

INTRODUCTION to the book of REVELATION

Teacher: John M. Brown, Flatwoods church of Christ, Sunday Bible Class

The book of Revelation is a book of comfort and hope! Though various interpretations have been placed upon it, as we shall see in this study, it is a record of God's judgment against the Roman Empire which was terribly persecuting first century Christians. God's children will ultimately be victorious, and God's truth vindicated. From this, Christians of all eras, epochs, and cultures can be assured of God's presence and the victory of God's truth.

I. PRINCIPLES OF INTERPRETATION

- A. Always remember the Bible is God's inspired, infallible Word (2 Timothy 3:16-17).
- B. Always understand the Bible in light of its historical background, the purpose and plan of each book, the context, the meaning of words, and pertinent parallel passages.
- C. Let the Bible be the final authority; don't accept something as true unless the Bible verifies!

II. AUTHOR

Revelation 1:1, 4, 9; 22:8

GOD ----→ JESUS ----→ ANGELS ----→ JOHN -----→ SEVEN CHURCHES
OF ASIA

TO WHOM WRITTEN: Revelation 1:4; 1:11 – Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamos, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, Laodicea

III. THE PURPOSE OF THE BOOK

- A. It is written to give comfort and assurance to the church in the face of impending persecution
- B. See Revelation 2:10; 6:9; 7:14-15; 12:12; 20:4, 10

IV. THEME OF THE BOOK Revelation 17:14

“These shall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them: for he is Lord of lords and King of kings; and they that are with him are called, and chosen, and faithful.”

V. TIME FRAME OF THE BOOK

A. Revelation 1:1, 3

1. “...*things which must shortly come to pass*”
 - a. “MUST” = DEI (a word implying moral necessity)
 - b. “SHORTLY” EN TAXEI: “swiftly, speedily, quickly, soon”

(note some other uses of this word: Luke 18:8; Acts 12:7; 22:18; 25:4; Romans 16:20; Revelation 1:1; 22:6)

2. “*for the time is at hand*” = *near, close!*

B. Revelation 22:6, 10

1. “...*things which must shortly be done*”
2. “*seal not the sayings of the prophecy of this book: for the time is at hand.*”
 - a. Remember to whom written – is there any message for the seven churches?
 - b. Compare also Daniel 8:1, 26

C. Thus we are forced, by John’s language, to assign and ascribe a meaning to the book of Revelation that would have first significance to the ones to whom it was written (the seven churches of Asia). To assign a meaning to Revelation hundreds or thousands of years removed from the first century persecuted saints to whom John addresses this book is to ignore John’s own “time frame” for his writing.

VI. THEORIES OF INTERPRETATION

- A. FUTURIST: this views the book as dealing wholly with events at the end of time.
- B. CONTINUOUS HISTORICAL: this considers the book an unfolding of church history from John’s day until the present time, noting the apostasies of Roman Catholicism, etc.
- C. PRETERIST: this views the book as having been completely fulfilled in the past with no message for the church today.

OBJECTIONS TO THESE THEORIES:

FUTURIST:

1. This is inconsistent with John's statements in the book at 1:1, 3; 22:6, 10. Always remember John is writing to the seven churches about things which must shortly come to pass.
2. This puts the book out of contact with the needs of the churches addressed.
3. This is inconsistent with the closing of the book in 22:10

CONTINUOUS HISTORICAL

1. This also puts the book out of touch with the early church, to whom it was written.
2. This narrows the scope of the book to apostasy only.
3. This view has led men to calculations of times and periods which have been false.

PRETERIST

1. This view has no message except for John's day; but are we not blessed if we read?
2. Though this view is close (John did write primarily for Christians in his day), the lessons of victory, courage, faithfulness, and comfort are lessons for us today!

VII. GUIDELINES FOR UNDERSTANDING THE BOOK OF REVELATION

A. Realize John wrote primarily to encourage and edify persecuted saints of his day! 1:3; 2:3

B. Realize that the book is written largely in symbolic language.

1. Revelation 1:1, "...sent and signified" -- "SIGN – I – FIED" : A book of signs!
2. Revelation is APOCALYPTIC literature: Revelation 1:1

APOKALPSIS = "an uncovering; disclosure, revelation, manifestation"

C. Realize that the book uses Old Testament terminology with New Testament meaning (*there are 404 verses in Revelation, with over 330 have direct or indirect allusions to the Old Testament!*)

D. Realize that Revelation uses figurative language.

1. "Literal" = using words in their normal, ordinary sense.
2. "Figurative" = representing by figures or symbols; not usual, literal, exact sense.
 - a. There is much figurative language in the Bible (see for example Psalm 18:2; Luke 13:32; John 2:18-22; 7:37-39)
 - b. There is much figurative language in Revelation (for example, 5:5, 6, 8)
3. One good "rule of thumb": always understand the Bible literally, unless context and word usage forces you to understand it figuratively.

E. Realize that to best understand Revelation, we must grasp the overall picture: HOPE! We mustn't get "bogged down" in details and lose the meaning of what John seeks to convey.

VIII. WORLD CONDITIONS AT THE TIME OF REVELATION

A. THE ROMAN EMPIRE:

1. Morally Rome was exceedingly wicked.
2. Religiously Rome was the center of Emperor Worship, a mixture of fear and superstition – to refuse to worship the Emperor as “Lord” was an act of disloyalty and treason – the Romans attempted to force this Emperor Worship upon Christians.
3. The Roman Empire was large, wealthy, powerful and corrupt. Rome was nearing the height of her “greatness” when Revelation was being written.

B. CHRISTIANITY

1. Christianity was an illegal, persecuted religion; many false ideas about Christians were believed; Christians refusal to worship the Emperor as “Lord” was considered treasonous, exclusive, and fanatical.
2. Christians were undergoing persecution, viewing a powerful Empire that seemed about to crush them as they were imprisoned, beaten, stoned, robbed, exiled, and pressured to compromise their faith. Would God help? Would Christianity be destroyed? Would the name of Jesus be forgotten? Is there hope? *Revelation provides answers to those questions!*

IX. THE DATE OF THE BOOK

Revelation 17:8-11

Seven heads – seven mountains (Rome sat on seven mountains) – seven kings – an eighth

“FIVE ARE FALLEN”	{	1. AUGUSTUS	27BC – 14 AD
		2. TIBERIUS	14 – 37 AD
		3. CALIGULA	37 – 41 AD
		4. CLAUDIUS	41 – 54 AD
		5. NERO	54 – 68 AD

“ONE IS” →		6. VESPASIAN	69 – 79 AD

“ONE YET TO COME...SHORT SPACE”		7. TITUS	79 – 81 AD

“AN EIGHTH” →		8. DOMITIAN	81 – 96 AD

Thus period during which Revelation was written: 69 – 79 AD

CONCLUSION TO THE INTRODUCTION The New Testament records Rome’s persecution against God’s people. Just as God came in judgment against unbelieving Israel (Matthew 24; Mark 13; Luke 21; Daniel 9), so God will judge pagan Rome. We can take comfort and hope in the message of this book, realizing that God comforts and supports His people and condemns those who would oppress them. *We have victory in Jesus!*

BIBLE NUMBERS

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Number One

1. A single object
2. Unity; united; single
3. Independence
4. A number describing God: Deut. 6:4

Number Two

1. Strength; that which is stronger, more effective (Eccl. 4:9-12)
2. Confirmation: the Law required two witnesses (Deut. 17:6; 19:15; 2 Cor. 13:1); Jesus sent the disciples out two by two (Luke 10:1); our Bible has two parts, being the sum of God's complete revelation to man.
3. This number can also represent distinction, difference, division (Gen. 1:16-18; Gen. 2:23-24 with Matt. 19:5)

Number Three

1. Divine number; Deity; the number representing GOD.
2. Father, Son, Holy Ghost: Genesis 1:1-2; Matthew 3:13-17; 28:19; 1 John 5:7
3. The creation is a reflection of this three-dimensional nature (time = past, present, future; space = breadth, length, width; man = body, soul, spirit)

Number Four

1. World, earth, creation
2. Four corners of the earth (Isaiah 11:12); four winds (Ezekiel 37:9; Daniel 7:2; 11:4; Rev. 7:1).
3. Four seasons; four points on compass; four basic elements (fire, wind, earth, water)
4. During fourth kingdom (Daniel 2) the kingdom of God shall be set up ("in earth" – Matt. 6:9 ff).

Number Seven

1. Completeness ("three" for God; "four" for creation).
2. God created all in six days; seventh He rested (done!).
3. Seven spirits, churches, candlesticks, stars, vials, trumpets,
4. Seventy members of Jewish high court; Jesus sent out seventy; forgive brother seventy times seven; etc.
5. The number "seven" occurs more than fifty times in Revelation.
6. Our world reflects this seven-completion: seven primary colors; seven notes on musical scale; "seven seas"; "seven wonders of the world"; "seven deadly sins"; etc.

Number Six

1. Falling short of perfection; incompleteness.
2. Six came to represent falling short of God's expectation
3. Man's number: "666" (Revelation 13:18).

Number Eight

1. Something new or different; a new beginning.
2. Eight souls in ark (1 Pet. 3:20) from which new earth population would come; circumcision done on eighth day (Lev. 12:3; 14:10, 23; 15:14, 29)
3. "Eighth" horn; "an eighth"

Number Ten

1. Human completeness (ten fingers, toes).
2. Rounded total: ten-horned beast (complete power in government); dragon, ten horns; first and last beast, ten horns.
3. $10 \times 10 \times 10 = 1,000$ – came to mean ultimate completeness. (our numerical system is based on "ten")

Number Five

1. Half of ten
2. Incompleteness; imperfection.

Number Twelve

1. Symbolic of religion; a "religious number" (twelve tribes of Israel; twelve cakes of shewbread; twelve apostles; twelve Gates; twelve manner of fruit for the nations; etc.).
2. $12 \times 12 \times 1000 = 144,000$ – perfect, complete number of those sealed from the wrath of God.

Number Three and one-half

1. Broken seven – falling short, incompleteness.
2. Came to represent persecution, trial
3. Time, times, and $\frac{1}{2}$ time =
 $1 + 2 + \frac{1}{2} = 3\frac{1}{2}$

REVELATION Chapter 1

Teacher: John M. Brown, Flatwoods church of Christ, Sunday Bible Class

I. INTRODUCTION TO THE BOOK, vv. 1-8

A. The message John received:

1. Its origin: FROM GOD
2. Its time frame: SHORTLY COME TO PASS
3. Its characteristic: “SIGNIFIED” = “sign – i – fied”
4. John’s responsibility: HE BARE RECORD
5. The reader’s responsibility: READ – HEAR – KEEP
6. Who John addresses: GOD’S SERVANTS (v.1); SEVEN CHURCHES in Asia (v.4)

B. The description of God:

1. The Father: “Him which is...which was...which is to come” – Past, present, future
2. The Holy Spirit: “seven spirits which are before his throne” – Fullness! (cf. Isa. 11:2)
3. Jesus Christ
 - a. Faithful witness
 - b. First begotten of the dead (Acts 26:23; 1 Cor. 15:20-23; Col. 1:18)
 - c. Prince of the kings of the earth (1 Tim. 6:15)
 - d. The One who loved us, washed us, made us kings and priests (1 Pet. 2:5,9)
 - e. He cometh with clouds – every eye shall see Him
 - f. Alpha & Omega (first and last letters of Greek alphabet): is, was, is to come

NOTE ON VERSE 6: In what way are Christians “kings”?

We reign with Christ! (1 Cor. 15:24-25; Revelation 5:8-10)

1. We reign in life through righteousness (Rom. 5:17).
 2. We reign with the apostles as we follow their teaching (1 Cor. 4:8).
 3. We reign by righteous judgment (1 Cor. 6:2-3)
 4. We reign by enduring (2 Tim. 2:12).
 5. We reign by overcoming (Rev. 3:21).
 6. We reign by ruling over the nations (Rev. 2:25-27; cf. Jeremiah 1:10; Matt. 5:5).
- CHRIST REIGNS NOW! CHRISTIANS REIGN NOW WITH HIM!

II. JOHN'S REFLECTION OF HIS VISION FROM CHRIST, vv. 9-20

A. John's situation, vv. 9-11

1. He is a brother and companion in tribulation, the kingdom, and patience – on the isle of Patmos for the word of God and testimony of Jesus Christ.
2. He describes himself as “in the Spirit” on the Lord's day – he heard a voice as of a trumpet (cf. Exodus 19:16).
3. John is told to write what he sees and send it to the seven churches in Asia.

