age. One reason they will do so is that it will seem to them that Satan and the beast have achieved the final victory over God and God's people. Satan has always wanted worship (see Matt 4:8-10), and has received it from some people (9:20; Lev 17:7; Deut 32:17; Ps 106:37; 1 Cor 10:20). Such worship will, it seems, be more prevalent and more open at the end of this age.

"The dragon who gave authority" - Satan tried to destroy Christ by offering Him all the kingdoms of the world. Christ refused that offer. But at the end of this age Satan will find someone who will accept it.

"Worshipped the beast" - the ages-long tendency to worship men will reach its full development toward the end of this age.

"Who can make war" - the beast will have world-wide power (v 7), and no country will be able to fight him.

13:5 "Big things and blasphemies" - v 1; Dan 7:8; 11:36.

"Forty-two months" - 11:2,3; 12:6,14; 17:12. Many dictators in history lasted longer than the antichrist will, in spite of his great boasts.

13:6 "Blaspheme" - since this is mentioned three times in these verses we may judge that it will be a striking feature of the beast's character.

13:7 "The saints" - Dan 7:21,25. This is the word used throughout the New Testament to indicate believers in the Lord Jesus Christ. Compare Rom 1:7. It is also used in the Old Testament to designate believers.

"Overcome them" - 6:10; 7:14; 11:7; 12:17. The "great tribulation" will be a result of his activities. The beast will overcome the saints, but at the same time they will overcome him. See 15:2. He will overcome them physically, they will overcome him in the way that matters most - spiritually. They will still be more than conquerors even while he is torturing them or putting them to death.

"All tribes. . . nations" - the empire of antichrist will be the first to encircle the whole globe.

beginning of the world.

9 If anyone has an ear, let him hear.

10 He who leads into captivity will go into captivity. He who kills with the sword must be killed with the sword. Here is the patience and the faith of the saints.

11 And I saw another beast, coming up out of the earth, and he had two horns like a lamb, and he spoke like a dragon. 12 And he exercises all the authority of the first beast in his presence, and causes the earth and those who live in it to worship the first beast, whose fatal wound was healed. 13 And he performs great signs. He even makes fire come down from heaven onto the earth in the sight of men. 14 And *he* deceives the inhabitants

of the earth by those signs that he had been granted to do in the sight of the beast, telling earth's inhabitants to make an image of the beast who had the wound caused by a sword, and *yet* lived. 15 And he was given *power* to give life to the image of the beast, so that the image of the beast would both speak and cause all who would not worship the image of the beast to be killed. 16 And he caused *everyone*, small and great, rich and poor, free and slave, to receive a mark on their right hand or on their foreheads, 17 so that no one could buy or sell except he who had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name.

18 Here is wisdom. Let him who has understanding calculate the number of the beast, for it is the

13:8 Verse 4.

"Book of life" - 3:5.

"From the beginning of the world" - this phrase may be taken with the words "Lamb who was slain", or, possibly, "whose names are not written." Compare 17:8. The Lamb was slain from the creation of the world in the plan of God (1 Pet 1:19,20), though not, of course, in actual fact. And we also have reason to think that the names of certain people were written in the book then (for example, see Eph 1:4). Here those written in His book are God's chosen ones mentioned in Matt 24:24. They will love God and recognize the wicked nature of the beast and so refuse to do what all the world will do.

13:9 "Hear" - 2:7.

13:10 Compare Ps 7:15; 18:25-27; Prov 22:8; Gal 6:7.

13:11 "Out of the earth" - evidently in contrast with "out of the sea", the origin of the first beast. Here "sea" may symbolize the "sea" of humanity (compare 17:15). If this is so then earth probably means a particular country, perhaps Israel.

"Like a lamb. . .like a dragon" - his appearance is deceiving. He looks (and doubtless wants to look) like one thing, but is actually the opposite of it. But his words will reveal what he is (compare Matt 12:34,35). In 16:13; 19:20; 20:10 he is called "the false prophet." He may try to convince Israel that he is their Messiah (compare John 5:43; Zech 11:15-17; 11:36-45). He will certainly be the chief of all those false prophets and false Christs that Jesus warned about in Matt 24:23-26. So at the end of this age the whole world will be deceived by an evil threesome - the dragon, the antichrist, and the false prophet.

13:12 Wherever he may live he will act as the representative of the first beast, the ruler of the world empire.

"Worship" - being a false prophet his particular field will be religion and he will lead a world-wide religious movement which will oppose the one true God and make the antichrist the one object of worship.

13:13 See the warnings at Matt 24:24; Deut 13:1-3.

"Fire. . .from heaven" - or, "from the sky." He will do what a true prophet twice did (1 Kings 18:38; 2 Kings 1:10).

13:14 "Deceives" - see 2 Thess 2:9-12. Men will not want Christ, who is the truth (John 14:6), so in punishing them God will see to it that they receive "the lie" who is antichrist.

"Image" - when this age draws to a close people everywhere will be engaged in the worship of an evil man and his image instead of in the worship of the Creator of the universe.

13:15 "Life. . .speak" - to the world this will seem a great display of supernatural power, and it may well be so. Jesus said that false prophets will perform "great signs and miracles", and gave no hint that those miracles might be mere tricks of some sort.

"To be killed" - no doubt the believers we read of in 7:9,14 will leave the world in this way. They will prefer death to unfaithfulness to God, and in this they will be wise. Compare Daniel chapter 3.

13:16,17 See how the people of the world will become worshipers of the beast - first political authority and military might (v 4); then deceiving miracles (vs 13-15); then the economic squeeze. The choice in many cases may be either to worship the beast or to suffer great hunger. Those will be times which will fully try men's souls.

13:18 What is the meaning of 666? It is "man's number", a symbolic number signifying a man taking God's place, saying he is God and trying to force God out of His world. If 7 is the number of perfection and completeness (1:4), 666 may speak of man at his most powerful, trying to take God's place but coming short as he must always do. No doubt the meaning of this number and how it will be related to antichrist, will become clear when the events of this chapter are being fulfilled. Believers will then know all they need to know to resist him. Today in the world there are many forces preparing the ground economically, psychologically, politically, and religiously for the advent of

number of a man. And his number *is* 666.

14 And I looked, and there, on Mount Zion, stood a Lamb, and with him one hundred *and* forty-four thousand who had his Father's name written on their foreheads. **2** And I heard a sound from heaven like the sound of many waters and like the sound of great thunder, and I heard the sound of harpists playing on their harps. **3** And they sang a new song before the throne and before the four living beings and the elders. And no man could learn that song but the hundred *and* forty-four thousand who were redeemed from the earth. **4** These are the ones

the "beast." Let us be on our guard.

14:1 This chapter is a continuation of the long break in the orderly progression of seals, trumpets and bowls which began at 12:1. It gives further information about the end time before the bowls of wrath are poured out. This portion looks back to a time before the sounding of the last trumpet.

"There" - literally, "look".

"Mount Zion" - here this may refer either to the Jerusalem in the land of Israel (2 Sam 5:6-9; Ps 2:6; Matt 23:37-39), or to the Jerusalem which is in heaven (2:12; Gal 4:25,26; Heb 12:22-24). If the earthly Jerusalem is meant the picture here is of a time after Christ's return to earth. But it is possible the heavenly Jerusalem is meant - v 3 gives this impression.

"A Lamb" - 5:6. The word for "the" is lacking in the Greek of the text used with this translation, but there is only one "Lamb", and no possibility of thinking another is meant here.

"One hundred and forty-four thousand" - the word "the" is lacking here too. One group of 144,000 is seen in 7:4. Is this the same group as that one? There is reason here to think they are not - those in chapter 7 are from the tribes of Israel and are on the earth; the ones here are "from the earth", "from among men", and the further description of them is not given in chapter 7, and there is no reason to think this description applies to those chosen from Israel.

"Written on their foreheads" - this means they are God's special property, and that His character can be seen in them.

14:2 "Harp" - 5:8; 15:2.

14:3 "New song" - 5:9.

"Learn" - we are not told who first sings this song or who teaches it to the 144,000.

"Redeemed" - 1:5; 5:9; 1 Pet 1:18; Heb 9:12; Eph 1:7; Rom 3:24; Matt 20:28.

14:4 "Not defiled with women" - marriage is not defiling. See Heb 13:4; Matt 19:4-6. But sexual activity outside the bonds of marriage is defiling.

"Virgins" - if this is taken literally the meaning is obvious. Some commentators prefer to take it figuratively. See a figurative use of the word at 2 Cor 11:2. If taken

who were not defiled with women, for they are virgins. These are the ones who follow the Lamb wherever he goes. These were redeemed from among men, the firstfruits to God and to the Lamb. **5** And in their mouth no deceit has come, for they are without fault before the throne of God.

6 And I saw another angel flying in the upper sky, *and he* had the eternal gospel to preach to the inhabitants of the earth, and to every nation and tribe and language and people, **7** *and he* said with a loud voice, "Fear God, and give him glory, for the hour of his judgment has come. Worship him who made heaven and earth and the sea and the springs of water."

in this way it means that the 144,000 were not guilty of spiritual unfaithfulness to God (compare Hos 1:2; 2:2; Jer 2:2,5; etc).

"Follow" - 7:7; John 10:27. Those who follow the Good Shepherd here and now will follow Him there and then. They who will not follow Him now will not be there.

"Redeemed" - see note at 5:9, where the same word appears.

"From among men" - this phrase is evidence that they may not be the same as the group in 7:4-8 who are all from the nation of Israel.

"Firstfruits" - before Christ came the whole nation of Israel was called "firstfruits" (Jer 2:3). After Christ came the whole body of people now born again are "firstfruits" (Jam 1:18). Firstfruits always indicates that there is a greater harvest still to come. Here it may point to the great number of people to be gathered into Christ's kingdom during His thousand year reign (15:4; Isa 2:2-4; 60:3-9; Jer 3:17; Zech 14:16).

14:5 "No deceit" - compare Ps 15:1-5. Liars will have their portion in another place (21:8,27; 22:15). Lying is exceedingly hateful to God who is the God of truth - Ps 31:5; Prov 6:16-19; etc.

"Without fault" - Ps 15:2; 24:3-5; Gen 17:1; Deut 18:13; Eph 1:4; 5:27; Phil 1:10; 2:15; 2 Pet 3:14.

14:6 This angel may be symbolic just as the woman of chapter 12 and the beast of chapter 13 are symbolic. In Greek angel means "messenger" (1:20; Mark 1:2; Luke 7:24; 9:52), and here may represent the world-wide preaching of the gospel of Christ before this age ends. See Matt 24:14.

"Nation. . . people" - 5:9; 7:9.

14:7 "Fear God" - for the importance of this see 15:4; 19:5; 1 Pet 1:17; 2:17; 2 Cor 5:11; Rom 3:18; Heb 12:28; Gen 20:11; Ps 34:11-14; 111:10; Prov 1:7. Observe here that the fear of God is connected with the "eternal gospel", and, like repentance (Acts 17:30), is commanded to all people everywhere. Repenting and turning to the one true God and believing His gospel will produce the fear of God that He commands. The gospel is called eternal because it began with God's plan for men in eternity past and produces results that will last for

8 Another angel followed and said, "Babylon is fallen, is fallen! That great city! Because she made all nations drink of the inflaming wine of her adultery."

9 And a third angel followed them and said in a loud voice, "If any man worships the beast and his image and receives *his* mark in his forehead, or in his hand, 10 he himself will drink of the wine of God's wrath which is poured out unmixed into the cup of his indignation, and he will be tormented with fire and sulfur in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb. 11 And the smoke of their torment rises for ever and ever. And day and night *there is* no rest for those who worship the beast and his image, or for anyone who receives the mark of his name. 12 Here is the

eternity in the future. It will always be God's good news to mankind, the best news ever heard.

"Give him glory" – 16:9; 19:7; 1 Cor 10:31.

"Judgment" – 11:18.

"Worship him who made the universe" – Matt 4:10; Acts 14:15; 1 Cor 8:5,6; Isa 40:18-26; 42:5; 43:10,11; 45:18. People must worship the Creator and nothing else and no one else.

14:8 "Babylon" – 17:1-5; 18:2. Here she is said to be already fallen but her fall is not described until chapter 18.

"Wine of her adultery" – 18:3,9.

14:9-11 This warning against worshipping the "beast" (13:4,8,15) implies a warning against ever worshipping anything or anyone except the one true God, the Creator (v 7). All idolaters, not merely worshipers of the beast, will suffer the vengeance of eternal fire (21:8).

14:10 "Wrath. . .indignation" – v 19; Num 25:3; Ps 90:7-11; Isa 51:17; Jer 25:15; John 3:36; Rom 1:18; Eph 5:6.

"Fire and sulphur" – compare Gen 19:24; Ps 11:6; Jude 7.

"In the presence of the Lamb" – the Lord Jesus, who gave His life to save men, will look on the torment of these wicked people and will do nothing to prevent their suffering. This is proof that their suffering comes to them in perfect justice and that it would not be right, or according to heaven's laws, to relieve it.

14:11 "Forever and ever" – Isa 33:14; Matt 25:46; Mark 3:29; 9:48; Luke 16:22-26. This verse does not actually say that the torment of those wicked people goes on forever, only that the smoke from their torment rises up forever (compare 19:3), but the presumption is that the torment also will go on forever. Compare 20:10. As long as day and night exist the beast worshipers will be without rest. It is interesting that the verbs in this verse are not in the future tense, as we might expect, but in the present tense.

14:12 See 13:10; Heb 6:12; 2 Thess 1:4.

14:13 "From now on" – this truth should be

patience of the saints, here *are* those who keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus."

13 And I heard a voice from heaven saying to me, "Write: Blessed *are* the dead who die in the Lord from now on." "Yes," says the Spirit, "that they may rest from their labours. And their works follow them."

14 And I looked and a white cloud appeared, and sitting on the cloud was *one* like the Son of man. He had a golden crown on his head and a sharp sickle in his hand. 15 And another angel came out of the temple and called out in a loud voice to the one who was sitting on the cloud, "Thrust in your sickle and reap, for the time has come for you to reap, because the harvest of the earth is ripe." 16 And the one who was sitting on

an encouragement to all believers who will face death under the reign of the beast (13:15). Of course it is always true that it is a blessed thing for believers to die in the Lord (2 Cor 5:1-6; Phil 1:21-23; Ps 116:15; etc). But it will be especially true for those who refuse to submit to the beast and the false prophet.

"Rest" – compare v 11.

"Their works follow them" – there will be special rewards for special faithfulness in the face of great pressure and great danger.

14:14 "Cloud" – 1:7; Matt 24:30; 26:64; Acts 1:9,11; 1 Thess 4:16,17.

"Like the Son of man" – this same expression is used of the Lord Jesus in 1:13. Is there any good reason to think this one on the cloud is not He?

"Crown" – the word is never used in regard to angels. The Greek for this (stephanos) speaks of the reward given to a victor, not a royal crown worn by a king. Compare 2:10; 1 Cor 9:25; Heb 2:9. Later Christ appears wearing many crowns – 19:12. There the Greek word means the kind of crowns kings wear. Here Christ is not yet coming to reign but to "reap."

14:15 If the one on the cloud is the Lord Jesus why should an angel come and tell Him what to do? Because Jesus is always in submission to God the Father and gets His instructions from Him (compare John 5:19; 6:38; 14:31). This angel comes out of the temple – from the presence of God – and brings a message from the Father to the Son. Or the angel may be merely symbolic of a message that passes between Father and Son.

"Time to reap. . .ripe" – compare Matt 3:12; Mark 4:29. When Christ reaps He will use angels as His agents – Matt 13:39; 24:31.

14:16 We are not told what this harvest is. However, it is put in contrast with the harvest from "the earth's vine" in vs 17-20. That is a harvest of wicked people, so this harvest, it would seem, will be of God's people. In other words vs 14-16 may be a symbolic picture of the Rapture of the Church (1 Thess 4:16,17). Other scholars think the

the cloud thrust his sickle onto the earth, and the earth was reaped.

17 Then another angel came out of the temple which is in heaven. He also had a sharp sickle. 18 And another angel, who had authority over fire, came from the altar, and called out in a loud voice to the one who had the sharp sickle and said, "Thrust in your sharp sickle and gather the clusters of grapes from the earth's vine, for its grapes are fully ripe." 19 And the angel thrust his sickle onto the earth and gathered the earth's vine and threw it into the great wine press of the wrath of God. 20 And the wine press was trampled outside the city and blood came out of the wine press up to the horse bridles for the distance of a thousand six hundred furlongs.

Rapture takes place at 4:1; still others think 11:12 may refer to that event; and some think it will take place only when Christ appears from heaven in chapter 19.

The author of these notes thinks the verses here (14:14-16) probably speak of the Rapture, but thinks also that dogmatism about doubtful things is not wise. Let us always be ready for the events of the end of this age, and for the coming of the Lord Jesus.

14:17-20 "Another" – obviously these verses depict a different harvest from the previous one. This one is for the purpose of judgment and wrath on evil men.

14:18 "Authority over the fire" – probably the angel of 8:3-5.

"The altar" – 6:9; 8:5; 16:7.

"The earth's vine" – not God's vine. See Deut 32:32,33 (compare John 15:1-5).

"Ripe" – evil will have come to full ripe fruit under the reign of the beast.

14:19 "Wine press of the wrath of God" – Isa 63:3,4; Lam 1:15; Joel 3:13.

"Wrath" – references at v 10.

14:20 "Trampled" – the Lord Jesus himself does this – 19:15. That is, God the Father has appointed Him to execute God's anger against earth's wicked people.

"The city" – these words standing alone almost surely refer to Jerusalem (11:2,8, 13). Certainly Jerusalem will be the scene of some terrible judgment from God in the last days. See Joel 3:12-16; Zech 14:1-3.

"1,600 furlongs" – nearly 300 kilometers, which is the approximate length of the most highly populated area in the land of Israel from the northern border into the desert in the south. So much blood signifies an enormous slaughter of human beings. Compare 19:17,18.

15:1 The long explanatory section that began with 12:1 is over and we have here a resumption of the main thread of the narrative of seals, trumpets and bowls. These seven bowls come under the 7th trumpet and the trumpets all come out of the 7th seal.

"With them the wrath of God is

15 And I saw another sign in heaven, great and marvelous: seven angels having the seven last plagues, because with them the wrath of God is completed. 2 And I saw something like a sea of glass mixed with fire, and those who had gotten the victory over the beast and over his image and over his mark and over the number of his name, standing on the sea of glass with harps from God. 3 And they sing the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb and say, "Great and marvelous are your works, Lord God Almighty. Just and true are your ways, King of saints. 4 Who will not fear you, O Lord, and glorify your name? For you alone are holy. For all nations will come and worship before you, for your judgments have been revealed."

5 And after this I looked, and saw that the

completed" – 6:16,17; 11:18; 14:10,19.

15:2 Before the angels pour out the bowls of wrath, a scene of beauty and blessedness appears.

"Sea of glass" – 4:6.

"Fire" – note at Ex 3:2. All heaven will then be prepared to execute God's judgment on the earth.

"Those who had gotten the victory over the beast" – will actually be those the beast conquers and kills (13:7,15). They would rather die than compromise with evil. And this is a great spiritual victory anytime, anywhere. The beast seems to be victorious and has a physical victory, but these believers will have the spiritual victory, the eternal victory. Their victory will be this: they will refuse to worship the beast or receive his mark. So it will be time for music and singing.

15:3 "Song of Moses" – there are two songs of Moses in the Old Testament – Ex 15:1-18 and Deut 31:30-32,43. Either one seems appropriate to this occasion. The one speaks of rescue from Pharaoh and his armies (in some ways Pharaoh is a good picture of the "beast"), the other describes the final overthrow of the wicked (Deut 32:16-19,22,32,35,41-43).

"The Lamb" – 5:9. The song of the Lamb is the one that follows.

"Great. . . your works" – Ex 15:11; Ps 92:5; 111:2.

"Just. . . your ways" – 16:5,7; 19:2; Deut 32:4; Ps 33:5; 89:14; 145:17.

15:4 "Who will not" – the meaning is that eventually all of earth's peoples will fear Him and glorify Him. See references on fear at 14:7.

"You alone are holy" – compare what is said of the Lord Jesus in Luke 1:35; Acts 2:27; 3:14 (note there). Note on God's holiness at Lev 20:7.

"All nations" – Ps 66:4; 86:9; Isa 66:23; Zeph 2:11; Zech 14:16,17; Mal 1:11.

"Your judgments" – displayed in His wrath poured out on evil men.

15:5 "Sanctuary" – 7:15; 11:19.

sanctuary of the tabernacle of the testimony in heaven was opened. 6 And out of the sanctuary came the seven angels with the seven plagues, *and they* were dressed in clean and bright linen, and with golden sashes tied around their chests. 7 And one of the four living beings gave to the seven angels seven golden bowls full of the wrath of God who lives for ever and ever. 8 And the sanctuary was filled with smoke from the glory of God and from his power, and no one was able to enter the sanctuary until the seven plagues of the seven angels were finished.

16 And I heard a loud voice out of the sanctuary saying to the seven angels, "Go, and pour out the bowls of God's wrath on the earth."

2 And the first went and poured out his bowl on the ground, and harmful and painful sores came on those who had the mark of the beast, and on those who worshiped his image.

3 And the second angel poured out his bowl on the sea, and it became as the blood of a dead *man*, and every creature living in the sea died.

4 And the third angel poured out his bowl on the

rivers and springs of waters, and they became blood. 5 And I heard the angel of the waters say, "You are righteous, O Lord, who are and was and will be, because you have judged like this. 6 For they have shed the blood of saints and prophets, and you have given them blood to drink, for they deserve it."

7 And I heard another from the altar say, "Yes, Lord God Almighty, your judgments *are* true and righteous."

8 And the fourth angel poured out his bowl on the sun, and power was given to it to scorch people with fire. 9 And men were scorched with great heat, and blasphemed the name of God, who had power over these plagues, but they did not repent and give him glory.

10 And the fifth angel poured out his bowl on the throne of the beast. And his kingdom became full of darkness, and they gnawed their tongues because of the pain, 11 and blasphemed the God of heaven because of their pains and their sores, and did not repent of their deeds.