B. John's vision, vv. 12-16

1. Seven golden candlesticks (the seven churches, verse 20).
2. The Son of man
 - a. Clothed with a garment down to the foot: **PRIESTLY**
 - b. Girt with a golden girdle: **HIGH PRIEST** (Ex. 28:39-40; Lev. 8:7; Heb. 6:20)
 - c. Head and hair white like wool: **ANCIENT – ETERNAL** (John 1:1-3; 14:9)
 - d. Eyes as a flame of fire: **ALL SEEING JUDGE** (John 2:24-25; Rom. 2:16)
 - e. Feet like fine brass: **A TRIED FOUNDATION** (see Dan. 10:5-7, 14)
 - f. Voice as the sound of many water: **POWERFUL VOICE OF GOD**
 - g. Seven stars in His right hand: **AUTHORITY** (Matt. 28:18; Heb. 1:3)
 - h. Sharp two-edged sword goes out of His mouth: **WORD OF GOD** (Heb. 4:12)
 - i. Countenance as the sun: **GOD'S GLORY** (Matt. 17:1-5)

C. John's reaction, vv. 17-20

1. John fell at His feet: **WORSHIP, ADORATION**
(cf. Ezek. 1:28; 3:23; 43:3; Dan. 8:17; 10:7-10)
2. What Jesus tells John:
 - a. To not be afraid – He is the first and last: **OMINPRESENT!**
 - b. Jesus liveth - was dead, and is alive forevermore: **ETERNAL CONQUEROR**
 - c. Jesus is the One who has the keys of hell and death: **OMNIPOTENT**
3. Jesus instructs John to write: have seen, are, shall be (past, present, future)
4. “angels of the seven churches” = “messengers” - personification of the prevailing spirit (life) of the seven congregations

REVELATION Chapter 2

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THE SEVEN CHURCHES OF ASIA, Revelation Chapters 2 & 3

Remember it is the Lord giving the assessment of each church – He walks among the churches (1:12-13, 19), ruling, overseeing, and judging His people.

I. THE CHURCH OF EPHESUS, 2:1-7 “UNLOVING”

A. COMMENDATION:

1. Works & labour
2. Patience (perseverance – Acts 19:9; 23-41)
3. Can't bear them which are evil
4. Tried them which say they are apostles (1 John 4:1)
5. Laboured and not fainted (Galatians 6:9)
6. Hate the deed of the Nicolaitanes (a group which promoted moral laxity, and engaged in various other heathenistic practices) – remember that Paul had warned the Ephesian elders of grievous wolves entering among them (Acts 20:28-31)

B. CONDEMNATION: “left thy first love” (compare Luke 14:26-27)

C. Their course of action: REMEMBER & REPENT

D. WARNING: If they do not, the Lord will come in judgment against them: “remove thy candlestick out of his place”

E. PROMISE: Overcomers will eat of the tree of life (Ezekiel 31; Revelation 22:2, 14)

II. THE CHURCH IN SMYRNA, 2:8-11 “SPIRITUALLY RICH”

A. COMMENDATION: works, tribulation, poverty

B. CONDMENATION: there is none!

C. Blasphemy of some:

1. They say they were Jews, but not – note: the true Israel of God today is the Lord's church! (see John 8:41-47; Romans 2:28-29; Galatians 6:16).
2. They are of the synagogue of Satan – when the Jews rejected Christ, they rejected God, and their father became Satan (see Luke 10:16; John 13:20; 12:48-50; 8:41-47).

- D. They are about to suffer (James 1:2-4; 1 Peter 1:6-7, 2:21 ff)
- E. They shall have tribulation ten days (note the number: “full and complete period”)
 - 1. Be faithful unto death (John 16:2)
 - 2. Receive the crown of life (2 Timothy 4:8)
- F. PROMISE: Overcomers will not be hurt of the second death (Revelation 20:5-6, 14)

III. THE CHURCH IN PERGAMOS, 2:12-17 “TOLERATING FALSE DOCTRINE”

A. COMMENDATION:

- 1. Works
- 2. Dwell where Satan’s seat is (Pergamos a center of idolatry)
- 3. Hold fast Christ’s name
- 4. Have not denied Christ’s name (even when Antipas was martyred in Pergamos)

B. CONDEMNATION:

- 1. Some hold the doctrine of Balaam (Numbers 22-23, 31)
Balaam hired himself out as a prophet – “Balaam” represents deceit and covetousness, doing religious works for personal gain – and involves a stumblingblock, idolatry, and fornication.
- 2. Some hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitaines, which the Lord hates (see 2:6)

C. MESSAGE: Repent, or the Lord will come unto thee (Gal. 5:9), and fight against them

- 1. Note: though only some held these false doctrines, the Lord calls upon the whole church to repent – Why? Because a little leaven leavens the whole lump (Gal. 5:9), and left unchecked, these false doctrines would grown into full-blown apostasy.
- 2. We must always be concerned about doctrine!!! 1 Corinthians 1:10; 1 John 1:5-7; 2 John 9-11; 2 Peter 2:1-3

D. PROMISE:

- 1. Overcomers will eat of the hidden manna (see John 6:32-33, 35, 40, 48-51, 53, 58)
- 2. Overcomers will receive a white stone with a new name written (Isa. 56:1-6; 62:1-2)

IV. THE CHURCH IN THYATIRA, 2:18-29 “Slipping Into Idolatry”

A. COMMENDATION: works, charity, service, faith, patience, last works

B. CONDEMNATION: tolerate that woman Jezebel.

A Study of the book of Revelation

1. Jezebel, the daughter of Ethbaal king of the Sidonians, married Ahab, 7th king of the northern kingdom, and led him into the worship of Baal – she slew the prophets of God and introduced Baal worship into the nation (see 1 Kings 16:31; 18:4, 13, 18-21; 19:1-2; 21:25-26; 2 Kings 9:22)
 2. The name is used symbolically here: there is apparently a woman in the congregation at Thyatira who is leading saints in the path of sin and false religion.
 3. Her outcome: verses 22-23
- C. Promise: Overcomers will rule over the nations (see 1:6) and will receive the morning star (22:16 – cf. 1 John 5:12-13; 2 John 9)

REVELATION Chapter 3

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I. THE CHURCH IN SARDIS, 3:1-6

A. COMMENDATION:

1. None to the church as a whole.
2. Some, however, had not defiled their garments (verse 4).

B. CONDEMNATION: Spiritually dead! *The Lord knew their true condition (Matt. 6:1-18) that they were dead (1 Timothy 5:6).*

C. EXHORTATION & WARNING:

1. Be watchful – strengthen the things which remain, which are ready to die (Eph. 5:14).
2. Remember & Repent
3. The Lord will come on them as a thief – JUDGMENT (2:5, 16, 22-24)

D. PROMISE TO THE FAITHFUL FEW:

Overcomers

1. will be clothed in white raiment
2. will not have names blotted out of the book of life
3. will have name confessed before the Father and his angels

II. THE CHURCH IN PHILADELPHIA, 3:7-13

A. SPEAKER:

1. He that is holy (Isa. 60:9, 14; Mark 1:24; Luke 4:34; Acts 2:27; 3:14)
2. He that is true (John 14:6)
3. He that hath the key of David: *the Messiah's authority to open the kingdom (cf. Isaiah 22:21-23; Acts 2:30).*

B. COMMENDATION:

1. Works – an open door before them (opportunity & fellowship – see John 10:1-5).
2. Have a little strength
3. Have kept Christ's word and not denied His name.

C. CONDEMNATION: none

D. WARNING: none

E. EXHORTATION: Hold fast that which you have - let no man take your crown.

F. PROMISES:

1. Those of the synagogue of Satan (2:9) will not prevail over God's people.
2. Jesus shall keep them from the hour of temptation.
3. Overcomers will be a pillar in the temple of God (1 Cor. 3:16; Eph. 2:20-22; 1 Tim. 3:15; 1 Pet. 2:5), and have God's name written on them ("name of my God" – "name of the city of my God" – "my new name").

The church in Philadelphia was in good shape – small, lacking great ability, but acceptable to God! Our strength is not in numbers, but in faith, truth, commitment, and spiritual might.

III. CHURCH OF THE LAODICEANS, 3:14-22

A. COMMENDATION: none

B. CONDEMNATION:

1. They had become lukewarm – neither hot nor cold.
2. They were guilty of empty boasting.

C. EXHORTATION:

1. Buy gold tried in the fire (trials – cf. 1 Corinthians 3:9-15; 1 Peter 1:6-7).
2. Buy white raiment to cover your nakedness.
 - a. White raiment is the righteousness of the saints – Rev. 19:8
 - b. Spiritual "nakedness" reveals their lack of faith, conviction, and strength – they should be clothed with righteousness and the whole armor of God!
3. Anoint eyes with eye-salve to see (compare Matthew 13:15, 16)
4. Be zealous and repent!

D. WARNING:

1. The Lord rebukes and chastens those whom He loves.
2. The Lord is sickened by lukewarm-ness.
3. The Lord desires to fellowship with them ("I stand at the door and knock").

E. PROMISE: Overcomers will sit with the Lord in His throne (Ephesians 2:6; Colossians 1:13).

REVELATION Chapter 4

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This is the beginning of the “apocalyptic” part of the book, as John receives a vision of God in heaven on His throne as REIGNING CREATOR.

I. JOHN’S VISION, verses 1-2

- A. John had heard a voice previously and received a prior vision (1:9-20; chapters 2-3).
- B. Now John hears the voice and receives a vision again.
 - 1. He saw a door opened in heaven – the voice says “Come up hither...”
 - 2. He was immediately in the spirit (1:10).
 - 3. The setting is HEAVEN itself: a throne, and One sitting on the throne.

II. THE THRONE, verses 3-8

- A. There was One on the throne, v. 3
 - 1. Throne = A KING.
 - 2. Two stones:
 - a. Jasper – like a diamond (purity, strength – God’s beauty, holiness and power).
 - b. Sardine – a blood-red stone in appearance (God’s wrath).
 - 3. A rainbow – symbolic of God’s mercy (see Genesis 9:8-17)
- B. There were twenty-four around the throne, v. 4
 - 1. There were twenty-four seats, with twenty-four elders sitting.
 - a. Clothed with white raiment = PURITY
 - b. Crowns of gold on their heads = VICTORY CROWN
 - 2. Who are these? Symbolically, they are the redeemed!
 - a. Remember that there were 12 tribes of Israel, and 12 original apostles.
 - b. Also, the priests of the Old Testament were organized into 24 orders for service in the sanctuary (1 Chronicles 24).
 - c. These are GOD’S PEOPLE, His PRIESTS, who are redeemed, reigning, and victorious (compare 1 Peter 2:5, 9).

C. There comes something forth from the throne, v. 5

1. Lightening, thunderings, voices – a manifestation of God’s power and wrath (compare Exodus 19:16 and Revelation 8:5) - There is a storm brewing: God’s Judgment!
2. Seven lamps of fire = seven Spirits of God (HOLY SPIRIT)

D. There is something before the throne, vv. 6-8

1. SEA OF GLASS – like crystal (clear)
 - a. Remember that before the Holy Place in the Jewish Temple sat Solomon’s brazen sea (1 Kings 7; 2 Chronicles 4) where the priests cleansed themselves
 - b. The figure here is SEPARATION – holiness!
2. FOUR BEASTS – full of eyes (omniscience – seeing all)
 - a. FIRST BEAST – like a lion (strength, courage, boldness)
 - b. SECOND BEAST – like a calf (service)
 - c. THIRD BEAST – like a man (intelligence)
 - d. FOURTH BEAST – like an eagle (swiftness)
3. Description of the four living beasts:
 - a. Six wings, full of eyes, rest not day and night, saying “Holy, holy, holy...”
 - b. These must be symbolic of angels (compare the cherubim in Ezekiel 1:4-10 and 10:8-15 – see also Isaiah 6:1-4)

***The vision is of a powerful God, with His angelic order, poised for judgment!**

III. THE WORSHIP, verse 9-11

- A. The beasts have given glory, honor, and thanks to the One on the throne.
- B. The 24 elders now fall down before Him to worship.
 1. They fall down – submission to God.
 2. They cast their crowns before the throne – dependence on God
 3. They say, “Thou art worthy...”

The whole picture is of man (24 elders) and the angels (four beasts) all around God’s throne to honor and worship Him! Revelation 4 shows us the REIGNING CREATOR, who is ever on the throne, ever in control, ever ruling, and ever worthy to be praised! Read Psalm 96.

REVELATION Chapter 5

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The scene described here continues from chapter 4, where we saw God the Father upon His throne, surrounded by redeemed man and the Holy Spirit. Now, we see the Son of God there!

I. GOD'S SEALED BOOK, 5:1-7

A. God holds a Book in His right hand, vv. 1-4

1. It is written “within and on the backside” (“front and back”) and sealed with seven seals (a complete message, but completely sealed! – compare Ezekiel 2:9-10).
2. A strong angel with a loud voice asks: “*Who is worthy to open the book...?*”
 - a. No one was found worthy to open it, not in heaven, or in earth, or under the earth (the realm of the dead: Romans 10:7; Ephesians 4:7) – *No created being!*
 - b. This book was beyond human disclosure, and this caused John much grief.

B. One found worthy to open it! vv. 5-7

1. He is the **LION OF THE TRIBE OF JUDAH** (Genesis 49:8-10; Isaiah 22:21-22; Hebrews 7:14).
2. He is the **ROOT OF DAVID**
 - a. The Old Testament promised One coming who would rule upon the throne of David (1 Samuel 16:13; 2 Samuel 2:4; 5:3; 7:12-16; Amos 9:11; Zechariah 12:6-13:1; Isaiah 9:6-7; 11:1-4, 10).
 - b. Jesus is the fulfiller of that prophecy! Matthew 1:1; 9:27; 12:23; Luke 1:30-33; Acts 2:29-36; 13:33-39; Romans 1:3; 2 Timothy 2:8).
3. He is the **ONE WHO PREVAILED** (“overcame” – cf. John 16:33; Hebrews 2:14).
4. He is the **SLAIN LAMB**.
 - a. Slain for the sins of the world (Isaiah 53; John 1:29, 36; 1 Peter 1:20; Revelation 13:8).
 - b. He has seven horns.
 - (1) “Horns” were symbols of power (Daniel 7:7-8; 8:3-10, 19-27).
 - (2) The Lamb has complete (“seven”) authority or power.
 - c. He has seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God.
 - (1) The Lamb has the Holy Spirit (Revelation 1:4; 3:1; 4:5).
 - (2) These “eyes” are Deity’s omniscience (2 Chronicles 16:9).
 - (3) Remember that Jesus promised the apostles the Holy Spirit (John 14:25-26; 16:12-13; Luke 24:49; Matthew 3:11), which He had authority to promise and send (“in my name”).