12 And the sixth angel poured out his bowl upon the great river Euphrates, and its water was dried

"Tabernacle of the Testimony" – Ex 38:21; Num 1:50; Heb 8:2,5 – called this in the Old Testament because the "testimony" (the ten commandments) was kept in it in the ark. This is the only place in the New Testament this name appears – here perhaps because God is about to pour out His full anger on the world that has trampled His laws under its feet.

15:6 "Out of the sanctuary" – from God's presence.

15:7,8 "Four living beings" – 4:6-8.

"Wrath" references at 14:10.

"Smoke" – Ex 19:18; Ps 18:8; Isa 6:4; 30:27.

"No one was able to enter" – Ex 40:34; 1 Kings 8:10,11.

16:1 "Loud voice out of the sanctuary" – probably the voice of God. No one else could enter there at this time (15:8).

"Bowls" – the seven seals completely seal the scroll in God's hand (5:1). The seven trumpets give complete warnings of coming disasters. These seven bowls contain the complete measure of God's wrath against the world as a whole. The disasters that come under them are similar to the ones under the trumpets, but much more severe and intense.

16:2 "Sores" – compare Ex 9:9-11.

16:3 "The sea" – 8:8,9. Under the 2nd trumpet only a third part of the sea and its living creatures were affected.

16:4 Compare 8:10,11 – under the 3rd trumpet only a third part of the sources of fresh water was affected.

16:5-7 See references at 15:3. God's justice in pouring out His wrath on evil men is three times declared. See also 2 Thess 1:5-7 and the note at Ps 47:2. This is

emphasized, perhaps, because people find it difficult to believe. When disasters come on the earth now, they complain against God as though He were guilty of unjust dealings with innocent mankind. This is because they have an entirely perverted view of things. When the most terrible plagues possible come on the world at the end of this age, everyone in heaven will agree that God is perfectly just in sending them.

16:6 Here is the law of perfect retribution at work. Compare Lev 26:23,24; Num 31:1-3; Deut 32:35,41,42.

"They deserve it" – no one receives any punishment from God that they do not fully deserve.

16:7 "Altar" – 6:9,10.

16:8 "Sun" – compare 8:12 where only a third part of the sun, etc was affected.

16:9 "Blasphemed the name of God" – this is thrice repeated (vs 11,21). This emphasizes the depravity, hardness, and folly of human beings. Instead of confessing and forsaking their sins which bring these plagues on them, they will rage against God who in justice must send them. See Rom 8:7; John 7:7.

"Did not repent" – 9:20,21.

16:10 "Throne of the beast" – the only mention of this throne in this book (God's throne is referred to 40 times). The beast will think he is in control of things and too late will realize that heaven rules (Dan 4:26).

"Darkness" – compare Ex 10:21-23.

"Pain" – from the burns received from the previous plague.

16:12-16 Compare 9:14-19.

"Euphrates" – note at 9:14. To the east

up so that the way for the kings of the east might be prepared. 13 And I saw three foul spirits like frogs *come* out of the mouth of the dragon, out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet. 14 They are the spirits of demons, performing signs, *that* go out to the kings of the earth, of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty.

15 "Look, I come as a thief. Blessed *is* he who watches and keeps his clothes so that he does not walk naked and they see his shame."

16 And they gathered them together to a place called Armageddon in the Hebrew language.

17 And the seventh angel poured out his bowl into the air, and a loud voice came out of the sanctuary in heaven, from the throne, saying, "It is done." 18 And there were voices, and thunders, and lightning flashes, and a great earthquake. An earthquake so mighty *and* so great had not

of this river lie Iran, Afghanistan, Pakistan, India, China, etc. This drying up of its waters may be a symbol indicating the removal of all obstacles for the rulers of those nations to march to Western Asia.

16:13,14 Reason and sound military strategy will not be the basic causes of this movement of vast armies at the end of this age. Compare Ezek 38:4; 39:2. Rulers will be deceived and stirred up by demons. Observe the source of these demons – Satan, the coming antichrist and the false prophet (the second "beast" of chapter 13). Note on demons at Matt 4:24.

"Battle of that great day of God Almighty" – compare 6:17; 19:19; Isa 42:13; Joel 3:9-13; Zeph 1:14-18; Zech 14:3.

16:15 "As a thief" – 3:3; Matt 24:42-44; 1 Thess 5:2; 2 Pet 3:10.

"Watches" – 1 Thess 5:4-8.

"Naked" – 3:17,18.

16:16 "They" – the demons (vs 13,14).

"Armageddon" – means the mountain or hill of Megiddo. The Hebrew word for mountain or hill is "har." Megiddo is the large plain in Israel south of Nazareth and the hills of Galilee and east of Mount Carmel (2 Chron 35:22; Zech 12:11). It is called the Plain of Esdraelon and the valley of Jezreel. Mount Tabor lies northeast and Mount Gilboa lies southeast of this plain. The ancient and important fortress city of Megiddo lay on its southern edge (Judges 1:27; 1 Kings 9:15).

16:17 "Sanctuary" – v 1.

"From the throne" – 19:5; 21:3.

16:18 Compare 4:5; 8:5; 11:19.

"Earthquake" – the word is used seven times in this book. This one will be worse than any in history.

16:19 "City" – the mention of Babylon immediately after the reference to the earthquake gives us reason to think that the city which Babylon symbolizes is meant here (17:9,18). Also the description of her fall in chapter 18 is suggestive of what happens

occurred since men were on the earth. 19 And the great city was split into three parts, and the cities of the nations fell, and great Babylon was remembered before God, to give to her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of his wrath. 20 And every island fled away, and the mountains were not found. 21 And a great hail out of heaven fell on men, *each stone* weighing about fifty kilograms. And men blasphemed God because of the plague of the hail, because its plague was exceedingly great.

17 And one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls came and talked with me. *He* said to me, "Come here. I will show you the judgment of the great prostitute who sits on many waters, 2 with whom the kings of the earth have committed adultery. And the inhabitants of the earth have been made drunk with the wine of her adultery."

in a great earthquake (18:8-10,21. Fires often result from earthquakes).

"Cities of the nations fell" – this earthquake is no local one (as in 11:13). Compare Isa 24:18-20; Heb 12:26,27.

"Wine. . .of his wrath" – 14:10.

16:20 See 6:14.

16:21 "Hail" – compare Ex 9:22-26.

"Blasphemed God" – vs 9,11.

17:1 "Prostitute" – in the Bible this word is sometimes used of those called the people of God who are unfaithful to Him and go after other gods. See Isa 1:21; Jer 2:20; 3:1; Ezek 16:15-34; Hos 9:1. When used in a figurative sense, as here, this is the usual meaning of the word. In one place it is used of the merchant city of Tyre (Isa 23:15-17), and once of Nineveh (Nahum 3:4), both cities of idolatry. In those cases it means ignoring the true God and going after the treasures of this world. The "prostitute" in this chapter is a city – v 18. But we make no mistake in thinking it is a city that represents a vast religious and commercial system.

"Many waters" – v 15.

17:2 "Adultery" – this word too is frequently used in the Old Testament to signify the unfaithfulness in spiritual matters of those called God's people. See Jer 3:6,8,9; Ezek 23:37,43; Hos 1:2; 2:4,5; etc. Indeed, it is not used figuratively of anything else. In the Old Testament it always spoke of fallen, apostate Israel. It seems almost certain that here it means fallen, apostate Christianity at the end of this age (compare Matt 24:10-12; 2 Tim 3:1-5; 4:3,4; 2 Pet 2:1-3). If it does not mean this, then apostate Christianity is not mentioned anywhere in these chapters which describe God's judgment coming on the world. And this would be a very strange thing indeed.

The "kings" committing adultery with the "woman" means having close dealings with her for their benefit or pleasure.

"Drunk" – people drink and are out of

3 So he carried me away in the Spirit into the wilderness, and I saw a woman sitting on a scarlet beast that was full of blasphemous names and had seven heads and ten horns. 4 And the woman was dressed in purple and scarlet and adorned with gold, precious stones and pearls, and had a golden cup in her hand full of abominations and the filthiness of her adultery. 5 And on her forehead a name *was* written:

MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT,

their right minds with this false religious and commercial system. Her "wine" is what she uses to seduce them to share her ungodliness.

17:3 "Wilderness" – perhaps indicating that what the woman represents is like a spiritual desert.

"Woman" – in the Bible woman is used sometimes to signify a religious body (Isa 54:5,6; Jer 3:1; Eph 5:23-32. In the Revelation 12:1; 19:7,8).

"Beast" – 13:1. The beast signifies both a kingdom and its ruler. Therefore the woman is not either of those. But sitting on the beast indicates that in the beginning of the beast's reign the woman is supported by the beast and may even try to control it. Later the beast destroys her – v 16.

17:4 "Purple and scarlet" – some commentators say these colors indicate only luxury and splendor or royalty. Others point to the fact that the cardinals of the Roman Catholic Church, as well as high officials in some other churches, wear these colors.

"Gold. . . pearls" – signify great wealth.

"Golden cup" – rich and attractive on the outside (compare Matt 23:25,26).

"Abominations" – in the Old Testament abominations frequently mean idols and idolatry (note at Jer 7:30).

17:5 "Name. . . on forehead" – in other words this name describes exactly what she is.

"Mystery" – this means she is a mystery that no one could discover the meaning of if God did not reveal it (compare Matt 13:11; Rom 16:25; etc).

"Babylon the Great" – she is not the literal Babylon that was destroyed long ago (see v 18; Jer 50:39,40). She is "mystery" Babylon. But in certain respects she is like that Babylon. Babylon was a city of false religion. It was built originally in defiance of God (Gen 9:1,7, with 11:1-4). It became a city full of idols (Jer 50:38), and the center of a vast religious system. The chief priest of that system was called "Pontifex Maximus" (eventually the emperors of Rome took this title, and later still the bishops of Rome and the popes of the Roman Catholic Church. The words mean "Chief Bridge Maker." The word "pontiff", used of popes today, means "bridge maker").

"Mother of prostitutes" – this means she is the chief producer of groups, like herself (v 1), unfaithful to God in spiritual and

THE MOTHER OF PROSTITUTES
AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH.

6 And I saw the woman, drunk with the blood of the saints and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus. And when I saw her, I was amazed, greatly amazed.

7 And the angel said to me, "Why were you amazed? I will tell you the mystery of the woman, and of the beast that carries her, that has the seven heads and ten horns. 8 The beast that you

religious matters. This woman is a false system of religion which has some of its roots in ancient Babylon and reaches its end in the final apostate religion with its headquarters in Rome.

"Abominations of the earth" – the abominations religious people are capable of when they forsake the teachings of the one true God.

17:6 "Blood of the saints" – in the first centuries Rome under its emperors sometimes persecuted Christians. After that for many centuries the greatest religious persecutor of true believers in Christ was the Roman Catholic Church, and she put multiplied thousands of believers to death (one scholar has estimated the total at five crores – 50 millions). At the end of this age the beast (probably the head of the revived Roman Empire – note at 13:2) will be the persecutor – 13:7,15, but we see the woman here riding the beast.

17:7-18 In these verses the angel gives John (and us) a straightforward explanation of the woman and the beast in literal language. We should accept this explanation and not try to explain it away – which we may do if we try to take this literal language and make it symbolic. Yet we need wisdom to understand some of his words (v 9).