5. He is the **ONE WHO RECEIVES AUTHORITY FROM THE FATHER.**

- a. He “took the book out of the right hand of him that sat upon the throne.”
- b. See Matthew 28:18; 1 Corinthians 15:24-28; Ephesians 1:20-23.

II. THE LAMB’S PRAISE, 5:8-14

A. The beasts and elders worship the Lamb.

1. They have harps (compare 14:2) – these were symbols of rejoicing (cf. Psalm 137:2).
2. They have odours (“incense”) which are the prayers of saints (8:3).

B. The “new song”:

1. “Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals...”
 - a. The Lamb was slain: the song announces redemption by the blood of the Lamb
 - b. The Lamb redeems every kindred, tongue, people, nation (Hosea 1:10; Romans 9:25-26; 1 Peter 2:10).
 - c. The Lamb made the redeemed kings and priests (Revelation 1:6):
 - (1) *Rulers*: The church (Christians) rule with Christ (Romans 5:17; 8:17; 2 Timothy 2:12)
 - (2) *Worshippers*: The church is the priesthood (Hebrews 13:15; 1 Peter 2:5, 9).
 - d. The reign is on the earth (Matthew 5:5; Romans 5:17; cf. Jeremiah 1:10).
2. The angelic host: 10,000 x 10,000 and thousands (= more than one hundred million!)
3. What they all (beasts, angels, elders) say: “*Worthy is the Lamb...*” to receive
 - a. Power: supreme and absolute authority
 - b. Riches: unlimited resources (Psalm 24:1; Romans 12:33)
 - c. Wisdom: the counsels of God (Colossians 2:3)
 - d. Strength: omnipotence, power (Psalm 93:1)
 - e. Honor: worthy of adoration, praise
 - f. Glory: “brightness” (John 17:5; James 2:1; Hebrews 1:3).
 - g. Blessing: praise, adoration, thanksgiving (Romans 9:5)
4. Every creature worships the FATHER and the LAMB (see Ephesians 3:14):
Blessing, Honor, Glory, Power,
5. To this song:
 - a. Four beasts said “Amen” (“so let it be”).
 - b. Twenty-four elders fell down and worshipped him.

REVELATION Chapter 6

Teacher: John M. Brown, Flatwoods church of Christ, Sunday Bible Class

I. FIRST SEAL: WHITE HORSE! Christ Conquering, vv. 1-2

- A. The worthy Lamb opens one of the seals: John saw the vision of the white horse.
 - 1. “Horse” – not a beast of burden in the Bible, but a beast of war, used by soldiers and royalty (see Genesis 49:17; 1 Kings 4:26; 10:26, 29; Esther 6:8; Job 39:19-25)
 - 2. The rider had a bow (a means of overcoming enemies, see Psalm 45:4-6; Hosea 2:18).
 - 2. He had the “victor’s crown”
- B. He went forth conquering and to conquer (literally, “Overcome” – see 3:21; 5:5; John 16:33).

II. SECOND SEAL: RED HORSE! Bloodshed & War, vv. 3-4

- A. This horse is red: bloodshed / war (see Zechariah 1:7-11; 6:1-8).
- B. The rider has power to take peace from the earth.
 - 1. That men on earth would kill one another.
 - 2. The rider has a great sword (see Leviticus 26:24-25).

III. THIRD SEAL: BLACK HORSE! Economic Hardship & Famine, vv. 5-6

- A. Black Horse: doom, despair, gloom, mourning (see Joel 2:6; Nahum 2:10; Jeremiah 8:21)
- B. The rider has a pair of balances in his hand.
 - 1. To measure food: shortage, scarcity, famine.
 - 2. “Hurt not the oil and the wine” – medicinal (see Isaiah 1:6; Mark 6:13; Luke 10:34)

IV. FOURTH SEAL: PALE HORSE! Death, vv. 7-8

- A. “Pale” = “yellow-green” – sickness, death.
- B. The rider’s name was DEATH, and HELL (“Hades”) followed him.
 - 1. He would have power to kill with sword (war), hunger (famine), death (disease), beasts (devouring).
 - 2. But his power would have limitation: ¼ of the earth.
 - 3. Compare Matthew 10:28 with Revelation 11:7-9 and Ezekiel 14:21-23
 - 4. Note also that the “end of time” is not in view here, because at the end, Hades shall be destroyed (Revelation 20:14).

V. FIFTH SEAL: SOULS SLAIN CRYING FOR VINDICATION, vv. 9-11

A. “Souls slain...”

1. “Souls” – “life” (see Genesis 2:17; Leviticus 17:11).
2. “altar” – before the throne of God (see Revelation 8:4 & Hebrews 13:10).

B. These are martyrs: killed for the Word of God and their testimony.

1. They cry for vindication: “How long...?” (see Luke 18:7-8; Romans 12:19).
2. They are victorious: white robes are given them (9:7; 13:7).
3. They are told to rest: others will follow.

C. This fifth seal is PERSECUTION and MARTYRDOM.

VI. SIXTH SEAL: Announcement of Judgment, vv. 12-17

A. God’s Judgment is coming against the ungodly: it is the WRATH OF THE LAMB!

1. Earthquakes: symbols of great national upheaval (Isaiah 29:5-6; Haggai 2:6, 21-22; Joel 2:1-11; 3:14-15; Nahum 1:5; Matthew 24:29).
2. Sun black: mourning resulting from a sad state of affairs (Isaiah 13:10; 24:21-23; Jeremiah 15:9; Ezekiel 32:4-8; Joel 2:1-11; 3:14-15; Amos 8:9).
3. Moon as blood: dark, gloomy occasion (Joel 2:28-32; Acts 2:17-21).
4. Stars of heaven fell to earth: this figure is used in the Bible to describe notable leaders falling (Daniel 8:10; Matthew 24:29).
4. The heaven departed as a scroll: God’s enemies attacked / destroyed (Isaiah 34:1-5).
6. Every mountain and island moved: God’s enemies stirred, agitated, shaken (Isaiah 41:15; 59:18; 64:1-4; Ezekiel 26:15-18; Amos 4:1; Micah 1:1-4; Revelation 16:20).

B. Those judged by God’s wrath: kings, great men, rich men, chief captain, mighty men, bondmen, free men.

1. They will hide in dens, rocks, seek destruction: they don’t want to face judgment coming from God’s throne! (compare Isaiah 2:10-22; Hosea 10:8; Luke 23:28-30).
2. None can escape the wrath of the Lamb! (see Nahum 1:5-6)

CONCLUSION: We have here an awesome, terrible, powerful picture of God’s retributive judgment against the oppressors of His people. In the midst of God’s wrath, what will become of His people? The answer is in chapter 7!

REVELATION Chapter 7

Teacher: John M. Brown, Flatwoods church of Christ, Sunday Bible Class

In chapter 5 we saw the Lamb worthy to open the sealed book. In chapter 6, the seals begin to be opened, and we see the wrath of the Lamb. Who shall be able to stand when the Lamb's wrath is poured out? That is chapter 7!

I. A VISION OF GOD'S PROTECTION OF HIS SERVANTS, vv. 1-8

A. The four angels hold back the four winds, v. 1

1. Who can abide God's judgment? Christians!
2. "Four corners of the earth" = all the earth.
3. "Four winds" =
 - a. Wind often used in the Bible as a symbol of God's wrath being poured out.
 - b. See Jeremiah 13:24; 18:17; 22:22; 51:1-2; Ezekiel 1:4; 13:11-16; Hosea 12:1; 13:15
 - c. Thus these four angels are holding back this wrath of God that is to be poured out – they are holding it back until God's servants are sealed.

B. The sealing of God's servants, vv. 2-3

1. Hurt not the earth, sea, trees – TILL the servants of God are sealed in their foreheads.
2. God's people will be spared from the wrath to be poured out upon His enemies.

C. The One-hundred forty-four thousand, vv. 4-8

1. John heard the number of them that were sealed.
 - a. "Sealed" – to set a mark upon; to distinguish by a mark.
 - b. Compare Ephesians 1:13-14; 4:30; 2 Corinthians 1:21-22
2. The number of the sealed came from every tribe.
3. REMEMBER: twelve is the number for "religion" – these are not literally the twelve tribes of Israel (compare Genesis 35:22ff; Numbers 1:19-54)
 - a. It is a symbolic number for completeness, denoting all of God's faithful servants (see Matthew 18:28; Acts 26:7; James 1:1).
 - b. God seals His servants, thereby declaring them faithful and sparing them from the wrath of the Lamb.

$$12 \times 12 \times 1000 = 144,000$$

II. THE VISION IS SEEN OF GOD'S VICTORIOUS SERVANTS, vv. 9-12

- A. What John saw: a great multitude which no man could number! (cf. Hebrews 12:22)
1. They are of all nations, kindreds, people, tongues
 2. They stood before the throne and before the Lamb.
 3. They are clothed with white robes and have palms in their hands.
- B. What they SAID: "Salvation to our God...and unto the Lamb..."
- C. What they DID: worshipped God (all the angels, elders, four beasts).
- D. These are the VICTORIOUS ONES!

III. EXPLANATION IS GIVEN OF JOHN'S VISION, vv. 13-17

- A. The elders' question: verse 13
- B. John's answer: verse 14 (compare Revelation 4:4)
- C. The elders' description of those wearing white robes:
1. They came out of great tribulation: **OVERCOMERS!**
 2. What is this "great tribulation"? Remember the context is the wrath of the Lamb (6:16). These are the sealed servants of God who are victorious over any enemies, and even victorious over Gods' wrath upon His enemies.
 3. Compare Revelation 2:10-13, 17, 24-25, 28; 3:10; 6:9-11
 4. The persecutions and tribulation shall end ("*...God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes*") – **VICTORY ASSURED!**

REVELATION Chapter 8

Teacher: John M. Brown, Flatwoods church of Christ, Sunday Bible Class

In chapter 5, we saw the Lamb worthy to open the sealed Book, and in chapter 6 we saw the opening of the first six seals. In chapter 7 there was an interlude, and now in chapter 8, we continue with the sealed Book, and the opening of the 7th Seal.

I. THE LAMB OPENS THE SEVENTH SEAL, vv. 1-6

A. When the seal is opened, there is *silence in heaven* for about half an hour, v. 1

1. The judgment of God was about to be executed, and it was a time for reverence, attention, and solemn reflection.
2. Compare Habakkuk 2:20; Isaiah 41:1; Zechariah 1:7-12; 2:8-13.

B. Seven angels and seven trumpets, v. 2

1. These are before the throne of God (see 1:20).
2. The sound of the trumpet was the alarm of war (Isaiah 58:1; Ezekiel 33:3-6; Zechariah 9:14; Joel 2:1; Jeremiah 4:19-20).
3. Note the fourfold use of trumpets in Numbers 10:1-10: to call the congregation, to journey to the camps, to go to war, to sound an alarm.
4. The seven stars = the seven angels = the character of the seven churches.
5. God was telling how it was with the churches, and what it will be like when God's judgment falls.

The picture here: ***Danger Ahead! War is coming! It is the wrath of the Lamb!***

C. God's saints cry for help, vv. 3-5

1. Another angel makes his appearance with incense, standing over the altar, having a
 - a. golden censer.
2. There was given this angel much incense to offer with the prayers of the saints.
 - a. See Hebrews 10:18 ff.
 - b. This golden altar is the true tabernacle, before which Jesus is High Priest (Hebrews 7:25 – 8:5).
3. The smoke went up before God – the prayers of the saints (compare Rev. 6:10-11; Romans 8:26, 27, 34; 1 John 2:1-2; Acts 10:4).
4. The angel fills the censer with fire from the altar and casts it into the earth.
 - a. God hears – and those on earth will be vindicated.
 - b. The VOICES, THUNDERING, LIGHTNINGS, EARTHQUAKE is the coming wrath of God against the ungodly!

II. THE FIRST FOUR ANGELS SOUND THEIR ALARMS, vv. 7-13

A. **FIRST TRUMPET WARNING:** Land (natural) disaster, v. 7

1. Fire and hail mingled with blood is cast upon earth – great destruction.
2. Hail often symbolized the implements of war (see Joel 1:15-20; Exodus 9:18).
3. The effect = one-third part of trees and all green grass burnt up.

B. **SECOND TRUMPET WARNING:** Sea disaster, vv. 8-9

1. Destruction in the sea – a great burning mountain cast into it.
2. “Mountains” = world powers (see Isaiah 2:2-4; 42:15; Jeremiah 51:25; Amos 6:1; Micah 6:1-2).
3. A great sea battle in which world powers are destroyed: 1/3 part of sea became blood; 1/3 part of the creatures died; 1/3 part of the ships destroyed.
(compare Exodus 7:17-18).