17:8 One question that has perplexed commentators is this: Does the word "beast" here mean an individual or an empire? The answer seems to be it represents an individual who is the head of the empire (as a king of France once said, "I am the state").

"Once was, and is not" – both the "beast" and the "woman" are connected with the city of Rome (vs 9,18). When the angel gave this explanation to John the city of Rome was the flourishing capital of a mighty empire. The angel could not have said either of the city or of the empire in John's day that it "is not." But he could have said it of an individual.

"Will come up out of the Abyss" – see 11:7. The Abyss is the unseen realm of the dead (note at 9:1). The future head of antichrist's kingdom comes from there. And his manifestation was future to John's day (and still is future).

"Destruction" – 19:20.

"Book of Life" – 13:8; 3:5; 20:12.

"Amazed" – see 13:3. There the cause of astonishment is the death and coming

saw was, and is not, and will come up out of the Abyss and go to destruction. And those who live on the earth whose names were not written in the book of life from the beginning of the world will be amazed when they see the beast that was, and is not, and yet is.

9 "Here a mind that has wisdom *is needed*. The seven heads are seven hills on which the woman sits. 10 There are also seven kings: five have fallen, one is, *and* the other has not yet come; and when he comes, he must remain for a short time. 11 And the beast that was, and is not, he is the eighth *king*, and is *one* of the seven, and goes to destruction.

12 "And the ten horns that you saw are ten to life of one of the heads.

17:9 Wisdom is required because the seven heads are a double symbol.

"Seven hills on which the woman sits" – Rome was famous in that day as the city on seven hills. To John it could not have meant any other place on earth (and we must keep in mind that the angel is giving him an explanation so he can understand, not trying to confuse him). The same is true of the word of the angel in v 18. The Greek word here translated "hill" also means mountain.

17:10 This is the other explanation of the seven heads of the beast. Rome and its empire rested solidly upon its first powerful emperors, beginning with Julius Caesar. In John's day five of them had "fallen." This may mean death by violence. From Caesar to John's day (a period of about 140 years, if John wrote about 96 AD.) there had been eleven emperors. Eight of them died by murder or suicide but only five of those eight were powerful rulers on whom Rome could be said to sit. Counting Julius Caesar they were Caesar, Tiberius, Caligula, Claudius and Nero. The other three (Galba, Otho and Vitellius) were insignificant and between them ruled for only about 2 years.

"One is" – the emperor in John's day was Domitian. Or, if John actually wrote sometime between 54-68 AD (as some think) the emperor in his day would have been Nero (in this case the emperors who had passed off the scene – not necessarily by violence – would be Julius Caesar, Augustus, Tiberius, Caligula and Claudius. Nero would be the sixth).

"The other has not yet come" – he is the seventh king whose place is taken by "the eighth" (v 11), the individual who will come up out of the Abyss (v 8). There were many emperors after Domitian (or Nero) until the Roman Empire collapsed nearly 400 years later. But all that time is passed over in silence because it has no bearing on the purpose of this book. Revelation does not give a history of the Roman Empire, but a picture of things at the end of this age. In vs 10,11 after explaining the origin of the coming individual ruler of the revived Roman empire

kings who have as yet received no kingdom, but will receive authority as kings with the beast for one hour. 13 They *will* have one intention, and will give their power and authority to the beast. 14 They will make war against the Lamb, and the Lamb will overcome them, for he is Lord of lords, and King of kings, and those who are with him *are* called and chosen and faithful."

15 And he said to me, "The waters that you saw, where the prostitute sits, are peoples and multitudes and nations and languages. 16 And the ten horns that you saw on the beast, these will hate the prostitute and will make her desolate and naked, eat her flesh, and burn her with fire. 17 For God has put it into their hearts to execute his will,

the angel passes on to the end.

"A short time" – 13:5.

17:11 Observe in this literal explanation of the angel the words "the beast. . . is an eighth king." He lived before the angel spoke to John but was not living then. He would come to power afterwards.

"He is one of the seven" – since he comes up out of the Abyss (v 8; 11:7), it seems he is resurrected from the dead. Compare 13:3.

17:12,13 "Ten horns" – v 3; 13:1; Dan 7:7. Again we have the explanation in literal language. These ten kings are future to John's day and have still not given their help to the beast. Since they do so all at the same time they must be rulers of places other than Rome. Rome will not have eleven kings at once.

"One hour" – most emphatically a short period of time. Compare 13:5.

"One intention" – probably world-wide power under the leadership of the beast – 13:7.

17:14 "Will make war against the Lamb" – 13:7. Waging war against the people of the Lamb is the same as waging war against the Lamb. Compare Acts 9:4,5.

"Lamb will overcome them" – 19:19-21.

"King of kings" – 19:16.

"Those who are with him" – 19:14.

17:15 "Waters" – v 1. If the prostitute sits in Rome how can she sit at the same time over many other peoples? Rome is her home, the headquarters of her operations. But she will dominate or influence people in many countries around the world.

17:16 "Hate the prostitute" – she will "sit" on them, but they will not be happy about it, and when opportunity comes they will turn on her and destroy her.

"Eat her flesh" – suggests taking her wealth for themselves.

"Burn her" – possibly a literal burning of her possessions and properties which gets out of hand and consumes the whole city (18:8,9). It is difficult to conceive how the beast and the ten kings will hate her as a wealthy commercial center. It is clear though how they could hate her as a religious system – she will be in competition with them.

17:17 "For God" – God is on the throne in

to agree together and give their kingdom to the beast until God's words are fulfilled.

18 "And the woman that you saw is that great city which is reigning over the kings of the earth."

18 And after these things I saw another angel come down from heaven. *He* had great authority and the earth was lit up with his brightness. 2 And he cried out loudly in a strong voice and said, "Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen and has become the home of demons, a guardhouse for every foul spirit and a cage for every unclean and hateful bird. 3 For all nations have drunk of the inflaming wine of her

4:2, and His throne is mentioned forty times in this book. In the world's darkest period He will still be in control of events, working out His purposes toward the world. A former king of literal Babylon learned this – Dan 4:35.

"Put it into their hearts" – compare Prov 16:9; 21:1; Gen 45:5. No matter how evil men oppose Him, God accomplishes His purposes on earth.

"Until God's words are fulfilled" – 10:7; Matt 5:18. What God says will happen, and no one can prevent it.

17:18 When the angel gave this literal explanation Rome was the city that ruled over the parts of the earth John knew. To him it could mean only that city. See also v 9 and 18:20. We might suppose that he did not then know all that Rome would become as a center of apostate Christianity, etc, but he could know that it was to be the center of important events at the end of this age. The woman, then, is the city of Rome but a city that represents the religious (and other) characteristics of a people.

18:1 "Another angel" – an angel was already speaking to John. One purpose he had was to show John "the judgment of the great prostitute" (17:1). This he did in v 16. Why then does another angel come now to announce it? It may be because this chapter reveals a different aspect of her fall, or that her fall is in two stages.

18:2 "Fallen", "fallen" – 14:8; Isa 21:9. Why is the word "fallen" repeated? Possibly for emphasis. Or possibly because she falls first from her high religious position, and then from her commercial position. By destroying the one (17:16) the beast finds he has also destroyed the other. Or it may mean that this woman Babylon first fell spiritually, morally, and ethically, and then will fall into literal destruction.

"Home of demons" – this sounds like a fall in the spiritual sense, completely away from God (note on demons at Matt 4:24). After the destruction of the old literal Babylon it became the haunt of jackals and hyenas (Isa 13:19-22; Jer 50:39; 51:37). Mystery Babylon is filled with worse than these.

18:3 "Wine of her adultery" – 17:2. Here the wine is said to be "inflaming." Compare

adultery, and the kings of the earth have committed adultery with her, and the merchants of the earth have grown rich through the power of her luxuries."

4 And I heard another voice from heaven say: "Come out of her, my people, so that you do not share in her sins and that you receive none of her plagues. 5 For her sins have reached to heaven, and God has remembered her wrongdoing. 6 Give her back just as she has given you and pay her back double for her deeds. Pour out for her a double *amount* in the cup that she poured. 7 In the measure she has honoured herself and lived luxuriously, give her torment and sorrow. For she says

Jer 51:7.

"Merchants" – vs 11,15,23. This is the first mention of them in this book. Until now there has been no reason to think that the "prostitute" of chapter 17 is anything but a city which represents a large and powerful religious system. But of course a great city is more than its religion.

"Luxuries" – vs 7,9.

18:4 "Another voice from heaven" – compare Heb 12:25.

"Come out" – compare Isa 52:11; Jer 51:45; 2 Cor 6:17. Some of God's people will be in this "mystery Babylon" in the last days. Coming out of her does not mean to leave physically the city of Rome. It means to separate from the system that city represents, and from its greed for gain as revealed in this chapter. Compare 1 Tim 6:10,11.

"Share in her sins" – sharing her sins will mean sharing her punishment also. Compromise with evil is extremely dangerous.

18:5 "To heaven" – Jer 51:9. When they built the original Babylon men wanted a tower that reached to the heavens (Gen 11:4). But in the end it is their sins which reach the heavens.

"Remembered" – 16:19.

18:6 "Give her back just as she has given" – here is the perfect principle of justice that God reveals throughout His word (Ex 21:23-25; Lev 24:20; 26:23,24; Esther 7:10; Ps 18:25-27; Isa 59:18; Jer 51:56; Rom 2:5-11; Gal 6:7-9).

"The cup" – 17:4. She used her "cup" to destroy others; justice will see that it destroys her.

18:7 Three sins (v 5) are listed here in this verse: self-glory, luxurious living, and proud boasting.

"Honoured herself" – what she did was all for self rather than for God whom all should glorify.

"Luxuriously" – this is another of her sins for which God will punish her. When many in the world live in deep poverty, rags and hunger, living in luxury is a crime. It is also a sign that those who indulge in it have no heart for God (compare Luke 16:19-21). And God will punish those guilty of it – Jam 5:1-5.

in her heart, 'I sit as queen and am not a widow, and will not see grief.' 8 Therefore her plagues will come in one day: death, mourning, and famine. And she will be consumed by fire, for the Lord God who judges her *is* mighty.

9 "And the kings of the earth who have committed adultery *with her* and lived luxuriously with her will weep and lament for her, when they see the smoke of her burning. 10 From fear of her torment they will stand far off, and will say, 'Alas, alas, the great city Babylon! The mighty city! In one hour your judgment has come.'

11 "And the merchants of the earth will weep and mourn over her because no one buys their merchandise any more, 12 the merchandise of gold and silver, precious stones and pearls, fine linen and purple, silk and scarlet *cloth*, and every kind of citron wood, and every kind of article *made* of costly wood, of bronze, of iron, and of marble, 13 and cinnamon, perfumes, fragrant ointment, frankincense, and wine and oil, and fine flour and wheat, and cattle and sheep, horses and chariots, and bodies and souls of men.

"Queen" – mystery Babylon thinks she is reigning now and that no disaster can overtake her. But Prov 11:2; 16:18 will be true of her (as those verses always are).

18:8 "In one day" – very suddenly and quickly. It seems there will be two stages in her destruction, and possibly three. First death, mourning and famine, then fire, then (possibly) a violent, overwhelming disaster (v 21). It takes time for famine to develop and affect a city.

"God who judges her" – 16:5,7.

18:9 "Kings of the earth" – v 3; 17:2. Apparently these are different kings than the ones in 17:12,16 (if they are the same this means that they did not want to destroy Rome as a commercial system, but only as a religious system). And they are different from the beast and the woman.

"Weep" – because an important source of their power and influence is destroyed.

18:10 "Fear" – their own future will seem grim and fearful.

"The mighty city" – 17:18.

18:11-17 "Merchants" – v 3. Evidently Rome will represent a very large commercial system (v 23). More and more the economies of the various nations of the world will be tied together. When one large market is affected the whole world is affected.

"Fear" (v 15) – fearful that a similar thing might happen to them.

"Wailing" – those who have their treasures in this world (rather than in heaven – Matt 6:19-21) will be alarmed and sad when there is a threat of losing them.

18:13 "Bodies and souls of men" – "Babylon" cares nothing for people but only what can be gotten out of them. Her dealings result

14 "The fruit that your soul craved has gone from you, and *your* luxuries and splendors have gone from you, and you will never find them again.

15 "The merchants of these things who were made rich by her, will stand far off for the fear of her torment, weeping and wailing, 16 and say, 'Alas! alas! that great city, that was clothed in fine linen, and purple, and scarlet, and adorned with gold, and precious stones, and pearls! 17 For in one hour such great wealth has come to nothing.'

"And every ship captain, and all who travel by ship, and sailors, and all who trade by sea, stood far off, 18 when they saw the smoke of her burning, and cried out and said, 'What *city was ever* like this great city!' 19 And they threw dust on their heads and cried out, weeping and wailing, and said, 'Alas! alas! that great city, where all who had ships on the sea were made wealthy through her riches! For in one hour she has been destroyed.'

20 "Rejoice over her, *O* heaven, and *you* holy apostles and prophets, because for you God has executed judgment on her."

21 And a mighty angel took up a stone like a great millstone and threw *it* into the sea, and said,

in every kind of bondage and enslavement. Her leaders will sell souls like cattle.

18:17-19 Sailors and their captains will join the lament. The fall of Rome will be a serious blow to commerce by sea.

"What city was ever like this great city?" Will Rome in the future be greatly developed as a commercial center as well as a political one? It seems quite possible from this question and this chapter. Or is it here viewed more as what it represents than what it will be in itself?

"Wealthy" (v 19) – the kings will think of her power (v 10), merchants and sailors will think of her wealth.

18:20 These words are spoken by the voice from heaven which has been speaking from v 4. See how different are God's thoughts from the thoughts of unbelievers about the same event. The destruction of mystery Babylon is a source of grief to men of the world, but of joy to God and His people. Compare Luke 16:15; Isa 55:8,9. It will mean the end of a system based on greed, covetousness, and love of money; a system that craves power and cares nothing for people; a system that would ignore God and try to build a world of leisure, luxury and satisfaction without Him. Such a system deserves to be destroyed, and it will be.

"Apostles and prophets, because for you God has executed judgment on her" – v 24; 17:6; 19:2. This is more evidence that the woman means Rome. It was Rome which killed Paul and Peter and countless other believers, and had persecuted John and banished him to Patmos.

18:21,22 It would seem that mystery

"In this way that great city Babylon will be violently thrown down and will never be found again. 22 And the sound of harpists, and musicians, and flutists, and trumpeters will never again be heard in you. And no workman of any kind of work will ever again be found in you. And the sound of a millstone will never again be heard in you. 23 And lamplight will never again shine in you. And the voice of bridegroom and of bride will never again be heard in you. For your merchants were the world's great men and all nations were deceived through your sorceries. 24 And in her was found the blood of prophets and of saints and of all who had been killed on the earth."

19 After these things I heard a loud voice of many people in heaven saying, "Hallelujah! Salvation and glory and honour and power *belong* to the Lord our God, 2 for his judgments *are* true and righteous, because he has judged

Babylon's final destruction will result from a sudden terrific act of violence.

"Never again" - one name men have given Rome is "The Eternal City." It will prove a false title.

18:23 "World's great men" - v 11,14,15. Again we see that the city represents a great commercial system with its immensely rich and powerful bankers and industrialists.

"Deceived" - 12:9. Here this means led astray from God into ungodliness. Satan uses her for this purpose.

"Sorceries" - compare what is said about Nineveh in Nahum 3:4.

18:24 "All who have been killed" - how can this be said of any single city? For a similar thing see Matt 23:35,35 and notes. Mystery Babylon by her attitude and behavior reveals herself as one with all the violent persecutors of history and shares and inherits the guilt of all. She is their successor who has willingly imbibed their spirit.

19:1 "Hallelujah" - this word occurs in the New Testament only in the first six verses of this chapter. The word joins two Hebrew words - "Hallel" meaning praise, and "Jah" (Yah) meaning Jehovah God. It can be translated as "Praise the Lord", or "Praise Jehovah", or "Praise Yahweh."

"Belong to the Lord our God" - 4:11; 5:12; 7:10,12.

19:2 "True and righteous" - 15:3; 16:5,7.

"Adultery" - 17:2,5.

"Taken vengeance" - 6:10; 17:6; 18:20. It is not our place to take vengeance, but when God does it there is great rejoicing in heaven. They all recognize that it is God acting in perfect justice for the good of the universe.

19:3 They praise God because mystery Babylon will be destroyed forever. Never will she rise again to corrupt the earth or persecute true believers.

"For ever and ever" - 14:11.

the great prostitute who corrupted the earth by her adultery and has taken vengeance on her for the blood of his servants she shed."

3 And again they said, "Hallelujah! And smoke from her rises up for ever and ever."

4 And the twenty-four elders and the four living beings prostrated themselves and worshiped God, who was seated on the throne, and said, "Amen, Hallelujah!"

5 And a voice came from the throne, saying, "Praise our God, all you his servants, and you who fear him, both small and great."

6 And I heard what seemed to be the voice of a great multitude, and like the sound of many waters, and like the sound of mighty thunders, saying, "Hallelujah! For the Lord God omnipotent reigns! 7 Let us be glad and rejoice, and give him honour, for the wedding of the Lamb has come and his wife has made herself ready. 8 And to wear she was given fine linen, clean and bright; for the fine

19:4 "Elders. . .living beings" - 4:4,6-8.

"Amen" - 1:6.

19:5 "From the throne" - 16:17; 21:3.

"Praise our God" - note at Ps 33:1-3.

"Fear Him" - 14:7; 15:4; notes at Gen 20:11; Job 28:28; Ps 34:11-14; 86:11; 111:10; Prov 1:7; Rom 3:18; 1 Pet 1:17; 2:17. Observe in this verse that God's servants and those who fear Him are the same persons. Without the proper fear of the Lord it is not possible to be a true servant of God. How can a person truly serve God if He does not have a reverential awe and respect for Him, a fear of offending or dishonoring Him?

19:6 "Reigns" - 11:15. Here is reason for great praise and rejoicing. God is the great King over all the earth, and He will demonstrate it by destroying all corrupt and ungodly power on earth, religious or secular.

19:7 "The great prostitute" has been judged and destroyed. Now, in great contrast to all that she was and did, the bride of the Lamb appears.

"Wedding" - the public manifestation and celebration of what has been true of all His believers throughout this age. All believers are even now united to Him. The "bride" is the same as what is called the "body" of Christ in Rom 12:4,5; 1 Cor 12:12; Eph 1:23; 5:23; Col 1:18. On this subject see Matt 22:2-14; John 3:29; 17:20-23; Rom 6:3; 7:4; 2 Cor 11:2; Eph 5:22-32. In the Old Testament the nation Israel was the "wife" of Jehovah God - see Isa 54:5-7; Jer 3:14,20; 31:32; Hos 2:16,19,20. See also notes on Song of Songs and Ps 45:8-17.

"His wife has made herself ready" - compare Eph 5:26,27. There we see it is Christ who makes the bride ready. How then does she make herself ready? By cooperating with Him and doing what He commands.

19:8 "Righteous deeds" - believers have the righteousness of Christ (Rom 3:21-26;

linen is the righteous deeds of the saints."

9 And he said to me, "Write: Blessed *are* those who are called to the wedding supper of the Lamb." He also said to me, "These are the true words of God."

10 And I prostrated myself at his feet to worship him. And he said to me, "Look, *do* not do *that*! I am a servant together with you and with your brethren who have the testimony of Jesus. Worship God. For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy."

11 And I saw heaven opened, and there appeared a white horse and he who sat on him. *He is* called Faithful and True, and in righteousness

1 Cor 1:30; 2 Cor 5:21; Phil 3:9), but they prove this by their own righteous acts. On this subject see Matt 5:6; 25:34-40; Rom 2:6-10; Jam 2:14-26. No righteous acts means no real faith and no readiness to meet the Lord.

19:9 "Those who are called" – this does not refer to the open invitation given to many who do not accept the invitation (compare Matt 22:2-7; Luke 14:16-24). This means a special invitation in heaven to those who have already accepted the one on earth. The "called" are all those who actually attend (see Rom 8:30). Who are they? Is there any doubt that they constitute the bride? The symbol of the bride views them collectively; the words "those who are called" view them individually. In the parable in Matt 22:2-14 those who accept the King's invitation, and wear the wedding garment he gives, all together make up the "bride" for the King's Son. They show they are part of the bride by accepting his invitation.

"Blessed" – notes at Gen 12:1-3; Num 6:22-27; Ps 1:1; Matt 5:3.

"True words of God" – not the angel's own invention. Everywhere in the Bible God has spoken (Heb 1:1,2). On His revealed Word believers can rest and rejoice.

19:10 If this angel was the one in 18:1 perhaps John was overcome by his splendor and his words of authority and blessing, and mistook him for Christ.

"Do not do that" – no good angel and no good man has the desire that Satan has (to receive worship – see Matt 4:9). All of them will refuse worship and point people away from themselves to God. Any who accept worship reveal their wickedness.

"Spirit of prophecy" – anyone who gives true witness concerning Christ is giving a witness that is truly prophetic. It is speaking forth truth revealed by God Himself and it has to do with both the present and the future.

19:11 The great prostitute has been judged. Now the evil triumvirate – the dragon, the beast and the false prophet – must be dealt with to redeem the earth from its enslavement to wickedness. This Christ will do at His return (v 20; 20:1-3). The picture in this verse is of Christ's sudden coming to earth

he judges and makes war. 12 His eyes *were* like a flame of fire, and on his head were many crowns. And he had a name written that no man knew except he himself. 13 And he *was* dressed in a garment dipped in blood. And his name is called The Word of God. 14 And the armies in heaven followed him on white horses, dressed in fine linen, white and clean. 15 And out of his mouth comes a sharp sword with which he should strike the nations. And he will rule them with an iron rod. And he tramples the wine press of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. 16 And on *his* robe and on his thigh he has a name written:

again. Believers from the first century onwards have looked forward to this great event. See references at 1:7.

"There appeared" – literally, "look".

"White horse" – the rider of this one will be in great contrast to the one in 6:2.

"Faithful and True" – 1:5; 3:14 – He is the Lord Jesus and no other. He is not unfaithful and false as the prostitute, the beast and his prophet will prove to be.

"Makes war" – 17:14; Ex 15:3; Josh 10:42; 23:3; Ps 45:3-7; Isa 11:4. Christ will fight for His world and for His people, and He will win. Compare His coming here with His first coming (Luke 2:7), and His riding into Jerusalem on a donkey (Matt 21:1-5).