C. **THIRD TRUMPET WARNING:** Freshwater disaster, vv. 10-11

1. A great star fell from heaven:
 - a. “falling stars” often symbolized the fall of some great dignitary or notable one (see Isaiah 14:12-15; Matthew 24:29; Mark 13:25; Luke 21:25).
 - b. Fell into the rivers (compare Revelation 17:15).
 - c. The star’s name was “Wormwood” (meaning “bitterness”).
2. The picture here: a notable leader’s fall would cause bitterness, because many would
 - a. Die – these were “bitter waters” (see Deuteronomy 19:18; Jeremiah 9:13-16; 23:25; Lamentations 3:15, 19; Amos 5:7).

D. **FOURTH TRUMPET WARNING:** Cosmic disaster, v. 12

1. Heavenly bodies fall and fail to shine (sun, moon, stars).
 - a. The sun, moon, and stars are symbols of light upon earth.
 - b. In the Old Testament, the loss of light from these three sources is symbolic of God’s light going out upon a nation (compare Isaiah 13:9-11; Jeremiah 15:9; Ezekiel 32:4-8; Joel 2:1-12; 3:15; Amos 8:9).
3. This is a *partial warning* of judgment coming – the whole will be given later.

CONCLUSION to the chapter, verse 13

-- a *PREVIEW* of what is to come!

REVELATION Chapter 9

Teacher: John M. Brown, Flatwoods church of Christ, Sunday Bible Class

Chapter 6 was the opening of the first six seals of the sealed book. Chapter 7 was an interlude to encourage. Chapter 8 was the opening of the seventh seal, which contained four trumpet warnings. In chapter 9 we shall see the fifth and sixth angels sound.

I. FIFTH TRUMPET WARNING: The First Woe, vv. 1-12

A. The FIFTH ANGEL sounded.

1. A star fell from heaven unto earth – he had the key to the bottomless pit.
2. The bottomless pit is opened – smoke arises out of it.
3. Locusts come forth; they have power like scorpions.
4. They were not to hurt the grass, any green thing, or any tree.
5. What they would hurt: those people who were not sealed of God!

B. Let us SEE the overall picture:

1. This first woe is sorrow, warning, pity: something bad!
2. The “star” is personified: “him” (v. 1).
3. The land is not hurt (unlike the first four trumpets).
4. This woe doesn’t affect the people of God, v. 4
5. The sting of the locusts was hard, but not fatal, v. 5
6. “Five months” – the length of time of a locust plague.
7. Description of the locust:
 - a. They are like HORSES prepared for war, armed for battle.
 - b. They have CROWNS like gold – victory.
 - c. Their FACES were as the faces of men – intelligence, beauty.
 - d. Their HAIR was as the hair of women – beauty
 - e. Their TEETH were as the teeth of lions – power.
 - f. Their BREASTPLATES were of iron – defense.
 - g. The SOUND OF THEIR WINGS like many chariots – many in number
 - h. Their TAILS were like scorpions – death, destruction.
 - i. They had STINGS in their tails- they could hurt men five months.
 - j. Their king was ABADDON (Hebrew) or APOLLYON (Greek), meaning DESTROYER (Job 26:6; 28:22; 32:12; Psalm 88:11; Proverbs 15:11; 27:20)

C. Let us ANALYZE the picture:

1. The STAR which falls from heaven is SATAN – see Isaiah 14:12-15; Luke 8:26-29; 10:18; 2 Corinthians 4:4; 1 Peter 5:8; Revelation 12:9).
2. The SMOKE which blinds the eyes is the true light of God being hidden, or shut out – Satan uses FALSE DOCTRINE to blind men’s eyes from truth (see 2 Corinthians 4:4; Ephesians 2:1-4; Colossians 1:12-13).
3. LOCUSTS are symbols of destruction! (see Isaiah 33:4; Joel 1:2-7).
 - a. These locusts come out of smoke – the smoke represents false doctrine.
 - b. When men “swallow” false doctrine they’re “stung” by the locusts!

SUMMARY: *Remember the theme of the Book of Revelation: it is God's judgment against the persecuting, pagan Roman Empire. Satan's influence in this Empire is quite evident. In this fifth trumpet sound, because of the influence of Satan, internal destruction, chaos, and ruin will befall the Empire. Rome has fallen for the lies of the Satan, and thus she will herself fall from internal rottenness and decay!*

Two instruments that God can use to cut down the oppressors of His people:
NATURAL CALAMITY & INTERNAL DESTRUCTION

We shall now see a third:

II. SIXTH TRUMPET WARNING: The Second Woe, vv. 13-21

A. John heard a voice from the four horns of the golden altar, vv. 13-17:

1. The sixth angel is told to loose the four angels bound in the river Euphrates:
 - a. "Euphrates" often represented the evil land of the enemies, wielding great military power (Isaiah 8:5-8; Jeremiah 1:13).
 - b. This military power here is going to become a tool of judgment!
2. The four angels had been prepared for the time of God's judgment:
 - a. Hour, day, month, year: partial judgment(s).
 - b. A third part of men would be slain.
 - c. The horsemen's army numbers 200,000.
3. These tools of God are connected with the plagues that began in chapter 8:
 - a. The armor is described, using judgment terms: the breastplates are of fire, jacinth, and brimstone.
 - b. The heads of the horses: like the heads of lions (power, fierceness)
 - c. Their mouths spew out fire, smoke, and brimstone (see Job 18:15; Psalm 11:6)

B. The activities of the horsemen, vv. 18-19:

1. A third part of men are killed from the fire, smoke, & brimstone (see Gen. 19:24-28).
2. Their power is in their mouths and tails: like heads of serpents which cause hurt.

C. This partial judgment does not bring about repentance, vv. 20-21

1. They did not repent of their devil worship, idolatry: **RELIGIOUS EVIL.**
2. They did not repent of their murders, sorceries, fornication, thefts: **SOCIAL EVIL.**

SUMMARY: we see here a picture of **EXTERNAL DESTRUCTION**: They come, they kill.

God's judgment comes in the form of NATURAL CALAMITY (1st through 4th Trumpet), INTERNAL DECAY (5th Trumpet), and EXTERNAL DESTRUCTION (6th Trumpet).

REVELATION Chapter 10

Teacher: John M. Brown, Flatwoods church of Christ, Sunday Bible Class

We have seen in chapters 8 and 9 God's judgments against the oppressors of His people. In chapters 10 and 11 we have another interlude, to encourage, comfort, and assure.

The delays of God's judgments come to an end, and word is given of His intentions.

I. GOD'S MERCY HAS COME TO AN END, vv. 1-6

A. Another mighty angel appears, vv. 1-2

1. We have already seen a strong angel (5:2), and other angels which intervene to carry out God's intentions (7:2 and 8:3-5).
2. This angel is described:
 - a. Clothed with a cloud: *the majesty of a heavenly messenger* (see Exodus 16:10; 33:9; Numbers 11:25; Psalm 18:11, 17; Matthew 17:5; Luke 21:27).
 - b. A rainbow about his head: *symbolic of the divine covenant of mercy* (see Genesis 9:12-17; Ezekiel 1:28; Revelation 4:3; 10:7).
 - c. His face as the sun: *the darkness of persecution would become the glory and splendor of victory!* (see Malachi 4:2; 2 Corinthians 4:6)
 - d. His feet as pillars of fire: *feet are symbolic of the messenger* (see Romans 10:15; Psalm 119:59; Ephesians 6:15; Revelation 1:15) *and pillars of fire symbolic of the presence of the messengers God* (see Exodus 12:21-22; 14:19; 23:20; 32:34; Luke 1:79).
 - e. In his hand a little book is open (no longer sealed, for the Lamb had opened it – 5:2, 5).
 - f. He stands on both land and sea: *all inclusive and powerful, with a universal message for the persecutors who controlled both land and sea.*

B. The action of the mighty angel, vv. 3-6

1. He cried with a loud voice as a lion roaring: power, majesty! (see Jeremiah 25:30; Joel 3:17; Amos 3:8).
2. Seven thunders utter their voices: power, judgment!
 - a. "Thunder" in the Old Testament signified the voice of God in judgment.
 - b. See Exodus 9:23; 19:16; 20:18; 1 Samuel 7:10; 2 Samuel 2:10; 22:14; Job 26:14; 37:2; Psalm 18:13; Isaiah 30:31-32; John 12:29
2. John is told not to write: "seal up...write not"
3. The angel lifted up his hand to heaven (see Daniel 12:7), declaring that "there should be time no longer" (that is, no longer any delay – see 11:15 and 16:1-21).

The 7th Trumpet is coming! God's judgment would not be delayed!

II. THE 7th ANGEL WITH THE 7th TRUMPET WILL FINISH THE MYSTERY OF GOD, v. 7

- A. The 7th Angel will not sound yet – but when he does God’s intentions will be finished.
 - 1. The 7th angel sounds in Revelation 11:15.
 - 2. The 7th angel brings the last of the three woes.
- B. The “mystery of God” had been given to the prophets.
 - 1. “Mystery” = that which is being uncovered, unveiled (compare Ephesians 3:3-5).
 - 2. The “mystery” here is what has been under discussion, that is, the conflict between the church and Rome, God’s judgment against Rome and the church’s victory!

III. JOHN’S INSTRUCTIONS FROM HEAVEN TO CARRY OUT, vv. 8-11

- A. John is told to take the little book, vv. 8-9.
 - 1. John asks the angel to give it to him, but he is told to take it (he must be active in the matter).
 - 2. He is told to eat it (compare Ezekiel 2:8 – 3:14): It would be both sweet and bitter.
 - a. “belly bitter” – the church will suffer (11:7).
 - b. “mouth sweet” – the church will ultimately be victorious (11:11-18).
- B. John follows the instructions from the angel, v. 10
- C. Final instructions are given to John, v. 11.
 - 1. The angels had messages from God to John to write unto God’s servants.
 - 2. Note the message in verse 11 (compare Revelation 1:7; 6:17; 10:6).

More details will follow (Revelation 12-22) after the 7th angel has sounded.

SUMMARY: We have seen an angel of great power who assures the saints that God and His cause will be victorious over the oppressors.

REVELATION Chapter 11

Teacher: John M. Brown, Flatwoods church of Christ, Sunday Bible Class

As we begin chapter 11, we are still in the midst of the interlude to encourage and exhort God's people. We saw in chapter 10 that God's judgment is coming upon the oppressors of His people, and will not be delayed. Again word is given of His intentions.

I. JOHN IS TOLD TO MEASURE THE TEMPLE OF GOD, vv. 1-2

A. John was given a reed like a rod, vv. 1-2.

1. A stick about 9 feet long – see Ezekiel 40:3
 - a. John was told to measure three things: the temple of God, the altar of God, and them that worship in the temple.
 - b. This measuring was for *separation, protection, holiness!* Compare Ezekiel 42:40; 2 Samuel 8:1-2
2. John was not to measure the outer court.
 - a. The outer court had been given to the Gentiles (the nations).
 - b. Notice the description in 1 Kings 5-7
3. The holy city would be trodden under foot by the Gentiles.

B. What is the significance?

1. In the Old Testament, the Temple was a physical building where worship was offered.
2. In the New Testament, we have a different priest and tabernacle: Hebrews 8:1-6
3. What is the “Temple of God” today? **THE CHURCH!** See 1 Corinthians 3:16-17; 6:19-20; Ephesians 2:20-22; 1 Timothy 3:15; 1 Peter 2:5
4. The holy city is the New Jerusalem – the church.
 - a. The church will be persecuted 42 months (this will be bitter).
 - b. The church will also be seen in another figure (witness).
5. The time of persecution is 42 months.
 - a. Not a literal time, but the period of the beasts authority (Rev. 13:5) referred to As 1260 days (Rev. 12:6).
 - b. It is the period of time that the bodes of the two witnesses will be looked upon, called 3 ½ days (11:9), called “time, times, and half a time” (Rev. 12:14).
 - c. It is the time God allows the persecutor to war against the righteous (compare Daniel 7:25; 4:23, 25, 32).

The picture here is **PERSECUTION** and **PROTECTION** of God's people!

II. THE CHURCH PROPHECIES DURING THE PERSECUTION, vv. 3-6

- A. The temple, altar, and people have been measured: the nations have been allowed to persecute the holy city.
See the picture: When the cry comes up to God, He will send deliverance. He sends someone to cry for repentance (this prophesying is the plea for repentance).
- B. The TWO WITNESSES shall prophecy 1260 days, vv. 3-4.
1. “Two witnesses” – compare Revelation 1:6; Joel 1:8-14 – remember Moses & Aaron (Exodus 5:1; 6:6 ff.); Joshua & Caleb; Elijah & Elisha (1 Kings 18 ff.); Zerubbabel & Joshua (Zech. 2-6; Haggai 1:1-14).
 2. These two witnesses are clothed in sackcloth (repentance!) and prophecy the holy city is trodden under foot 42 months (persecution).
 3. They stand before the Lord, as two olive trees and two candlesticks (see Rev. 1:20).
The TWO WITNESSES represent THE CHURCH! (cf. Zech. 4:1-14; Hag. 1:1-14).
- C. The Two Witnesses are protected from God’s vengeance, and reign, vv. 5-6.
1. Others may desire to hurt them, but God will protect them (not from suffering, but God will render vengeance – compare Gen. 12:1-3; Rev. 6:9-11).
 2. Judgment is given to the saints: fire would proceed out of their mouths to devour their enemies – hurting the saints would be recompensed!
 3. The Two Witnesses reign - their prayers (cries) to God would have power to shut the heaven (8:3 – see also Rev. 6:1-8; 8:7-9:21; Exodus 6-11).