19:12 "Fire" – 1:14.

"Many crowns" – this is the only place in the New Testament where Christ is said to wear any royal crown (diadem) and it is when He comes to earth to reign.

"No one knew, except he" – compare 2:17; Matt 11:27. Only God can fully understand all that Christ is.

19:13 "Blood" – probably signifies Christ as Redeemer who shed His blood for sinners (Matt 26:28; Rom 3:24,25; Eph 1:7). Some think it speaks of Christ as warrior and the defeat of His enemies. But this comes in v 15.

"Word of God" – John 1:1,14.

19:14 "Armies in heaven" – certainly His angels (Matt 16:27; 25:31; 2 Thess 1:7), and perhaps His believers also (17:14; see note at 1 Thess 3:13). In this book fine white linen is the dress for both angels and believers (v 8; 15:6).

19:15 Note at 1:16.

"Strike" – 2 Thess 2:8; Isa 11:4.

"Iron rod" – 2:27; Ps 2:9. Very clearly, his rule over the nations of earth is after His second coming.

"Wine press of the . . . wrath" – 14:19; Isa 63:1-4.

19:16 "King of kings and Lord of lords" – means the greatest and highest of all who are called kings or lords. Could this be said of anyone who does not share the nature of God and is not God Himself? Compare Deut 10:17; Ps 136:2,3; Dan 2:47. See 1 Tim 6:15 where God Himself bears this name.

KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS.

17 And I saw an angel standing in the sun. And he shouted in a loud voice and said to all the birds that fly through the sky, "Come and gather together at the supper of the great God, 18 so that you may eat the flesh of kings and the flesh of captains and the flesh of mighty men and the flesh of horses and of their riders and the flesh of all kinds of people, both free and slave, both small and great."

19 And I saw the beast and the kings of the earth and their armies gathered together to make war against him who sat on the horse and against his army. 20 And the beast was captured and with him the false prophet who performed signs in his presence, with which he deceived those who had received the mark of the beast and those who

In the Old Testament the LORD (Jehovah God) is the great King (Ps 47:2). Here the Lord Jesus is the great King. Jesus is the incarnation of Jehovah (see note and other references at Luke 2:11). This name "written" on Christ at His coming means that He Himself is the King of Kings and Lord of Lords - 17:14. He does not bear a title that belongs to someone else. This is the "glorious appearing of our great God and Saviour Jesus Christ", the blessed hope of believers (Titus 2:13). Other references to Christ's deity at Phil 2:6.

19:17,18 The reference to birds, flesh, horses and men suggest a literal battle with many killed. This "supper" is in great contrast with "the wedding supper of the Lamb" (v 9). That one is for Christ's righteous people; this one for Christ's opponents. God provides this supper for the vultures who feed on the dead. Compare Ezek 39:17-20.

"All kinds of people" - people of all nations who have received the mark of the beast and joined the armies mentioned in v 19.

19:19 "Beast" - see 13:4. Now One is seen who can make war against him.

"Kings of the earth" - 6:15; 16:12, 14,16; 17:2,18; 18:3; 21:24.

"Gathered together" - 16:14,16. This is the final great battle of this age. They will come to this battle whether they think it is militarily reasonable or not (compare Ezek 38:4; 39:2). Christ is sovereign over all the kings of earth - 1:5. And He who brought Pharaoh's army to the Red Sea and their destruction (Ex 14:4,23-38) can bring earth's armies to this final battle. And He will do so. We are not told what the beast and these kings will think - whether they realize they are trying to fight the Lord from heaven. For all we know they may think it is an invasion from space which must be resisted to save the earth. But we should not rule out even a conscious attempt on their part to fight the Son of God. There is no limit to the willful and stubborn depravity of

worshiped his image. Both of them were thrown alive into a lake of fire burning with sulfur. 21 And the rest of them were killed by the sword of the one who sat on the horse, the sword that came out of his mouth. And all the birds were filled with their flesh.

20 And I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key to the Abyss and a great chain in his hand. 2 And he seized the dragon, that old serpent, who is the Devil, that is, Satan, and bound him for a thousand years, 3 and threw him into the Abyss and locked him up and put a seal on him, so that he could no longer deceive the nations until the thousand years were finished. And after that he must be let loose for a little while.

4 And I saw thrones and those who were sitting

men energized by Satan. Remember that Satan and his angels fight in heaven itself (12:7). And men can know God's coming judgment and still continue in their rebellion against Him (Rom 1:32; etc).

19:20 "False prophet" - 16:13; 20:10.

"Signs" - 13:13-15.

"Lake of fire" - 20:10,14,15; 21:8. The throwing of them alive into the lake of fire is further evidence that the beast and false prophet are individuals. The Bible says nothing about kingdoms and empires being thrown there.

19:21 "Sword. . .out of his mouth" - Christ will but speak and destruction results.

20:1-3 Before this event Christ has dealt with the prostitute, the beast and the false prophet. But before the earth is prepared for His glorious reign one more person must be removed. That is what we have here.

20:1 "Abyss" - note at 9:1.

20:2 "Dragon" - 12:3,9.

"Satan" - notes at 1 Chron 21:2; Matt 4:1-10; John 8:44.

"Bound him" - in a sense Christ at His first coming bound Satan (Matt 12:29). Some teach that Satan is bound throughout this whole age and that these verses here in this book refer to that. However, if that is true Satan must be on a very long chain - see 12:10,12,13,17; 1 Pet 5:8; Eph 2:2; 6:11,12! We should notice that here it is an angel, not Christ, who binds Satan. And that having bound him he throws him into the Abyss. And there is not a word about this anywhere else in the New Testament, not a suggestion that Satan has been in the Abyss all these centuries and not able to deceive the nations.

"Thousand years" - vs 4,6. There have been many attempts to make this mean anything but a literal thousand years, but in the view of the author of these notes these attempts have all been unsuccessful.

20:3 "Locked him up and put a seal" - compare Isa 24:21-24. This surely indicates imprisoned so that he cannot for a moment step out of the Abyss and put his foot on

on them. *Authority to mete out* judgment was given to them. And *I saw* the souls of those who had been beheaded for the witness of Jesus and for the word of God, and who had not worshiped the beast or his image, and had not received *his* mark on their foreheads or in their hands. And they lived *again* and reigned with Christ a thousand years. 5 But the rest of the dead did not live again until the thousand years were finished. This *is* the first resurrection. 6 Blessed and holy *is* he who will

earth.

"So that he could no longer deceive the nations until" – we can be sure that this speaks of an event still in the future, because deceiving the nations is something Satan constantly does now (12:9). See also 2 Cor 4:4; 11:3,14,15; 2 Thess 2:9; 1 Tim 4:1.

"A little time" – v 7.

20:4 "Thrones" – it does not say where they are, but the whole scene from v 1 to v 9 seems clearly to be on earth. Verse 1 says the angel came "down out of heaven" and vs 8,9 are events which will take place on earth.

"Authority to mete out judgment" – compare Matt 19:28.

"Souls of those. . .beheaded" – 6:9.

"Beast" – the antichrist does not appear until the end of this age and Christ Himself will deal with him at His coming (19:20; 2 Thess 2:3-8). It is perfectly clear that the events revealed here in this verse happen after that.

"Lived again" – in the next verse this is called resurrection; that is, souls entering the bodies they once occupied and the bodies coming to life again.

"Reigned with Christ" – as Christ promised (2:26,27; 3:21). It speaks here of those reigning who had been beheaded by the beast, but this does not mean that other believers will not reign with Christ. Their reign had been revealed before in other Scriptures, and so it was not necessary to state that truth again. See 5:10; 2 Tim 2:12; Rom 8:17; compare Luke 19:15-17,19.

"A thousand years" – all the time Satan is in the Abyss. This is the only place in the Bible that speaks of the length of this time when Christ will reign with His saints on the present earth. But this book is a special revelation from God, and it should not surprise us that there is truth in it not revealed before. There are Christian scholars who say there will be no literal reign of Christ on this present earth after His return. Some of them teach that the promises of glory and blessing made to Israel in the Old Testament are being fulfilled in the Church in this present age, that Satan is bound now, and that now the saints reign with Christ. And some scholars teach that this "thousand year" reign does not refer to the earth at all, but to the reign of the saints in heaven. The reasons they give for these views do not satisfy the author of these notes. On Christ's reign as prophesied in the Old

have a part in the first resurrection. On such *people* the second death has no power, but they will be priests of God and of Christ and will reign with him a thousand years.

7 And when the thousand years have ended, Satan will be let loose from his prison, 8 and will go out to deceive the nations that are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together for battle. The number of them is like the sand of the sea. 9 And they

Testament see Isa 2:1-4; 9:6,7; 11:4-16; 24:23; 32:1-5; 35:1-10; Dan 2:34,35, 44,45; Zech 14:8-21.

20:5 According to this there are two resurrections.

"The rest of the dead" – unbelievers who have died in their sins. Compare John 5:28,29. See note at Phil 3:11; Luke 20:35. Other references on the resurrection of believers: 1 Cor 15:20-25, 42-44, 51-53; 1 Thess 4:14-17.

20:6 Blessed and holy surely applies to all true believers in Christ throughout this age – Matt 5:3; Gen 12:1-3; Num 6:22-27; John 17:17; Rom 1:7; Eph 1:4; 2:21; Col 1:2; 3:12; Heb 10:10,14; 1 Pet 2:9.

"Second death" – v 14.

"Priests" – 1:6; 5:10; 1 Pet 2:5,9.

"Will reign with Him" – no description is given here of Christ's reign on earth. It was not necessary to give it because God had revealed it before in other parts of the Bible. For example see Isa 2:1-4; etc.

20:7 "Let loose" – this will be for the "little time" referred to in v 1. It is different from the little time in 12:12. There Satan was cast out of heaven; here he is let loose from the Abyss – a huge difference.

20:8 "Deceive" – immediately he will be up to his old tricks again and he will succeed remarkably well. Even after one thousand years of universal justice and righteousness, peace and prosperity and perfect government, the hearts of men will prove to be as rebellious and depraved as ever. These will be people born and grown to maturity during the thousand year reign. Their rebellion at the end will reveal other lessons (or deeper truths) God will be pleased to teach about the depravity of the human heart.

"Gog and Magog" – compare Ezek 38:2. In Ezekiel Gog is the chief prince of Magog, and Magog and the other nations that come against Israel are from the far north of Israel (Ezek 38:6,15; 39:2). And it seems they will invade Israel sometime before the end of this age, before the thousand year reign (notes at Ezek 38:1,8). Here in this book Gog and Magog are nations from the "four corners of the earth." Also this invasion takes place after the thousand year reign. Why are these nations called Gog and Magog? Possibly merely to reveal their character – they will be just as rebellious and determined, etc. as the ones in Ezekiel chapters 38,39.

20:9 "The earth's wide expanse" – this is

proceeded across earth's wide expanse and surrounded the camp of the saints and the beloved city. Then fire came down from God out of heaven and consumed them. 10 And the devil who deceived them was thrown into the lake of fire and sulfur, where the beast and the false prophet *are*, and they will be tormented day and night for ever and ever.