III. THE TWO WITNESSES ARE KILLED, vv. 7-10

- A. When the Two Witnesses finish prophesying, the beast comes up out of the pit, vv. 7-8.
1. The prophesying was not heeded, and the beast comes out angry.
 2. The beast does not like the judgment brought against him, so he wars with the Two Witnesses and overcomes them.
 3. The Two Witnesses are killed, and their bodies are on the street of the great city.
- B. All people, kindred, tongues, nations know that the Two Witnesses are dead, vv. 9-10.
1. They look upon them 3 ½ days (not literal, but the period of time it takes for something to be accomplished).
 2. The two Witnesses are not buried.
 3. Those that dwell on the earth rejoice over what has happened to the Two Witnesses.
 - a. The Two Witnesses had tormented them.
 - b. Now, the Two Witnesses (THE CHURCH) have been stopped!

IV. THE TWO WITNESSES ARE RESURRECTED, vv. 11-14

A. The Two Witnesses are raised from the dead, vv. 11-12.

1. The spirit of life from God enters, and they are no longer dead: MATTHEW 16:18!
2. Great fear comes upon those who see this.

B. Many of the enemy are killed in God's judgment, vv. 13-14.

1. A great earthquake comes, a tenth part of the city falls, and 7,000 are killed.
2. The remnant is afraid, and gives glory to God.
3. The judgment is doubly complete ("7" and "1000").

THIS COMPLETES THE SECOND WOE – THE THIRD WOE IS COMING!

V. THE MYSTERY IS BROUGHT TO AN END, vv. 15-19

A. The Seventh Angel sounds, v. 15.

1. This is the last trumpet that began in 8:2, and finishes the mystery of God (10:7).
2. This revelation show who reigns:
 - a. God's Kingdom has been vindicated – *God had allowed Rome to be the kingdom of the world, but the kingdom of the world now becomes the Kingdom of the Lord.*
 - b. This King (Christ) shall reign for ever and ever.

B. The Twenty-four elder testify of God's reign, vv. 16-17

1. They sit before God, and fall on their faces to worship Him.
2. God is acclaimed as the One who reign because He has taken His power.

C. The nations are displeased at the vindication of God's Kingdom, v. 18

1. They are angry, but God has but a stop to the persecution against the saints.
2. Reward is given to the prophets, saints, and them that fear God's name.

D. God's judgment is issued upon the oppressor, v. 19

1. The true temple of God is opened (see Heb. 8:1-5; 12:18-29; Eph. 2:21; 3:14-15).
2. The ark of His testament is there (cf. Gen. 12:1-3).
3. Lightning, voices, thundering, earthquake, great hail: JUDGMENT IS HERE!

REVELATION Chapter 12

Teacher: John M. Brown, Flatwoods church of Christ, Sunday Bible Class

We have seen the struggle between God's people and their oppressor, which in John's day was the Roman Empire. The struggle between Christ and Satan continues through the rest of the book. Satan and his forces (those whom he uses to do his will, whomever they are, to oppose God's work and oppress God's people) will be the ultimate losers in this battle!

I. THE DELIVERY OF THE CHILD & SATAN'S PERSECUTION, vv. 1-6

A. THE WOMAN

1. Her description: *clothed with the sun, the moon under her feet, upon her head a crown of twelve stars, with child, about to deliver her child.*
2. Her identity: She is the **PEOPLE OF GOD!**
 - a. Compare Isaiah 50:1; Jeremiah 2:32; Hosea 2:2, 7; Micah 2:15; 4:9-13
 - b. This woman must be more than only literally Mary.
 - c. It was through physical Israel that Jesus came, but not only physical Israel (compare verses 13-17).
 - d. This woman cannot be just the church (Jesus did not come from the church) NOR physical Israel only (for all did not accept Christ), thus it must be both!

GOD'S COVENANT PEOPLE (whether in the Old or New Testament)

- e. God's providence from Eden: Genesis 3:15 (see also Genesis 12:1-3; Galatians 3:16; 4:4-7, 26; 6:16; 1 Corinthians 11:3; Romans 7:1-4).

B. THE CHILD

1. His description: *a man child who would rule all nations; Satan is after him; he will be caught up unto God and His throne.*
2. His identity: it is **JESUS!**
 - a. Compare Psalm 2:6-9; Hebrews 1:5; Revelation 2:26-28; 19:15
 - b. His throne: see Isaiah 9:6-7; Mark 11:10; Luke 1:32; Acts 2:29-36

C. THE DRAGON

1. His description:
 - a. "seven heads" = *complete, universal authority*
 - b. "ten horns" = *complete, universal power, including destructive power.*
 - c. "seven crowns" = *symbolizing his rule (see Ezek. 29:1-3; Psalm 74:13; Isaiah 51:9).*
2. His identity: verse 9 tells us it is **SATAN**.

3. His work:
 - a. “*drew the third part of the stars of heaven and did cast them to the earth*” - stars often represent the people of God (see Genesis 15:5; Daniel 8:10ff; 12:3; Matthew 13:43) – thus Satan has had some power in the lives of some of God’s people (to kill or harm them, or even make them fall away – compare Acts 5:3; 1 Corinthians 5:5; 2 Corinthians 12:7; 1 Timothy 5:15; 2 Timothy 4:10; etc.)
 - c. He stood before the woman, ready to devour her.
- D. The woman flees for protection for 1260 days (see Isaiah 50:1; 54:1ff; Revelation 11:3).

II. THE WAR IN HEAVEN, vv. 7-12

A. THE WAR COMBATANTS:

1. Michael and his angels (see Daniel 10:13, 21; 12; 21:1; Jude 9).
2. The devil and his angels (see Ezekiel 28:11-19; Jude 6-9; 2 Peter 2:4).

B. THE WAR RESULT:

1. No place was found for Satan and his angels in heaven; they were cast down to the earth = Defeated! (see Isaiah 14:12; Luke 10:18; John 12:31; Romans 16:20; 1 John 3:8; Revelation 20:7-10).
2. There is rejoicing in heaven, vv. 10-12
 - a. The accuser of the brethren is cast out.
 - b. How they overcame:
 - (1) By the blood of the Lamb (Ephesians 1:7; Revelation 1:5).
 - (2) By the word of their testimony (2 Timothy 2:2)
 - (3) By loving not their lives even unto death (Luke 9:23; Rom. 12:1-2)
 - c. Woe for earth and sea!
3. Great wrath: Satan’s is angry at his defeat, but knows he has a short time, and knows he is overcome!

C. See the picture: VICTORY PROCLAIMED FROM HEAVEN!

1. God has given salvation, demonstrated His power, and vindicated His kingdom.
2. God’s Son has taken His throne as King.
3. The accuser of the brethren cannot present his case in heaven anymore.

WOW! – What a victory!

III. THE WAR ON EARTH, vv. 13-17

A. The persecution and protection of the church, vv. 13-16

1. The dragon persecutes the woman.
2. The woman is given protection:
 - a. “two wings of a great eagle” = *God’s strength* (cf. Exodus 19:4-6; Isa. 40:31)
 - b. “fly into the wilderness” = *this is a place of nourishment (12:6) away from the serpent (12:4)*.
 - c. She is nourished “time, times, and half a time” = 3 ½ - this represents her period of persecution (see Daniel 7:25; 1 Kings 17:1-19:21; James 5:17; Revelation 18:10-13), during which time she shall be nourished by God and be ultimately triumphant! (see Revelation 17:3-6; 18:1, 21, 25, 30).
3. The serpent “cast out of his mouth water as a flood” =
 - a. The symbolism of this “flood”: ungodliness, wickedness, persecution, and destruction (see Psalm 18:4, 16; 124:4-5; Isaiah 8:5-8; 57:19-20; 59:19).
 - b. Through lies (false religion), Satan attempts to destroy the influence of the church.
 - c. But mankind, in falling for the lies (“the earth opened her mouth, and swallowed up the flood”) of Satan, thereby helps the true church!

B. Satan is not finished, verse 17!

1. The dragon is wroth with the woman, and goes to make war with the remnant of her seed.
2. Who is this “remnant”? *Those who keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus Christ!*

REVELATION Chapter 13

Teacher: John M. Brown, Flatwoods church of Christ, Sunday Bible Class

We have seen that Satan cannot win in fighting against God! Never forget that! But that doesn't mean that he won't continue to try. In spite of Satan's persecutions, the people of God have assurance and hope because they know the ultimate victory is theirs!

I. THE BEAST COMES UP OUT OF THE SEA, vv. 1-10

A. Description of the sea beast, vv. 1-3

1. "out of the sea"
 - a. Symbolically, "sea" represents the nations (see Isaiah 17:12-14; 57:20; Revelation 17:1, 15).
 - b. Thus, the sea of humanity is that out of which the beast rises.
2. "seven heads" = complete authority (compare Gen. 3:15; Eph. 1:22-23; 5:22-31).
3. "ten horns"
 - a. "Horns" indicate power (see Deut. 33:17; 1 Sam. 2:10; 1 Kgs 22:11; Luke 1:69)
 - b. "ten" indicates "completeness" – thus, complete power!
4. "ten crowns" = kingly power, rulership, reign.
5. Like a leopard, feet of a bear, mouth of a lion

COMPARE Daniel 7:1-8

- a. Sea: Rev. 13:1 & Dan. 7:3
- b. Ten horns: Rev. 13:1 & Dan. 7:7
- c. Leopard, bear, lion: Rev. 13:2 & Dan. 7:3-6
- d. Blasphemous: Rev. 13:5 & Dan. 7:8, 20, 25
- e. Wars against the saints: Rev. 13:7 & Dan. 7:21, 25
- f. 42 months (Rev. 13:5) – Time, times, ½ time (Dan. 7:25).

Notice the conclusion of both:

Daniel 7:27: triumph for the saints of the most High God!

Revelation 13:9-10: have patience, the enemy will be destroyed!

Who is the fourth beast of Daniel? *The Empire that rose after Greece – **ROME!***

- 1) **BABYLON**
- 2) **MEDO-PERSIA**
- 3) **GREECE**
- 4) **ROME!**

6. One head wounded to death ... deadly wound healed!

NOTE: Nero (54-68 AD) was the first Roman emperor to persecute Christians. In 68 AD he committed suicide, but the persecution would begin again under Domitian (cf. 17:8-11). Thus the deadly wound healed!

THE LINE OF ROMAN EMPERORS: (compare Daniel 7, Revelation 13 & 17)

DANIEL (Ten Horns)

REVELATION (Seven Heads)

1. Augustus
2. Tiberius
3. Caligula
4. Claudius
5. Nero

1. Augustus (27 BC – 14 AD): Luke 2:1-5
2. Tiberius (14-37 AD): Luke 3:1
3. Caligula (37-41 AD)
4. Claudius (41-54 AD)
5. Nero (54-68 AD)

6. Galba (68 AD)

7. Otho (68 AD)

8. Vitellius (69 AD)

9. Vespasian

6. Vespasian (69-79 AD) “one is” (17:10)

10. Titus

7. Titus (79-81 AD) “yet to come”

11. Domitian

8. Domitian (81-96 AD) “eighth” (17:11)

B. The power of the beast, vv. 4-8

1. The dragon and the beast are worshipped: in John’s day, all mankind worshipped Rome and the Emperor (except Christians, which brought on the persecution).
2. Mouth speaking great things and blasphemies: power, rule, and authority.
3. Make war with the saints and overcome them – *physically!*

C. Encouragement for Christians to hold fast: (*Rome will fall!*), vv. 9-10

THE SEA BEAST IS THE PERSECUTING POWER OF ROME!

II. THE BEAST COMES UP OUT OF THE EARTH, vv. 11-18

A. The earth beast is described in view of worship, vv. 11-12

1. “two horns like a lamb” – lamb has religious significance, thus at least outwardly we see a religious image in this vision.
2. “spake as a dragon”: Satanic!
3. “all the power of the first beast”: authority derived from Roman Empire.
4. “causeth the earth...to worship the first beast”: false religion! Emperor worship!

B. The earth beast is powerful and deceitful, vv. 13-15

3. “doeth great wonders”: compare 2 Thess. 2:9; Exodus 7-8; Acts 8:9-10
4. “deceiveth them that dwell on earth”: compare Matthew 7:15 ff
5. make images to the beast: idolatry
6. Forces men to worship the beast, and kills them if they don’t.

C. The earth beast gives a mark of distinction, vv. 16-18

1. All would be marked, and this mark would indicate allegiance and approval: only those marked (showing allegiance to Rome) could buy or sell.
2. The “name of the beast” is worn by his followers (as Christians wear the name of Christ – Acts 4:12; 11:26; James 2:7).
1. The number of a beast is the number of a man (the enemy would be human): **666**

**Remember that seven (7) stands for completeness, fullness, perfection.
Six (6) represents that which is short of perfection – it falls short of victory
and indicates something BAD!*

THE SEA BEAST IS ROMAN FALSE RELIGION

CONCLUSION:

John has shown us three evil forces warring against God and His people: Satan, the Sea-Beast (Roman persecution) and the Earth-Beast (Roman false religion). Though this chapter presents a dark picture, chapter 14 will show us the forces of righteousness triumphant!