11 And I saw a great white throne and him who was sitting on it. From his face earth and heaven fled away, and no place was found for them. 12 And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God, and the books were opened. And another book was opened, which is *the book of life*. And the dead were judged by the things written in the books, according to their works. 13 And

the sea gave up the dead who were in it, and death and Hades gave up the dead who were in them, and everyone of them was judged according to his deeds. 14 And death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death. 15 And whoever was not found written in the book of life was thrown into the lake of fire.

21 And I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away. And no longer was there a sea. 2 And I, John, saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride dressed for her husband. 3 And I heard a loud voice from heaven which said, "Look, God's dwelling place *is* with men, and he will live with

not said of the invaders of Ezekiel chapters 38 and 39 (38:6,15; 39:2).

"The beloved city" - Ps 87:2.

"Fire. . . from heaven" - compare Ezek 38:22; 39:6; Ps 11:6,7.

20:10 "They" - the verb is in the plural here, indicating that all three of those mentioned here will be tormented. Two of them will have been there for 1000 years (19:20). Evidently being cast into the lake of fire does not mean annihilation, extinction of being.

"Day and night for ever and ever" - 14:11.

20:11-15 The final judgment of people and the end of the heavens and earth as they are now. God's throne is now a throne of grace - Heb 4:16. Those who reject God's grace will face His just judgment on all their sins. Does this judgment take place when the 1000 years are over, or before? The wording here does not make this clear. It may be that what is revealed here are the principles of the judgment and not the time of it. All we can say is that from the context it seems likely that it happens after the 1000 years reign of Christ. But this does not necessarily rule out a similar judgment before the 1000 years.

20:11 "Him who was sitting on it" - Christ; see John 5:22; Acts 17:31.

"No place was found for them" - 21:1.

20:12 "The dead" - presumably those raised from the dead in the second resurrection (v 5). They will be raised, but still called "the dead", because they will be without spiritual life. Compare Eph 2:1; 1 Tim 5:6.

"Books" - distinct from the book of life, and containing a record of the deeds done by those dead while they were on earth.

"The book of life" - note at 3:5.

"Were judged" - Ps 9:7,8; 82:8; 94:2; 96:10-13; Dan 7:9,10.

20:13 "The sea" is mentioned probably because some might think that bodies sunk in the depths of the sea or devoured by sharks or fish will be beyond recovery. But they too will rise and stand before the judgment throne.

"Death" - the power that separated peoples' souls from their bodies. But death

will not be able to keep souls and bodies separated.

"Hades" - see Luke 16:23; etc. There unbelievers are kept until God's final judgment on them.

20:14 Death will no longer separate souls from bodies but will be merged into the final separation of the wicked from God. Hades will no longer be a place where the wicked are kept until judgment. All the wicked will be judged and Hades merged into hell.

"Second death" - this means eternal separation from God who is the source of all peace, joy, and blessing (Matt 25:41; 2 Thess 1:8,9).

20:15 Those not written in the book of life will not have spiritual life (John 1:12,13; Eph 2:5), and they will practice the sins listed in 21:8. And they will receive exactly what they will deserve. Let us remember again the one way to escape this just judgment and punishment - John 5:24; Rom 8:1.

21:1 "New" - Isa 65:17; 66:22; 2 Pet 3:13.

"Passed away" - 20:11; Matt 24:29; 2 Pet 3:10.

"A sea no longer existed" - there will be vast changes from the state of things now.

21:2 "New Jerusalem" - compare Gal 4:26; Heb 11:10; 12:22; 13:14; Phil 3:20; John 14:2.

"Coming down out of heaven" - the final dwelling place of redeemed mankind will be on a new earth, not in heaven. Or should we say heaven becomes earth and earth heaven.

"As a bride" - vs 9,10.

21:3 "From heaven" - 4:2; 16:17; 19:5 - the central place of authority in the universe.

"God's dwelling place is with men" - that is, on the new earth. The new earth will become heaven, for God will live there with men. This is the climax of the whole Bible, the fulfillment of the plan God has had for mankind from the beginning. Note and references at Ex 25:8.

"His people. . . their God" - 2 Cor 6:16; Lev 26:11,12; Ezek 37:27; 2 Cor 6:16; 1 Pet 2:9.

them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them, *and be* their God. 4 And God will wipe away all tears from their eyes. And no longer will there be death, or sorrow, or crying. And no longer will there be pain, for the former things have passed away."

5 And he who sat on the throne said, "See, I make all things new." And he said to me, "Write this, for these words are true and faithful."

6 And he said to me, "It is done. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End. To him who is thirsty I will freely give from the fountain of

the water of life. 7 He who overcomes will inherit all things. I will be his God, and he will be my son. 8 But the cowardly, and the unbelieving, and the vile, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars will have their part in the lake which burns with fire and sulfur, which is the second death."

9 And one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls full of the seven last plagues, came to me and talked with me and said, "Come here, I will show you the bride, the Lamb's wife." 10 And he carried me away in the Spirit to a great and high

21:4 "Eyes" – 7:17.

"No. . . death" – 20:14 – no more physical death, the separation of soul and body, and no more spiritual death which is separation from God.

"Passed away" – the root cause of death, mourning, crying, and pain is the fall of mankind into sin (Rom 5:12). When sin is abolished from the world these other things will vanish with it.

21:5 "New" – He has already begun this work. See 2 Cor 5:17; Eph 2:10. Once the present earth and its system have fulfilled the purpose for which God made them, He will lay them aside and make new ones.

"True and faithful" – 19:9; 22:6. These things are not visionary or imaginary, but eternal realities.

21:6 "He" – God.

"It is done" – when God says something is done it means that it is absolutely certain it will be fulfilled, though it does not always become so at the moment of speaking. See Isa 46:10; Rom 4:17.

"Alpha and Omega" – 1:8; 22:13.

"Water of life" – here it is God who gives the water of life; in John 4:10,14 it is the Lord Jesus who gives it. Observe that it is given without cost. See 22:17; Isa 55:1; Rom 6:23.

21:7 "Overcomes" – see note at 2:7.

"Inherit" – 1 John 3:1-3; Rom 8:15,16, 19,23,29. This is a promise that should make everyone who reads it determine to be among the overcomers and not to be much concerned about any inheritance in this present world. But we should not think from this verse that becoming a child of God is a reward for overcoming. Becoming a child of God is altogether a gift of God's grace (John 1:1,13,14; Gal 4:4-7; Eph 2:8-10; 1 Pet 1:3-5). Overcoming is a result of becoming a child of God, is evidence of the new birth (1 John 5:4,5). However, overcoming is not something that takes place automatically without the child of God having any part in it. Winning, continuing in the faith, requires spiritual effort through the power God has put in believers.

21:8 There will be only two classes of people – the saved and the lost; God's people with whom He will dwell (v 3), and these who have refused to be God's people.

"Cowardly" – in the context this means those who refuse to believe in Christ and confess Him because of the fear of other

people.

"Unbelieving" – those who preferred darkness to light, themselves to Christ, this world to heaven and so do not believe in Christ because they do not want to (John 3:19,20,36; 5:40; 2 Thess 2:10,11). Unbelief is not some light thing, some misfortune, something to be easily excused. It is the sin above all which will condemn men to the lake of fire. It is here put together with murder and sins which make people vile.

"Whoremongers" – the original meaning of the Greek word (used also in Eph 5:5; 1 Tim 1:10; Heb 13:4; Rev 22:15) seems to be men engaged in buying or selling sex, but in various versions in various places has been translated "fornicators" or "sexually immoral person". Certainly all such immorality is condemned in many places in the Bible. See 1 Cor 6:9,10; Eph 5:5,6; Col 3:5,6.

"Sorcerers" – 9:21; 18:23; 22:15; Acts 8:11; Deut 18:9-14. This means those who practice black magic with the intention of deceiving people, and the result of which is to lead them away from God's truth.

"Idolaters" – a sin everywhere condemned in the Bible and one forbidden in the list of the ten commandments God gave (Ex 20:4-6). No idolater will ever be among God's people – unless he or she repents and forsakes all idols and gods.

"Liars" – see also v 27; 22:15. Because this is put last we should not think it is least. Liars are classed with "dogs" and murderers. Telling lies is no light thing. It is a deadly sin which will bring people at last to the lake of fire. God condemns it everywhere in His Word – Ex 20:16; Ps 5:6; 15:2; 31:5; Prov 6:16-19; 12:22; 19:5,9,22; Matt 19:18; Eph 4:15,25; Col 3:9. Liars are children of Satan (John 8:44), and will go where Satan goes (20:10). Observe that God says "all" liars will go into the lake of fire – all who practice any form of lying and deception whether they profess to be saints or Christians or Christian workers or anyone else. Let us all escape for our lives from this soul-destroying sin.

"Lake. . . second death" – 19:20; 20:6,10,14,15.

21:9 "Last plagues" – 15:1.

"The bride" – 19:7.

21:10 In v 9 the angel said he would show John "the bride, the wife of the Lamb." But

mountain, and showed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God, 11 having the glory of God. And her light *was* like a very precious gemstone, like a crystal-clear jasper. 12 *The city* had a great, high wall with twelve gates. And twelve angels were at the gates, and names were written on *the gates, the names* of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel. 13 Three gates *were* on the east, three gates on the north, three gates on the south, and three gates on the west. 14 And the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and on them *were* the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb.

15 He who talked with me had a gold rod to measure the city, and its gates and its wall. 16 The city is laid out *like* a square, and its length is the same as its breadth. And he measured the city with the rod, twelve thousand furlongs. Its length, breadth and height are equal. 17 And he measured its wall, a hundred *and* forty-four cubits, *according to* man's measurement, that is, of the angel. 18 The wall was built *of* jasper, and the city *was*

pure gold like clear glass. 19 And the foundations of the wall of the city *were* embellished with all kinds of precious stones. The first foundation *was with* jasper, the second sapphire, the third chalcedony, the fourth emerald, 20 the fifth sardonyx, the sixth sardius, the seventh chrysolyte, the eighth beryl, the ninth topaz, the tenth chrysoprasus, the eleventh jacinth, the twelfth amethyst. 21 And the twelve gates *were* twelve pearls, each gate was a single pearl. And the street of the city *was* pure gold like transparent glass.

22 And I saw no temple in the city, for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are its temple. 23 And the city had no need of the sun or of the moon to shine in it, for the glory of God illuminated it and the Lamb *is* its light. 24 And the nations of the saved will walk in its light, and the kings of the earth will bring their glory and honour into it. 25 And its gates will never be shut by day (for there will be no night there), 26 and they will bring the glory and honour of the nations into it. 27 And no defiling thing will ever enter it, or anyone who commits an

instead of showing John the people of God the angel shows him the city of God. This city will be the residence of the people of God (v 27) and represents them. Compare the great prostitute of chapter 17 who is also said to be a city (17:18). A city means more than buildings and streets. It means also the people who live there, and it can represent a whole system of religion. Compare Matt 23:37-39. It was not literal buildings and streets which killed the prophets but the people of Israel represented by the literal city of Jerusalem. As the old Jerusalem represented the Jews so the new Jerusalem represents the redeemed people of God and they will fully share its holiness, glory and splendor.

21:11 "Glory of God" - v 23. Compare John 17:22,24; Rom 2:10; 5:2; 8:17,18,30.

"Jasper" - 4:3.

21:12 "Twelve tribes" - 7:5-8. Evidently this city represents both Israel and the Church of the New Testament (v 14) united forever. Compare Eph 2:14-22; Rom 11:17-24. Since this city represents the bride of Christ (v 9) it seems that redeemed Israel is a part of the bride.

21:14 "Twelve apostles" - Matt 10:2-4. Judas Iscariot lost his place as an apostle - Acts 2:15-20. Can we doubt whose name will appear here with the remaining eleven? See Rom 1:1; 1 Cor 15:7-10; Gal 2:8,9.

21:16 "Twelve thousand furlongs" - about 2,200 kilometers. This city will be of tremendous size and reach far into the sky. Evidently a city of this size is required to represent the great multitude of redeemed people who will live there. Compare 7:9.

21:17 "A hundred and forty-four cubits" - about 66 meters. Why is a wall necessary? It is perhaps a symbol signifying the exclusion of all who do not belong there -

v 27; 22:15.

21:18 Gold transparent as glass is not a substance now known to men (nor pearls as large as city gates - v 21). God the Creator is not limited to the rude and solid materials we now have on earth.

21:19,20 We cannot be sure what the Greek names for some of these gems represent today.

21:21 No oysters produced these pearls, but He who will make all things new - v 5.

21:22 There will be no need of a temple built of materials. The temple (and tabernacle) in the Old Testament was a place for God to dwell (Ex 25:8), and no one but the high priest of Israel could even enter His presence (Heb 9:7; Lev 16:1,2). All others were excluded. In the new Jerusalem God and Christ are the temple and all His people will live in His presence and in Him (v 3; 3:12; John 17:20-23).

21:23 "Sun or moon" - we do not know whether there will be anything like our present sun or moon - 20:11.

"The Lamb is its light" - compare John 8:12; 2 Cor 4:6; 1 John 1:5,6. Only those who walk in His light in this world will live in it in the next.

21:24-26 This picture suggests that the redeemed in the new earth may have distinct lands with their individual rulers and come and go to and from the city. But we cannot be sure of this.

21:27 This makes it clear that the nations and kings of vs 24-26 will be the people of God, born of His Spirit.

"No defiling thing" - sin is what has ruined the earth we now live in. It will not ruin that one. Ah, eternal purity and holiness without a blot or stain!

"Anyone who practices lying" - singled out for special mention (see v 8). Not one

abomination *or tells* a lie, but *only* those who are written in the Lamb's book of life.

22 And he showed me a pure river of the water of life, clear as crystal, issuing from the throne of God and of the Lamb, 2 in the middle of the *city's* street. And on each side of the river *there was* the tree of life, producing twelve *kinds of* fruits *and* yielding its fruit every month. And the leaves of the tree *were* for the healing of the nations. 3 And no longer will there be any curse, but the throne of God and of the Lamb will be in *the city*. And his servants will serve him, 4 and they will see his face, and his name *will be* on their foreheads. 5 There will be no night there, and they will need no lamp or light of the sun, for the Lord God gives them light. And they will reign for ever and ever.

6 And he said to me, "These words *are*

lie will ever be told in the new Jerusalem – we might almost think now that this alone will be heaven enough!

"Book of life" – 20:12,15.

22:1 "River of the water of life" – 21:6. Compare Ps 46:4; Ezek 46:4. It is the flow of eternal life which believers will experience forever.

"From the throne" – the throne is shared by God and the Lamb, and that throne will be in the city on the new earth. The new earth will be the place from which God will reign over the universe.

22:2 "Tree of Life" – 2:7. The history of mankind begins with mention of the tree of life (Gen 2:9) and man barred from it because of sin (3:22-24). The last scene is of men redeemed from sin and having free access to this tree.

"Twelve kinds of fruit" – one taste of that fruit will mean the end of all that has afflicted God's people throughout the ages on this sinful earth.

22:3 "Curse" – Gen 3:17; Isa 24:6. The Old Testament concludes with a warning about a curse – Mal 4:6. The Bible concludes with a promise of the curse removed forever.

"Serve him" – see 7:15. The service of believers will not end when they enter the eternal ages. They will have the privilege and joy of serving God forever. This will be service without sin or fault, without opposition, without weariness.

22:4 "See his face" – Matt 5:8; 1 Cor 13:12; Heb 12:14; Isa 33:17.

"His name. . .in their foreheads" – 14:1. They will belong to Him and be like Him – Rom 8:29; 1 John 3:1,2.

22:5 "No night" – 21:25.

"Light" – 21:2.

"Reign forever and ever" – this will be part of their service. Their reign will not end at the completion of the 1000 years reign of Christ – 20:4. Like Christ's reign their reign will be in two stages. Nothing here is said about them being priests (as in 20:6).

trustworthy and true, and the Lord God of the holy prophets sent his angel to show to his servants the things which must quickly take place."

7 "Behold, I am coming quickly. Blessed *is* he who keeps the words of the prophecy of this book."

8 And I, John, saw these things, and heard *them*. And when I had heard and seen *them*, I prostrated myself to worship at the feet of the angel who showed me these things. 9 But he said to me, "Look, *do* not *do that*, for I am a fellow servant with you, and with your brethren the prophets, and with those who keep the words of this book. Worship God."

10 And he said to me, "Do not seal up the words of the prophecy of this book, for the time is at hand. 11 He who is unjust, let him still be unjust, and he who is vile, let him still be vile, and he who is righteous, let him still be righteous, and he who is

22:6 "True" – 19:9; 21:5.

"God of the holy prophets" – it was the God who inspired the prophets of the Bible (2 Pet 1:21) who inspired this book also.

"Must quickly take place" – see 1:1.

22:7 These are the words of the Lord Jesus – vs 12,20; 3:11. Perhaps the angel was quoting Jesus' words here, or else the Lord Himself spoke. "Quickly" – see not at 1:1.

"Blessed. . .prophecy" – 1:3. See who this blessing is for – it is not for those who interpret this book or speculate about its symbols, etc, but for those who obey the truth revealed here.

22:8 "I, John" – 1:9.

"I prostrated myself to worship. . .the angel" – see 19:10.

22:9 "Do not do that" – so we can learn the nature of angels and the nature of demons. God's angels reject worship; Satan and his angels crave it.

"Worship God" – then flee for your life from any person teaching the veneration or worship of any angel, or spirit, or human being, or object of any kind. Such teaching is devilish.

22:10 "Do not seal" – compare 10:4. The command not to seal the book means it is to be written for all to see, with nothing concealed. Compare Dan 12:4. Daniel's prophecies were given in such a way that they could not be understood until a later time. But this prophecy given through John was given for the understanding of God's servants now (1:1-3).

"The time is at hand" – 1:3.

22:11 The meaning here seems to be this: in the light of this unsealed book with its descriptions and promises of great glory and its warnings of terrible punishment, if anyone chooses to do wrong and to be vile, then let it be. No compulsion will be brought to bear upon such a person to move him from his determined course. Part of his punishment will be the terrible one of being left to his vileness and wrongdoing. The reverse

holy, let him still be holy.”

12 “Behold, I am coming quickly, and my reward *will be* with me to give every man according to his work. 13 I am Alpha and Omega, the Beginning and the End, the First and the Last. 14 Blessed *are* those who do according to his commandments, so that they may have the right to the tree of life, and may enter through the gates into the city. 15 For outside *are* dogs, and sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters, and whoever loves lies or makes *them* up. 16 I, Jesus, have sent my angel to testify these things to you in the churches. I am the Root and the Offspring of David, the bright and morning Star.

17 “And the Spirit and the bride say, ‘Come.’ And let him who hears say, ‘Come.’ And let him who

of this is also true. In the light of this book the holy and righteous should continue on this course.

22:12 “Quickly” – a better translation than “soon” – see 1:1, etc.

“My reward” – Matt 16:27; 1 Cor 3:12-15; Col 3:24.

22:13 “Alpha and Omega” – compare 1:8; 21:6. The Lord Jesus could not more plainly say that He is God. He would not take for Himself a name of God unless the name belonged to Him. See also references at Phil 2:6; Luke 2:11.

“Beginning and the End” – 21:6.

“First and Last” – 1:17.

22:14 “Blessed” – these words appear eight times in this book – here, v 7; 1:3 (twice); 14:3; 16:15; 19:9; 20:6.

“Do . . . his commandments” – compare 1 John 2:3-6; James 2:14-26; see the note at Acts 22:10.

22:15 “Outside” – this does not mean lurking just outside the gates hoping to slip in if an opportunity offers. We have already been told where such people will be – 21:8.

“Whoremongers” – see note at 21:8.

22:16 “My angel” – 1:1.

“Root and Offspring” – 5:5; Matt 1:1; Rom 1:3; Isa 11:10; Ps 110:1.

“Morning Star” – compare 2:28; Num 24:17.

22:17 This last invitation in the Bible is a great one, and stands as a reminder of all the many promises God has given throughout the Bible. God’s Spirit invites people to come to Him. The Church, the bride of Christ echoes this invitation. Every individual who hears it should repeat it to others.

“Thirsty” – Isa 55:1; Matt 5:6.

“Whoever” – John 3:16,36; 7:37; 1 Tim 2:4; 2 Pet 3:9; Isa 55:7; Ezek 18:32.

“Water of life” – v 1; 21:26; John 4:14. This water of life is God Himself (Jer 2:13; 17:13). He invites all to come and drink of Him and gain eternal life.

is thirsty come. And whoever will, let him take the water of life freely.

18 “For I testify to everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: if anyone adds to these things, God will add to him the plagues that are written in this book. 19 And if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God will take away his part from the book of life, and from the holy city, and *from* the things which are written in this book.”

20 He who testifies these things says, “Surely I am coming quickly.” Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus.

21 The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ *be* with you all. Amen.

“Freely” – Rom 5:16,17; 6:23; Eph 2:8,9.

22:18,19 This last warning in the Bible is a very severe one. See how important this book is. The emphasis here is on the words. Deliberately adding or taking away any of them would be trying to pervert the truth God has revealed. Compare Deut 12:32; Prov 30:6. Of course, this refers to the sin of willfully doing so, not to copying mistakes or printing errors, etc. God has chosen to convey His truth to men through words, and these words are of the utmost importance. Compare Deut 4:2; 12:32; Ps 12:6; 119:160; Prov 30:6; Jer 1:9; 15:16. New translations of God’s Word may be made, and should be made, as languages and writing styles change, but no one should try to add or take away from the words of the Greek and Hebrew manuscripts which have come down to us. This inspired warning is surely enough to prevent any true believer from meddling with these.

22:20 This is the last doctrine in the Bible. This teaching is referred to in one out of every 25 verses in the New Testament. Jesus will come personally, visibly, triumphantly, and suddenly. The suddenness, the swiftness of His coming is taught three times in the last chapter.

“Come, Lord Jesus” – this last prayer of the Bible is an expression of the desire of His Church from the beginning until now. All our hopes are in Him. His is the glory we want to see.

22:21 This last blessing of the Bible is a fitting conclusion to all the Bible teaches. The grace of the Lord Jesus is what overcomes sin and death and alone makes it possible for people to be God’s people and to inherit all God has promised.

“Amen” – 1:6. And so the Bible ends. So be it. We should all say “Amen” to all of it, every book and every word and every jot and tittle of it. Blessed indeed is the person who can say from the heart “amen” to all that God has said.