REVELATION Chapter 14

John M. Brown, Flatwoods church of Christ, Sunday Bible Class

In chapter 13 we saw two forces of evil, the sea beast (the persecuting power of Rome) and the earth beast (the false religion of emperor worship). In this chapter, we see two forces of righteousness, the Lamb and the sickles of judgment.

I. THE LAMB & THE REDEEMED, vv. 1-5

A. THE LAMB: the victorious Christ of chapter 5.

B. MOUNT ZION:

1. Its origin in history: 2 Samuel 5:6-10; 6:12-13; 1 Kings 8:1
2. Symbolic of Jerusalem: Psalm 2:5-6; 15:1; 48:1-2; 132:13-14
3. Use in prophecy: Zechariah 8:1-3; Daniel 2:34-35; Isaiah 2:2-4; Micah 4
4. “Jerusalem” symbolizing the church: Hebrews 12:18-29
5. God is still in Zion: Psalm 110:1-2

Zion is used in the Bible as the location of God. In the New Testament it can refer to either the church or heaven (context determines). Compare Hebrews 12:22-23; 1 Corinthians 3:16; Ephesians 3:14

C. THE 144,000: symbolic number denoting all the saved (see again 7:1-8).

1. The Father’s name is in their foreheads, v. 1 (see Rev. 3:12; 7:2-4).
2. Their voice from heaven as of many waters, thunder, harp, v. 2
3. They sing a new song, v. 3
(the old song was that of tribulation; this one a praise to God – see 5:9-10; 7:10).
4. They are free from sexual impurity, v. 4 (see Rev. 2:14, 20; cf. 2 Corinthians 11:2; Ephesians 5:22-32)
5. They follow the Lamb wherever He goes, v. 4
6. They are redeemed (“purchased”) from among men, v. 4
(cf. Acts 20:28; 1 Corinthians 6:19-20; 1 Peter 1:18-19; 2 Peter 2:1; Rev. 5:9-10).
7. They are firstfruits unto God, v. 5 (cf. Romans 8:23; James 1:18).
8. In their mouth is no guile, v. 5 (cf. Ephesians 4:29; Colossians 1:22).
9. They stand before God’s throne without fault, v. 5 (cf. Ephesians 5:25-27; Colossians 1:21-23).

II. THE FOUR ANNOUNCEMENTS, vv. 6-13

A. FIRST ANGEL: The Triumph of Righteous, vv. 6-7

1. The angel announces the wicked are judged!
 - a. This angel has the everlasting gospel to preach to all them dwelling on earth.
 - b. The message: fear God – give glory to God – worship God!

2. **REVELATION 15-16**

B. SECOND ANGEL: The Judgment of Wicked Babylon, v. 8

1. Babylon is fallen, that great city!
 - a. She made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication.
 - b. Who is Babylon? *ROME* (compare Revelation 17).
2. **REVELATION 17-18**

C. THIRD ANGEL: The Judgment of Emperor Worshipers, vv. 9-12

1. Emperor worshippers are judged – those who worship the beast, his image, or receive his mark (Revelation 13:15-18).
 - a. This judgment would come from God: unmixed (pure) and stemming from God's anger.
 - b. It is spoken of as already accomplished (compare Genesis 12:1-3).
 - c. God's longsuffering has come to an end.
 - d. This judgment is complete: fire, brimstone, torment, no rest, their leader would be bound.
2. The saints would have what was promised them, v. 12
 - a. Here is the patience ("steadfastness) of the saints.
 - b. This victory is for those who keep the commandments of God and have faith in Jesus (compare 7:13-17).
3. **REVELATION 19-20**

D. REWARD FOR THE SAINTS, v. 14

1. The message: "Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord..."
 - a. The "dead" are described in 11:7-10.
 - b. They are "in the Lord" (Galatians 3:27; Ephesians 1:3) are faithful (2:10).
 - c. "Rest" indicates VICTORY! REWARD!
2. **REVELATION 21-22**

III. TWO SICKLES OF JUDGMENT, vv. 14-20

A. God uses one sickle for HARVESTING, vv. 14-16

1. One like the Son of man comes upon a white cloud.
2. An angel comes out of the temple announcing the time for reaping has arrived.
3. Compare Matthew 3:12; 13:24-30, 34-43

B. God uses one sickle for JUDGMENT, vv. 17-20

1. Message: gather the clusters of the vine of the earth, for her grapes are fully ripe.
2. Cast it into the winepress of the wrath of God.
 - a. Fire: symbol of destruction.
 - b. "fully ripe": iniquity is full (cf. Genesis 15:16; 49:10-12; Isaiah 63:1ff; Lamentations 1:15; Joel 3:12).
 - c. Winepress: "grapes" being crushed.
 - d. Without the city: that is, outside the church (non-Christians).
 - e. Blood: depth to horses bridle; 1600 furlongs (200 miles) long.

Jesus is VICTOR! The enemy is destroyed! God rules and reigns!

REVELATION Chapter 15

Teacher: John M. Brown, Flatwoods church of Christ, Sunday Bible Class

THE ANNOUNCEMENT OF GOD'S JUDGMENT: COMPLETE, EVERLASTING, AND WITHOUT MERCY! When the trumpets were blown (Revelation 8-11) mercy was mixed with God's wrath, affecting only a third part and given that man might repent (Revelation 9:20-21). Now the narrow line separating God's mercy and wrath (Exodus 10:27; Matthew 12:32; Romans 1:24, 2 Thessalonians 2:11-12; 1 John 5:16) has been crossed and His wrath will not be mixed with mercy (Revelation 14:10) - we see God as a consuming fire (Hebrews 12:29).

I. A SIGN IN HEAVEN, vv. 1-4

A. John sees seven angels having seven plagues (complete wrath of God).

B. Those who have victory over the beast.

1. Sea of glass = God's holiness, transcendence
2. Victory over the beast, his image, his mark, his name.
3. They sing the song of Moses (Old Testament) and the Lamb (New Testament).

DELIVERANCE & PRAISE! LOOK WHAT GOD HAS DONE!

II. ANGELS COMING OUT OF THE TEMPLE IN HEAVEN, vv. 5-8

A. The Temple of the tabernacle of the testimony = holy of holies = HEAVEN!

3. Before, we saw judgment come from the altar (Revelation 8:3-5).
4. Now we see judgment coming from the very place where God dwells.

B. Seven angels, seven plagues, seven bowls = complete destruction awaiting the impenitent!

1. Dress of the angels: similar to Old Testament priests (Exodus 28:4).
2. Work of the angels = pour out the seven bowls of God's wrath.
3. Four beasts = cherubim, or chariot, of God (1 Chronicles 28:18; Psalm 104:3) –
They protect the holiness of God and seek the punishment of transgressors (Ezekiel 1).

C. Seven golden bowls: used in service to God (see Daniel 5:3).

D. Forever and ever = how long God will visit His wrath upon the wicked (as long as He exists).

E. Temple filled with smoke = the solemnity of the occasion (Exodus 19:18; 1 Kings 8:10-11).

- F. None able to enter: in the Old Testament, priests entered the temple to make sacrifices, thus mediate between God and man – but regarding God’s wrath against the wicked, no man is able to mediate.

We can see the conclusion to the entire 15th chapter: judgment is set against Rome and even if she repented, destruction is still determined (compare Manasseh and Judah in 2 Chronicles 33:10-20 and Jeremiah 15:4).

Chapter 15 announces that judgment is on the way – In chapter 16 we shall see the seven bowls of wrath poured out.

REVELATION Chapter 16

Teacher: John M. Brown, Flatwoods church of Christ, Sunday Bible Class

INTRODUCTION: In this chapter we see the judgment against Rome (the oppressor of God's people) which was announced under the sixth seal (6:12-17) and the seven trumpets (8:6-11:19) is going to be fulfilled! This will be the "final blow" against Rome! God announced in chapter 15 that there would be no more warning, and as they had failed to repent, so God's wrath is coming upon them.

THE SEVEN ANGELS ARE INSTRUCTED TO POUR OUT THE BOWLS OF WRATH!

I. FIRST BOWL OF GOD'S WRATH: *Land Destruction!* vv. 1-2

- A. A voice out of the temple commanded, and this wrath is poured out upon the earth.
- B. A noisome and grievous sore is poured out upon those who had the mark of the beast.
 - 1. And those who worshipped his image.
 - 2. This judgment is against Rome and her allies, admirers, and adherents!

II. SECOND BOWL OF GOD'S WRATH: *Sea Destruction!* v. 3

- A. This bowl is poured out upon the sea, and it became as the blood of dead men.
- B. Every living soul died in the sea.
 - 1. Compare Zephaniah 1:2-4; Jeremiah 4:23 ff.
 - 2. Compare also God's partial judgment in 8:8-11 (1/3 destroyed) with this: full wrath!
- C. Sea destruction – commerce destroyed!

III. THIRD BOWL OF GOD'S WRATH: *Freshwater Destruction!* vv. 4-7

- A. This bowl is poured out upon the rivers and fountains of waters and they became as blood.
- B. God's wrath satisfies the angel of the waters.
 - 2. This wrath is righteous (cf. 2 Thessalonians 1:5-10; Revelation 6:9-11).
 - 3. God is eternal and has given them blood to drink (cf. Genesis 12:1-3; Deuteronomy 30:1ff).

IV. FOURTH BOWL OF GOD'S WRATH: *Heavenly Bodies Affected!* Vv. 8-9

- A. This bowl is poured out upon the sun, and its purpose is to scorch men with fire (these men blasphemed God, didn't repent, didn't glorify God).
- B. Destruction due to the abnormal working of heavenly bodies.

V. FIFTH BOWL OF GOD'S WRATH: *Internal Decay!* Vv. 10-11

- A. This is poured out upon the seat (throne) of the beast and his throne (kingdom) is darkened.
 - 1. Men gnawed their tongues for pain (see Revelation 6:15-17; 9:1-12).
 - 2. They blasphemed the God of heaven and would not repent.
- B. Destruction by internal decay!

VI. SIXTH BOWL OF GOD'S WRATH: *Invading Armies!* Vv. 12-16

- A. Notice the overall picture here:
 - 1. This is poured out upon the river Euphrates to dry up the water to make way for the kings from the east, v. 12.
 - 2. Unclean spirits appear to get ready for battle, vv. 13-14
 - 3. The message to Christians: Be prepared! V. 15
 - 4. Armageddon! V. 16
- B. Notice the symbolism to see the meaning of the picture:
 - 1. Euphrates: the land of enemies or evil (Jeremiah 1:13).
 - 2. River dried up: no obstacle in the way of this army coming by God's direction to do battle with Rome.
 - 3. The dragon (Satan, 12:9), the beast (sea-beast, 13:1-10), and the false prophet (earth-beast, 13:11-18) all rally their forces to do battle with this "army of God."
 - 4. The enemies of God use deception to get others on earth to be their allies (frogs, deception, etc), but those who watch will not be deceived by the best.
 - 5. The final battle against the beast would be at Armageddon:
 - a. Armageddon was the place of great battles in the past where God's people were victorious and God's enemies were defeated(see Judges 5:19; 2 Kings 9:27; 23:28-29; Zechariah 12:11).
 - b. Thus it symbolizes a place (any place) where those who rebel against God go down in defeat (we shall see the results in 19:11-21).

VII. SEVENTH BOWL OF GOD'S WRATH: *Complete destruction!* Vv. 17-21

A. This vial is poured out in the air (compare Ephesians 2:1-2; 6:12; 2 Corinthians 10:3-5).

B. The voice out of heaven says: "It is done"

1. What is done? *The judgment of God against Rome!*
2. Evil has been punished; God's wrath has been demonstrated; justice has avenged!

B. Voices, thunders, lightnings, great earthquake:

1. The city (Rome) fell and was divided into three parts (utter destruction).
2. The cities of the nations fell (remember they were under Roman rule and deceived by her, 1:7).
3. God gave Rome the cup of the fierceness of His wrath (Revelation 11:16-19).
4. Every island fled away, and the mountains were not found
(symbolic speech – God shaking the nations! See Psalm 18:7-15; 97:4; Micah 1:2-4; Nahum 1:5).
5. Great hail fell out of heaven upon men, the weight of a talent (about 100 pounds).
6. Still, these blasphemed God!

C. Utter destruction by the complete judgment of God against Rome!.

CONCLUSION:

To the Christians in the first century this is a great message of comfort, relief, and hope: God will bring down their oppressors! We'll see the utter fall of the great city in chapters 17-18 and the fall of the dragon in chapters 19-20. Then we'll see the church victoriously shining having overcome the onslaught of the enemy in chapters 20-21.

REVELATION Chapter 17

Teacher: John M. Brown, Flatwoods church of Christ, Sunday Bible Class

Before looking at the actual outline of chapter 17, let us introduce briefly two concepts that we find therein, the GREAT HARLOT and the EIGHT KINGS:

THE GREAT HARLOT

2. She sits upon many waters, v. 1
3. The kings of the earth have committed fornication with her, v. 2
4. She is called Babylon, v. 5
5. She is a great persecutor of God's people, v. 6
6. She has great power, vv. 3 & 7
7. She sits upon seven mountains, v. 9
8. She rules over many peoples, v. 15
9. She is "that great city which reigneth over the kings of the earth," v. 18
10. She is the leading commercial power on earth, 18:3, 11-19
11. She shall be destroyed by her own power (internal decay), vv. 16-17

Remember that John is writing to the seven churches of Asia (1:4, 11) about things which must shortly come to pass (1:1,3; 22:6, 10). To those saints in the first century looking for a message of hope in the midst of great trial and affliction, there can be no questions that this "Babylon" who is going down to defeat is ROME.

THE SEVEN KINGS plus an EIGHTH, vv. 10-11

"And there are seven kings:...

five are fallen...

1. AUGUSTUS, 27BC – 14 AD
1. TIBERIUS, 14-37 AD
2. CALIGULA, 37-41 AD
3. CLAUDIUS, 41-54 AD
4. NERO, 54-68 AD

One is...

and the other is not yet come;
and when he cometh, he must continue
a short space.

6. VESPACIAN, 69-79 AD

7. *TITUS, 79-81 AD*

And the beast that was, and is not,
even he is the eighth, and is of the seven,
and goeth into perdition."

8. *DOMITIAN, 81-96 AD*

And what shall these do? Verse 14, "Make war with the Lamb..."

I. THE GREAT HARLOT WHO SITS UPON MANY WATERS, vv. 1-6

A. The scene here is the judgment of the harlot: the angel shows John the great harlot that sits upon many waters, vv. 1-2

1. “many waters” = nations (v. 15).
2. The harlot is Rome, who rules the world, and has enticed many nations.
 - a. The kings of the earth had committed fornication with her (they had followed her rule and lead).
 - b. The inhabitants of the earth had been made drunk with the wine of her fornication.

B. John is carried by the angel into the wilderness, v. 3

1. John sees the woman sitting upon a scarlet colored beast (compare 12:6, 13-17).
 - b. The woman is not the woman in Revelation 12.
 - c. This woman is the harlot (see Isaiah 23:13-18; Nahum 3:4; Ezekiel 17).
 - d. She has names full of blasphemy, seven heads and ten horns, arrayed in purple and scarlet (royalty), decked with gold and precious stones and pearls (wealth).
 - e. She has a golden cup full of abominations and filthiness.
 - f. Upon her head is a name written:
***MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS
AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH.***
 - g. The woman is seen by John as drunken with the blood of the saints and of the martyrs (see 6:9 ff; 12:11).

2. John is greatly astonished (amazed; “wondered with great admiration”) at her.

II. THE ANGEL EXPLAINS THE MYSTERY OF THE WOMAN, vv. 7-14

A. THE BEAST:

1. WAS: his power had been severe before.
2. IS NOT: his power was not currently as severe as before
3. YET IS: shall come again, with severe power as before.

B. Those on the earth: those whose names are not written in the book of life – they shall wonder when they behold the beast.

C. Mystery of the beast that was, and is not, and yet is (shall be):

1. SEVEN MOUNTAINS: an accurate and oft-used description of Rome.
2. SEVEN HEADS represent the seven kings (17:10).
3. FIVE ARE FALLEN: ***Augustus, Tiberius, Caligula, Claudius, Nero***

4. ONE IS: *Vespasian*, 69-79 AD

Note: Three had been uprooted, as viewed in Daniel 7: *Galba, 68 AD*
Otho, 68 AD
Vitellius, 69 AD

5. OTHER IS NOT YET COME: *Titus*, 79-81 AD

6. Then the BEAST THAT WAS and IS NOT YET SHALL APPEAR AGAIN,
the EIGHTH:

Domitian, 81-96: he is a persecuting Emperor like Nero (even worse!)

7. The TEN HORNS are TEN KINGS: not kings yet, but they have been delegated authority as kings.
- They are vassal or client kings, ruling in Roman provinces, and have authority for a short time.
 - They are unified in promoting the reign of the Beast.
8. These make WAR WITH THE LAMB, v. 14
- The Lamb shall overcome them, for HE is Lord of lords and King of kings!
 - They with Him are called, and chosen, and faithful!

III. THE IDENTITY AND FATE OF THE HARLOT, vv. 15-18

A. The harlot sat upon many waters, vv. 1 & 15

- The “waters” are people, multitudes, nations, tongues: the kingdoms of the world.
- The Harlot is reigning over the world’s kingdoms – the Beast is the Roman kingdom (compare 13:1-6; Daniel 2; Daniel 7:1-8).

B. The harlot is the great city, v. 18

C. The ten horns hate the harlot, v. 16:

- They will make her desolate and naked, eat her flesh, and burn her with fire.
- They will thereby fulfill the very will of God until the words of God should be fulfilled - what words? Compare 1:7 & 16:19

D. Thus God uses INTERNAL FORCES, INTERNAL DECAY, and INTERNAL DESTRUCTION to bring Rome to its fall!

Compare Daniel 2:40-45: iron mixed with clay

SEE THE PICTURE: The client kings become disturbed with the way things are carried out in the seat of authority, Rome, where the Emperor resides. Thus Rome’s overthrow will be from within herself and by her own allies – internal decay!

REVELATION Chapter 18

Teacher: John M. Brown, Flatwoods church of Christ, Sunday Bible Class

INTRODUCTION: Chapter 18 is a continuation of chapter 17: the fall of THE HARLOT, Rome, because of God's wrath poured out upon her!

I. THE ANGEL ANNOUNCES THAT BABYLON IS FALLEN!, vv. 1-5

A. The authoritative and glorious message: Babylon is fallen! vv. 1-2

1. "Fallen" (compare *Isaiah 13:20-22; 14:22-23; Jeremiah 13:9-22; 51:37,42*)

1. The doom of the fallen: she has become the habitation of devils.

2. She is the hold of every foul spirit and the cage of every unclean, hateful bird.

B. The influence of the harlot on others, v. 3

1. All nations have drunk the wine of the wrath of her fornication.

2. The kings of the earth have committed fornication with her (*cf. Isaiah 10:12-14; Nahum 3:4*).

3. The merchants of the earth are rich through the abundance of her delicacies.

C. God's people are to come out from her! vv. 4-5

1. The reason to come out: to not partake of her sins or receive her plagues.

NOTE: God has always required His people to be separate from evil (compare *Isaiah 18:4-8; Jeremiah 50:8; Zechariah 2:7; 2 Corinthians 6:16-18*).

2. Her sins have reached God in heaven, and He will remember her iniquities.

II. THE NATURE OF THE JUDGMENT AGAINST THE HARLOT, vv. 6-23

A. The judgment is a repayment! *Rendered as rendered, and doubled! Severe mourning!*, v. 6

B. The reason for the Harlot's severe judgment: PRIDE! vv. 7-8

1. She glorified herself, lived deliciously, and brags.

2. But what is coming to her is torment, sorrow, plagues, mourning, famine, burning.

3. **PRIDE vs. JEHOVAH** is an age-old problem (*see Daniel 4:30-32; 5:17-28; 8:8, 25; Amos 6:8*).

4. She will fall in one day – *quickly, suddenly!*

C. The Harlot's allies will be judged, vv. 9-19

2. Kings, allies, merchants – fear, wail, mourn – these shall no longer be able to satisfy the pleasure of the flesh she has offered – the days of prosperity are over!, vv. 9-16

3. Shipmasters and sea workers (mariners) also mourn, vv. 17-19

D. All mourn except the HEAVENLY, v. 20

1. Message: *Rejoice, for God has avenged you!* (note 2:26-27; 6:9-10; 8:3-5; 11:18; 12:10-11; 14:13; 16:7; 17:14).
1. The saints rule the nations through the judgment of God on the ungodly!
(see Matthew 5:5).

E. The judgment will be complete! vv. 21-23

1. A mighty fall! Complete destruction!
2. The great city is not found anymore (cf. Isaiah 13:19ff).
3. No more merriment or craftsmen.
4. A millstone is hanged around her neck and she is cast into the sea (cf. Matt. 18:6).
5. Her lamp is gone out and the great merchants are no more (“were”).

III. THE HARLOT’S JUDGMENT AND THE REASON FOR IT, vv. 23-24

A. The harlot caused other nations to be deceived.

1. The harlot controlled the “great men” of the day.
2. The harlot used sorcery.

B. The harlot persecuted and killed the righteous.

1. Compare *Revelation 12:13-17; 13:3-8*
2. In her was found the blood of the prophets and saints (cf. Matthew 23:29-36).
3. She had killed Christians (cf. Rev. 17:6).

CONCLUSION: *The Harlot had been responsible for killing God’s people, bring great death and destruction upon them. But their blood and sacrifice was avenged when God’s wrath was poured out! The great Harlot is brought low!*

In chapters 19 and 20 we see God’s wrath then turned against the Dragon. Just as the harlot met defeat, so shall Satan as well, and God’s people will be vindicated!

REVELATION Chapter 19

Teacher: John M. Brown, Flatwoods church of Christ, Sunday Bible Class

INTRODUCTION: We saw in **CHAPTER 13** the **SEA BEAST** (the persecuting power of Rome) and the **EARTH BEAST** (the false religion of Rome). **CHAPTERS 17 and 18** concerned God's judgment against the harlot (Rome). **CHAPTERS 19 and 20** concern God's judgment against Satan which begins with judgment against the **SEA BEAST** and the **EARTH BEAST**. In **CHAPTER 16** we saw **ARMAGEDDON**, the victory of God over His enemies. This is **CHAPTER 19!**

I. REJOICING OVER THE DOWNFALL OF THE GREAT WHORE, vv. 1-10

A. FIRST ALLELUIA, vv. 1-2

1. A multitude in heaven proclaims "Alleluia" ("Hallelujah" = "PRAISE THE LORD").
2. The message: Salvation, glory, honor, power unto God!
3. What God had done: judged the great whore and avenged the blood of His servants.
4. PERFECT JUSTICE! See 6:9ff; 14:17-20; 18:20

B. SECOND & THIRD ALLELUIA's, vv. 3-4

1. Her smoke rises forever and ever: perpetual burning.
2. The 24 elders (4:4) and four beasts (4:6) worship God (4:10).

C. FOURTH ALLELUIA, vv. 5-9

1. A great multitude worship God (14:1; 19:6) – those called upon to praise God do so!
2. God reigns! (*God's reign is made manifest*)
3. The marriage feast is come: celebration!
4. The Lamb's bride has made herself ready:
 - a. She is arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: the righteousness of the saints (through persecution, righteousness has been maintained).
 - b. The bride of Christ = the church

THE LAMB = CHRIST

THE BRIDE = THE CHURCH

Ephesians 5:23-32 - Romans 7:4

2 Corinthians 11:2 - Matthew 9:15

Mark 2:19 - Luke 5:34-35 - John 3:29

4. Jesus had said to be faithful to receive the crown (2:10); the saints had been faithful, and they are now ready to reign with Him! (chapter 18).
5. John attempts to worship the messenger but is told "WORSHIP GOD": the purpose of this prophecy is to glorify Christ!

II. THE VICTORIOUS CHRIST, vv. 11-21

A. The description of the **VICTOR**, vv. 11-16:

1. White Horse (6:1-2).
2. He is Faithful and True (1:5; 3:7)
3. In righteousness He judges and makes war (Isaiah 11:4-5)
4. His eyes are a flame of fire (1:14)
5. Upon His head are many crowns: rule, dominion, kingship
6. He has a name written that no man knew but Himself (3:7-12)
7. He is clothed in a vesture (garment) dipped in blood (Isaiah 63:3)
8. His name is called “the Word of God” (John 1:1-3, 14; 1 John 1:1-4)
9. His armies are heavenly, and out of His mouth goes a sharp sword (1:16) with which He smites the nations and rules them with a rod of iron (Psalm 2:6-9).
10. He treads the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of God (14:20).
11. He has a name written: **KING OF KINGS & LORD OF LORDS: Jesus!**

B. The Fall of the **TWO BEASTS**, vv. 17-21

1. The angel cries for all to gather for the supper of God:
 - a. To eat the flesh of kings, captains, mighty men, horses, riders, all men.
 - b. This “supper of God” is judgment! (compare 1 Samuel 17:46; Ezekiel 39:4, 17-20; Joel 3:9-13; Matthew 24:28).
2. The Beast and kings of the earth come to make war against the White Horse Rider and His army.
 - a. The battle is fought: **Armageddon!** (16:16; see also 2 Chronicles 35:20-27; Ezekiel 39).
 - b. The **BEAST** (Sea Beast of 13:1-10) and the **FALSE PROPHET** (Earth Beast of 13:11-18) are cast in the lake of fire and brimstone (utter destruction).
 - c. The remnant were slain (the rest of the Roman Empire – the Roman kingdom is no more!).
 - d. The fowls are filled with their flesh (eating their decaying corpses).

CONCLUSION: *We have seen God’s judgment! The Great Whore, the Sea-Beast and Earth-Beast are all fallen. Only the Great Dragon, Satan, is left. He goes down to defeat in the next chapter!*

REVELATION Chapter 20

Teacher: John M. Brown, Flatwoods church of Christ, Sunday Bible Class

INTRODUCTION: *We have seen three of Christ's enemies go down in defeat: the Great Whore, the Sea-Beast, and the Earth-Beast. Now we'll see the Dragon, Satan, judged by God's wrath. He will be bound in that he will not be able to work through Rome any longer.*

I. THE BINDING OF SATAN, vv. 1-3

A. John sees an angel come down from heaven with the key to the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand.

1. The angel is ready to “catch” Satan to stop his activity: Satan is bound for 1,000 years!

Remember the symbolism of numbers: 10 = completeness

10 x 10 x 10 = 1,000: symbolic of a period of time (or state of affairs) in which God has Satan bound.
(compare Deuteronomy 7:9; Psalm 50:10).

2. Satan is cast into the bottomless pit, shut up, and a seal is set on him.
 - a. Purpose: *to deceive the nations no more.*
 - b. Remember that Satan had deceived the nations before (13:11-14) by Emperor worship, convincing the earth to worship the State (Rome). But now God's people are being comforted with the knowledge that Satan's power of deception would be stop for a period of time.

This binding doesn't mean he is inactive during this time, but rather his power to deceive the nations had been bound – Satan has used Rome to fight Christians, but will not use Rome nor her allies during his binding.

B. Satan is loosed for a “little season” (a short while): to deceive again!

II. THE REIGN OF THE SAINTS, vv. 4-6

A. The victorious ones are seated on thrones.

1. Souls that had been beheaded, who had not worshipped the beast or his image, or received his mark (666).
2. These live and reign with Christ 1,000 years!
 - a. Christians are comforted in knowing that faithful brethren who had departed this life were alive and reigning with Christ.
 - b. Christ now reigns (1 Timothy 6:15) – those cleansed by His blood live and reign with Him (1:5-6; 7:14-17) – this reign began on this earth but continues after death.

- B. “*Rest of the dead*” = the wicked dead (they don’t live or reign with anyone).
- C. The *FIRST RESURRECTION*: over such the second death has no power.
1. This first resurrection is to life and reigning.
 2. The Christians being described here are martyrs: thus “first resurrection” is a way of referring to their triumph in connection with the fall of Rome.

NOTE: there will only be one bodily resurrection from the grave (John 5:28-29; 1 Corinthians 15) and that is NOT what is under discussion here.

3. These martyrs are raised to reign with and relish in the victory of the Lamb during the period of the Dragon’s binding!

Compare Mark 12:26-27; John 8:51; 11:25-26; 12:25-26; 16:16; Ezekiel 37

SOME FACTS ABOUT THE THOUSAND YEAR REIGN:

- a. Where? Heaven, where Christ is (v. 4) – not earth.
- b. When? After death, martyrdom (v. 4).
- c. Nature? Judging, living, reigning with Christ - first resurrection.
- d. Who? All the souls (not bodies) of the martyrs.

III. SATAN LOOSED AND DEFEATED, vv. 7-10

A. When the thousand years are finished, Satan is loosed out of his prison and comes forth to deceive ALL nations.

GOG and **MAGOG** (from Ezekiel 38-39): they represent the evil nations of the earth (not just one in particular, but any who would fight against God and His people).

EZEKIEL 38

- a. The events take place in the latter years (v. 8) or latter days (v. 16).
- b. The motive of God’s coming: for gain.
- c. God’s purpose for bringing Gog: that Jehovah may sanctify Himself in Gog’s destruction (vv. 16, 23).

EZEKIEL 39

- a. The greatness of Gog’s overthrow is depicted (vv. 1-20).
- b. Nations will know that Jehovah is God (vv. 22-23) and all will long for Satan’s defeat (Just as ROME was defeated, so will be ANYONE who fights against God).

B. Heavenly destruction will come upon them!

1. Fire came down from God and devoured them (cf. 2 Peter 3:10).
2. The devil was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone where the beast and the false prophet are: **TORMENT!**
3. Satan will put forth one final effort to destroy the work of God: that is his nature!

IV. THE DESTINY OF THOSE JUDGED, vv. 11-15

A. The Judge described, v. 11

1. He sat upon a great white throne.
2. Heaven and earth fled away, and there was no place for the fleers.

B. The evil are judged, vv. 12 and 15

1. The dead had to give account (compare 19:17-18).
2. The books were opened (the record of those being judged).
3. Another book was open: the book of life.

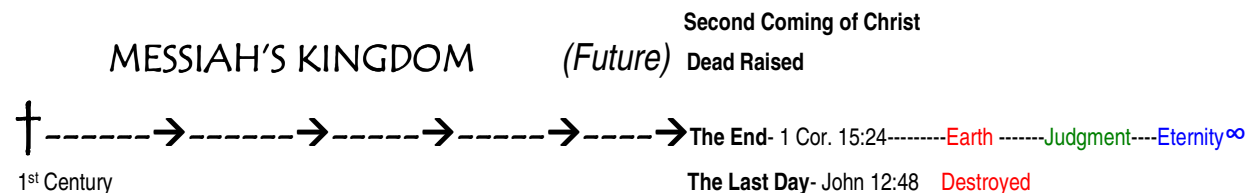
C. The dead are identified, vv. 13-14

1. The sea gave up the dead, and death and hell (hades) delivered up their dead..
2. "...judged every man according to their works."

GOD'S VENGEANCE HAS BEEN POURED OUT AND HIS JUDGMENT COMPLETED!

NOTE: Much of the doctrine called **PREMILLENNIALISM** is built upon some phrases or thoughts found in Revelation 20. Unfortunately, it is a doctrinal system that reads far more into the chapter than is actually there. Premillennialists do not believe that Christ has yet set up His kingdom, but the Bible teaches otherwise (*see Daniel 2:44-45; Luke 1:30-33; Matthew 3:12; John 3:3-5; Matthew 16:13-19; Mark 9:1; Luke 17:20-21; John 18:33-37; Acts 1:6-8; 2:29-33; Colossians 1:13-14; Hebrews 12:22-23, 26-28; Revelation 1:6*). When the Second Coming of Christ occurs, that is not the "beginning," but rather the ending! (see 1 Corinthians 15:24). The **KINGDOM OF CHRIST** (which is the rule and reign of God in the hearts and lives of men and women) began in the first century, on the day of Pentecost, and continues to the present time. Jesus rules as King of God's Kingdom!

BIBLE TEACHING:



Jesus' kingdom: ruling and reigning in the hearts and lives of His disciples!

REVELATION Chapter 21

Teacher: John M. Brown, Flatwoods church of Christ, Sunday Bible Class

INTRODUCTION: *As we have stressed throughout this book, we must keep the context! We have seen the saints persecuted, and we have seen God's wrath poured out upon the persecutors. In chapters 17 and 18, we saw the Great Whore destroyed. In chapters 19 and 20, we saw the old dragon, Satan, destroyed! Now in chapters 21 and 22 we see the people of God standing victorious, having come through this severe persecution. With God's help, they have won the battle, and now, rest and victory are sweet!*

I. NEW HEAVEN & NEW EARTH FOR THE CHURCH, VV. 1-8

A. "New heaven and a new earth...first heaven and the first earth were passed away."

1. "NEW" = something never used; a thing of late date or origin; something novel or strange; another possession, relation, or state (such as 2 Corinthians 5:17).
2. Note the use of apocalyptic language (compare Isaiah 13:6-22; 34:1-17; 65:17ff; Ezekiel 11:19; 36:26-36; Micah 1:3-6; Zephaniah 1:2 ff; 2 Peter 3:13).
3. The saints had lived among the kingdoms of God and had been severely persecuted, but God's vindication and vengeance had come and the situation had changed.
4. Without the restraint of the heathen Roman government, changed conditions in society would favor Christianity, and cause it to become universal (Isaiah 11:9), which is exactly what happened! See also Jeremiah 1:10; Habakkuk 2:14; Romans 10:18; 16:26; Colossians 1:23)
5. "No more sea" – the sea out of which the Beast arose was no more.

B. "The holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven...bride"

1. The holy city is the "tabernacle of God among men" – it is the **CHURCH!** (compare 1 Corinthians 3:16-17; 6:19-20; Ephesians 2:20ff; 1 Peter 2:5-10).
2. The new Jerusalem is the **CHURCH!** (compare Galatians 4:26; Hebrews 12:22-23).
3. The bride is the **CHURCH!** (compare Romans 7:4; 2 Corinthians 11:2; Ephesians 5:22-33).

THE PICTURE HERE IS OF THE LORD'S CHURCH!

C. Thus, a new state of affairs!

1. The persecutor and the persecution is gone! Jesus and His people reign!
 - a. No more tears: *persecution is over*
 - b. Death has ceased: *martyrdom is finished*
 - c. No more sorrow, crying, or pain: *no more tribulation*
 - d. First things passed away: *the surroundings of the church under persecution.*
2. The One on the throne makes new surroundings – these things are faithful and true!
 - a. John sees these changes – “new” – as having already taken place.
 - b. Blessing is promised to the overcomers: fulfillment, inheritance, fellowship!
3. Those not among the overcomes: to them, second death! *Fearful, unbelieving, abominable, murderers, whoremongers, sorcerers, idolaters, all liars...lake which burneth with fire and brimstone.*

II. OVERCOMERS RECEIVE GOD’S PROTECTION & PROVISION, vv. 9-27

A. John is shown THE BRIDE, the LAMB’S WIFE!, vv. 9-22

1. The glory of God is seen in her – light, precious stones.
2. Wall = protection!
3. Twelve gates with twelve angels – names of the twelve tribes; twelve foundations – names of the twelve apostles: a picture of God’s people as a whole in both the Old and New Testaments.
4. “Foursquare” = a term denoting perfection.
5. The city is measured: 12,000 furlongs (approximately 1500 miles square).
6. The wall is measured: 144 cubits (about 216 feet) – high, tall, strong!
7. The wall = jasper / the city = pure gold like clear glass.
8. The foundation of the wall is garnished with all manner of precious stone: an exquisite vision of greatness and beauty beyond all human comprehension!
We have a picture of the glorious majesty of the Lamb’s wife!

B. Provision for the city, vv. 23-26

1. No temple in the city– because the church IS the temple of God! (Ephesians 2:21).
2. God and the Lamb are the temple (Matthew 27:51; Ephesians 2:21).
3. God’s glory and the Lamb’s light illuminate with city.
4. The nations of the saved walk in the city; kings bring their glory and honor into it (compare Ephesians 3:21).
5. There is no night in the city.

C. Protection for the city, v. 27

1. Nothing that defiles enters into it (see John 3:1-5; 1 Corinthians 6:9-11; 2 Corinthians 6:14-18; Ephesians 5:25-27).
2. Only those written in the Lamb’s book of life are here!

The city is a safe haven for the saints of God!

REVELATION Chapter 22

Teacher: John M. Brown, Flatwoods church of Christ, Sunday Bible Class

INTRODUCTION: *We have seen the saints of God as they enjoy their victory over their persecutors. In chapter 21 we saw the church as the city of God, COMFORTED, PROVIDED FOR, and PROTECTED. The thought continues in chapter 22; thus we see the church in chapters 21 and 22 as the OVERCOMING VICTOR!*

I. THE PROJECTION OF THE CITY DESCRIBED, vv. 1-5

- A. The river of the water of life proceeds out of the throne of God and of the Lamb.
- B. The tree of life is there on both sides of the river.
 - 1. There is continual fruit-bearing, and the leaves of the tree are for healing.
 - 2. God's holy city can now extend healing to the nations.
- C. There is no more curse (compare Genesis 12:1-3).
 - 1. The throne of God is there, with the Lamb therein.
 - 2. His servants shall serve the Lamb; they shall see His face and wear His name.
 - 3. There is no more darkness – they reign with God!

II. THE ANGEL CONFIRMS THE MESSAGE AS TRUTH, vv. 6-10

- A. God had sent His angel to show unto His servants things which must shortly be done (1:1,3).
 - 1. Jesus is coming quickly – WHY IS HE COMING? *What will be poured out?*
THE WRATH OF GOD!
 - 2. John falls down to worship the angel, and is rebuked: “*WORSHIP GOD*”
- B. John is instructed not to seal up the Book, for the “time is at hand” (compare 1:1, 3; 22:6)

III. JUDGMENT IS HERE: EACH WILL RECEIVE ACCORDINGLY, vv.11-15

A. The vengeance of God is about to be poured out – it will find people as they are!

1. Unjust – unjust still.
2. Filthy – filthy still.
3. Righteous – righteous still.
4. Holy – holy still.

B. Jesus is coming quickly!

1. Purpose? *To give every man according to his works.*
2. Blessed are those who keep God's commandments: they shall eat of the tree of life and enter into the city!
3. Separation: those "without" are ... dogs, sorcerers, whoremongers, idolaters, liars

NOTE: on "first and last" compare Revelation 1:8, 11, 17, 18, 22

IV. JESUS PROCLAIMS BLESSING FOR THE CHURCHES, vv. 16-21

A. *The reason for His coming is to inform the churches:* He is the root and offspring of David, the bright and morning star.

B. Others may want to come:

1. The Spirit and bride say come.
2. Those that hear and those athirst may come.
3. Whosoever will – let him take the water of life!

C. Warning about this revelation: Do not add! Do not take away!

(Compare Deuteronomy 4:1-2; 5:28-33; Proverbs 30:5-6).

D. CLOSING:

1. Jesus says He is coming quickly!
2. John earnestly desires Him to come.
3. "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen."