

Just as 1 Samuel is the history of the transition from theocracy to monarchy in Israel, perhaps Revelation is the parallel and prophetic story of the transition from monarchy to theocracy (under Christ) in the world, the story of the Return of the King, if you will. So, I took another look at outlining Revelation with the idea in mind that Revelation completes the circle of history with the true King (Christ) returned to the throne, not only of His people, but of the whole world.

Here is the first draft of the resulting outline of the book of Revelation (in light of the sequence of world history furthered in the account of 1 Samuel):

I. The Revelation of the King and the Restoration of the Kingdom (Rev. 1:1-22:5)

A. The Revelation of the King to His Subjects (Rev. 1:1-3:22)

Specifically this revelation is made to the apostle John and the seven Churches of Asia Minor, but ultimately this revelation is given to everyone who by faith in Christ enters the kingdom of heaven and participates in its advance through faith in Christ and obedience to His word. Faithful obedience is the calling put forth in 1 Samuel, the calling to which Saul so powerfully failed and even David struggled with. It is a calling that must be enabled by Christ and empowered within us by the Holy Spirit to the praise and glory of God.

1. To the apostle John (the things that you have seen) (Rev. 1:1-20)

a. Prologue to the Revelation (Rev. 1:1-3)

(1) The interest here is in the Person who will be introduced, namely, Jesus the King

(2) Note that the source of the revelation is God Almighty, the final and ultimate king/Creator

(a) The fact that God gave the revelation to Jesus as a message to pass along to Christ's servants

i) adds authenticity and authority to the revelation,

ii) as well as credibility, integrity,

iii) and an inherent reason to PAY ATTENTION!

a) Reconsider the encounter of Saul and the Amalekites in 1 Samuel 15

b) **1 Samuel 15:22b (ESV) Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to listen than the fat of rams.**

c) Listening means hearing and responding appropriately (faith and obedience)

(b) The fact that it is given to show to his "bondservants" suggests that those who receive this revelation are not peers with Christ but are in a "vertical" relationship with him where he is their master.

(3) **EXERCISE:** Make a list of all the words, phrases and concepts in Revelation 1:1-20 that indicate "kingdom" or "royal" theme.

(a) 1:1 bondservants

(b) 1:4 throne

(c) 1:5 Christ

(d) 1:5 ruler of kings on earth

- (e) 1:6 made us a kingdom
 - (f) 1:6 glory and dominion (“forever” points to an eternal kingdom)
 - (g) 1:7 tribes of earth
 - (h) 1:9 the kingdom
 - (i) 1:12-16 The entire description of Jesus
 - (j) 1:18 keys of Death and Hades
 - (k) 1:20 right hand
- b. Greeting from the Messenger on Behalf of the King (Rev. 1:4-7)
- (1) The messenger is John
 - (2) The audience (**the bondservants of Jesus**) is the seven churches of Asia
 - (a) These may be the churches John has spent his life ministering among
 - (b) They may be the focus because the church in Rome is in turmoil and Jerusalem has already fallen so that the church there has been scattered.
 - i) **Tribulation/persecution**
 - ii) **John’s exile to Patmos (1:9)**
 - (c) **QUESTION:** If you were a member of the church in Jerusalem or Rome and suddenly found yourself embroiled in persecution and being scattered throughout the known world, what would you think about the certainty of Christ’s kingdom that you’ve been praying about year after year (“thy kingdom come”)?
 - (d) The intent may be to assure the remaining Christians in the more stable regions of the empire that God’s plan to build His kingdom has not been abandoned but will proceed according to this plan.
 - (3) The content of the greeting is Jesus Christ, the King
 - (a) The Trinity is Present in the Greeting, the Process, and the Outcome of the Kingdom
 - i) God
 - a) from whom grace and peace come
 - 1) **we have access through Christ**
 - 2) **God is disposed to grant grace and mercy through Christ, but the sources of grace and mercy is the Father**
 - b) who was and is and is to come
 - 1) **eternality (not temporary)**
 - 2) **God endures regardless of any believer’s current circumstance**
 - 3) **Isaiah 40:8 (ESV) ⁸ The grass withers, the flower fades, but the word of our God will stand forever.**
 - ii) Holy Spirit: seven spirits before the throne (Not a new concept)
 - a) **QUESTION:** How are we to understand the reference to the “seven spirits that are before the throne”?

b) References in Revelation

- 1) **Revelation 1:4 (ESV)** ⁴ John to the seven churches that are in Asia: Grace to you and peace from him who is and who was and who is to come, **and** from the seven spirits who are before his throne,
 - “and” and “who” represent another person in a list
 - the article “the” is plural
- 2) **Revelation 3:1 (ESV)** “And to the angel of the church in Sardis write: ‘The words of him who has the seven spirits of God and the seven stars. “I know your works. You have the reputation of being alive, but you are dead.
 - the word “know” is often found in relation to the work of the Holy Spirit
 - it is often the Spirit who is the “source” of God’s knowing the events of the world
- 3) **Revelation 4:5 (ESV)** ⁵ From the throne came flashes of lightning, and rumblings and peals of thunder, and before the throne were burning seven torches of fire, which are the seven spirits of God,
- 4) **Revelation 5:6 (ESV)** ⁶ And between the throne and the four living creatures and among the elders I saw a Lamb standing, as though it had been slain, with seven horns and with seven eyes, which are the seven spirits of God sent out into all the earth.
 - you get a picture here not of the impersonal universe of Buddhism, nor the indifferent Allah of Islam, nor the mythical chaos of Hinduism, but a single, personal, present, engaged God.

c) References in Other Scripture

- 1) **2 Chronicles 16:9 (ESV)** ⁹ For the eyes of the LORD run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to give strong support to those whose heart is blameless toward him. You have done foolishly in this, for from now on you will have wars.”
- 2) **Proverbs 15:3 (ESV)** ³ The eyes of the LORD are in every place, keeping watch on the evil and the good.
- 3) **Proverbs 22:12 (ESV)** ¹² The eyes of the LORD keep watch over knowledge, but he overthrows the words of the traitor.
- 4) **Psalms 34:15 (ESV)** ¹⁵ The eyes of the LORD are toward the righteous and his ears toward their cry.
- 5) **Zechariah 4:1-10 (ESV)** ¹ And the angel who talked with me came again and woke me, like a man who is awakened out of his sleep. ² And he said to me, “What do you see?” I said, “I see, and behold, a lampstand all of gold, with a

bowl on the top of it, and seven lamps on it, with seven lines on each of the lamps that are on the top of it. And there are two olive trees by it, one on the right of the bowl and the other on its left.”⁴ And I said to the angel who talked with me, “What are these, my lord?”⁵ Then the angel who talked with me answered and said to me, “Do you not know what these are?” I said, “No, my lord.”⁶ Then he said to me, “This is the word of the LORD to Zerubbabel: Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, says the LORD of hosts.⁷ Who are you, O great mountain? Before Zerubbabel you shall become a plain. And he shall bring forward the top stone amid shouts of ‘Grace, grace to it!’”⁸ Then the word of the LORD came to me, saying,⁹ “The hands of Zerubbabel have laid the foundation of this house; his hands shall also complete it. Then you will know that the LORD of hosts has sent me to you.¹⁰ For whoever has despised the day of small things shall rejoice, and shall see the plumb line in the hand of Zerubbabel. “These seven are the eyes of the LORD, which range through the whole earth.”

d) **QUESTION:** In Scripture, which member of the Trinity is the one who accomplishes the work of God in the world?

- 1) The Holy Spirit
- 2) This leads many interpreters (and for now I agree) to conclude that “the seven spirits” are the Holy Spirit (seven-fold Spirit)
- 3) I appreciate this inclusion because it reveals that God is “all in” in relation to the overthrow of the kingdom of darkness and the establishment of Christ’s kingdom of eternal light and life.

iii) Jesus

a) Notes

- 1) Third member of the Trinity present in this revelation
- 2) God is “all in” regarding this message to the churches

b) Descriptors

- 1) Christ
 - anointed one
 - term used of kings and priests
- 2) Faithful Witness - to the Person and plan of God
- 3) Firstborn of the dead
 - first raised from the dead to die no more
 - Conquered death
 - only the king of heaven can win that battle!

- 4) Ruler of the kings of the earth
 - 5) Loves us - **an amazing concept given His power and authority**
 - 6) Freed us from our sins by his blood - **most kings seek deliverance and power through the shedding of the blood of their subjects**
 - 7) Made us a kingdom - **under His authority with His identity**
 - 8) Made us priests - **this is all about relationship with Him**
 - 9) Coming again
- c. Personal Greeting from the King Himself (Rev. 1:8)
- (1) Inclusio with verse 1:
 - (2) **This is God's signature (seal of authenticity)** at the end of the prologue that this is in fact the revelation he delivered to Christ that Christ delivered to John and John is now delivering to the servants
 - (3) Jesus quotes these words
 - (a) **Revelation 22:13 (ESV)** ¹³ I am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end."
 - (b) **QUESTION:** What does Jesus' use of the title that God claims for Himself mean?
 - i) **John 5:19 (ESV)** ¹⁹ *So Jesus said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of his own accord, but only what he sees the Father doing. For whatever the Father does, that the Son does likewise.*
 - ii) **The Son is neither incompetent or incapable**
 - iii) **He is one with the Father**
 - iv) **Revelation 22:13 is a statement of reality not ability**
- d. Vision of the King (Rev. 1:9-20)
- (1) John validates his message as "intimately delivered"
 - (a) Brother to the churches
 - i) Shares their faith
 - ii) Shares their adoption
 - iii) He writes as one of them
 - (b) Partner in tribulation -
 - i) **social context note (see v. 9)**
 - ii) **on the island of Patmos**
 - a) **on account of the word of God - this is God's will for him**
 - b) **on account of the testimony of Jesus**
 - 1) **This is what Jesus testified would happen to His followers**
- Matthew 24:9 (ESV) ⁹ "Then they will deliver you up to tribulation and put you to death, and you will be hated by all nations for my name's sake.**

- John 16:1-3 (ESV) ¹ “I have said all these things to you to keep you from falling away. ² They will put you out of the synagogues. Indeed, the hour is coming when whoever kills you will think he is offering service to God. ³ And they will do these things because they have not known the Father, nor me.

2) This is what happens when disciples testify of Jesus to the culture

(c) Partner in the kingdom -

i) spiritual context note (see v. 10)

a) “I was in the Spirit

b) on the Lord’s day

c) and I heard . . .

ii) Despite exile and tribulation, John maintains

a) a personal connection with God

b) a personal worship of God

c) a personal preparedness to hear from God

(d) Partner in patient endurance -

i) personal context note

ii) It is helpful to know that this message is coming through a messenger who knows the personal significance of the message for those who are receiving it

a) The message come to John as well as from him

b) The message comes from John as well as through him

(2) John validates his message as “personally commanded”

(a) John hears the voice like a trumpet

(b) John hears the command to write to these seven churches

i) List

a) Ephesus

b) Smyrna

c) Pergamum

d) Thyatira

e) Sardis

f) Philadelphia

g) Laodicea

ii) **QUESTION:** Why these seven?

1) The fact that there are seven points to their completeness/universality as representative

2) The content of each letter suggests

- they are chosen for the specific condition within the church
- that together they represent the condition of the universal church and message of Christ to the whole church throughout the ages in preparation for the establishment of His kingdom.
- 3) I believe it is best to retain the “wholeness” of the seven churches when considering their significance. Seeing each as a separate church age disintegrates the wholeness of the seven.
- (c) John looks to see whose voice it is - ICC understands this voice to belong to the Father as at the transfiguration of Christ.
 - i) Read parallel passages
 - a) **Daniel 7:9-10 (ESV)** ⁹ *“As I looked, thrones were placed, and the Ancient of Days took his seat; his clothing was white as snow, and the hair of his head like pure wool; his throne was fiery flames; its wheels were burning fire. ¹⁰ A stream of fire issued and came out from before him; a thousand thousands served him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him; the court sat in judgment, and the books were opened.*
 - b) **Matthew 10:5-6 (ESV)** ⁵ *These twelve Jesus sent out, instructing them, “Go nowhere among the Gentiles and enter no town of the Samaritans, ⁶ but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.*
 - ii) Questions
 - a) Who does John see?
 - b) What does John see?
 - c) Can we see Jesus as John does?
 - d) Does Jesus change with the viewer (as a kaleidoscope does)?
 - iii) Two mistakes to avoid
 - a) The Watchtower Error - kingdom is everything
 - b) Progressive Christian Error - the current culture is the kingdom
 - iv) Before John introduces us to the kingdom he focuses us clearly on the King!
 - v) It is the character of the King that infuses each letter to the churches and every development in the establishment of the eternal kingdom
- (3) John validates his message as “gloriously divine”
 - (a) Seven golden lampstands (1:12)
 - i) **1 Samuel 3:3 (ESV)** ³ *The lamp of God had not yet gone out, and Samuel was lying down in the temple of the LORD, where the ark of God was.*
 - a) The relationship between the Light and the lampstands should not be overlooked
 - b) Lampstands are the source of light in the temple

- c) Lampstands are to be kept burning throughout the night
 - 1) Before the lamp of God went out in the temple, God called Samuel
 - 2) Before the lamp of God goes out in the world, God presents His King
 - ii) Seven
 - a) Complete
 - b) As intended, goal reached
 - c) Qualitative rather than quantitative measure
 - d) There once was only one candlestick with seven branches, now there are seven individual candlesticks. Once there was only Israel, now there are multiple expressions of the people of God encompassing all the peoples of the world
 - iii) Lampstands are the churches (1:20)
 - a) The church belongs to Christ
 - 1) Separate from Christ
 - 2) Separated to Christ
 - b) The church is the light of the world
 - c) The church's function is to be light in the world according to the will of Christ for the world
 - 1) Share the light of His character
 - 2) Share the purpose of that light: to dispel the darkness that covers the world
 - d) **QUESTION:** How does your life reflect your function as a light in the hands of Jesus?
 - (b) One like a son of man (1:13)
 - i) **QUESTION:** Why is Jesus standing among the lampstands? What is the relationship between Jesus and the lampstands?
 - a) They are his
 - b) He is their caretaker
 - 1) He is the one who maintains their light
 - 2) He is the one who maintains their function
 - 3) He is the source of their oil, and wicks, and the opportunity to be light
 - 4) He is the one who sets them where they are needed
 - c) He is their character as well
 - ii) Descriptors
 - a) like a son of man
 - 1) **Daniel 7:13-14 (ESV)** ¹³ *"I saw in the night visions, and behold, with the clouds of heaven there came one like a son of man, and he came to the Ancient of*

Days and was presented before him. " And to him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom, that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve him; his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom one that shall not be destroyed.

- 2) Revelation is the story of this prophecy being fulfilled
- 3) Not a "son of Man" else he could not appear before the Ancient of Days
- 4) Yet, appears before God like a son of man rather than like the son of God

b) Compare with Daniel's vision

- 1) **Daniel 10:5-6 (ESV)** ⁵ *I lifted up my eyes and looked, and behold, a man clothed in linen, with a belt of fine gold from Uphaz around his waist. ⁶ His body was like beryl, his face like the appearance of lightning, his eyes like flaming torches, his arms and legs like the gleam of burnished bronze, and the sound of his words like the sound of a multitude.*

- 2) The description is intended to convey more than a divine fashion statement
- 3) We see here the character of Christ revealed in the description John uses

c) Compare with transfiguration account

- 1) **Matthew 17:1-2 (ESV)** ¹ *And after six days Jesus took with him Peter and James, and John his brother, and led them up a high mountain by themselves. ² And he was transfigured before them, and his face shone like the sun, and his clothes became white as light.*

- 2) His face shone

- 3) His clothes

- became white as light

- Mark - became more white than anyone on earth could bleach them

d) We are seeing not merely the glory Christ has, as if separate from himself, but the glory He is!

e) like a Priest-King

- 1) Clothed with a long robe -

- emblem of royalty;

- abundance of cloth indicates the position and possibility of attaining and maintaining such a garment in antiquity

- 2) Golden sash around his chest

- **Exodus 28:2 (ESV)** ² *And you shall make holy garments for Aaron your brother, for glory and for beauty.*

- **Exodus 28:4 (ESV)** ⁴ *These are the garments that they shall make: a*

breastpiece, an ephod, a robe, a coat of checker work, a turban, and a sash. They shall make holy garments for Aaron your brother and his sons to serve me as priests.

Hebrews 6:19-20 (ESV) ¹⁹ We have this as a sure and steadfast anchor of the soul, a hope that enters into the inner place behind the curtain. ²⁰ Where Jesus has gone as a forerunner on our behalf, having become a high priest forever after the order of Melchizedek.

- Hebrews 7:1-3 (ESV) ¹ For this Melchizedek, king of Salem, priest of the Most High God, met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings and blessed him, ² and to him Abraham apportioned a tenth part of everything. He is first, by translation of his name, king of righteousness, and then he is also king of Salem, that is, king of peace. ³ He is without father or mother or genealogy, having neither beginning of days nor end of life, but resembling the Son of God he continues a priest forever.

- OT symbol of power, righteousness and truth (Isa. 22:21; Job 12:18; Isa 11:15)

- NT symbol of truth (Eph 6:14)

Girdle binds together all the other graces in Eph 6 and all the other symbols in the robes of the High Priest in the OT; Christ is bound in truth because He is the Truth and all that he will say and do and reveal is bound up in the quality of truth.

3) **QUESTION:** Saul gets rejected as king for assuming a priestly role in Israel.

Why can Jesus take on the role of High Priest **AND** King?

4) **QUESTION:** What three roles, kept separate in Israel, are united in Christ in Revelation?

- Prophet: Jesus gives the revelation, as does a prophet

- Priest: Jesus represents God to man and man to God, as does the priest

- King: Jesus assumes authoritative rule over the earth and heavens, as does the one eternal True King

f) Pure white hair

1) **Daniel 7:9 (ESV)** ⁹ “As I looked, thrones were placed, and the Ancient of Days took his seat; his clothing was white as snow, and the hair of his head like pure wool; his throne was fiery flames; its wheels were burning fire.

2) The color white is the delimiting factor here - represents authority, purity, wisdom

3) Irene Laine notes:

“White light is what we experience when we see every wavelength of light that the human eye can perceive. If any wavelength is removed, we do not

“see” white. White is the complete band of wavelengths we can see. Mar that continuum and you do not have white.

White, then, is the color of completion, completeness. When we think in terms of “sin as sacrlet” as it is described biblically - sin is not adding anything to eh white of completion and purity - it is removing part of that completeness, When God restores the condition to “white as snow” He is restoring that which sin took away. Only the King can do that, restore what sin took away.

Pastor’s note: Sin took away the kingdom. The White Haired One restores it!

- g) Eyes like flame
 - 1) **Revelation 19:11-12 (ESV)** ¹¹ *Then I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse! The one sitting on it is called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he judges and makes war.* ¹² *His eyes are like a flame of fire, and on his head are many diadems, and he has a name written that no one knows but himself.*
 - 2) The authority to judge sin and sinners
 - 3) The passion of pure righteousness to consume evil
 - 4) **Deuteronomy 4:24 (ESV)** ²⁴ *For the LORD your God is a consuming fire, a jealous God.*
- h) Feet like burnished brass carefully refined
 - 1) This word for burnished brass is used only here and in chapter 2:18 in the New Testament. It’s actual meaning is uncertain as it may be a technical term readily familiar in its day to the metal workers in Ephesus (among whom John ministered) but obscure after 2000 years.
 - 2) The tabernacle had brass fittings everywhere the tent posts or fence posts touched the ground.
 - 3) Brass represents the combination of earth and heaven, the transition by which the two may touch, the God-man Jesus Christ, fully human of the earth, fully divine of heaven
 - 4) Burnished and refined testifies to the purity of his character in both human and divine elements
- i) voice like the roar of many waters
 - 1) **Ezekiel 1:24 (ESV)** ²⁴ *And when they went, I heard the sound of their wings like*

the sound of many waters, like the sound of the Almighty, a sound of tumult like the sound of an army. When they stood still, they let down their wings.

- 2) **Ezekiel 43:2 (ESV)** ² *And behold, the glory of the God of Israel was coming from the east. And the sound of his coming was like the sound of many waters, and the earth shone with his glory.*

- 3) **Isaiah 17:12 (ESV)** ¹² *Ah, the thunder of many peoples; they thunder like the thundering of the sea! Ah, the roar of nations; they roar like the roaring of mighty waters!*

Not just loud

Noticeable

Audible

Captivating

Powerful

Authoritative

- j) Right hand: seven stars

- 1) Diadem

- 2) **1 Thessalonians 2:19-20 (ESV)** ¹⁹ *For what is our hope or joy or crown of boasting before our Lord Jesus at his coming? Is it not you?* ²⁰ *For you are our glory and joy.*

Paul tells the Thessalonians they are his glory and his crown

Thus the church, by faith and obedience, are Christ's crown of glory

- k) Mouth: sharp, two edged sword

- 1) **Hebrews 4:12 (ESV)** ¹² *For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart.*

- 2) **Revelation 19:15 (ESV)** ¹⁵ *From his mouth comes a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations, and he will rule them with a rod of iron. He will tread the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God the Almighty.*

- 3) By the word

- God creates

Genesis 1:3

John 1:3

- Disciples win

Revelation 12:11

- The King conquers

Revelation 19:15

- 1) Face like the sun shining full strength
 - 1) Sheer glory
 - 2) But also utterly revealing all that he directs his face toward
 - 3) Everything is laid bare before him
 - 4) This is a king who cannot be duped
 - cf. "The Emperor's New Clothes"
- (4) **QUESTION:** If we fail to appreciate and worship the King as He is revealed now, how shall we love and worship Him in eternity when He is revealed fully?
 - (a) If we despise Him now, shall we not despise Him then?
 - (b) If He has little value for us now, in our weakness and infirmity, shall we treasure Him successfully then?
 - i) No. For when we die, our pattern is set and we take what we have been into eternity with us.
 - ii) Transformation is for now, now is the appointed time, today is the day of salvation
- (5) John validates his message as "fear provoking"
 - (a) Introduction
 - i) Song "Open Our Eyes, Lord, We Want to See Jesus"
 - a) Do we really want to see Jesus?
 - b) Do we want to see the warm, gentle Shepherd with the lambs in his arms?
 - c) Do we want to see the risen and glorified King whose eyes flame with fire and whose feet stamp out all opposition?
 - ii) When people see Jesus in His glory, their lives are changed!
 - (b) Compare with Daniel's vision experience
 - i) **Daniel 10:7-10 (ESV)** ⁷ *And I, Daniel, alone saw the vision, for the men who were with me did not see the vision, but a great trembling fell upon them, and they fled to hide themselves.* ⁸ *So I was left alone and saw this great vision, and no strength was left in me. My radiant appearance was fearfully changed, and I retained no strength.* ⁹ *Then I heard the sound of his words, and as I heard the sound of his words, I fell on my face in deep sleep with my face to the ground.* ¹⁰ *And behold, a hand touched me and set me trembling on my hands and knees.*
 - (c) Fell as dead
 - i) **NOTE:** Sometime, with apocalyptic literature, it is better to hold the ideas initiated by the words in mind, loosely, rather than try to tie them down to specific definition. You know, intuitively, what John means by falling as dead, let that imagery linger in your mind and don't try to make it concrete, and you will come away with the best ideas of the symbols this language is intended to convey.
 - ii) John does fall to the ground unable to respond on his own, but it is the reason for his condition

rather than the description of his condition that matters most here.

- iii) **QUESTION: Why do people fall on their faces “as dead” in the presence of the divine glory?**
 - a) Seeing Jesus in His glory results in “actualized humility”
 - b) Humility, submission, dependence are anathema to American “democratized” Christians, but they are normal, essential in the Kingdom
- (d) Was raised by Christ
 - i) Think for a moment. John is “raised from the dead” by King Jesus.
 - ii) **QUESTION:**
 - a) **Why is John being raised to his feet by Christ significant?**
 - 1) Both exaltation and resurrection come from King Jesus
 - 2) The power to rise and stand in the presence of the King must be granted; it cannot be assumed
 - b) **Who enables us to live in and live with the revelation of who Jesus is?**
 - c) **Why then do so few Christians ever fall at his feet?**
 - 1) With no will of their own
 - 2) With no power of their own
 - 3) With no independence of their own
 - 4) In either a real or figurative sense
 - d) Jesus’ value for the believer is not in what He does but in who He is!
 - 1) **Who He is drives us to our knees**
 - 2) **Who He is topples us in fear**
 - 3) **Who He is overwhelms our natural ability to stand against Him as an equal**
 - e) While we cannot and should not dismiss the revelation of Jesus as king and gentle Shepherd, Friend, and Brother, neither can we neglect that He is the risen, eternal, glorified, fear-inducing, all-powerful, commanding King
 - 1) Self-rule must yield to His rule for all who enter His kingdom
 - 2) That being the case, it is mercy that He reveals Himself to us beforehand, so that we may know the heart of the One to whom we give our heart!
 - 3) His heart is the reason we can take His next gesture to heart.
- (e) “Fear not” **because**
 - i) I am (ἐγώ εἰμι)
 - a) the first (ὁ πρωτος)
 - b) the last (ὁ ἔσχατος)
 - c) the living one (ὁ ζων)
 - 1) The source of all life

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| These two terms form an inclusio |
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- 2) No remnant of death left on him
 - d) I was dead and behold I am alive forever more
 - ii) I have the keys of Death and Hades
 - a) Most fear producing entities in human experience
 - b) But in the hands of the most fear relieving One in human experience
- (f) Write
- i) Revelation in three tenses
 - ii) The things that you have seen - chapter 1
 - a) Those that are - chapter 2-3
 - b) Those that are to take place after this - chapter 4ff
 - iii) Seven stars and lampstands?
 - a) Stars are the angels (messengers) of the seven churches
 - 1) It is unlikely that guardian angels could be held accountable for the derelictions illucidated in the various letters
 - 2) It is more likely that the ἄγγελοι are the messengers/pastors/bishops in each church
 - b) Lampstands are the seven churches
 - c) **QUESTIONS**
 - 1) What is the significance of the number 7? (Complete/perfect)
 - 2) What then is the significance of seven angels and seven churches?
- Galatians 3:28 (ESV) ²⁸ There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.**

(I. The Revelation of the King and the Restoration of the Kingdom

Rev. 1:1-3:22

A. The Revelation of the King to His Subjects

Rev. 1:1-3:22

1. The Revelation of the King to the Apostle John

Rev. 1:1-20)

2. The Revelation of the King to the Churches

Rev. 2:1-3:22

a. Introductory Notes

- (1) Earlier we noted that, "It is the character of the King that infuses each letter to the churches and every development in the establishment of the eternal kingdom." Interpreters often focus on the nature of the churches as symbols, but I believe we want to focus on the nature of the Author (King) revealed in the content of each letter. Who He is and what He reveals about Himself in what He says seems more important than trying to figure out what each church represents.
- (2) These are the "things that are," Christ's own summaries and interactions with the church that He is perfecting (see Ephesians 5.)
- (3) **The prevailing questions in these seven letters are 1) What attributes and expectations of the King are revealed in each letter? and 2) What is the proper response of faith to the King?**

b. Revelation of the King to the Church at Ephesus (2:1-7)

- (1) Revelation given - The One Who hold the seven stars in his right hand and walks among the seven candlesticks
 - (a) Holds - holds fast; tenacious
 - (b) Right hand
 - i) Dominance
 - ii) Strength
 - (c) Walks - the focus is on the movement and the One moving; He is personally involved with His people
 - i) The King Shepherds
 - ii) The King Surveys
 - iii) The King Studies
 - iv) The King Scrutinizes
 - v) The King Sustains
 - vi) The King Sovereign
 - (d) Knows
 - i) Their works: the content of their efforts in relation to faith
 - a) Toil
 - 1) strenuous effort; determined, persistent effort to maintain against assault
 - 2) **Matthew 11:28 (ESV) ²⁸ Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.**
 - b) Patient endurance
 - ii) Their "intolerance" of false apostles

iii) Their determined steadfastness

iv) Their shortcoming

a) Abandoned their first love

1) “to leave in a place”; discard

2) First Love

ἀφῆκεν ἀγάπην σου σου πρώτην (v. 4) with τὰ πρωτα ἔργα ποιήσον (v. 5)

In first four proton may refer to value/importance

In verse five prota may refer to order or sequence in time

>This raises the question, what does “first love” refer to?

>Love in Ephesians

Ephesians 1:15 (ESV) ¹⁵ For this reason, because I have heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love toward all the saints,

Ephesians 3:17-19 (ESV) ¹⁷ so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith, that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may have strength to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.

Ephesians 4:2 (ESV) ² with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love

Ephesians 5:1-2 (ESV) ¹ And walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.

Ephesians 5:25 (ESV) ²⁵ Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her,

Ephesians 5:28 (ESV) ²⁸ In the same way husbands should love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself.

Ephesians 6:24 (ESV) ²⁴ Grace be with all who love our Lord Jesus Christ with love incorruptible.

b) **QUESTION:** Is “first love” an object or a quality?

1) If an object, then it could be Jesus, the saints, or spouses

2) But, if it is a quality, then it would be the thing all these have in common, unconditional, self-sacrificing commitment to the well-being of others

3) What if the problem in Ephesus is not that they started doing wrong things but that they continued doing right things without the quality of love that actually makes them right things?

c) **QUESTION:** What does abandoned love look like?

- 1) Duty with passion or compassion
 - 2) Activity without conviction or purpose
 - 3) Frenzy without direction or goal
 - d) **QUESTION:** How might these ideas be expressed in real/practical terms?
 - 1) I get nothing out of church but I keep coming because that's what we're supposed to do.
 - 2) I just can't attend here any more as long as those people are coming.
 - 3) I'm so tired of cleaning the kitchen every week when no one even notices.
- (e) Warns
 - i) If you leave your love in a place it doesn't belong (forsake it, forget it, leave it behind somewhere), I will come and remove you from your place where you belong!
 - 1) What does this mean?
 - 2) "remove" in the Greek, is a verb of motion
 - 3) John uses the word for remove only in Revelation and only twice, and both times in the context of judgment (6:14)
 - 4) Could represent a loss of testimony
 - 5) Could represent the closing of the church
 - 6) Removal does not seem to mean destruction, just that the lampstand will lose its place among the lampstands
 - 7) Could mean the loss of blessings as a result of genuine, love filled service
 - ii) Is this a "threat" in the sense that there is real risk but the point is the church's compliance not the experience of the threat?
 - iii) There is neither church nor town of Ephesus today. Could it be that there never was a return to unconditional, sacrificial love?
 - a) What about the church in America?
 - b) What about the church in Grand Marais?
- (f) Requires Response
 - i) Remember
 - ii) Repentance
 - a) Moral turnaround (conversion to faithfulness)
 - b) Also a return to fealty to the True King
 - c) **More than surrender, I think there is a measure of conviction of sin (in order to build our abhorrence of sin and gratitude for grace)**
 - 1) **True repentance always brings us back to the cross and the grace of God in Christ; why would we not want to be there?!**

- 2) The cross is the place where we first bow the knee of the will and soul and mind and body to the great King
 - 3) The cross is the place where we are adopted by the King and inducted into the kingdom
 - iii) Return to first love
- (2) Love is the language of the Kingdom and the modus operandi of the King
 - (a) Return to love
 - (b) If you are going to spend your lives and effort on something let it be love
 - i) Love for Christ
 - ii) Love for the brothers in the kingdom
 - a) Jesus came first to the Jews
 - b) Jesus came also for the world
 - c) Ought we not to practice love for our brothers
 - d) And then extend love to the world?
 - iii) Love for those outside the kingdom whom the King would invite in through your love
 - a) **Matthew 25:31-36**
 - 1) I was hungry and you gave me food
 - 2) I was thirsty and you gave me drink
 - 3) I was a stranger and you welcomed
 - 4) I was naked and you clothed me
 - 5) I was sick and you visited me
 - 6) I was in prison and you came to me
 - b) This is what kingdom love looks like to the lost;
 - 1) this is what God's love in Christ looks like to all of us!
 - 2) He came to us in our need and brought us more than we knew we needed
 - 3) He sends us to the needy with more than they know they need: his love!
 - c) **Philippians 2:5-8 (ESV)** *⁵ Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, ⁶ who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, ⁷ but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. ⁸ And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.*
 - 1) Emptied himself taking on the form of a servant
 - 2) Humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death
- (c) Commends
 - i) You hate the works of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate.

- a) Who are the Nicolaitans?
 - 1) Conquerers of people?
 - 2) Seduced people to sensuality as a means of conquering sin?
 - 3) Note it is not those who conquer people but those who conquer sin that are granted the privilege to eat of the tree of life in the garden of God
 - b) What does it mean to be hated by the King?
- (d) Calls
- i) Let him hear
 - ii) Let him conquer
 - iii) Let him be rewarded

- c. Revelation of the King to the Church at Smyrna (2:8-11)
- (1) Revelation of the King given -
- (a) The One Who is the first and the last
 - i) **Isaiah 44:6 (ESV)** ⁶ *Thus says the LORD, the King of Israel and his Redeemer, the LORD of hosts: "I am the first and I am the last; besides me there is no god.*
 - ii) Smyrna
 - a) Built a temple where Rome was worshiped as god in 195 BC
 - b) In AD 26 built a temple where Caesar was worshiped as god
 - iii) Rome came and went
 - iv) Caesar came and went
 - v) King Jesus endures forever
 - a) Rome was no god
 - b) Caesar was no god
 - c) Jesus, taking the description Yahweh gives of himself, reveals that he is God!
 - (b) who died and came to life
 - i) Smyrna
 - a) Settled 3000 years before Christ
 - b) Destroyed at one point and left in ruins for 300 years
 - c) Restored by Alexander the great in the 300s
 - ii) Direct reference to Christ's resurrection
 - iii) **QUESTION:** Why would a church need a reminder of the resurrection from the King?
- (2) Revelation of the Church given
- (a) NO ROYAL REBUKE! Their suffering appears to keep them pure in faith and life.
 - (b) The King knows
 - i) Their tribulation
 - a) It is possible that, if John wrote his Gospel in Ephesus, that Smyrna was his intended audience, since many of the issues of this letter (and the one to Philadelphia) grapple with some of the same issues as those in the gospel.
 - b) Their tribulation comes from
 - 1) The pagan society - Smyrna is a center of the Imperial cult in the reign of Domitian
 - 2) The religious Jews - the Jews of the day often denounced members of the Way in order to forestall persecution upon themselves
 - 3) The Devil - this is what he always does in hatred for God and Christ (see Rev. 12)
 - c) Jesus' tribulations came from
 - 1) The pagan society

- 2) The religious Jews
 - 3) The Devil
 - ii) The truth about their poverty
 - a) Their's is an extreme poverty as indicated by the form of the Grk word
 - b) Their experience foretold down a down when those who do not take the mark of the beast will neither be allowed to buy or sell
 - iii) The slanderous, satanic opposition of the Jews
- (c) The King reveals
 - i) Their coming experience - suffering
 - a) The Devil will throw some into prison
 - b) You will be tested
 - 1) **QUESTION:** By whom?
 - 2) **QUESTION:** For what purpose?
 - > See 1 Samuel 16:14-23 - God sent the evil (injurious/harmful) spirit to torment Saul in order to bring David into the public eye and ultimately to the throne
 - > God allows persecution of this church in order to bring Jesus (revealed in the faith under fire of His people) to the public eye and eventually to the throne.
 - > Four Reasons God's People Suffer
 - Discipline (**1 Cor. 11:30-32; Heb. 12: 3-13**)
 - Preventive (**2 Cor. 12:7**)
 - Discipling (**Heb. 5:8; Rom. 5:3-5**)
 - Witness (**Acts 9:16**)
 - c) **QUESTION:** Does God test for knowledge or character?
 - 1) Is He primarily interested in what we know or in who we are?
 - 2) If God is primarily interested in who we are, should Bible study result primarily in what we know or what we become?
 - d) For ten days you will have tribulation
 - 1) Ten days probably simply represents a limited amount of time
 - 2) Reference to **Daniel 1:12**, the minor test before the major trials Daniel and the others suffer in the furnace and the lion's den.
 - 3) *It is good for all of us to know*
 - Suffering/tribulation serves God's purpose
 - > Suffering purifies
 - > Suffering corrects
 - > Suffering edifies

Continuation in NT of 1 Samuel strategy

> Suffering testifies

- God sets limits on time, severity, and outcomes
- God rewards faithful endurance

4) Ten Potential "days" violent Roman opposition to Christianity)

| | |
|------------|--------|
| Nero | 64 AD |
| Domitian | 81 AD |
| Trajan | 98 AD |
| Adrian | 117 AD |
| Severus | 193 AD |
| Maximian | 235 AD |
| Decius | 249 AD |
| Valerian | 254 AD |
| Aurelian | 270 AD |
| Diocletian | 284 AD |

ii) Their present comfort

a) Fear not - Jesus is always the reason for fearless faithfulness.

- 1) They have persecution from every direction except above!
- 2) The world condemns, but Christ commends

b) I will give you the crown of life

- 1) Crowns in the NT

> **Note: a crown of thorns (crown of death) was placed on Jesus' head by men who did not believe in him, but Jesus places a crown of life on the men who do believe in him**

> **1 Thessalonians 2:19 (ESV) ¹⁹ For what is our hope or joy or crown of boasting before our Lord Jesus at his coming? Is it not you?**

> **2 Timothy 4:8 ⁸ Henceforth there is ^ylaid up for me ^zthe crown of righteousness, which the Lord, ^athe righteous judge, will award to me on ^bthat Day, and not only to me but also to all ^cwho have loved his appearing.**

> **1 Peter 5:4 (ESV) ⁴ And when the chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the unfading crown of glory.**

> **James 1:12 (ESV) ¹² Blessed is the man who remains steadfast under trial, for when he has stood the test he will receive the crown of life, which God has promised to those who love him.**

- 2) "Crowns" in Revelation

> **Revelation 2:10 (ESV) ¹⁰ Do not fear what you are about to suffer. Behold, the**

devil is about to throw some of you into prison, that you may be tested, and for ten days you will have tribulation. Be faithful unto death, and I will give you the crown of life.

> **Revelation 3:11 (ESV)** ¹¹ I am coming soon. Hold fast what you have, so that no one may seize your crown.

> **Revelation 6:2 (ESV)** ² And I looked, and behold, a white horse! And its rider had a bow, and a crown was given to him, and he came out conquering, and to conquer.

> **Revelation 12:1 (ESV)** ¹ And a great sign appeared in heaven: a woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet, and on her head a crown of twelve stars.

> **Revelation 14:14 (ESV)** ¹⁴ Then I looked and behold a white cloud, and seated on the cloud one like a son of man, with a golden crown on his head, and a sharp sickle in his hand.

3) Potential references in 2:10

Topographical reference - The crown above the city

Socio-religious reference - The crown of imperial favor

Spiritual reference - Crowned by the living King with life!

Quality of life - glory

Quantity of life - eternal

Compare **2 Corinthians 4:17 (ESV)** ¹⁷ *For this light momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison,*

4) To choose Jesus as Lord instead of Caesar as lord was to choose martyrdom!

5) The crown of life, the bestowment of a specific blessing, is the imposition of an attribute that the King possesses and is His to bestow: life after/without death

(3) Three Responses required (which are all really the same thing) -

(a) Be faithful unto death

i) In their tribulations they are representing their King in the most praiseworthy manner: faithfulness!

ii) Faithful = faith + obedience

(b) Him who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches

i) God's ministry in "hearing"

a) Always start any understanding of any biblical topic with God and His role in the topic

1) God must give "ears to hear" - **Deuteronomy 29:4 (ESV)** ⁴ *But to this day the LORD has not given you a heart to understand or eyes to see or ears to hear.*

| |
|--|
| “Hearing” = understand and act accordingly |
|--|

- b) Jesus presents the ministry of the Spirit
 - 1) **John 14:26 (ESV)** ²⁶ *But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you.*
 - 2) **John 16:8-11 (ESV)** ⁸ *And when he comes, he will convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment: ⁹ concerning sin, because they do not believe in me; ¹⁰ concerning righteousness, because I go to the Father, and you will see me no longer; ¹¹ concerning judgment, because the ruler of this world is judged.*
 - 3) “The ruler of this world is judged” - deemed ineligible to rule and sentenced to be replaced!
 - 4) Fear not! Live faithful! There is a new kingdom coming!
 - ii) Jesus presents the necessity to pay attention, understand, and act upon what is heard
 - a) **Mark 4:21-25 (ESV)** ²¹ *And he said to them, “Is a lamp brought in to be put under a basket, or under a bed, and not on a stand? ²² For nothing is hidden except to be made manifest; nor is anything secret except to come to light. ²³ If anyone has ears to hear, let him hear.” ²⁴ And he said to them, “Pay attention to what you hear: with the measure you use, it will be measured to you, and still more will be added to you. ²⁵ For to the one who has, more will be given, and from the one who has not, even what he has will be taken away.”*
 - b) The gospel, which includes the credentials of the king and the plan to establish his kingdom (Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand) will not be hidden.
 - 1) Your participation in revealing the kingdom matters
 - 2) The measure you use (to reveal the kingdom) will be the measure used to reward both responsibility and blessing in the kingdom
 - iii) Jesus presents the implications of hearing
 - a) **Matthew 13:1-23**
 - b) The entire parable is about hearing and understanding: the obstacles and the results of
- (c) Conquer
 - i) Fear
 - ii) Faithlessness
 - a) **1 John 5:4-5 (ESV)** ⁴ *For everyone who has been born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world—our faith. ⁵ Who is it that overcomes the world except the one who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?*
 - b) By faith we are born of God (“Born again”)

- c) By faith we overcome the world
 - d) By faith we believe Jesus is the Son of God
 - (4) Reward Extended
 - (a) not hurt
 - (b) by the second death
 - i) Relevant Scripture
 - a) **Revelation 20:6 (ESV) ⁶ *Blessed and holy is the one who shares in the first resurrection! Over such the second death has no power, but they will be priests of God and of Christ, and they will reign with him for a thousand years.***
 - b) **Revelation 20:14 (ESV) ¹⁴ *Then Death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire.***
 - c) **Revelation 21:8 (ESV) ⁸ *But as for the cowardly, the faithless, the detestable, as for murderers, the sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars, their portion will be in the lake that burns with fire and sulfur, which is the second death.***
 - ii) Second death is
 - a) Exclusion
 - 1) from the presence of God
 - 2) from the purpose of God
 - 3) from the protection of God
 - 4) from the providence of God
 - b) Three Stages of Death in the Bible
 - 1) Spiritual Death -
 - Spiritual legacy of Adamic disobedience
 - Separation of the soul from God
 - Symptoms of Spiritual Death
 - Spiritual ignorance
 - Sin controlled mind
 - Unbelief
 - Life devoted to sinful pleasure
 - Acting in ways that lead to death
 - Deliverance from Spiritual death ONLY through Jesus Christ
 - Ephesians 2:4-5
 - 2) Physical Death -
 - Physical legacy of Adamic disobedience
 - The separation of the soul from the body

- 3) Eternal Death - Spiritual/physical legacy of personal disobedience

Chafer - "It is true that the second death, which is eternal, is separation from God and that eternal state is an immeasurable penalty in the light of the fact that the lost soul must know what grace might have wrought. The penalty is a definite imposition over and above the natural course of events - a retribution which corresponds to the punishment required. It is as certain as the character of God that whatever is imposed will be just and right, and it will be so recognized by all. God will not in this, any more than in any other undertaking, be the author of that which is evil.
- iii) It is against this reality of the second death that the work of God in Christ (the gospel) most clearly shines.
 - a) In the end there will be only life and death
 - 1) Life in Christ and in His kingdom
 - 2) Death: outside of Christ and outside His kingdom
 - b) Rescue is not merely into temporal blessing but eternal salvation from death
 - 1) cf. John 3:16
 - 2) "Shall not perish but have everlasting life.
- (5) Reward conditioned: To him who overcomes
 - (a) Rev 2:11b ὁ νικῶν οὐ μὴ ἀδικηθῇ ἐκ τοῦ θανάτου τοῦ δευτέρου.
 - i) nikon - victory, overcome
 - a) Nikon cameras, Nike shoes
 - b) *Ho nikon* = the one who prevails, gets the victory, overcomes, conquers
 - (b) Overcoming is a requirement for reward.
 - (c) What are Christians to overcome?
 - i) **John 16:33 (ESV)** ³³ *I have said these things to you, that in me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart; I have overcome the world.*
 - a) "cosmos"
 - b) The entire system in which human beings exist including both visible and invisible components
 - ii) **Romans 8:37 (ESV)** ³⁷ *No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us.*
 - a) God's attributes (Ro 8:28-37)
 - 1) God's goodness
 - 2) God's foreknowledge
 - 3) God's predestined purpose

- 4) God's calling
 - 5) God's justifying grace
 - 6) God's glorifying power
 - b) The world's efforts
 - 1) Opposition
 - 2) Accusation
 - 3) Condemnation
 - c) The world's effects
 - 1) Tribulation
 - 2) Distress
 - 3) Persecution
 - 4) Famine
 - 5) Nakedness
 - 6) Danger
 - 7) Sword
- iii) **Romans 12:21 (ESV) ²¹ Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.**
 - a) *kakos*
 - b) pertaining to being bad, harmful, destructive
- iv) **1 John 2:13 (ESV) ¹³ I am writing to you, fathers, because you know him who is from the beginning. I am writing to you, young men, because you have overcome the evil one. I write to you, children, because you know the Father.**
 - a) *ho poneros*
 - b) The one who is essentially evil
- v) **Revelation 15:2 (ESV) ² And I saw what appeared to be a sea of glass mingled with fire—and also those who had conquered the beast and its image and the number of its name, standing beside the sea of glass with harps of God in their hands.**
- (d) How are Christians to overcome?
 - i) **1 Corinthians 15:57 (ESV) ⁵⁷ But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.**
 - ii) **1 John 4:4 (ESV) ⁴ Little children, you are from God and have overcome them, for he who is in you is greater than he who is in the world.**
 - iii) **1 John 5:4-5 (ESV) ⁴ For everyone who has been born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world—our faith. ⁵ Who is it that overcomes the world except the one who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?**
 - iv) **Revelation 12:11 (ESV) ¹¹ And they have conquered him by the blood of the Lamb and by the**

word of their testimony, for they loved not their lives even unto death.

(e) What is the result of overcoming?

i) **Revelation 21:7 (ESV)** *⁷ The one who conquers will have this heritage, and I will be his God and he will be my son.*

d. Revelation of the King to the Church at Pergamum (2:12-17)

(1) Revelation given to the Church at Pergamum

- (a) The city was mainly indebted to Eumenes II. (B.C. 197–159) for its embellishment and extension.
 - i) In addition to walks and public buildings, he founded the library, which contained two-hundred-thousand volumes, and was second only to that of Alexandria.
 - ii) The kingdom of Pergamum became a Roman province B.C. 130; but the city continued to flourish, so that Pliny styled it *by far the most illustrious of Asia*.
- (b) All the main roads of Western Asia converged there. Pergamum was celebrated for the manufacture of ointments, pottery, tapestries, and parchment, which derives its name (*charta Pergamena*) from the city.
- (c) It contained a celebrated and much-frequented temple of Æsculapius, who was worshipped in the form of a living serpent fed in the temple,
- (d) The great glory of the city was the Nicephorium, a grove of great beauty containing an assemblage of temples.
 - i) The city has been described as a sort of union of a pagan cathedral-city, a university-town, and a royal residence, embellished during a succession of years by kings who all had a passion for expenditure and ample means of gratifying it.
 - ii) The streams which embraced the town irrigated the groves of Nicephorium and of Æsculapius, in which flourished the licentious rites of pagan antiquity.
 - iii) The sacred character of the city appears in coins and inscriptions which described the Pergamenes by the title claimed by the worshippers of Diana at Ephesus, νεωκόροι *temple-sweepers* or *sacristans*
 - iv) Vincent, M. R. (1887). *Word studies in the New Testament*. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons. Page 30. Exported from Logos Bible Software, 4:34 PM September 01, 2015.

(2) Revelation given of the King- The One Who has the sharp two-edged sword

(a) “Sharp two-edged sword”

- i) The word order is retained here from 1:16
 - a) “The sword, the two-mouthed, the sharp”
 - b) Each component of the description is highlighted by the repetition of the article
 - c) This is THE sword that gets God's will done!
- ii) The word for sword used here is a rare word compared with the more common word
 - a) This is the word used of the sword with which the cherub guarded the entrance to Eden
 - b) This is the word used for Goliath's sword
- iii) Other places where the words “two-edged sword” is used
 - a) The danger of the adulterous woman
 - 1) **Proverbs 5:4 (ESV)** ⁴ but in the end she is bitter as wormwood, sharp as a two-edged sword.
 - b) The potential of the divine revelation/truth/word of God
 - 1) **Hebrews 4:12 (ESV)** ¹² For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-

edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart.

- iv) “Sword” related to Jesus
 - a) **Matthew 10:34 (ESV)** ³⁴ “Do not think that I have come to bring peace to the earth. I have not come to bring peace, but a sword.”
 - b) **Ephesians 6:16-17 (ESV)** ¹⁶ In all circumstances take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming darts of the evil one; ¹⁷ and take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God,
 - c) **Revelation 1:16 (ESV)** ¹⁶ In his right hand he held seven stars, from his mouth came a sharp two-edged sword, and his face was like the sun shining in full strength.
 - d) **Revelation 2:12 (ESV)** ¹² “And to the angel of the church in Pergamum write: ‘The words of him who has the sharp two-edged sword.
 - e) **Revelation 2:16 (ESV)** ¹⁶ Therefore repent. If not, I will come to you soon and war against them with the sword of my mouth.
 - f) **Revelation 19:15 (ESV)** ¹⁵ From his mouth comes a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations, and he will rule them with a rod of iron. He will tread the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God the Almighty.
 - g) **Revelation 19:21 (ESV)** ²¹ And the rest were slain by the sword that came from the mouth of him who was sitting on the horse, and all the birds were gorged with their flesh.
- v) Swords have one inherent purpose: to divide
 - a) Represent the authority to judge
 - b) Represent the power
 - 1) To persuade
 - 2) To punish

(b) **QUESTIONS:**

- i) **If King Jesus presents Himself as the One who divides, what is He dividing and why?**
 - a) Truth from falsehood
 - b) Kingdom of the Father from the kingdom of the father of lies
 - c) Life from death
- ii) **Where else in the New Testament do we see a principle of “division for the sake of unity” at work?**
 - a) Sheep & Goats (**Matthew 25:31-33**)
 - b) Be ye separate: **2 Corinthians 6:17 (ESV)** ¹⁷ Therefore go out from their midst, and be separate from them, says the Lord, and touch no unclean thing; then I will welcome you,

- c) Be ye holy: **1 Peter 1:15 (KJV)** ¹⁵ But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation;¹⁶ Because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy.
- d) Cast out the evildoer (**1 Cor 5:1-2**)

iii) Why is it important (in the context of Revelation in general and this letter to Pergamum in particular) that the church not tolerate error and sin?

(3) Revelation given of the present experience/condition of the church

(a) Context

- i) The King knows the conditions, positive and negative, of his people.
 - a) There are no secrets in the kingdom of Christ
 - b) Therefore:
 - 1) Trust Him to know what He needs to know
 - 2) Trust Him to know what you want Him to know
 - 3) Trust Him to know what you don't want Him to know
- ii) Dwell where Satan's throne is
 - a) A throne soon to be replaced but currently filled with a fraud
 - b) Aesculapius
 - 1) Worshiped in Pergamum
 - 2) god of healing
 - 3) Took the form of a serpent
 - 4) "That old serpent, the devil"
 - c) Emperor worship
 - 1) 1st city in Asia with a temple to Augustus
 - 2) Became the center of emperor worship in the region
- iii) Antipas martyred - violent persecution from the culture
- iv) Beale: "In such an atmosphere it would be more difficult for Christians to maintain a high profile about their faith without also running into conflict with those committed to the officially accepted pagan religions, behind all of which Satan stood as king." (Pg. 246)

(b) Condition

- i) Faithful
 - a) Hold fast His name
 - b) Do not deny faith in Him
- ii) Few things
 - a) Some hold the teaching of Balaam (**Numbers 31:16**)
 - 1) Stumbling block
 - > *skandalon*

- > that part of a trap upon which the bait was set
 - 2) eat food sacrificed to idols (faith destruction)
 - 3) Practice sexual immorality
 - b) Some hold the teaching of the Nicolaitans
 - iii) Diversity of doctrine (tolerance) leads to impurity of practice
 - a) Direct defiance of the council of Jerusalem to Gentiles
 - b) **Acts 15:28-29 (ESV)** ²⁸ *For it has seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us to lay on you no greater burden than these requirements:* ²⁹ *that you abstain from what has been sacrificed to idols and from blood and from what has been strangled and from sexual immorality. If you keep yourselves from these, you will do well. Farewell.*
 - c) The combined sin of the Hellespontians and Nicolaitans seems to be a form of self-indulgent gnosticism that proclaimed that since Christians were no longer under law they were free to practice licentiousness in any form, whether forbidden by divine law or church council.
 - d) This is a “nobody can tell us what to do” attitude.
 - e) Return to pagan moral laxity perhaps in the face of strong public opposition
 - 1) (a concession to culture?)
 - 2) A feature of many churches and church bodies today
 - iv) Jesus’ letters reveal
 - a) “what is,” the current condition of the church as He prepares for the transition between kingdoms
 - b) that the current condition is not necessarily one that will transition to the new kingdom
 - c) some changes may be necessary in the church to prepare for the coming kingdom
 - v) In Pergamum, despite their faithfulness in the face of great opposition, their tolerance of false doctrine that leads to moral impurity is unacceptable to the King and He will authoritatively and powerfully address their sinful condition unless they repent.
- (4) Response required - Repent
- (a) Repentance -
 - i) acceptance of God’s trustworthy indictment of an action or characteristic of the heart
 - ii) action of turning in faith to God from sin for forgiveness, restoration, and transformation
 - iii) Repentance
 - a) The means for conversion
 - b) The means for sanctification
 - (b) Two parties called to repentance
 - i) Sinners
 - ii) The Whole Church
 - (c) Two reasons for repentance

- i) Repent of sin itself
 - ii) Repent of tolerance of sin
- (d) Obstacles to Repentance
 - i) Fear of reprisal
 - a) From the culture
 - b) From the sinners
 - c) From the church
 - ii) With Christ, repentance results in reward, though often in the church there is fear of repentance because of condemnation and punishment
 - iii) With Christ punishment follows not repentance but lack of repentance
- (e) **QUESTIONS:**
 - i) How does a congregation repent?
 - a) Prepare with prayer
 - b) Practice “one anothers” (which prepares an environment for genuine repentance without fear)
 - ii) Why would a congregation repent?
 - a) Love for Christ
 - b) Love for God’s word and promises
 - c) Love for others who are in danger if they don’t repent
- (5) Rewards and Consequences
 - (a) Consequences for the unrepentant
 - i) I will come to you soon: you will gain my attention and presence in a way you do not desire
 - ii) I will war against them with the sword of my mouth
 - (b) Some perspectives on promises
 - i) Christians must understand there can be and will be only one King upon the throne when all is said and done.
 - a) Pergamum church dwells in the place where Satan has his throne, where Satan is king
 - b) But they must dethrone him now in their midst before Christ comes and assumes His throne and they are left out of the Kingdom That Is Coming!
 - ii) The rewards of the future motivate faithfulness in the present.
 - a) **QUESTIONS:**
 - 1) Is the above statement true?
 - 2) Is the statement true for us?
 - 3) Do we actively, cognitively retain the perspective that the way in which we walk in faith now has eternal implications?
 - b) The call to repentance is a present action that has both a present and a future effect

- 1) Faithfulness in the present
- 2) Reward in the future
- c) This is consistent with the eternal perspective faith in Christ nurtures
- d) Pay attention to the now because the future counts on it
 - 1) Rewards equal an inheritance given on the basis of faithfulness to the divine character of the King, in the case of Pergamum that means: Truth, Sound Doctrine, Holy Practice
 - 2) ~~Unless the people demonstrate~~ **they share the nature of the King (faithfulness), and therefore their relation to Him, will they qualify to inherit the inheritance.**
- iii) **QUESTION:** Who inherits the inheritance?
 - a) The one who repents
 - b) The one who hears what the Spirit says to the churches
 - c) The one who overcomes
 - 1) **Matthew 7:21-23 (ESV)** ²¹ *“Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven.”* ²² *On that day many will say to me, ‘Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and cast out demons in your name, and do many mighty works in your name?’* ²³ *And then will I declare to them, ‘I never knew you; depart from me, you workers of lawlessness.’*
 - 2) Some will hear, “Depart from me you workers of iniquity, I never knew you!”
 - 3) **While we are saved through faith alone in Christ alone, we inherit through faithfulness: faith + obedience!**
- (c) Promised Rewards
- (d) of Faithfulness
 - i) I will give some of the hidden manna
 - a) In contrast to the “meat offered to idols”
 - b) Christ Himself, the bread of life, the manna that comes down from heaven
 - 1) **John 6:1-35**
 - 2) Jesus is the “manna,” the true bread sent by the Father from heaven, for the New Covenant people of God
 - > Manna has two purposes: nutrition and provision
 - > It is probably more important that God in mercy and love fed his people and sustained them, than what fed them with.
 - > Jesus is God’s specific provision of mercy and love for his people, that nurtures them now and keeps them alive forever.
 - 3) Jesus will be revealed/unhidden at His coming and will be the eternal, glorious satisfaction of all who believe and keep their faith in Him

- ii) I will give him a white stone (multiple historical backgrounds)
 - a) Urim (of Urim and Thummin)
 - 1) Ancient stone, perhaps diamond,
 - 2) Part of High Priest's required "uniform"
 - 3) Used to discern God's will for the nation
 - 4) Worn over the heart
 - 5) ONLY used for the man of God's own choosing!
 - 6) Points to Christ's choice of those to whom He will reveal the fullness of His will and with whom He will share responsibility to shepherd the nations for His glory
 - b) Seal of Authority
 - 1) Much like a family crest or government seal
 - 2) Represented the reputation, resources, and position of the person's whose name is engraved on the stone
 - 3) Bearer could request provision based on the riches of the issuer
 - 4) Signified confidence of the issuer in the person and errand of the bearer
 - c) Pass of admission to special occasions -
 - 1) stone (halved) also served as seat assignment
 - 2) Such as the marriage supper of the Lamb
 - 3) Or the hidden manna
 - d) Recognition of accomplishment
 - 1) Sporting event: olive wreath (fades) and white stone
 - 2) Unending memorial of victory
 - e) Mark of acceptance
 - 1) Slave bore the marks of a slave throughout his life
 - 2) But the stone, the mark of freedom, overrides the mark of the slave
 - f) Vote of acquittal/favor
 - 1) The judge's answer to the accuser becomes the accused's answer to accusers
Rev. 12:10
 - 2) **QUESTION:** If the white stone is a vote of acquittal or favor from Jesus, what are the believers being acquitted from?
 - > Their sin of tolerance and false doctrine
 - > The accusal of culture that they were failing to follow majority rule
 - > The accusation of the enemy that neither the work of Christ, nor the power of the Spirit, nor the faith of the redeemed has truly accomplished God's purpose in the life of the Christian or the Christian congregation

- g) White
 - 1) Given that it is white it could represent the righteousness of the saints is not compromising with the world
 - 2) "White" probably also connotes the victory won by the person who **overcomes** through persevering faith and righteousness
 - 3) **QUESTION:** What does a Pergamum Christian need to overcome?
 - > Spiritual laziness
 - > Cultural assimilation
 - > Spiritual ignorance
- h) The white stone combined with the new name could serve the same function as the wedding ring does in our culture: sign of covenant union
 - 1) I choose you to bear my name forever
 - 2) I choose you to share in my identity and my character and the blessing of being my intimate partner in union for eternity
 - 3) I choose for you to bear my image, my identity, in the world that all might know how I love and how I choose, that the world might know me through my choices!
- iii) with a new name
 - a) Most likely a name for the King, Less likely as individual name
 - 1) **Revelation 3:12 (ESV)** ¹² *The one who conquers, I will make him a pillar in the temple of my God. Never shall he go out of it, and I will write on him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, the new Jerusalem, which comes down from my God out of heaven, and my own new name.*
 - 2) **Revelation 22:3-4 (ESV)** ³ *No longer will there be anything accursed, but the throne of God and of the Lamb will be in it, and his servants will worship him.* ⁴ *They will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads.*
 - b) Beale: all reference in Rev. that refer to a "new name" "refer to the intimate eschatological presence of God and Christ with his people, as expressed most clearly in Rev. 22:3-4.
- iv) that no one knows except the one who receives it.
 - a) This is the kingly name of Christ that He himself reveals at the end of each believers' life and the conclusion of all history
 - b) To be given a new name was in indication of a change in status, thus, when the King comes and His kingdom is established, faithful believers will receive the identifying name of the King
 - c) Unbelievers are unable to know or experience the reality of this name, since it is reserved for believers alone
 - 1) The wedding party does not receive the groom's name

- 2) **Only the bride enters into the consummate unity and identity bestowed by the covenant to which bride and groom commit themselves.**
 - > **Ephesians 5:25-27 (ESV) ²⁵ *Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, ²⁶ that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, ²⁷ so that he might present the church to himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish.***
 - > **Revelation 21:2 (ESV) ² *And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.***
 - 3) The new name is a mark of membership in the community of the redeemed without which entry into the eternal city of God and the marriage supper of the Lamb is impossible.
 - 4) Compare: the mark of the beast which allows the worldly to participate in the activities of the world, but disqualifies them from participating in the activities of heaven!
- (6) Summary:
- (a) Compromise draws the world into the heart and life of the church,
 - (b) the tolerance for sin and false doctrine that manifests spiritual compromise are condemned and resisted by the King
 - (c) For love of the King and the future favor of the King, the church rejects and resists the world, preferring the white stone of His eternal favor to the number of the beast, the mark of the world.

- e. Revelation of the King to the Church at Thyatira (2:18-29)
- (1) Revelation given to - the angel and the congregation at Thyatira
 - (a) Church may have been started by Lydia (Acts 16:14-15)
 - (b) Commerce
 - i) Known for purple dyes
 - ii) Known for metalcraft, including bronze armor
 - iii) Known for pottery making
 - (c) Pagan religion
 - i) Practices
 - a) Each craft guild dedicated to a different deity
 - b) Often festivals where food offered to idols was served and where sex and religion mingled
 - ii) Mysteries
 - a) The idea that true worship of a deity required a knowledge that could only be obtained through certain practices
 - b) Only those initiated into these practices could gain the secret knowledge required for acceptable worship
 - c) Initiation practices often included eating the food offered to the idol and sex with religious adherents and temple prostitutes (both male and female)
 - iii) Temple of Apollo, the sun god
 - (2) Revelation given by
 - (a) Description of who He is
 - i) Son of God
 - a) Only used here in the book of Revelation
 - b) There was a temple of Apollo, the sun god, in Thyatira
 - 1) Apollo was considered the son of Zeus, king of the gods
 - 2) Jesus reveals that He alone is the Son of the One True God
 - 3) Whose eyes and feet shine brighter than the sun!
 - ii) The One Who has eyes like flames of fire,
 - a) Eyes that see the truth
 - b) Eyes that pierce the lies of the mystery promoters and gnostics
 - iii) Whose feet are like burnished bronze
 - (b) Description of what He knows
 - i) I know your works
 - a) "Works"
 - 1) Three uses

- > The works of God
- > The work of Christ
- > The work of man in relation to faith
- 2) Jesus knows the degree to which their efforts as people of faith match the will and purpose of God in Christ, especially in quality
 - > It was by his works that Jesus revealed that he was both Messiah and Son of God, exemplified by his answer to John the Baptist (Mt. 11:2–5).
 - > John’s Gospel records the significant activity of Jesus with set purpose to reveal his Messiahship and deity so as to induce faith in his Person (Jn. 20:30–31).
 - > Frequently Jesus pointed to his works as evidence that he was sent by the Father (Jn. 5:36; 10:37–38).
 - > Being the very works of God (Jn. 9:3–4), his works are sufficient ground for faith in him as being uniquely related to the Father (Jn. 10:38; 14:10–11).
- 3) Their works
 - > Reveal Christ as Messiah and Son of God
 - > Persuade others to faith in Christ
 - > Demonstrate that Christ was sent by the Father and they are sent by Christ!
 - > Jesus said, “Greater works than these will you do,” meaning that when the disciples genuinely and authentically live out their faith in Christ, their works, empowered by the same Holy Spirit who worked God’s work in and through Christ, would work in and through them because through faith they are uniquely related to the Father.
 - > (They are not Christ, but they are in Christ and Christ is in them through the Holy Spirit as evidenced by the quality of their works related to faith.)
- b) Nature of their works
 - 1) Love - agape
 - 2) Faith
 - > **Hebrews 11:1 (ESV) ¹ Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.**
 - > **Hebrews 11:6 (ESV) ⁶ And without faith it is impossible to please him, for whoever would draw near to God must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who seek him.**
 - > Three Kinds of Faith
 - Saving Faith
 - Pleasing Faith (Validating Faith)

- Living Faith (James)

- 3) Service - *diakonos*
 - > See Acts 6:1-4
 - > Ways Christians actively live out Christ's love for one another
- 4) Patient Endurance
- c) Multiplications
 - 1) **1 Thessalonians 4:1 (ESV)** *Finally, then, brothers, we ask and urge you in the Lord Jesus, that as you received from us how you ought to walk and to please God, just as you are doing, that you do so more and more.*
 - 2) **Revelation 2:5 (ESV)** ⁵ *Remember therefore from where you have fallen; repent, and do the works you did at first. If not, I will come to you and remove your lampstand from its place, unless you repent.*
- ii) **QUESTION:** The spiritual activities of the congregation at Thyatira are characterized by love, faith, service, and patience. And their efforts have increased both in quantity and quality since they were first saved. What does this indicate about this congregation?
 - a) They are a church with the character of Jesus
 - b) They are a church with a concern at the heart that is unlike Jesus
 - c) They probably think they are faithfully loving and serving these people by not confronting them.
- (c) Description of what He sees
 - i) Christ's condemnation of this congregation, unlike Pergamum ("I have a few things against you") is focused on one single deficit, perhaps highlighting the severity of the problem and the intensity of the Lord's rejection of and judgment against it.

NOTE: Prior to the transition of kingdoms that begins in ch. 4 and continues through the end of the Revelation, Christ, using pointed assertions, asks the church two questions:

1. What is the condition of your heart?
2. What is the condition of your church?

Both questions lead to the essential transition question: Are you ready for the coming of the King and the transition to His eternal kingdom? (That being the primary question of the entire book.)

Kevin DeYoung -

www.thegospelcoalition.org/blogs/kevindeyoung/2015/10/13/the-tolerance-jesus-will-not-tolerate
 "You tolerate that woman, Jezebel"

- 1) **FIRST:** Spiritual Realities and Spiritual Armor
Ephesians 6:10-18 (ESV) ¹⁰ *Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might.* ¹¹ *Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil.* ¹² *For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places.* ¹³ *Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand firm.* ¹⁴ *Stand therefore, having fastened on the belt of truth, and having put on the breastplate of righteousness,* ¹⁵ *and, as shoes for your feet, having put on the readiness given by the gospel of peace.* ¹⁶ *In all circumstances take up the shield of faith,*

with which you can extinguish all the flaming darts of the evil one; ¹⁷ and take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God, ¹⁸ praying at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication. To that end keep alert with all perseverance, making supplication for all the saints

- 2) Jezebel is a spiritual reality and must be understood and opposed as such

NOTE: When we begin to draw the enemy into the light we can expect a fervent response of returning to darkness/covering up/misdirecting/evasive action

- 3) Need to keep in mind and heart the nature of the discussion at this point, and prayerfully rely on the Holy Spirit to give us insight and protection from the workings of this spirit.

- c) **NOTE:** In Greek, “that woman” = “thy wife”

- 1) This person (or those infected by this spirit) are as closely attached to the church at Thyatira as a wife is to a husband, and as powerfully influencing the church to evil as Jezebel did Ahab.
- 2) The nature of the relationship obstructs action against the sin
- 3) This is a case where human relationships are given priority in the church over the gospel, the commandments, and the King Himself.
- 4) **We cannot rescue Christ’s servants from His enemies if we are not willing to put His relationship with them in priority over our relationship with them.**

- d) “teaches and seduces my servants”

- 1) The three oldest manuscripts read, “and she teaches and seduces,” or “deceives.”
- 2) “Thyatira was just the reverse of Ephesus. There, much zeal for orthodoxy, but little love; here, activity of faith and love, but insufficient zeal for godly discipline and doctrine, a patience of error even where there was not a participation in it” [TRENCH]. Jamieson, R., Fausset, A. R., & Brown, D. (1997). *Commentary Critical and Explanatory on the Whole Bible* (Vol. 2, p. 558). Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc.

ii) Participation in the spirit of Jezebel

a) Jezebel in OT History

- 1) **1 Kings 16:31 (ESV)** ³¹ And as if it had been a light thing for him to walk in the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, he took for his wife Jezebel the daughter of Ethbaal king of the Sidonians, and went and served Baal and worshiped him.
 > Ethbaal [ěth‘bāl] (Heb. ʔeʔbaʕal “man of Baal”).
 Ethbaal I, king of Tyre and Sidon for thirty-two years; father of Jezebel, who married King Ahab of Israel (1 Kgs. 16:31).
 He was a priest of Astarte and usurped the throne by murdering Pheles, the last of Hiram I’s descendants (Josephus *Ap.* i.18 [123]). Ethbaal

successfully expanded Phoenician commercial activities. Myers, A. C. (1987). In *The Eerdmans Bible dictionary* (p. 354). Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans.

- 2) **1 Kings 18:4 (ESV)** ⁴ and when Jezebel cut off the prophets of the LORD, Obadiah took a hundred prophets and hid them by fifties in a cave and fed them with bread and water.)
- 3) **1 Kings 18:13 (ESV)** ¹³ Has it not been told my lord what I did when Jezebel killed the prophets of the LORD, how I hid a hundred men of the LORD's prophets by fifties in a cave and fed them with bread and water?
- 4) **1 Kings 18:19 (ESV)** ¹⁹ Now therefore send and gather all Israel to me at Mount Carmel, and the 450 prophets of Baal and the 400 prophets of Asherah, who eat at Jezebel's table."
- 5) **1 Kings 19:1-2 (ESV)** ¹ Ahab told Jezebel all that Elijah had done, and how he had killed all the prophets with the sword. ² Then Jezebel sent a messenger to Elijah, saying, "So may the gods do to me and more also, if I do not make your life as the life of one of them by this time tomorrow."
- 6) **1 Kings 21:5 (ESV)** ⁵ But Jezebel his wife came to him and said to him, "Why is your spirit so vexed that you eat no food?"
- 7) **1 Kings 21:7 (ESV)** ⁷ And Jezebel his wife said to him, "Do you now govern Israel? Arise and eat bread and let your heart be cheerful; I will give you the vineyard of Naboth the Jezreelite."
- 8) **1 Kings 21:11 (ESV)** ¹¹ And the men of his city, the elders and the leaders who lived in his city, did as Jezebel had sent word to them. As it was written in the letters that she had sent to them,
- 9) **1 Kings 21:14 (ESV)** ¹⁴ Then they sent to Jezebel, saying, "Naboth has been stoned; he is dead."
- 10) **1 Kings 21:15 (ESV)** ¹⁵ As soon as Jezebel heard that Naboth had been stoned and was dead, Jezebel said to Ahab, "Arise, take possession of the vineyard of Naboth the Jezreelite, which he refused to give you for money, for Naboth is not alive, but dead."
- 11) **1 Kings 21:23 (ESV)** ²³ And of Jezebel the LORD also said, 'The dogs shall eat Jezebel within the walls of Jezreel.'
- 12) **1 Kings 21:25 (ESV)** ²⁵ (There was none who sold himself to do what was evil in the sight of the LORD like Ahab, whom Jezebel his wife incited.
- 13) **2 Kings 9:7 (ESV)** ⁷ And you shall strike down the house of Ahab your master, so that I may avenge on Jezebel the blood of my servants the prophets, and the blood of all the servants of the LORD.
- 14) **2 Kings 9:10 (ESV)** ¹⁰ And the dogs shall eat Jezebel in the territory of Jezreel, and none

shall bury her.” Then he opened the door and fled.

- 15) **2 Kings 9:22 (ESV)** ²² And when Joram saw Jehu, he said, “Is it peace, Jehu?” He answered, “What peace can there be, so long as the whorings and the sorceries of your mother Jezebel are so many?”
- 16) **2 Kings 9:30 (ESV)** ³⁰ When Jehu came to Jezreel, Jezebel heard of it. And she painted her eyes and adorned her head and looked out of the window.
- 17) **2 Kings 9:36-37 (ESV)** ³⁶ When they came back and told him, he said, “This is the word of the LORD, which he spoke by his servant Elijah the Tishbite: ‘In the territory of Jezreel the dogs shall eat the flesh of Jezebel,’ ³⁷ and the corpse of Jezebel shall be as dung on the face of the field in the territory of Jezreel, so that no one can say, This is Jezebel.’”

b) Historical Jezebel’s evil

- 1) Aggressively ambitious daughter of Ethbaal
- 2) Married into Israel/married Ahab in order to impose false worship on God’s people (demonic power play)
- 3) Thoroughly devoted to Baal/Ashtoreth worship
- 4) Murdered many of the prophets of Yawheh
- 5) Imported Baal/Ashtoreth worship, as well as false prophets into Israel
- 6) Supported and nurtured false prophets and false religion in Israel
- 7) Manipulated leaders to do her bidding, even evil bidding
- 8) Conniving and vicious
- 9) Murdered Naboth in order to gain his vineyard for her petulant husband
- 10) Threatened the life of Elijah, God’s prophet of opposition to Jezebel
- 11) Incited her husband to great evil (using his authority as a mask for her own expression of power [Ahab the puppet])
- 12) Practiced sexual and religious adultery and witchcraft
- 13) Attempted to seduce her judge (Jehu)

c) Thyatiran Jezebel’s evil

- 1) Seducing “my servants”
 - > To practice sexual immorality
 - > To eat food sacrificed to idols
 - > Jezebel’s lie is Jezebel’s power - “Self-indulgence, pleasure, exaltation of self is okay as long as “faith” or spirituality remains in place.”
- 2) Refuses to repent
- 3) In danger of divine judgment

d) What **we** need to understand about the Jezebel spirit

- 1) **Ephesians 6:12 (ESV)** ¹² For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places.
 - > Rulers
 - > Authorities
 - > Cosmic powers over this present darkness
 - > Spiritual forces in the heavenly places
 - 2) **Churches can get very comfortable with the sins that will condemn them.**
 - 3) Paul reveals the spiritual context for disciples and disciple-makers: Ignorance is not a refuge; it is a defeat!
 - 4) The Jezebel spirit is one of the spiritual forces in the heavenly places
 - 5) The Jezebel spirit influences susceptible people, usually but not always women, to assume the character and spiritual traits seen most flagrantly in Jezebel of ancient Israel
 - > Genesis 3:1 “Did God really say . . .?”
 - > Creating doubt related to God’s revelation of Himself
 - 6) The Jezebel spirit is a diabolical spiritual force that seeks to deceive, defile, and destroy God’s authority, particularly where it means destroying God’s people and leading God’s people away from pure and holy faith in and obedience to God
 - 7) The Jezebel spirit undermines the work of the Holy Spirit by masking or veiling the true revelation of the Person of God
 - 8) The Jezebel spirit is a celestial power that has worldwide influence
 - 9) Like Jezebel of old, the Jezebel spirit is a murderous spirit, willing to murder reputations or entire churches (thus Christ’s threat to kill her children with death)
 - 10) The Jezebel spirit takes what is holy and replaces it with what is profane
 - 11) Like Jezebel of old, the Jezebel spirit is manipulative, controlling, sexually perverse, and idolatrous
 - 12) Like Jezebel of old, the Jezebel spirit neither supports nor practices true marriage
 - > Driving force behind divorce and “same-sex marriage”
 - > Driving force behind radical feminism
 - 13) Like Jezebel of old, the Jezebel spirit submits to no one but requires submission by everyone
 - 14) The Jezebel spirit seeks power, prestige, and position, with the intent to destroy
 - 15) The Jezebel spirit creates desire, longing, lust, and an appetite for sin in the heart of a person.
- e) Fourteen Suggested Characteristics of the Jezebel Spirit in Today’s Church

- 1) From “Unmasking the Jezebel Spirit,” Appendix A
- 2) “While it’s almost unrecognizable at first, such individuals are threatened by a prophetic leader, who is the main target of concern.
 - > Although such people will seem to have prophetic gifts, their aim is to control those who move in the prophetic realm.
 - > Jezebel influenced people will seek to neutralize discernment in the church, usually by discrediting the insight of the truly discerning
- 3) To increase their favor, such individuals often zero in on a pastor or church staff, and then seek to find the weakest link in order to subdue them. Their eventual goal is to run the church.
- 4) Seeking to gain popular and pastoral endorsement, such individuals will form strategic affiliations with people who are perceived by others to be spiritual or influential with others.
 - > Jezebel influenced people use gossip and private “prayer request” conversations to create distrust and division.
 - > Jezebel influenced people are far more likely to use ambiguous, undefined terms to sound as if they have more support than they do, eg. “Some people,” “everyone I talk to,” etc
- 5) To appear spiritual, such individuals will seek recognition by manipulating situations to gain an advantage.
- 6) When these individuals receive initial recognition, they often respond with false humility. However, this trait is short lived.
- 7) When confronted, these individuals will become defensive. They will justify their actions with phrases like, “I’m just following God” or “God told me to do this.”
- 8) These individuals will often allege to having a great spiritual insight into church government and affairs, but they will not appeal to proper authority. Rather they *first* appeal to others. Often their opinion becomes the “last word” on matters, thereby elevating their thoughts above the pastor’s.
- 9) Having impure motives, these individuals will seek out others, desiring to have “disciples,” needing constant affirmation from their followers.
- 10) Desiring to avoid accountability, these individuals prefer to pray for people in isolated situations—in a corner or in another room. Thus, innuendoes and false “prophetic” words cannot be easily challenged.
- 11) Eager to gain control, these people will gather others and seek to teach them. While the teachings may begin correctly, “doctrine” is often established that is not supported by the

- Word of God.
- 12) Masking poor self esteem with spiritual pride, these individuals want to be seen as the most spiritual ones in the church. They are no different from the Pharisees who announced their gifts in order to be seen by men.
 - 13) Usually such an individual's family life is shaky. These individuals may be single or married. If married, their spouse is usually weak spiritually, unsaved, or miserable. They begin to dominate and control everyone in the family.
- iii) The King's Prescription for A Pure Church: (The goal of each letter and all the letters and the R)
- a) Jezebel spirit
 - 1) Thrown onto a bed of sickness -
 - > the place of her sin shall be the place of her suffering and punishment
 - > pleasure becomes a burden
 - 2) Children struck down -
 - > she who led others to sacrifice their children to false gods will have her own children struck down by the one True God!
 - > ~~Probably not literal children, but all who take on her spiritual DNA having become~~ like her or been "born to her" by embracing her teaching
 - b) Participants -
 - 1) "those who commit adultery with her
 - > Those who actively participate with her in her idolatries and adulteries
 - > Those who "tolerate" her, or advance her position by "leaving her alone" to do her work.
 - 2) Thrown into great tribulation
 - > Distinguish "great tribulation" from "the great tribulation"
 - > Unless, this "great tribulation" IS "the great tribulation" being referenced later
 - > In which case, the church is not raptured prior to "the great tribulation," but suffers through it as an act of cleansing from ungodly "tolerance"
 - 3) "All the churches will know
 - > ***This is the entire purpose of the Revelation: that the church will KNOW***
 - > God is known by *the judgments that he executes*; and, by this revenge taken upon seducers, he would make known,
 - > (1.) His infallible knowledge of the hearts of men, of their principles, designs, frame, and temper, their formality, their indifference, their secret inclinations to symbolize with idolaters.
 - > (2.) His impartial justice, in *giving every one according to his work*, that the name

of Christians should be no protection, their churches should be no sanctuaries for sin and sinners.

> Henry, M. (1994). *Matthew Henry's commentary on the whole Bible: complete and unabridged in one volume* (p. 2467). Peabody: Hendrickson.

(3) Response required - Repent or Hold On

(a) Repent of "her works" (Five Measures That Support Repentance)

i) Repentance requires

a) Faith

- 1) In the truthfulness of God - that God is right and true about what he says
- 2) In the goodness of God - that God's intent in revelation is to sustain His righteousness and increase ours
- 3) In the mercy of God - that God's motive is mercy rather than judgment (James)

b) Acceptance

- 1) Of the assessment of God
- 2) Of the worthiness of God
- 3) Of the intent of God

c) Action

- 1) Confess the sin
 - > To God
 - > If necessary, to others involved
- 2) Reject the sin
 - > Re-evaluate its worthiness
 - > Sever affectional ties
- 3) Take the action required against sin
 - > Remove the occasion of sin
 - > Remove the opportunity for sin
- 4) Do not return to the sin
- 5) **QUESTION:** If there is no action to remove/end the sin, can it be said the church has truly repented?

(b) How does the church avoid a Jezebel infection in the first place?

i) Churches willing to accept the authenticity of Christ's warnings ought to become churches that actively put in place and maintain preventative measures

- a) A church that assumes everything is alright because nothing changes is already not alright.
- b) Integrity and purity in the church require diligent, active, constant faithful maintenance
- c) Consider the pattern of practice King Jesus prescribes in the first four letters

- 1) Keep your first love first!
 - 2) Be faithful unto death: an unwavering commitment
 - 3) Hold fast and do not deny Christ's name
 - 4) Hold fast to what you have: recognize and maintain the value of pure doctrine in faith and practice!
- ii) Test the spirits
- a) **1 John 4:1 (ESV) ¹ Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, for many false prophets have gone out into the world.**
 - b) "Religious information is not benign. It either comes from the Spirit of truth, who is the Holy Spirit, so called by our Lord Himself several times in the upper room discourse in the gospel of John. There is the Spirit of truth, the Holy Spirit, and there is the spirit of error who would be Satan and his demons. Nothing is benign. All spiritual truth either comes from a divine source or a demonic source." John MacArthur
 - c) **QUESTION:** How does the church "test the spirits?" **1 John 4:1-6**
 - 1) 1 John 4:2 Number one test, the confession of the divine Lord. (Christology)
 - 2) 1 John 4:4 Second test, possession of the divine life. (Regeneration)
 - 3) 1 John 4:6 Third test, the evidence of submission to biblical truth
 - d) For this to be effective the entire congregation must have an active mentality of protecting the integrity of their belief and witness
 - 1) Integrity is not merely the realm of church leaders
 - 2) STOP BEING PASSIVE consumers relative to your church
 - 3) The message of the Thyatira church: Get involved in the spiritual integrity of the church or suffer the consequences with the rest.
- iii) Rightly divide the word of truth
- a) **2 Timothy 2:15 (ESV) ¹⁵ Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who has no need to be ashamed, rightly handling the word of truth.**
 - 1) "Do your best"
 - > Assign the cause to which you are called appropriate worth or value
 - > Determine to excel
 - > Prepare: gather and gain competence with the tools necessary to succeed
 - > Exert maximum effort (including investing adequate time for excellence)
 - 2) Uses of the term
 - > **2 Timothy 2:15 (ESV) ¹⁵ Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who has no need to be ashamed, rightly handling the word of truth.**
 - > **2 Timothy 4:9 (ESV) ⁹ Do your best to come to me soon.**

- > **2 Timothy 4:21 (ESV)** ²¹ Do your best to come before winter. Eubulus sends greetings to you, as do Pudens and Linus and Claudia and all the brothers.
- > **Titus 3:12-13 (ESV)** ¹² When I send Artemas or Tychicus to you, do your best to come to me at Nicopolis, for I have decided to spend the winter there. ¹³ Do your best to speed Zenas the lawyer and Apollos on their way; see that they lack nothing.
- > **Galatians 2:10 (ESV)** ¹⁰ Only, they asked us to remember the poor, the very thing I was eager to do.
- > **1 Thessalonians 2:17 (ESV)** ¹⁷ But since we were torn away from you, brothers, for a short time, in person not in heart, we endeavored the more eagerly and with great desire to see you face to face,
- > **2 Peter 1:15 (ESV)** ¹⁵ And I will make every effort so that after my departure you may be able at any time to recall these things.
- > **Ephesians 4:3 (ESV)** ³ eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.
- > **Hebrews 4:11 (ESV)** ¹¹ Let us therefore strive to enter that rest, so that no one may fall by the same sort of disobedience.
- b) **2 Timothy 3:16-17 (ESV)** ¹⁶ *All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness,* ¹⁷ *that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.*
 - 1) “Be complete”
 - 2) Word typically translated “perfect”: having arrived at the goal and purpose for which you were created
- c) The Holy Spirit clearly calls the church to diligence and excellence in knowing and applying the Scripture truths He reveals
 - 1) Though Paul addresses a single person in these two verses, there is no valid reason to think that only Timothy or only pastors/leaders are to “do your best” and “be complete.”
 - 2) Every born again person can own the title “man of God,” or “woman of God.”
 - 3) These excludes the “good enough” attitude that prevails among many Christians when it comes to Bible study
 - > Requires concentrated prayer
 - > Requires Spirit-given heart preparation
 - > Requires sanctified effort, including time investment
 - > Requires practice!
 - > Requires increasing expertise

- 4) **QUESTION:** With this level of diligence required by the Spirit, why do so many who call themselves Christian spend so little effort to truly know the word, through which they would know Christ, the Father, and the Spirit, and their own hearts?
- iv) Discern
- a) **Hebrews 5:14 (ESV)** ¹⁴ But solid food is for the mature, for those who have their powers of discernment trained by constant practice to distinguish good from evil.
- b) Discernment
- 1) Definition -
- > The sound judgment which makes possible the distinguishing of good from evil, and the recognition of God's right ways for his people.
 - > It is necessary for the understanding of spiritual realities and, on a practical level, for right government and the avoidance of life's pitfalls.
- 2) Nature of discernment -
- > Discernment is given by God, through his Holy Spirit.
 - > It is received through God's word and through the insight of a renewed mind.
 - > Discerning believers seek to grow in their understanding and knowledge of God's word.
- 3) Discernment as sound judgment
- > Judging the right course
Proverbs 15:21 (ESV) ²¹ Folly is a joy to him who lacks sense, but a man of understanding walks straight ahead.

Philippians 1:9-10 (ESV)
⁹ And it is my prayer that your love may abound more and more, with knowledge and all discernment, ¹⁰ so that you may approve what is excellent, and so be pure and blameless for the day of Christ,

See also Pr 3:21-23; 8:8-9; 10:21; 11:12; 18:1; 24:30; Hos 14:9

 - > Distinguishing good from evil
2 Samuel 14:17 (ESV) ¹⁷ And your servant thought, 'The word of my lord the king will set me at rest,' for my lord the king is like the angel of God to discern good and evil. The LORD your God be with you!"
- See also* Ge 3:22; Job 6:30; 34:3-4; Isa 7:15

- > Distinguishing holy from common

Leviticus 10:10 (ESV) ¹⁰ You are to distinguish between the holy and the common, and between the unclean and the clean,

Leviticus 11:47 (ESV) ⁴⁷ to make a distinction between the unclean and the clean and between the living creature that may be eaten and the living creature that may not be eaten.

Ezekiel 22:26 (ESV) ²⁶ Her priests have done violence to my law and have profaned my holy things. They have made no distinction between the holy and the common, neither have they taught the difference between the unclean and the clean, and they have disregarded my Sabbaths, so that I am profaned among them.

Ezekiel 44:23 (ESV) ²³ They shall teach my people the difference between the holy and the common, and show them how to distinguish between the unclean and the clean.

- > Seeing through outward appearances

Proverbs 12:1 (ESV) ¹ A rich man is wise in his own eyes, but a poor man who has understanding will find him out.

See also 1Sa 16:7; Isa 11:3

- > Understanding the significance of events

Deuteronomy 32:29-30 (ESV) ²⁹ If they were wise, they would understand this; they would discern their latter end! ³⁰ How could one have chased a thousand, and two have put ten thousand to flight, unless their Rock had sold them, and the LORD had given them up?

See also 1Ch 12:32; Est 1:13; Mt 24:32-33 pp Mk 13:28-29; Lk 12:54-56

4) Discernment as insight into spiritual realities

- > Distinguishing between spirits

1 Corinthians 12:10 (ESV) ¹⁰ to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another the ability to distinguish between spirits, to another various kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues.

See also 1Ki 22:19-23 pp 2Ch 18:18-22; 1Ti 4:1; 1Jn 4:1-3

- > Discerning true and false prophecy
Deuteronomy 13:1-3 (ESV) ¹“If a prophet or a dreamer of dreams arises among you and gives you a sign or a wonder, ²and the sign or wonder that he tells you comes to pass, and if he says, ‘Let us go after other gods,’ which you have not known, ‘and let us serve them,’ ³you shall not listen to the words of that prophet or that dreamer of dreams. For the LORD your God is testing you, to know whether you love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul.

Deuteronomy 18:21-22 (ESV) ²¹ And if you say in your heart, ‘How may we know the word that the LORD has not spoken?’— ²²when a prophet speaks in the name of the LORD, if the word does not come to pass or come true, that is a word that the LORD has not spoken; the prophet has spoken it presumptuously. You need not be afraid of him.

1 Corinthians 14:29 (ESV) ²⁹ Let two or three prophets speak, and let the others weigh what is said.

5) Characteristics of discerning people

- > The discerning grow in wisdom
Proverbs 1:5 (ESV) ⁵ Let the wise hear and increase in learning, and the one who understands obtain guidance,
See also Pr 9:9; 10:14; 14:6; 15:14; 17:24; 18:15
- > The discerning accept rebuke
Proverbs 17:10 (ESV) ¹⁰ A rebuke goes deeper into a man of understanding than a hundred blows into a fool.
- > The discerning keep God’s law
1 Chronicles 22:12 (ESV) ¹² Only, may the LORD grant you discretion and understanding, that when he gives you charge over Israel you may keep the law of the LORD your God.

Psalms 119:34 (ESV) ³⁴ Give me understanding, that I may keep your law and observe it with my whole heart.

Proverbs 28:7 (ESV) ⁷ The one who keeps the law is a son with understanding, but a companion of gluttons shames his father.

6) The source of discernment

> Discernment is given by God

Daniel 2:21 (ESV) ²¹ He changes times and seasons; he removes kings and sets up kings; he gives wisdom to the wise and knowledge to those who have understanding;

See also Pr 9:10; Da 2:27-28; 1Co 2:12-15

> Discernment through God's word

Hebrews 5:14 (ESV) ¹⁴ But solid food is for the mature, for those who have their powers of discernment trained by constant practice to distinguish good from evil.

See also Ps 19:7; 119:98-100,130; Ro 2:18

> Discernment through a renewed mind

Romans 12:2 (ESV) ² Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.

See also Jer 31:33; 1Co 2:16

7) Manser, M. H. (2009). *Dictionary of Bible Themes: The Accessible and Comprehensive Tool for Topical Studies*. London: Martin Manser

8) **QUESTION:** Think carefully and honestly, how important is discernment to you, given that with discernment comes responsibility to act?

v) Be faithful, looking for Christ and no other to lead

a) **Ephesians 1:22–23 (ESV)** *And he put all things under his feet and gave him as head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all.*

b) When human leadership veers in content and outcome from the leadership of Christ, human leadership should be rejected in favor of divine leadership of Christ

c) How will one know if human leadership veers from that of Christ? DISCERNMENT!

(c) Hold fast to what you have until I come.

- i) Hold fast
 - a) Uses
 - 1) **Revelation 2:1 (ESV)** ¹ *“To the angel of the church in Ephesus write: ‘The words of him who holds the seven stars in his right hand, who walks among the seven golden lampstands.*
 - 2) Also used with Philadelphia - **Revelation 3:11 (ESV)** ¹¹ *I am coming soon. Hold fast what you have, so that no one may seize your crown.*
 - 3) **QUESTION:** Think about how Jesus holds the churches in his hand. How should Christians then hold on to what they have?
 - b) Meaning
 - 1) ***kratos***
 - 2) To seize, to retain in the hand
 - 3) tenacious grip
 - 4) Holding on to a possession, refusing to release it: the idea here might be a woman grasping her child and refusing to release it to a kidnapper
- ii) What you have
 - a) Gospel
 - b) Works: love and faithfulness
 - c) Revelation: past and present teachings of Jesus
 - d) Church
 - e) Commitment
 - 1) To keep the teaching of Christ
 - 2) To deny the “deep things of Satan” (as if they were anything worth getting anyway)
 - f) Summary
 - 1) Trust what Christ has done and is doing in your church
 - 2) Hold passionately to the value and worth of your church (the people, the people!)
 - 3) Grasp with passion and determination the grace, mercy, and teaching you have already received.
 - 4) Know Christ so that you will know when he comes from when an imposter attempts to come in his name.
- iii) Until I come
 - a) You don’t know when He will come.
 - b) You do know that He is coming
 - c) Therefore the point is that you maintain the integrity of your grip on Him until He arrives regardless of how long it takes or what occurs in the meanwhile.

- 1) You're soon going to find out what the transition process between kingdoms encompasses
 - 2) Hold on to what you have because the work of God establishing His kingdom will have in it, from both sides, sufficient power to sweep you away if you do not hold on!
- (d) To the one who conquers and keeps my works to the end
- i) There is a *kai* between v. 25 and v. 26 that suggests a close tie between the call to hold fast and the promise to the victor
 - a) "conquering" could be the equivalent of "hold fast"
 - b) Victory = refusing to release the gospel prize to the unrelenting tug of the world
 - ii) Conquers vs
 - a) *nike* - to win victory over, to overcome
 - b) Overcome what?
 - 1) defeat - joins Jezebel
 - 2) indifference - tolerates Jezebel
 - 3) retreats - knows about Jezebel but refuses to act
 - iii) "my works" vs "her/their works"
 - a) What are the works of the great King?
 - 1) The works of the King are mighty
 - > **Matthew 11:20 (ESV)** ²⁰ Then he began to denounce the cities where most of his mighty works had been done, because they did not repent.
 - 2) The works of the King are true
 - > **John 3:21 (ESV)** ²¹ But whoever does what is true comes to the light, so that it may be clearly seen that his works have been carried out in God."
 - 3) The works of the King are the works of God
 - > **John 4:34 (ESV)** ³⁴ Jesus said to them, "My food is to do the will of him who sent me and to accomplish his work.
 - > **John 5:17 (ESV)** ¹⁷ But Jesus answered them, "My Father is working until now, and I am working."
 - > **John 14:10 (ESV)** ¹⁰ Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me? The words that I say to you I do not speak on my own authority, but the Father who dwells in me does his works.
 - > **John 17:4 (ESV)** ⁴ I glorified you on earth, having accomplished the work that you gave me to do.
 - 4) The works of the King cause men to marvel
 - > **John 5:20 (ESV)** ²⁰ For the Father loves the Son and shows him all that he himself is doing. And greater works than these will he show him, so that you may marvel.

- 5) The works of the King testify to His divine identity
 - > **John 5:36 (ESV)** ³⁶ But the testimony that I have is greater than that of John. For the works that the Father has given me to accomplish, the very works that I am doing, bear witness about me that the Father has sent me.
 - > **John 6:28-29 (ESV)** ²⁸ Then they said to him, “What must we do, to be doing the works of God?” ²⁹ Jesus answered them, “This is the work of God, that you believe in him whom he has sent.”
 - > **John 14:11 (ESV)** ¹¹ Believe me that I am in the Father and the Father is in me, or else believe on account of the works themselves.
 - > **Acts 2:22 (ESV)** ²² “Men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a man attested to you by God with mighty works and wonders and signs that God did through him in your midst, as you yourselves know—
- 6) The works of the King are for this time
 - > **John 9:4 (ESV)** ⁴ We must work the works of him who sent me while it is day; night is coming, when no one can work.
- 7) The works of the King are to be the work of disciples as well
 - > **John 14:12 (ESV)** ¹² “Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever believes in me will also do the works that I do; and greater works than these will he do, because I am going to the Father.
 - > **1 Corinthians 3:13 (ESV)** ¹³ each one’s work will become manifest, for the Day will disclose it, because it will be revealed by fire, and the fire will test what sort of work each one has done.
 - > **1 Corinthians 15:58 (ESV)** ⁵⁸ Therefore, my beloved brothers, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that in the Lord your labor is not in vain.
 - > **2 Corinthians 9:8 (ESV)** ⁸ And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that having all sufficiency in all things at all times, you may abound in every good work.
 - > **Colossians 1:10 (ESV)** ¹⁰ so as to walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to him, bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God.
 - > **1 Timothy 6:18 (ESV)** ¹⁸ They are to do good, to be rich in good works, to be generous and ready to share,
 - > **Titus 3:1 (ESV)** ¹ Remind them to be submissive to rulers and authorities, to be obedient, to be ready for every good work,

- > **Titus 3:8 (ESV)** ⁸ The saying is trustworthy, and I want you to insist on these things, so that those who have believed in God may be careful to devote themselves to good works. These things are excellent and profitable for people.
- > **Titus 3:14 (ESV)** ¹⁴ And let our people learn to devote themselves to good works, so as to help cases of urgent need, and not be unfruitful.
- > **Hebrews 10:24 (ESV)** ²⁴ And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works,
- > **James 2:26 (ESV)** ²⁶ For as the body apart from the spirit is dead, so also faith apart from works is dead.
- > **James 3:13 (ESV)** ¹³ Who is wise and understanding among you? By his good conduct let him show his works in the meekness of wisdom.

b) What are "her/his/their works"?

- 1) Jezebel
 - > falsehood
 - > seduction of King's subjects away from the King
 - > immorality - lack of concern for personal purity
 - > idolatry - lack of concern for religious purity
 - > unrepentance - spiritual resistance
- 2) Works of the flesh

Galatians 5:19-21 (ESV) ¹⁹ Now the works of the flesh are evident: sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality, ²⁰ idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, rivalries, dissensions, divisions, ²¹ envy, drunkenness, orgies, and things like these. I warn you, as I warned you before, that those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.

c) **QUESTION:** What then are the works which overcomers ought to be doing in preparation for the transition of kingdoms?

- 1) The works of Christ the King, the Son of God
 - > faith
 - > obedience
 - > purity
 - > endurance
 - > mercy
 - > compassion
- 2) The purpose of Christ the King, the Son of God
 - > proclaiming the truth about both the Father and the Son
 - > The glory of the God and the testimony of the Son

- iv) to the end (how long?)
 - a) To the end of their life
 - 1) Beyond the present moment
 - 2) Beyond the limit of their strength
 - 3) Beyond the extent of convenience
 - b) To the end of this age
 - c) Whichever comes first:
 - 1) the idea here is faithful endurance
 - 2) Endurance is a repeated theme in the letters and this book
- (e) To him who has ears and hears what the Spirit says to the churches
 - i) The ability to hear and understand and the Spirit and to act appropriately is a gift of the Spirit by the will of God as announced by Jesus
 - a) **John 14:16-17 (ESV)** ¹⁶ And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Helper, to be with you forever, ¹⁷ even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, for he dwells with you and will be in you.
 - b) **John 14:26 (ESV)** ²⁶ But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you.
 - ii) **QUESTION:** Are you cultivating a relationship with the Holy Spirit so that you may hear, understand, and act appropriately to this revelation of Jesus Christ which God gave Him to give to His servants?
 - a) Keep being filled (Eph 5:18)
 - b) Keep responding with faithfulness (faith + obedience)
- (4) Reward offered
 - (a) I will give authority over the nations (condition of authority)
 - i) Authority:
 - a) ability to perform an actions without hindrance
 - b) ability granted by a superior to an inferior to act without interference from above and expect compliance from below
 - ii) All authority is given by God, and must therefore be attained from God on God's terms.
 - a) **Matthew 4:8-10 (ESV)** ⁸ Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory. ⁹ And he said to him, "All these I will give you, if you will fall down and worship me." ¹⁰ *Then Jesus said to him, "Be gone, Satan! For it is written, "You shall worship the Lord your God and him only shall you serve."*
 - b) **Matthew 28:18 (ESV)** ¹⁸ And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.
 - c) **Romans 13:1 (ESV)** ¹ Let every person be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no

authority except from God, and those that exist have been instituted by God.

- iii) Why authority and not some other reward?
 - a) Authority long promised to the people of God
 - 1) First to Messiah
 - > **Psalm 2:8-9 (ESV)** ⁸ Ask of me, and I will make the nations your heritage, and the ends of the earth your possession. ⁹ You shall break them with a rod of iron and dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel."
 - 2) Then by Messiah
 - > **Luke 19:17 (ESV)** ¹⁷ And he said to him, 'Well done, good servant! Because you have been faithful in a very little, you shall have authority over ten cities.'
 - > **John 1:12 (ESV)** ¹² But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God,
 - > **Revelation 5:9-10 (ESV)** ⁹ And they sang a new song, saying, "Worthy are you to take the scroll and to open its seals, for you were slain, and by your blood you ransomed people for God from every tribe and language and people and nation, ¹⁰ and you have made them a kingdom and priests to our God, and they shall reign on the earth."
 - > **Revelation 20:6 (ESV)** ⁶ Blessed and holy is the one who shares in the first resurrection! Over such the second death has no power, but they will be priests of God and of Christ, and they will reign with him for a thousand years.
 - > **1 Corinthians 6:3 (ESV)** ³ Do you not know that we are to judge angels? How much more, then, matters pertaining to this life!
 - > **2 Timothy 2:12 (ESV)** ¹² if we endure, we will also reign with him; if we deny him, he also will deny us;
 - b) Because Jezebel presents herself as a false authority and the faithful will act in true authority
 - c) Because "tolerance" denies the authority of the King and His word and the faithful will act in true submission to the King and not in false acceptance of the world
 - 1) In a culture of "no absolutes" and therefore no "authority," Jezebel flourishes
 - 2) **QUESTION:** How much of Christ's blessing does the church miss by refusing to make Him their single authority and His word the trustworthy expression of His authority and obey?
- (b) He will rule them with an iron scepter (expression of authority)
 - i) as when earthen pots are broken in pieces
 - a) References
 - 1) **Psalm 2:9 (ESV)** You shall break them with a rod of iron and dash them in pieces like a

potter's vessel.”

- 2) **Revelation 12:5 (ESV)** ⁵ She gave birth to a male child, one who is to rule all the nations with a rod of iron, but her child was caught up to God and to his throne,
- 3) **Revelation 19:15 (ESV)** ¹⁵ From his mouth comes a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations, and he will rule them with a rod of iron. He will tread the **vinepress** of the **fur** of the **wrath** of God the Almighty.

- b) Typically refers to Jesus and His role in expressing the severe sovereignty of God over the rebellious nation(s)
 - 1) There is no sense of “playing games” with the King’s intent
 - 2) This is an image of severity, of power, of “no-nonsense” practice of obedience
- c) May also refer to the practice of breaking earthen pots used in the temple worship to prevent their use for mundane purposes after having been dedicated to holy purposes.
 - 1) **Leviticus 6:24-29 (ESV)** ²⁴ The LORD spoke to Moses, saying, ²⁵ “Speak to Aaron and his sons, saying, This is the law of the sin offering. In the place where the burnt offering is killed shall the sin offering be killed before the LORD; it is most holy. ²⁶ The priest who offers it for sin shall eat it. In a holy place it shall be eaten, in the court of the tent of meeting. ²⁷ Whatever touches its flesh shall be holy, and when any of its blood is splashed on a garment, you shall wash that on which it was splashed in a holy place. ²⁸ And the earthenware vessel in which it is boiled shall be broken. But if it is boiled in a bronze vessel, that shall be scoured and rinsed in water. ²⁹ Every male among the priests may eat of it; it is most holy.
 - 2) The holiness of the sacrifice (and the faith in which the sacrifice is offered) extends to the vessel in which the sacrifice is prepared, making the vessel unsuitable any longer for “common use.”
 - 3) **NOTE:** The body, as the vessel of the Holy Spirit, is no longer suitable for “common use.”
 - > **1 Corinthians 6:12-20 (ESV)** ¹² “All things are lawful for me,” but not all things are helpful. “All things are lawful for me,” but I will not be dominated by anything. ¹³ “Food is meant for the stomach and the stomach for food”—and God will destroy both one and the other. The body is not meant for sexual immorality, but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body. ¹⁴ And God raised the Lord and will also raise us up by his power. ¹⁵ Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ? Shall I then take the members of Christ and make them members of a prostitute? Never! ¹⁶ Or do you not know that he who is joined to a prostitute becomes one body with her? For, as it is written, “The two will become one flesh.”

“ But he who is joined to the Lord becomes one spirit with him. “ Flee from sexual immorality. Every other sin a person commits is outside the body, but the sexually immoral person sins against his own body. ¹⁹ Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God? You are not your own, ²⁰ for you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body.

> **Romans 12:1-2 (ESV)** ¹ I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. ² Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.

d) Either way, this invitation from the King to the overcomer is an invitation to join in the wisdom and authority given to Christ with which He will bring about the purification and holiness of the nations into one Kingdom dedicated to God having the character to belong solely to Him.

1) Call to personal holiness - immediate submission to the authority of Christ

2) Call to positional holiness - eventual expression of the authority of Christ

ii) as I myself have received authority from my Father

a) Satan offered Jesus authority over the nations without the cross

b) The Father offered Jesus authority over the nations through the cross

c) Jesus offers authority over the nations

1) through faithfulness to Him who has already endured the cross

2) and calls His followers to bear their own cross and follow Him.

d) Authority is offered to those who have learned to surrender to true Authority in faith and obedience. (Faith + obedience = faithfulness)

(c) And I will give him the morning star

i) References

a) **Isaiah 14:12 (ESV)** *“How you are fallen from heaven, O Day Star, son of Dawn! How you are cut down to the ground, you who laid the nations low!”*

b) **2 Peter 1:19 (ESV)** *And we have the prophetic word more fully confirmed, to which you will do well to pay attention as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts,*

c) **Revelation 2:28 (ESV)** *And I will give him the morning star.*

d) **Revelation 22:16 (ESV)** *“I, Jesus, have sent my angel to testify to you about these things for the churches. I am the root and the descendant of David, the bright morning star.”*

ii) Conclusions

a) Morning star can refer to one who was exalted

- 1) Either the king being spoken of in Isaiah
 - 2) or Lucifer, referred to later as one fallen like a star from heaven
 - b) Morning star can refer the personal, spiritual effect of God's word upon the heart
 - c) Morning star can refer to Christ
 - 1) First, look for the reference in Revelation, it's to Jesus
 - 2) Understand the early reference in ch. 2 to be similar to the later reference in ch. 22, before making a tie to a usage in another book.
 - iii) Interpretation
 - a) Christ offers Himself as the reward for overcoming
 - b) Through Christ and what the Father does in Him, the victor receives
 - 1) Authority
 - 2) Credibility
 - 3) Wisdom
 - 4) All that is needed to live and function in the eternal Kingdom of the Son of God
- (5) Admonition: He who has an ear, let Him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.
- (a) God gives the ability to "hear"
 - (b) Hearing = listening + acting appropriately
 - (c) Listening as though the wise King of all the ages is speaking truth that must be understood, accepted, and acted upon
 - i) Because He is the King
 - ii) Because He is true and trustworthy
 - iii) Because He is love and His word to us leads us in love and to love.
- (6) Review
- (a) The King sees that the church has gotten in bed with a worldly spirit and has not kept itself pure in devotion or practice.
 - (b) The King prescribes disaster and death for those who do not repent.
 - (c) The King offers authority to overcomers.

f. Revelation of the King to the Church at Sardis (3:1-6)

(1) Revelation given

(a) Of the King

i) The One Who has the seven spirits of God and the seven stars

a) The One Who - has been delivering the message all along. King Jesus, to Whom God gave this revelation to give to His servants

1) This revelation is divine; it comes from God

2) This revelation is mercy; it comes that God's people might be fully prepared for and engaged in His mission to fill the earth with the knowledge of His glory by filling the earth with His eternal Kingdom.

3) This revelation is Jesus; it comes from Him and describes Him.

4) This revelation is personal; Jesus Himself offers what He sees and knows and desires to those He holds in His hands, to those who belong to Him

b) Seven

1) Among every ancient people, especially in the East, a religious significance attaches to numbers. This grows out of the instinctive appreciation that number and proportion are necessary attributes of the created universe. This sentiment passes over from heathenism into the Old Testament. The number seven was regarded by the Hebrews as a sacred number, and it is throughout Scripture the covenant number, the sign of God's covenant relation to mankind, and especially to the Church.

2) The evidences of this are met

- > in the hallowing of the seventh day;
- > in the accomplishment of circumcision, which is the sign of a covenant, after seven days;
- > in the part played by the number in marriage covenants and treaties of peace.
- > It is the number of purification and consecration (Lev. 4:6, 17; 8:11, 33; Num. 19:12).
- > "Seven is the number of every grace and benefit bestowed upon Israel; which is thus marked as flowing out of the covenant, and a consequence of it.
 - The priests compass Jericho seven days, and on the seventh day seven times, that all Israel may know that the city is given into their hands by God, and that its conquest is a direct and immediate result of their covenant relation to Him.
 - Haaman is to dip in Jordan seven times, that he may acknowledge the God of Israel as the author of his cure.

- It is the number of reward to those who are faithful in the covenant (Deut. 28:7; 1 Sam. 2:5); of punishment to those who are froward in the covenant (Lev. 26:21, 24, 28; Deut. 28:25), or to those who injure the people in it (Gen. 4:15, 24; Exod. 7:25; Ps. 79:12).
- All the feasts are ordered by seven, or else by seven multiplied into seven, and thus made intenser still. Thus it is with the Sabbath, the Passover, the Feast of Weeks, of Tabernacles, the Sabbath-year, and the Jubilee.”
- > Similarly the number appears in God’s dealing with nations outside the covenant, showing that He is working for Israel’s sake and with respect to His covenant.
 - It is the number of the years of plenty and of famine, in sign that these are for Israel’s sake rather than for Egypt’s.
 - Seven times pass over Nebuchadnezzar, that he may learn that the God of his Jewish captives is king over all the earth (partly quoted and partly condensed from Trench’s “Epistles to the Seven Churches”).
- > Seven also occurs as a sacred number in the New Testament.
 - There are seven beatitudes, seven petitions in the Lord’s Prayer; seven parables in Matt. 13; seven loaves, seven words from the cross, seven deacons, seven graces (Rom. 12:6–8), seven characteristics of wisdom (Jas. 3:17).
 - In the Apocalypse the prominence of the number is marked. To a remarkable extent the structure of that book is moulded by the use of numbers, especially of the numbers seven, four, and three.
 - There are seven spirits before the throne; seven churches; seven golden candlesticks; seven stars in the right hand of Him who is like unto a son of man; seven lamps of fire burning before the throne; seven horns and seven eyes of the Lamb; seven seals of the book; and the thunders, the heads of the great dragon and of the beast from the sea, the angels with the trumpets, the plagues, and the mountains which are the seat of the mystic Babylon,—are all seven in number.
- > So there are *four* living creatures round about the throne, four angels at the four corners of the earth, holding the four winds; the New Jerusalem is foursquare. Authority is given to Death to kill over the fourth part of the earth, and he employs four agents.
- > Again the use of the number three is, as Professor Milligan remarks, “so remarkable and continuous that it would require an analysis of the whole book for

its perfect illustration.” There are three woes, three unclean spirits like frogs, three divisions of Babylon, and three gates on each side of the heavenly city. The *Trisagion*, or “thrice holy,” is sung to God the Almighty, to whom are ascribed three attributes of glory.

Vincent, M. R. (1887). *Word studies in the New Testament* (Vol. 2, pp. 410–411). New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons.

c) Seven spirits of God = Holy Spirit who enlivens and empowers the seven churches

1) Revelation

Revelation 1:4 (ESV) ⁴ John to the seven churches that are in Asia: Grace to you and peace from him who is and who was and who is to come, and from the seven spirits who are before his throne,

Revelation 3:1 (ESV)

¹ “And to the angel of the church in Sardis write: ‘The words of him who has the seven spirits of God and the seven stars. “I know your works. You have the reputation of being alive, but you are dead.

Revelation 4:5 (ESV)

⁵ From the throne came flashes of lightning, and rumblings and peals of thunder, and before the throne were burning seven torches of fire, which are the seven spirits of God,

Revelation 5:6 (ESV)

⁶ And between the throne and the four living creatures and among the elders I saw a Lamb standing, as though it had been slain, with seven horns and with seven eyes, which are the seven spirits of God sent out into all the earth.

2) General Ideas Regarding “Seven Spirits

- > The Spirit is designated by **The seven Spirits** (τῶν ἑπτὰ πνευμάτων).
- > The reference is not to the seven principal angels (ch. 8:2). These could not be properly spoken of as the source of grace and peace; nor be associated with the Father and the Son; nor take precedence of the Son, as is the case here. Besides, angels are never called *spirits* in this book.
- > With the expression compare ch. 4:5, the seven lamps of fire, “which are the seven Spirits of God:” ch. 3:1, where Jesus is said to have “the seven Spirits of God.” Thus the seven Spirits belong to the Son as well as to the Father (see John 15:26).
- > The prototype of John’s expression is found in the vision of Zechariah, where the

Messiah is prefigured as a stone with seven eyes, “the eyes of the Lord, which run to and fro through the whole earth”

the Seven Spirits; the perfect, mystical number seven indicating unity through diversity (1 Cor. 12:4).

- > Not the sevenfold *gifts* of the Spirit are meant, but the divine Personality who imparts them; the one Spirit under the diverse manifestations. Richard of St. Victor (cited by Trench, “Seven Churches”) says: “And from the seven Spirits, that is, from the sevenfold Spirit, which indeed is simple in nature, sevenfold in grace.”

Vincent, M. R. (1887). *Word studies in the New Testament* (Vol. 2, pp. 413–414). New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons.

d) The seven spirits of God

- 1) **Isaiah 11:1-5 (ESV)** ¹ *There shall come forth a shoot from the stump of Jesse, and a branch from his roots shall bear fruit.* ² *And the Spirit of the LORD shall rest upon him, the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and might, the Spirit of knowledge and the fear of the LORD.*
- 2) ³ *And his delight shall be in the fear of the LORD. He shall not judge by what his eyes see, or decide disputes by what his ears hear,* ⁴ *but with righteousness he shall judge the poor, and decide with equity for the meek of the earth; and he shall strike the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips he shall kill the wicked.* ⁵ *Righteousness shall be the belt of his waist, and faithfulness the belt of his loins.*
- 3) The “Seven Spirits”
 - > The Spirit of the LORD - the Spirit who works in redemption
 - > the Spirit of wisdom - the Spirit who is able to see through a situation and see things as they are
 - > the Spirit of understanding - the Spirit able to discriminate between good and evil regardless of external appearances
 - > the Spirit of counsel - the Spirit who is able to weigh the facts and come to the right conclusions
 - > the Spirit of might - the Spirit who has the courage and strength to carry out God’s will
 - > the Spirit of knowledge - the Spirit whose knowledge of God is personal deriving from fellowship with Him in love
 - > the Spirit of the fear of the LORD - the Spirit who reverences God and exalts Him
- 4) Notice how the “sevenfold Spirit” relates to the revelation of the condition of the

Sardinian church.

- e) Seven stars = “a portrayal of the provision of heavenly aid available to the Christians
- ii) I know your works.
 - a) Compare
 - 1) Ephesus -
 - Traits noted:
 - Toil
 - Patient Endurance
 - Cannot bear evil ones
 - Testing false apostles
 - Comparison between Ephesian/Sardinian letters
 - Introductory words closely parallel and note Christ as the One who holds the seven
 - Both churches censured for their fall from an earlier standard
 - Both letters promise the victor *zoe* (life)
 - 2) Thyatira
 - Love
 - Faith
 - Service
 - Patient endurance
 - Greater works
 - 3) Sardis
 - Reputation of being alive
 - Dead
 - There is nothing here even remotely commendable!
 - 4) Philadelphia
 - Kept my word - about patient endurance
 - Not denied my name
 - 5) Laodicea: Neither cold nor hot: lukewarm
 - b) I know
 - 1) Smyrna: tribulation and poverty
 - 2) Pergamum: where you dwell
 - c) **QUESTION:** How can the King know these things?
 - 1) The ability to know is found in the person and nature of the King
 - 2) The truthfulness of the knowledge is also found in the person and nature of the King
 - 3) Jesus knows because of who He is, and His assessment is true and trustworthy

- d) The King sees and knows as things are
 - 1) **Hebrews 4:13 (ESV)** ¹³ *And no creature is hidden from his sight, but all are naked and exposed to the eyes of him to whom we must give account.*
 - 2) **QUESTION:** This being true, what is a reasonable response to the revelation provided?
- (b) Of the church
 - i) You have the reputation (*onoma*) of being alive, but you are dead.
 - a) **2 Timothy 3:2-5 (ESV)** ² *For people will be lovers of self, lovers of money, proud, arrogant, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, ³ heartless, unappeasable, slanderous, without self-control, brutal, not loving good, ⁴ treacherous, reckless, swollen with conceit, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, ⁵ having the appearance of godliness, but denying its power.*
 - 1) **Avoid such people.**
 - 2) Instead of avoiding such people, the Sardinians became such people!
 - b) Life is an appearance not a reality
 - 1) Fabulously wealthy city
 - 2) King of Sardis the historical prototype for Ezekiel's "Gog"
 - 3) Constantly referring to what was once true but not currently true in presentations for empirical favor
 - c) necrotic
 - 1) dead
 - 2) Dead because of the absence of the spirit
 - d) Doing the work of the "alive" without the source of life
 - 1) **Ephesians 2:1-2 (ESV)** ¹ *And you were dead in the trespasses and sins ² in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience*
 - 2) **James 2:26 (ESV)** ²⁶ *For as the body apart from the spirit is dead, so also faith apart from works is dead.*
 - 3) **Hebrews 3:12 (ESV)** ¹² *Take care, brothers, lest there be in any of you an evil, unbelieving heart, leading you to fall away from the living God.*
 - ii) ⁴ Yet you have still a few names (*onoma*) in Sardis,
 - a) people who have not soiled their garments,
 - 1) The condition in Sardis is not merely illustrative, it is active
 - 2) Dead people doing right things is actually "soiling" - hypocrisy
 - 3) Failing to witness to Christ in order to avoid persecution
 - > Giving token homage to pagan deities to avoid confrontation/conflict

- > “Peace at all costs” marks the church at Sardis as appearing alive in death
 - b) and they will walk with me in white,
 - 1) Triumph reminiscent of Sardis’ past history and glory
 - 2) Righteousness and purity
 - c) for they are worthy.
 - 1) For not having “soiled” their garments with hypocrisy and compromise
 - 2) For being willing to follow the model of Jesus (who was considered worthy because he endured suffering on account of his faithful testimony) [Beale]
 - 3) For having suffered because of their faithful testimony
 - 4) For overcoming (in the present and for the future)
 - 5) For faith that openly acknowledges Jesus
- (2) Response required
 - (a) Wake up, and strengthen what remains and is about to die, for I have not found your works complete in the sight of my God.
 - i) Wake up
 - a) **Matthew 24:42 (ESV)** ⁴² *Therefore, stay awake, for you do not know on what day your Lord is coming.*
 - b) “Show yourself watchful” rather than “become watchful”; or “Demonstrate your vigilance!”
 - c) “The imperative . . . shows that the readers have become lethargic about the radical demands of their faith in the midst of a pagan culture.” (Beale, citing Porter, *Verbal Aspect*, 491)
 - d) “The mention of ‘remaining things’ implies that the readers have begun a life of faithful service, but something has happened that impeded further progress.” (Beale)
 - 1) **QUESTION:** What impediments to spiritual growth can you identify in individuals?
in congregations?
 - 2) **QUESTION:** What makes an individual’s or congregation’s works “incomplete” before God?
 - ii) Strengthen what remains
 - a) What survives (since the condition is “deadness” the idea of survival points to life, what is left living among death)
 - b) **QUESTION:** How does a church that is mostly dead strengthen what remains?
 - iii) In regards to their works,
 - a) they may pass muster with the world and gain them a reputation for life, but they will never pass the scrutiny of God
 - b) their incompleteness suggests to a lack of vigilance, of intentional interest

- c) They have not done what is necessary to survive
- (b) Remember, then, what you received and heard.
 - i) Remember - to recall and respond appropriately
 - ii) What or How (*pos*)
 - a) Some have “what” but the more usual translation is “how”
 - b) What, referring to content, makes more sense in the sentence
 - c) But, “how” (in my opinion), makes more sense in the context.
 - d) The Sardinian Christians have forgotten (or ignored) the manner in which the gospel came to them: public proclamation that included a call to self-identification with Jesus
 - e) Because they have essentially abandoned the “how” of the gospel, they are not perpetuating the “how” in their community and that is their sin!
 - iii) **QUESTION:** Why remember the past?
 - a) Content
 - b) Occasion/manner
 - c) “There is evidence that the Sardinian sin is not witnessing to their faith before the unbelieving culture.” (Beale)
 - d) “The distinctive character of the church’s faith had rather been so far lost in accommodation to society that it aroused no opposition. Spiritual poverty and complacency were thus leading the church into moral error.” (Hemer, 145.)
- (c) Keep it, and repent.
 - i) The King is He who holds the seven stars
 - a) The ability to stand as vibrant witnesses to King and kingdom among pagan people
 - b) “In order to carry out their call from the risen Lord to proclaim the gospel they need the fullness of the Spirit’s life giving power [inherent in Christ], which raised Jesus from the dead and will revive them from their spiritual stupor.” (Beale)
 - ii) “Cause a state to continue”
- (d) If you will not wake up, I will come like a thief, and you will not know at what hour I will come against you.
 - i) Wake up -
 - a) return to spiritual consciousness
 - b) **Matthew 24:42-51 (ESV)** ⁴² *Therefore, stay awake, for you do not know on what day your Lord is coming.* ⁴³ *But know this, that if the master of the house had known in what part of the night the thief was coming, he would have stayed awake and would not have let his house be broken into.* ⁴⁴ *Therefore you also must be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect.* ⁴⁵ *“Who then is the faithful and wise servant, whom his master has set over his household, to give them their food at the proper time?”* ⁴⁶ *Blessed is that servant whom his*

master will find so doing when he comes. ⁴⁷ *Truly, I say to you, he will set him over all his possessions.* ⁴⁸ *But if that wicked servant says to himself, ‘My master is delayed,’* ⁴⁹ *and begins to beat his fellow servants and eats and drinks with drunkards,* ⁵⁰ *the master of that servant will come on a day when he does not expect him and at an hour he does not know* ⁵¹ *and will cut him in pieces and put him with the hypocrites. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.*

- ii) The Impact of this message given Sardis the City
 - a) Two levels
 - 1) Acropolis on frail hill
Substrate easily eroded
Destroyed by catastrophic earthquake that caught the city off-guard (17AD)
Pliny - “the greatest disaster in human memory”
Sardis most severely hit
Perhaps resulted in the collapse of the mountain (acropolis) upon which the entire upper city(fortress and temples) rested.
 - 2) Lower city on river plain
 - b) Religion seems to have been marked by the idea of death and renewed life
 - c) Great architectural evidence that Jews and Christians in the city “had long sought a *modus vivendi* by accommodation to their pagan surroundings.”
 - 1) The presence of a huge synagogue in the gymnasium complex (more huge) of a pagan city
 - 2) Accommodation is “the most natural explanation of the acceptance and affluence of the synagogue community, and the relationship may have been established very early.”
- iii) Sardis Caught by Surprise
 - a) By Cyrus, king of Persia, 549 B.C.
 - 1) King Croesus of Sardis sent to Delphi for an oracle concerning war against Cyrus of Persia
The oracle said, “If you cross the Halys, you will destroy a great empire.”
Croesus took this to mean that if he went out he would beat the Persians. So he did.
 - 2) Indecisive battle with huge consequences
No winner, so Croesus withdrew to Sardis and dismissed his allies and his army
Croesus never expected Cyrus to pursue the battle in winter!
Croesus caught off-guard by Cyrus
 - 3) Croesus prepared for a siege in Sardis, but the city fell on the 14th day.
 - 4) An enemy succeeded in climbing up the escarpment of the Acropolis (1500 ft) that was left unguarded, “for there was no fear that it would ever be captured at that place, for the acropolis is sheer and impregnable there.”

- 5) Cyrus captured Croesus and intended to put him to death, but some obscure events rescued him and he became a vassal of Cyrus.
 - 6) The great empire Croesus destroyed was his own.
 - 7) This event became proverbial in the ancient world for describing the surprise consequences that come to a “lack of vigilance in the defenders.”
 - b) By Antiochus the Great, 218 B.C.
 - c) City often destroyed by “neglect on the part of the defenders”
- (3) Reward Extended
 - (a) ⁵ The one who conquers will be clothed thus in white garments,
 - i) The “one who conquers” may be identified with those faithful few than with those who might here the word of the King and repent
 - ii) The idea here is more likely the idea of Roman triumphal garb
 - a) Pomp and ceremony had long since departed Sardis
 - b) It was a city that had lost its glory
 - c) Suggestive of a restored glory for the faithful
 - (b) and I will never blot his name out of the book of life.
 - i) Conceivable that the “few” who had remained faithful suffered removal from the synagogue register, which provided a measure of societal security from persecution under Domitian since the majority of Jews (and Christians) in the synagogue may have capitulated and compromised with the pagan culture to avoid persecution.
 - ii) The King’s promise is that those who remain faithful to Him in this world will never be removed from the eternal register that actually counts.
 - a) Promise of His faithful in response to their faithfulness
 - b) Insight that what is coming is of greater importance for the living than the circumstances of the present
 - iii) The King promises real life (*zoe*) to those who remain faithful (alive) in a lifeless church
 - (c) I will confess his name before my Father and before his angels.
 - i) Confess
 - a) **Matthew 10:32-33 (ESV)** ³² *So everyone who acknowledges me before men, I also will acknowledge before my Father who is in heaven,* ³³ *but whoever denies me before men, I also will deny before my Father who is in heaven.*
 - b) Confession - the positive proclamation of true statements
 - ii) “Name”
 - a) This the fourth occurrence of the word (*onama*) in the letter.
 - b) In v. 1 it means “reputation,” everywhere else identification

- c) It seems to be used to highlight a comparison between those who have a false name (false reputation) from those who have a true name (in the Book of Life) and the basis for which is true.
 - d) The reputation Christ announces before the Father is utterly more important than the reputation we present to the world
 - e) SO: make sure the reputation Jesus present is your true name!
- (d) ⁶He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.'

- f. Revelation of the King to the Church at Philadelphia (3:7-13)
- (1) Revelation given
- (a) Revelation given of the King
- i) Who is God
- a) Who is holy
- 1) Is the only God to holy
 - 2) This first description alone points to the divinity of Jesus, as the King
 - 3) cf. **Matthew 25:31-34 (ESV)** ³¹ *“When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit on his glorious throne. ³² Before him will be gathered all the nations, and he will separate people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. ³³ And he will place the sheep on his right, but the goats on the left. ³⁴ Then the King will say to those on his right, ‘Come, you who are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.*
- b) Who is true (genuine, not hypocritical)
- 1) He is true/genuine/sincere in His Person
 - 2) He is truly King (authoritative) in His position
 - 3) He speaks truthfully in His proposition (revelation)
 - 4) He has the character, the authority, and the position to make and keep promises related to the health and well-being of His subjects and His kingdom.
- ii) Who has the key of David,
- a) OT Reference
- 1) **Isaiah 22:22 (ESV)** ²² *And I will place on his shoulder the key of the house of David. He shall open, and none shall shut; and he shall shut, and none shall open.*
 - 2) Eliakim was a steward of the household of the king, not a true king, but he was God’s provision
 - 3) His name means “God sets up.”
- b) NT Application (Revelation)
- 1) Rightful heir to the promises of God
 - 2) Rightful king over the people of God
 - 3) Rightful provider of the grace of God
 - 4) Rightful defender of the honor of God
- iii) Who opens and no one will shut,
- a) Allowing admission of the Gentiles into the people and promises of God, a condition the Jews would vehemently oppose
- b) Setting before the church access to

- 1) Blessing / security
 - 2) Opportunity for evangelism
 - iv) Who shuts and no one opens
 - a) Excluding from the renewed, reformed people of God unbelieving Israel, despite their parentage and privileges
 - b) He can define His own kingdom!
- (b) Revelation given of the Church
 - i) The King's Perspective - I know your deeds.
 - ii) The King's provision - an open door that no one can shut
 - a) Verb tenses and the guidance they offer
 - 1) I know = PAIIS
 - 2) I have set = PfAIIS (*didomi* gift, grant)
 - > **QUESTION: Is the "open door" a condition in which the church works or a reward for the work they've done?**
 - Grammar seems to indicate a previous gift resulting in the current condition
 - It is because of the open door and their response to it that they are who they are
 - > the open door was a gift from the King prior to His current "knowing" of their works
 - > Perfect tense indicates a completed action in the past with results continuing into the present, in fact which results in the present condition or state of affairs
 - 3) The King knows in the present the result in their lives of an opportunity/action he completed in them in the past that has resulted in the current condition or state of affairs.
 - b) What then is the open door he set before them?
 - 1) You have kept my word - the word about patient endurance that gave them access to steadfastness in ministry
 - 2) You have not denied my name -
 - c) What does the open door in the past result in in the present?
 - 1) Opportunity for ministry - as an investment of faith
 - > **Acts 14:27 (ESV) ²⁷ And when they arrived and gathered the church together, they declared all that God had done with them, and how he had opened a door of faith to the Gentiles.**
 - > **1 Corinthians 16:9 (ESV) ⁹ for a wide door for effective work has opened to me, and there are many adversaries.**
 - . **2 Corinthians 2:12 (ESV) ¹² When I came to Troas to preach the gospel of**

Christ, even though a door was opened for me in the Lord,

- 2) Escape/Deliverance - as a promise to be counted on
 - > **Acts 5:17-20 (ESV)** ¹⁷ *But the high priest rose up, and all who were with him (that is, the party of the Sadducees), and filled with jealousy ¹⁸ they arrested the apostles and put them in the public prison. ¹⁹ But during the night an angel of the Lord opened the prison doors and brought them out, and said, ²⁰ “Go and stand in the temple and speak to the people all the words of this Life.”*
 - > **Acts 12:8-10 (ESV)** ⁸ *And the angel said to him, “Dress yourself and put on your sandals.” And he did so. And he said to him, “Wrap your cloak around you and follow me.” ⁹ And he went out and followed him. He did not know that what was being done by the angel was real, but thought he was seeing a vision. ¹⁰ When they had passed the first and the second guard, they came to the iron gate leading into the city. It opened for them of its own accord, and they went out and went along one street, and immediately the angel left him.*
 - > **Acts 16:25-28 (ESV)** ²⁵ *About midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the prisoners were listening to them, ²⁶ and suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken. And immediately all the doors were opened, and everyone’s bonds were unfastened. ²⁷ When the jailer woke and saw that the prison doors were open, he drew his sword and was about to kill himself, supposing that the prisoners had escaped. ²⁸ But Paul cried with a loud voice, “Do not harm yourself, for we are all here.”*
- 3) Admission to heaven and the eternal kingdom - as the ultimate arrangement for faithfulness
 - > **Revelation 4:1 (ESV)** ¹ *After this I looked, and behold, a door standing open in heaven! And the first voice, which I had heard speaking to me like a trumpet, said, “Come up here, and I will show you what must take place after this.”*
 - > **Revelation 3:20 (ESV)** ²⁰ *Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and eat with him, and he with me.*
 - > **Acts 14:27 (ESV)** ²⁷ *And when they arrived and gathered the church together, they declared all that God had done with them, and how he had opened a door of faith to the Gentiles.*
 - > **John 10:7 (ESV)** ⁷ *So Jesus again said to them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, I am the door of the sheep.*
 - > **John 10:9 (ESV)** ⁹ *I am the door. If anyone enters by me, he will be saved and*

will go in and out and find pasture.

- 4) Rev 3:8-10 Paraphrase (Dale McIntire version).
 I know who you are today and what you are doing. In the past I set before you an open door that represented great opportunity and you made use of that access and what you are today is the result of my setting that access door before you in the past. You only have a little strength. You are not great and powerful and mighty, there are not hundreds and hundreds of you, but you did what you could with the door I gave you. You have kept my word about patient endurance and you have not denied my name even though there was opportunity to do so. You have stuck to the opportunity presented by my gift of an open door rather than the opportunity to recant offered by the world you live in. I will make the people who lied to you, as if they offered a better door, I will make them yield to you and testify that I have loved you (and they have not.) Because you have kept my word about patient endurance, the door I set before you, I will keep you from the hour of trial that is coming on the whole world to try those who dwell on the earth. (You have already passed the test, I won't make you go through it again.)

- d) Philadelphia often subject to powerful earthquakes. (Historical/cultural background)
- 1) An open door that cannot be shut would appeal to a people used to fleeing outdoors during earthquakes.
 - 2) The spiritual parallel of safety and opportunity would not be lost on a people of "little power" to save themselves or impact their community.
 - 3) Thus, their ministry life (both external ministry and internal perseverance) is entirely dependent on the person and power and promises of the King!

iii) The King's insight

- a) That you have but little power - *to change the external conditions or culture*
- 1) Can't stop the earthquakes - environmental context
 - 2) Can't stop the disastrous edicts of the emperor (regarding grape vines/economy) - socio/political context
 - 3) Can't silence the lies coming from the synagogue of Satan - religious/cultural context
- b) That you have kept my word (about patient endurance) - v. 8 & 10
- 1) *You don't have power for a huge influence on your context but that has not stopped you from applying what power you have to accessing the opportunities for faithfulness and steadfastness presented by the open door I set before you.*
 - 2) kept my word
 - > Aorist active ind. 2s = a specific person at a specific time in the past,
 - Aorist - an action completed in the past

- (perhaps the angel of the church of Philadelphia?)
- Grammar suggests this is not a statement of general lifestyle but recognition of a specific event which should become a general lifestyle
- > Two specific qualifiers (this is how they kept His word and made use of the open door)
 - You have not denied my name (v. 8) - *discussion to follow below*
 - You have patiently endured (v.10)

c) **Faithfulness/Endurance is a priority the king sets for His people**

- 1) **QUESTION:** What makes us think spiritual endurance is a priority set for us by the King?
- 2) References to the Priority of Spiritual Endurance for Disciples

- > Jesus commands steadfastness/perseverance
 - **Matthew 24:4 (ESV)** *And Jesus answered them, "See that no one leads you astray."*
 - **Matthew 24:13 (ESV)** ¹³ *But the one who endures to the end will be saved.*
 - **Matthew 24:42 (ESV)** ⁴² *Therefore, stay awake, for you do not know on what day your Lord is coming.*
 - **Matthew 25:13 (ESV)** ¹³ *Watch therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour.*
- > Steadfast having begun in the disciples, Jesus prays for its continuance
 - **John 17:6,8 (ESV)** ⁶ *"I have manifested your name to the people whom you gave me out of the world. Yours they were, and you gave them to me, and they have kept your word."* ⁸ *For I have given them the words that you gave me, and they have received them and have come to know in truth that I came from you; and they have believed that you sent me.*
 - They have embraced the words you gave me to give them
 - They have come to know in truth Christ's divine origin
 - They have believed God sent Jesus
 - They have believed and pursued the implications of faith through commitment and devotion

- 3) Consider the priority of "perseverance/steadfastness/endurance" in Revelation, Paul, Jesus

> In Revelation

Thyatira - **Revelation 2:25 (ESV)** Only hold fast what you have until I come.

Sardis - **Revelation 3:3 (ESV)** ³ Remember, then, what you received and heard.

Keep it, and repent. If you will not wake up, I will come like a thief, and you will

not know at what hour I will come against you.

Philadelphia - **Revelation 3:11 (ESV)** ¹¹ I am coming soon. Hold fast what you have, so that no one may seize your crown.

>

In Paul

1 Corinthians 15:58 (ESV) ⁵⁸ Therefore, my beloved brothers, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that in the Lord your labor is not in vain.

- Steadfastness = abounding
- Steadfastness ≠ stagnant

Galatians 5:1 (ESV) ¹ For freedom Christ has set us free; stand firm therefore, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery.

- Steadfastness = discerning/committed
- Steadfastness ≠ lustful, craving, self-indulgence

Philippians 1:27 (ESV) ²⁷ Only let your manner of life be worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that whether I come and see you or am absent, I may hear of you that you are standing firm in one spirit, with one mind striving side by side for the faith of the gospel,

- steadfastness = striving for the faith of the gospel
 - Striving to keep the faith of the gospel
 - Striving to live the faith of the gospel
 - Striving to spread the faith of the gospel
- steadfastness ≠ silent indifference to the demands of the gospel
 - Demand 1 = faith
 - Demand 2 = faithfulness (faith + obedience)

Galatians 6:9 (ESV) ⁹ And let us not grow weary of doing good, for in due season we will reap, if we do not give up.

- steadfastness = doing good continually
- steadfastness ≠ giving up on doing good for any reason

>

In Jesus

Matthew 10:22 (ESV) ²² and you will be hated by all for my name's sake. But the one who endures to the end will be saved.

- Endures in the life of faith despite external opposition
- Endures in the life of faith despite internal weakness

John 15:9 (ESV) ⁹ As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Abide in my love.

Abide (take up permanent residence) by trusting in his love for you

Abide (take up permanent residence) by expressing His love for others

> Other references

Joshua 23:7-8 (ESV) ⁷ that you may not mix with these nations remaining among you or make mention of the names of their gods or swear by them or serve them or bow down to them, “but you shall cling to the LORD your God just as you have done to this day.

1 Peter 5:9 (ESV) ⁹ Resist him, firm in your faith, knowing that the same kinds of suffering are being experienced by your brotherhood throughout the world.

2 Peter 3:17 (ESV) ¹⁷ You therefore, beloved, knowing this beforehand, take care that you are not carried away with the error of lawless people and lose your own stability.

Hebrews 12:1 (ESV) ¹ Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us.

Hebrews 12:7 (ESV) ⁷ It is for discipline that you have to endure. God is treating you as sons. For what son is there whom his father does not discipline?

James 5:11 (ESV) ¹¹ Behold, we consider those blessed who remained steadfast. You have heard of the steadfastness of Job, and you have seen the purpose of the Lord, how the Lord is compassionate and merciful.

Job 23:11 (ESV) ¹¹ My foot has held fast to his steps; I have kept his way and have not turned aside.

Daniel 3:18 (ESV) ¹⁸ But if not, be it known to you, O king, that we will not serve your gods or worship the golden image that you have set up.”

- 4) Fosdick on “perseverance”
 - > “The qualities which make a good start are not identical [to the qualities] which see life through to the end.”
 - > Three Qualities for Perseverance
 1. Central integrity of conscience – personal inner commitment to reject moral or spiritual failure as a life option
 2. Loyalty to a worthy cause greater than yourself - in this case, the cause of God in Christ in the world
 3. Profound resources of interior strength replenished by great faith - God reliance rather than self-reliance
 - > “Whenever we see a New Testament Christian carrying through to the finish, one fact is always apparent: he had set his devotion on a coming kingdom of God on earth for which he was willing to live or die.”
- d) That you have not denied my name (*continues the King’s insight into the condition of the church*)
 - 1) **QUESTION:** How did the church at Philadelphia “not deny” the name of Jesus?
 - 2) Note: A church/Christian can be tempted to deny Jesus under both conditions of persecution and prosperity
 - 3) **QUESTION:** In what ways might a church or a Christian deny the name of the King?
 - > Refuse to act in faith
 - only be and do what you know you can handle yourselves
 - fail to account for the King’s resources when contemplating plans
 - > Reject total dependence on the King
 - > Disregard command to love (one another or neighbors)
 - > Harbor hidden sin
 - > Quench the Spirit
 - > Live an uncrucified life
 - > Fail to hold the King’s values
- (c) Revelation Given of the Problem
 - i) (*in Phil. the problem is contextual not internal*)
 - a) There is commendation from Jesus w/o condemnation
 - b) They have persevered in a difficult context
 - c) They have lived up to their faith despite “little power” and large adversity
 - d) The opposition in Philadelphia is real (not merely philosophical and/or spiritual), **BUT**, that does not preclude our asking: “What is the context for our perseverance?”
 - ii) Afflicted by liars (as opposed to the King who is true)

- a) In Philadelphia, these liars are certain persons
- b) In our world these liars frequently fall under one of three categories
 - 1) The world
 - > corrupt cultural system that resists the King, His people, and His plan
 - > The great threat represented by the world is “zeal neutralizing compromise.”
 - > An important NT term from the Greek word *kosmos* (meaning that which is ordered or arranged), having five different meanings:
 1. The universe created by God with design and order (e.g., Mt 13:35; Jn 17:24; Acts 17:24).
 2. The planet earth (e.g., Jn 11:9). This includes the idea of earth as the dwelling place of human beings (16:21) and of earth as contrasted with heaven (6:14; 12:46).
 3. The total of humanity (Mt 5:14; Jn 3:16; 1 Cor 4:13).
 4. The total of human existence in this present life, with all of its experience and possessions (Mt 16:26; 1 Cor 7:33).
 5. The world order as alienated from God, in rebellion against him, and condemned for its godlessness.

It is “this world” (Jn 8:23; 12:25; 1 Cor 3:19), as opposed to “that which is to come.” The ruler of this world is the devil (Jn 12:31; 14:30; 16:11; 1 Cor 5:10)—as John said it, “The whole world is under the control of the evil one” (1 Jn 5:19, NIV). Christians are not of this world (Jn 15:19; 17:16), even though they live in the world and participate in its activities (17:11). The believer is regarded as dead to the world (Gal 6:14; cf. Col 3:2–3). The Christian is to be separated from the world (Jas 1:27).

One’s relationship with the world is an indicator of one’s relationship with God. Those who love the world are void of love for God the Father (1 Jn 2:15). The Scripture points out that “all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the pride of life, is not of the Father but is of the world” (v 16, RSV). The world and its desires or lusts are transient, passing away, but the doer of God’s word abides forever (1 Jn 2:17; cf. 2 Cor 4:18). Friendship with the world is enmity toward God (Jas 4:4).

The discourse of Jesus on the night before his crucifixion contains much teaching about the world.

The world cannot receive the Spirit of truth (Jn 14:17).

Thus the need to identify and retain a functional definition of “worldliness.” If worldliness ceases to be anathema to Christians and the church, perseverance wanes and compromise flourishes. And where compromise flourishes, sin blooms and brings forth death. (James 1:15)

Christ gives a peace that the world cannot give (v 27).

Jesus offers love, while the world gives hatred and persecution (15:19–20).

so directed against the followers of Christ (vv 18–21).

Although the disciples of Jesus have tribulation “in this world,” they are to be of good cheer, for Jesus has overcome the world (16:33).

Elwell, W. A., & Comfort, P. W. (2001). In *Tyndale Bible dictionary* (pp. 1310–1311). Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers.

2) The flesh -

- > corrupt inner nature that resists the King, all people, and anyone's plan for ourselves other than our own
- > **In the New Testament** Paul ascribes many—often unique—definitions to the word “flesh” (Greek *sarx*).
 - **Flesh as the Stuff of the Body** “Flesh” is frequently used to describe the tissues that constitute the body. There are different kinds of flesh—“of men,” “of animals,” “of birds,” “of fish” (1 Cor 15:39). Pain and suffering may be experienced in the flesh (2 Cor 12:7). Circumcision is done in the flesh (Rom 2:28). While “flesh” in such references is not sinful, it is corruptible and cannot inherit the kingdom of God (1 Cor 15:50). Jesus' body was also a body of flesh (John 1:22).
 - **Flesh as the Body Itself** By a natural transition, the part is used for the whole, and in many places “flesh” is synonymous with the body as a whole rather than designating the fleshy part of the body. Paul may thus speak either of being absent in the body (1 Cor 5:3) or in the flesh (Col 2:5). Paul can say that the life of Jesus may be manifested in our body or in our mortal flesh (2 Cor 4:10–11). “He who joins himself to a prostitute becomes one body with her. For, as it is written, ‘The two shall become one flesh’ ” (1 Cor 6:16, RSV).
 - **Flesh as Person with Reference to Origin** Following OT usage, “flesh” was used by Paul to refer not merely to the stuff of the body or to the body itself, but concretely to the person as constituted by flesh. In this usage the word may refer to the person's human relationship, the physical origin and the natural ties that bind one to other humans. Paul speaks of his kinsmen “according to the flesh,” his fellow Jews (Rom

9:3, KJV), and even uses “my flesh” (11:14, KJV) as a synonym for these kinsmen. The “children of the flesh” (9:8) are those born by natural generation in contrast to those born as a result of divine intervention. Christ was descended from David according to the flesh (1:3). The phrase does not designate the source merely of his bodily life but of his entire human existence, including both his body and his human spirit.

- **Flesh as Human Existence** Another use of “flesh” simply designates human existence. As long as a person lives in the body, that one is “in the flesh.” Thus, Paul can speak of the life that he lives “in the flesh” as lived by faith in the Son of God (Gal 2:20, RSV). Referring to Jesus’ earthly ministry, Paul says that he abolished “in the flesh” the enmity between Jew and Gentile (Eph 2:15). Peter has the same meaning when he speaks of Jesus having been put to death “in the flesh” (1 Pt 3:18). So also John: “Jesus Christ is come in the flesh” (1 Jn 4:2). This usage is reflected most notably in the Johannine saying “The Word became flesh and dwelt among us” (Jn 1:14).
- **Flesh as Human Existence in Terms of Outward Presentation** “Flesh” also extends beyond humans in their bodily life to include other factors crucial to human existence. Thus, “confidence in the flesh” (Phil 3:3, RSV) does not mean confidence in the body but confidence in the whole complex of the outward realm of human existence. It includes Paul’s Jewish ancestry, his strict religious training, his zeal, and his prominence in Jewish religious circles. The phrase to “glory after the flesh” (2 Cor 11:18, KJV) is rendered “boast about their human achievements” in the NLT. A good showing “in the flesh” is practically synonymous with worldly prominence (Gal 6:11–14). The Judaizers insisted upon circumcision to promote a sense of prideful attainment in the religious life so that they might have a ground of glorying. But these external distinctions and grounds for glorying no longer appealed to Paul, because the world had been crucified to him and he to the world. “Flesh” is also used of outward relationships, as when describing the social ties existing between slave and master (Eph 6:5; Col 3:22; Phlm 1:16). “In the flesh” also describes the realm of marital relationships, which entails certain troublesome problems (1 Cor 7:28). This usage illuminates an otherwise difficult saying, “Henceforth know

we no man after the flesh; yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we him no more” (2 Cor 5:16, KJV). The RSV correctly renders the phrase “from a human point of view.” The verse does not mean that Paul had heard and seen Jesus in Jerusalem at some previous time and had gained some acquaintance with Christ “after the flesh.” “After the flesh” modifies the verb “to know,” not the noun “Christ.” Before his conversion, Paul knew all people “after the flesh”; that is, he judged them by worldly human standards. To know Christ “after the flesh” means to look at him through merely human eyes. As a Jew, Paul had felt that Jesus was a deluded messianic pretender. According to the Jewish understanding the Messiah was to reign over the earth as a Davidic king, save his people Israel, and punish the hated Gentiles. But Paul surrendered this false human view and came to know Christ as he really is—the incarnate Son of God, the Savior of all who believe. As a Christian, Paul no longer judged others according to the flesh.

- **Flesh as Fallen Humanity** When Paul says that “flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God” (1 Cor 15:50, RSV), he does not mean that humans cannot inherit the kingdom of God but rather that human fallenness cannot; as the next clause shows, “neither does corruption inherit incorruption.” The weak, fallen, corruptible body cannot inherit the kingdom of God; there must be a change: the “corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality” (1 Cor 15:53, KJV). This is not the salvation of the soul or spirit but the exchange of one kind of body for another that is suited to the final glorious kingdom of God. When Peter confessed the messiahship of Jesus, Jesus replied, “Flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father who is in heaven” (Mt 16:17, RSV). The meaning of this verse is obvious. This knowledge of Jesus’ messiahship was not a human deduction; it could be achieved only by divine revelation.
- **Flesh as Sinful Humanity** There remains a group of ethical references that are distinctly Pauline. The most important feature of this usage is that man is seen not only as fallen and weak before God, but as fallen and sinful. Flesh is contrasted with human spirit regenerated by the

divine Spirit, and without the aid of the Spirit, one cannot please God. The most vivid passage is the first part of Romans 8, where Paul sharply contrasts those who are “in the flesh” with those who are “in the Spirit.” To be “in the Spirit” in this sense does not mean to be in a state of ecstasy but to be living one’s life in that spiritual realm that is controlled by the Spirit of God. Those who are “in the flesh,” that is, unregenerate, cannot please God. There are two contrasting and mutually exclusive realms: “in the flesh” and “in the Spirit.” To be “in the Spirit” means to be indwelt by God’s Holy Spirit, that is, to be a regenerate person.

In Romans 7–8 Paul makes it clear that the unregenerate person cannot please God by loving and serving him as God requires. Thus, the Law was unable to make mankind truly righteous, because the flesh is weak (8:2). To live after the flesh is death; to live after the Spirit is life (8:6). Elsewhere Paul says, “For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing” (7:18, KJV). Flesh here cannot be the physical flesh, for the body of flesh is the temple of the Spirit (1 Cor 6:19) and a member of Christ (6:15) and is to be the means of glorifying God (6:20). Paul, therefore, means that in his unregenerate nature there dwells none of the goodness that God demands.

While Paul makes a sharp and absolute contrast between being “in the flesh” (unregenerate) and “in the Spirit” (regenerate), when one becomes regenerate and comes to be “in the Spirit,” that person is no longer in the flesh, but the flesh is still in him. In fact, there remains in the believer a struggle between the flesh and the Spirit. Writing to people who are “in the Spirit,” Paul says, “For the flesh lusteth [strives] against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would” (Gal 5:17, KJV). Because the Christian life is the battleground of these two opposing principles, it is impossible to be the perfect person that one would wish to be.

The same situation is reflected in 1 Corinthians 2:14–3:3 where Paul describes three classes of people: the “natural” (2:14, KJV); the “carnal,” that is, fleshly man (3:1, 3, KJV); and the “spiritual man” (3:1, KJV). The “natural man” is unregenerate. Those who are “in the flesh” (Rom 8:9)

have devoted the whole of their life to the human level and hence are unable to know the things of God. “Spiritual man” refers to those whose life is ruled by the Spirit of God, so that the fruits of the Spirit (Gal 5:22–23) are evident in their life. Between these two there is a third class—those who are “fleshly” yet who are babes in Christ. Therefore, they must be “in the Spirit,” yet they do not walk “according to the Spirit.” Because they are “babes in Christ,” the Spirit of God dwells in them, yet the Holy Spirit is not allowed to have full control over them, and they are still walking “like men” (1 Cor 3:3), manifesting the works of the flesh in jealousy and strife.

- **Works of the Flesh** In Galatians 5:19–23 Paul contrasts the life in the flesh and the life in the Spirit: “Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like” (Gal 5:19–21, KJV). The important thing to note about this list is that while some of these are sins of bodily and sexual appetite, others are religious sins—idolatry, witchcraft—and several are sins “of the spirit,” that is, of the disposition—hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife. The words “seditions” and “heresies” refer not to theological heresies but to a factious, divisive spirit. This proves conclusively that for Paul the “flesh” is not synonymous with the body but includes the whole person, with all the inner attitudes and disposition.

- **Victory over the Flesh** While a struggle remains in the Christian between the Spirit and the flesh, Paul knows of a way of victory for the Spirit. The flesh of the body comes within the sphere of sanctification (1 Thes 5:23), but the flesh as the unregenerate human nature can only be put to death.

This is called the tension between the objective and the subjective. Because certain things have happened in Christ (objective), certain inevitable results should accrue (subjective). In Paul’s view, the flesh has already been put to death in the death of Christ. Those who belong to Christ have already crucified the flesh with its passions and desires (Gal 5:24). Paul elsewhere says, “I have been crucified with Christ”

(2:20) and “our old self was crucified with him” (Rom 6:6). Such references make it clear that “flesh” and the “self” are in some ways to be identified. This identity is further supported in the teaching about crucifixion, for Paul means the same thing by the crucifixion of the flesh that he means when he says, “How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein? We were baptized into his death. We are buried with him by baptism into death” (vv 1–4). It is I myself who have died with Christ.

This crucifixion and death of the flesh does not, however, work automatically. It is an event that must be appropriated by faith. This involves two aspects. First, believers are to recognize that the flesh has been crucified with Christ. “Reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord” (Rom 6:11, KJV). One cannot consider the self dead with Christ to sin unless that person has actually died and been crucified with Christ, but because this has already happened at the moment of saving faith, it can be put into daily practice. Those who have died with Christ are to “mortify [put to death] the deeds of the body” (8:13, KJV). “Body” is here used as a vehicle for the works of the “flesh”—the sensual life of the unregenerate nature. Those who have been brought from death into life are to yield their members to God as instruments of righteousness (6:13). One who has died with Christ is to “mortify” (KJV), that is, put to death what is earthly—fornication, uncleanness, covetousness (Col 3:5). Having already put off the old nature and put on the new, the believer is to put on compassion, kindness, lowliness and the like.

- Victory over the flesh is sometimes described as walking in the Spirit. “Walk by the Spirit, and do not gratify the desires of the flesh” (Gal 5:16, RSV; cf. Rom 8:4). Walking in the Spirit means to live each moment under the control of the Holy Spirit.

Elwell, W. A., & Comfort, P. W. (2001). In *Tyndale Bible dictionary* (pp. 487–489). Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers.

- 3) The devil - corrupt leader of fallen angels who sought to replace God, destroy His people, and kidnap His plan
- iii) of the synagogue of Satan who say they are Jews but are not
 - a) As opposed to the King who is holy and true (3:7)
 - 1) False worship of a liar by liars

- 2) We are to see that there is no reason to establish identification with the ruler of this world nor the current kingdom over which he presides.
- b) Jews at Philadelphia
 - 1) may have had an established canon by this point and are challenging the church's right to exist based on documentation and their perceived ability to prove textual authority and superiority.
 - 2) However, had they been "true Jews" they would have searched those Scriptures and discovered the true King.
- c) Which makes clear the value of being able to defend the validity and credibility of God's word in our own day.
- d) The world will always strategize to minimize the impact of God's word by sabotaging its perceived authority over their lives.
- (d) Revelation given of the Opportunity
 - i) You have kept my word,
 - a) **QUESTION:** What does it mean to keep Christ's word?
 - 1) Per Revelation
 - > An act of faithfulness - **Revelation 1:3** *Blessed is the one who reads aloud the words of this prophecy, and blessed are those who hear, and who keep what is written in it, for the time is near.*
 - > An act of obedience - **Revelation 3:3** *Remember, then, what you received and heard. Keep it, and repent. If you will not wake up, I will come like a thief, and you will not know at what hour I will come against you.*
 - > An act of endurance - **Revelation 3:10** *Because you have kept my word about patient endurance, I will keep you from the hour of trial that is coming on the whole world, to try those who dwell on the earth.*
 - > An act of war - **Revelation 12:17** *Then the dragon became furious with the woman and went off to make war on the rest of her offspring, on those who keep the commandments of God and hold to the testimony of Jesus. And he stood on the sand of the sea.*
 - > An act of faith - **Revelation 14:12** *Here is a call for the endurance of the saints, those who keep the commandments of God and their faith in Jesus.*
 - > An act of unity - **Revelation 22:9** *but he said to me, "You must not do that! I am a fellow servant with you and your brothers the prophets, and with those who keep the words of this book. Worship God."*
 - 2) Per Jesus

- > Life-provoking act - **Matthew 19:17** *And he said to him, "Why do you ask me about what is good? There is only one who is good. If you would enter life, keep the commandments."*
- > An act of diligent preparation - **Mark 13:33** *Be on guard, keep awake. For you do not know when the time will come.*
- > An act of blessing - **Luke 11:28** *But he said, "Blessed rather are those who hear the word of God and keep it!"*
- > An act of readiness - **Luke 12:35** *"Stay dressed for action and keep your lamps burning."*
- > An act of love - **John 14:15** *"If you love me, you will keep my commandments."*
- > **John 14:23** *Jesus answered him, "If anyone loves me, he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him."*
- > An act of permanent commitment - **John 15:10** *If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commandments and abide in his love.*

3) Per Paul and Others

- > An act of purity - **Acts 15:29** *that you abstain from what has been sacrificed to idols, and from blood, and from what has been strangled, and from sexual immorality. If you keep yourselves from these, you will do well. Farewell."*
- > An act of discipline - **1 Corinthians 9:27** *But I discipline my body and keep it under control, lest after preaching to others I myself should be disqualified.*
- > An act of surrender - **Galatians 5:25** *If we live by the Spirit, let us also keep in step with the Spirit.*
- > An act of maturity - **Galatians 6:1** *Brothers, if anyone is caught in any transgression, you who are spiritual should restore him in a spirit of gentleness. Keep watch on yourself, lest you too be tempted.*
- > An act of compassionate concern - **Ephesians 6:18** *praying at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication. To that end keep alert with all perseverance, making supplication for all the saints,*
- > An act of interest - **Philippians 3:17** *Brothers, join in imitating me, and keep your eyes on those who walk according to the example you have in us.*
- > An act of awareness - **1 Thessalonians 5:6** *So then let us not sleep, as others do, but let us keep awake and be sober.*

- > An act of soundness - **1 Timothy 4:16** *Keep a close watch on yourself and on the teaching. Persist in this, for by so doing you will save both yourself and your hearers.*
- > An act of discipleship - **1 Timothy 5:11** *In the presence of God and of Christ Jesus and of the elect angels I charge you to keep these rules without prejudging, doing nothing from partiality.*
- > An act of personal holiness - **1 Timothy 5:22** *Do not be hasty in the laying on of hands, nor take part in the sins of others; keep yourself pure.*
- > An act of authenticity - **1 Timothy 6:14** *to keep the commandment unstained and free from reproach until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ*
- > An act of selflessness - **Hebrews 13:5** *Keep your life free from love of money, and be content with what you have, for he has said, "I will never leave you nor forsake you."*
- > An act of morality - **James 1:27** *Religion that is pure and undefiled before God, the Father, is this: to visit orphans and widows in their affliction, and to keep oneself unstained from the world.*
- > An act of honor - **1 Peter 2:12** *Keep your conduct among the Gentiles honorable, so that when they speak against you as evil-doers, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day of visitation.*
- > An act of wisdom - **1 Peter 3:10** *For "Whoever desires to love life and see good days, let him keep his tongue from evil and his lips from speaking deceit;*
- > An act of genuine fellowship - **1 Peter 4:8** *Above all, keep loving one another earnestly, since love covers a multitude of sins.*
- > An act of relationship - **1 John 2:3** *And by this we know that we have come to know him, if we keep his commandments.*
- > An act of joy - **1 John 3:22** *and whatever we ask we receive from him, because we keep his commandments and do what pleases him.*
- > An act of affirmation - **1 John 5:3** *For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments. And his commandments are not burdensome.*
- > An act of worship - **1 John 5:21** *Little children, keep yourselves from idols.*
- > An act of anchorage - **Jude 21** *keep yourselves in the love of God, waiting for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ that leads to eternal life.*

b) Two aspects

- 1) An active expression of the redeemed heart towards God, Christ, or His word

- 2) An active expression of the redeemed heart toward man, either the believer himself or others
- ii) I will keep you from the hour of trial
 - a) You have kept . . . I will keep
 - b) Comparisons between Smyrna and Philadelphia
 - 1) Similarities
 - > Smyrna also troubled by the synagogue of Satan who say they are Jews but are not
 - > Both have endured in the face of persecution
 - > Both are commended not condemned by the King
 - > Both are called to continuing faithfulness
 - 2) Differences
 - > Smyrna:
 - “Do not be afraid of what you are about to suffer.”
 - “. . . that you may be tested”
 - “and for ten days you will have tribulation.”
 - > Philadelphia
 - I will keep you from the hour of trial
 - That is coming on the whole world
 - To test those who dwell on the earth
 - 3) Suggestions
 - > God tests His people for set time to perfect them
 - > God tests the world to judge them
 - > God’s people are not rescued from the process of spiritual perfection
 - > God’s people are rescued from the process final judgment
 - > Christians need to understand the nature and extent of suffering, and not confuse suffering with judgment
 - > Christians should expect, in relation to a Rapture, to be rescued from final judgment (wrath) and not necessarily from purposeful suffering.
 - c) Coming on the whole world
 - 1) There are localized seasons of persecution that come on regions of the church through the ages
 - 2) There is coming a global, encompassing trial that will spread across all the regions of the world and not involve the church
 - d) To try those *who dwell on the earth*

- 1) Always alludes to the enemies of the church in Revelation
 - > **Revelation 6:10 (ESV)** ¹⁰ *They cried out with a loud voice, “O Sovereign Lord, holy and true, how long before you will judge and avenge our blood on those who dwell on the earth?”*
 - > **Revelation 8:13 (ESV)** ¹³ *Then I looked, and I heard an eagle crying with a loud voice as it flew directly overhead, “Woe, woe, woe to those who dwell on the earth, at the blasts of the other trumpets that the three angels are about to blow!”*
 - > **Revelation 11:10 (ESV)** ¹⁰ *and those who dwell on the earth will rejoice over them and make merry and exchange presents, because these two prophets had been a torment to those who dwell on the earth.*
 - > **Revelation 14:9 (ESV)** ⁹ *and all who dwell on earth will worship it, everyone whose name has not been written before the foundation of the world in the book of life of the Lamb who was slain.*
 - > **Revelation 13:14 (ESV)** ¹⁴ *and by the signs that it is allowed to work in the presence of the beast it deceives those who dwell on earth, telling them to make an image for the beast that was wounded by the sword and yet lived.*
 - > **Revelation 17:8 (ESV)** ⁸ *The beast that you saw was, and is not, and is about to rise from the bottomless pit and go to destruction. And the dwellers on earth whose names have not been written in the book of life from the foundation of the world will marvel to see the beast, because it was and is not and is to come.*
- 2) Having this truth about the inhabitants of the earth strongly presents the value of having an open door for evangelism bearing in mind the door is open for others to enter during this testing and the door is open for our deliverance (even into heaven) from those who refuse to enter.
- iii) I am coming soon!
 - a) The Promise of His coming repeated in the seven letters
 - 1) I will come
 - Ephesus (2:5) threat of removal
 - Thyatira (2:25) basis for endurance
 - Sardis (3:3) as a “thief” “against” them
 - 2) I am coming soon
 - Pergamum (2:16) threat of war
 - Philadelphia (3:11) soon, as a relief, and a reason to endure

- 3) I have arrived
 - Laodicea (3:20) arrived and standing at the door
- 4) Only Smyrna lacks a promise of His coming
 - that is because they receive a prophecy of coming persecution and the need to remain faithful, anticipating the crown of life.
 - He is not coming to them because they are coming to him.
- b) ἔρχομαι ταχύ - I am coming quickly/soon
 - 1) **Revelation 2:16 (ESV) 16** Therefore repent. If not, I will come to you soon and war against them with the sword of my mouth.
 - 2) **Revelation 22:7 (ESV) 7** “And behold, I am coming soon. Blessed is the one who keeps the words of the prophecy of this book.”
 - 3) **Revelation 22:12 (ESV) 12** “Behold, I am coming soon, bringing my recompense with me, to repay each one for what he has done.
 - 4) **Revelation 22:20 (ESV) 20** He who testifies to these things says, “Surely I am coming soon.” Amen. Come, Lord Jesus!
- c) Arriving at the audience's reference point in a short period of time
 - 1) Can be a statement of schedule: my arrival will be soon
 - 2) Can be a statement of manner: my arrival will be swift
- d) His arrival is the ground/reason/motivation for their patient endurance
 - 1) Who is coming?
 - > the Holy One
 - > the True One
 - > the One who holds the keys
 - that opens doors
 - that locks doors
 - 2) How will he come?
 - > Swiftly - I am coming soon
 - > Visibly **Matthew 24:27 (ESV)** *For as the lightning comes from the east and shines as far as the west, so will be the coming of the Son of Man.*
 - > Majestically **Matthew 24:30–31 (ESV) 30** *Then will appear in heaven the sign of the Son of Man, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. 31 And he will send out his angels with a loud trumpet call, and they will gather his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.*

- > Suddenly **Matthew 24:37–39 (ESV)** *37 For as were the days of Noah, so will be the coming of the Son of Man. 38 For as in those days before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day when Noah entered the ark, 39 and they were unaware until the flood came and swept them all away, so will be the coming of the Son of Man.*
- > Authoritatively **1 Thessalonians 4:13–18 (ESV)** *13 But we do not want you to be uninformed, brothers, about those who are asleep, that you may not grieve as others do who have no hope. 14 For since we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so, through Jesus, God will bring with him those who have fallen asleep. 15 For this we declare to you by a word from the Lord, that we who are alive, who are left until the coming of the Lord, will not precede those who have fallen asleep. 16 For the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a cry of command, with the voice of an archangel, and with the sound of the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. 17 Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we will always be with the Lord. 18 Therefore encourage one another with these words.*

3) **Why will he come?**

- > to keep the church
 - They have kept His word
 - He will keep them from the hour of trial
- > to test the world
 - to set before the people of the world the opportunity to choose Christ or sin, with the expectation they will choose sin and thus vindicate Christ's judgment of them as rebellious sinners they have proven in life to be
 - this is the same idea as when Abraham was tested/tried in the temptation/trial to sacrifice Isaac
Abraham passed the test through faith
The world will fail the test through unbelief

4) **How can the church prepare for His coming?**

(2) Response Required -

- (a) Hold fast to what you have
 - i) Hold fast - grip and do not let go.
 - ii) You have started well with what you have

- a) an open door
 - b) an appropriate response
- iii) Persevere
 - a) What does “perseverance” look like? (James 1:12-27)
 - 1) Treasure God’s glory (1:13)
 - God cannot be tempted by evil because He is infinitely satisfied with and content in His own glory
 - > Temptation seizes us when we are less satisfied with God’s glory
 - > Sin is defined as a “falling short of the glory of God” by nature and by choice!
 - God has given to believers a measure of His glory for our satisfaction
 - > **John 17:22 (ESV)** *The glory that you have given me I have given to them, that they may be one even as we are one,*
 - > **2 Corinthians 3:18 (ESV)** *And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another. For this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit.*
 - > **2 Corinthians 4:6 (ESV)** *For God, who said, “Let light shine out of darkness,” has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.*
 - Those will persevere in the faith who learn to love God’s glory above all else in life!
 - 2) Receive God’s gift (1:17)
 - **John 1:14 (ESV)** *And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son of the Father, full of grace and truth!*
 - **Hebrews 1:3 (ESV)** *He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature . . .*
 - What is the good and perfect gift that comes down from the Father?
 - > JESUS!
 - > The glory of God, incarnate in human flesh, so that we may seen and savor and love God’s glory.
 - 3) Embrace God’s work (1:19-21)
 - James speaks of the righteousness God desires (v.20)
 - Righteousness of heart and conduct is the work of the Holy Spirit with the

- human nature and will.
- Look at the verbs:
 - > Quick to hear
 - > Slow to speak
 - > Slow to anger
 - > Put away filthiness, rampant wickedness
 - > Receive the word
- God's primary goal in your life is not your happiness but your holiness
- God's primary goal with your life is not your personal enlargement but the enlargement of the knowledge of His glory throughout the entire habited world!
- 4) Do God's word (1:22-25)
 - God's word is not merely for knowing and assenting to as truth, but for knowing and practicing as the course of life.
 - You may forget yourself (your image in the mirror) but you will not forget God's word if you practice it!
- 5) Reflect God's person/nature (1:26-27)
 - Public compassion
 - Personal holiness
- b) Perseverance of the saints is the natural outcome of genuine conversion; where there is no perseverance, there has been no conversion.
 - 1) The anticipation and expectation of the King is that His subjects will receive the warnings of these letters and respond appropriately
 - 2) These letters are invitations, first and foremost, not primarily judgment pronouncements
 - 3) Truly converted people do persevere.
 - The judgments WILL come on those who do not endure, do not repent, do not hold fast because those people have not been genuinely converted.
 - The judgments will NOT come to those, who, in love with God's glory, seek His glory in their responses to His revelation of himself, of them, of the church, and of the world.
- (b) So that no one may seize your crown -
 - i) the tragedy of Demas who let the world steal his crown
 - a) **Colossians 4:14 (ESV)** Luke the beloved physician greets you, as does Demas.
 - b) **Philemon 24 (ESV)** and so do Mark, Aristarchus, Demas, and Luke, my fellow workers.

- c) **2 Timothy 4:10 (ESV)** For Demas, in love with this present world, has deserted me and gone to Thessalonica. Crescens has gone to Galatia, Titus to Dalmatia.
 - ii) **QUESTION:** What crown is at risk and what would be the eternal consequence of losing each crown?
 - a) **Philippians 4:1 (ESV)** Therefore, my brothers, whom I love and long for, my joy and crown, stand firm thus in the Lord, my beloved.
 - b) **1 Thessalonians 2:19 (ESV)** For what is our hope or joy or crown of boasting before our Lord Jesus at his coming? Is it not you?
 - c) **2 Timothy 4:8 (ESV)** Henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will award to me on that Day, and not only to me but also to all who have loved his appearing.
 - d) **James 1:12 (ESV)** Blessed is the man who remains steadfast under trial, for when he has stood the test he will receive the crown of life, which God has promised to those who love him.
 - e) **1 Peter 5:4 (ESV)** And when the chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the unfading crown of glory.
 - f) **Revelation 2:10 (ESV)** Do not fear what you are about to suffer. Behold, the devil is about to throw some of you into prison, that you may be tested, and for ten days you will have tribulation. Be faithful unto death, and I will give you the crown of life.
 - iii) **QUESTION:** Who is out to steal the church's crown?
 - a) Satan
 - b) World
 - c) Flesh
 - (c) **Hold fast and gain or let go and lose!** Which will your church do?
- (3) Reward Offered
- (a) Recipient - To the one who overcomes
 - i) Who overcomes the onslaught of external opposition
 - a) Rejection by the world and culture at large
 - b) Rejection by the religious (Jewish) establishment in Philadelphia
 - ii) Who overcomes the internal temptation to compromise/give up
 - a) The one who overcomes is the one who perseveres
 - b) **James 1:12 (NIV)** ¹² *Blessed is the man who perseveres under trial, because when he has stood the test, he will receive the crown of life that God has promised to those who love him.*
 - (b) Reward -
 - i) I will make him a pillar in the temple of my God

- a) “I will make him” - remember, the King retains the authority to fulfill the promises of God and crown your life with whatever reward He deems any of us worthy of (as a response to personal faithfulness!)
- b) Why a pillar?
 - 1) Permanent memorial to a personal encounter with God - **Genesis 28:18 (ESV)** *So early in the morning Jacob took the stone that he had put under his head and set it up for a pillar and poured oil on the top of it.*
 - 2) Concrete testimony to a personal commitment to God - **Genesis 31:13 (ESV)** *I am the God of Bethel, where you anointed a pillar and made a vow to me. Now arise, go out from this land and return to the land of your kindred.’ ”*
 - 3) Visible representation of the presence of God (made by God) **Exodus 13:21 (ESV)** *And the LORD went before them by day in a pillar of cloud to lead them along the way, and by night in a pillar of fire to give them light, that they might travel by day and by night.*
 - 4) Visual representation of the full commitment of all Israel to covenant worship of the LORD - **Exodus 24:4 (ESV)** *And Moses wrote down all the words of the LORD. He rose early in the morning and built an altar at the foot of the mountain, and twelve pillars, according to the twelve tribes of Israel.*
 - 5) Provide a framework supporting the various symbolic fabric panels of the tabernacle - **Exodus 26:32** *“And you shall hang it on four pillars of acacia overlaid with gold with hooks of gold, on four bases of silver.”*
 - 6) Prohibited as a man-made representation of God
 - > **Leviticus 26:1 (ESV)** *“You shall not make idols for yourselves or erect an image or pillar, and you shall not set up a figured stone in your land to bow down to it, for I am the LORD your God.*
 - > God can authoritatively establish your place and your purpose in the His kingdom but you cannot authoritatively establish God’s place and purpose in your kingdom.
 - 7) Figurative foundation upon which God sets the solid earth - **1 Samuel 2:8 (ESV)** *He raises up the poor from the dust; he lifts the needy from the ash heap to make them sit with princes and inherit a seat of honor. For the pillars of the earth are the LORD’s, and on them he has set the world.*
 - 8) Remembrance perpetuating the name of the dead thereby extending his “life” beyond death - **2 Samuel 18:18 (ESV)** *Now Absalom in his lifetime had taken and set up for himself the pillar that is in the King’s Valley, for he said, “I have no son to keep my*

name in remembrance.” He called the pillar after his own name, and it is called Absalom’s monument to this day.

- 9) Affirmation of God’s promise to the Davidic dynasty - **1 Kings 7:21 (ESV)** *21 He set up the pillars at the vestibule of the temple. He set up the pillar on the south and called its name Jachin, and he set up the pillar on the north and called its name Boaz.*
 - > Jachin - “He will establish”
 - > Boaz - “fleetness” or “in its strength”
- 10) **Proverbs 9:1 (ESV)** *Wisdom has built her house; she has hewn her seven pillars.*
 - > Ephesus - covenant love
 - > Smyrna - faithfulness
 - > Pergamum - understanding (doctrinal purity)
 - > Thyatira - devotional purity
 - > Sardis - endurance
 - > Philadelphia - opportunity
 - > Laodicea - truth
- c) Which temple?
 - 1) Ancient Temple
 - 2) The Current Temple
 - > **1 Corinthians 3:16–17 (ESV)** Do you not know that you are God’s temple and that God’s Spirit dwells in you? If anyone destroys God’s temple, God will destroy him. For God’s temple is holy, and you are that temple.
 - > **1 Corinthians 6:19 (ESV)** Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God? You are not your own,
 - > **2 Corinthians 6:16 (ESV)** What agreement has the temple of God with idols? For we are the temple of the living God; as God said, “I will make my dwelling among them and walk among them, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.
 - > **Ephesians 2:20–21 (ESV)** built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone, in whom the whole structure, being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord.
 - 3) The Heavenly Temple
 - > **Mark 14:58 (ESV)** “We heard him say, ‘I will destroy this temple that is made with hands, and in three days I will build another, not made with hands.’ ”
 - > **2 Corinthians 5:1 (ESV)** For we know that if the tent that is our earthly home

is destroyed, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.

- > **Hebrews 9:11 (ESV)** But when Christ appeared as a high priest of the good things that have come, then through the greater and more perfect tent (not made with hands, that is, not of this creation)
- > **Revelation 7:15 (ESV)** *“Therefore they are before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple; and he who sits on the throne will shelter them with his presence.”*
- > **Revelation 11:19 (ESV)** Then God’s temple in heaven was opened, and the ark of his covenant was seen within his temple. There were flashes of lightning, rumblings, peals of thunder, an earthquake, and heavy hail.
- > **Revelation 14:15 (ESV)** And another angel came out of the temple, calling with a loud voice to him who sat on the cloud, “Put in your sickle, and reap, for the hour to reap has come, for the harvest of the earth is fully ripe.”
- > **Revelation 14:17 (ESV)** Then another angel came out of the temple in heaven, and he too had a sharp sickle.
- > **Revelation 16:1 (ESV)** Then I heard a loud voice from the temple telling the seven angels, “Go and pour out on the earth the seven bowls of the wrath of God.”
- > **Revelation 16:17 (ESV)** The seventh angel poured out his bowl into the air, and a loud voice came out of the temple, from the throne, saying, “It is done!”

4) The Future Temple

- > **Revelation 21:22 (ESV)** *And I saw no temple in the city, for its temple is the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb.*
- > There is no reason for there to be a “place” to worship God for His people will finally realize there is not where He is not.

ii) **QUESTION:** What is the benefit of being a pillar in the “future” temple?

- a) Never shall he go out of it - permanence of place
- b) I will write on him - permanence of purpose
 - 1) the name of my God - the heaven connection
 - 2) the name of the city of my God - the earth connection
 - > the new Jerusalem
 - > which comes down from my God out of heaven
 - 3) my new name - the personal connection

iii) This entire section points to the permanent establishment of the persevering believer in the presence

of the eternal glory of the Most High as a testimony to His great mercy, grace, compassion, and power.

- a) Perseverance benefits the one who endures
- b) Perseverance magnifies the glory of the One in Whom we endure
- c) **Isaiah 56:3-5 (NIV)** ³ *Let no foreigner who has bound himself to the LORD say, "The LORD will surely exclude me from his people." And let not any eunuch complain, "I am only a dry tree."* ⁴ *For this is what the LORD says: "To the eunuchs who keep my Sabbaths, who choose what pleases me and hold fast to my covenant, ⁵ to them I will give within my temple and its walls a memorial and a name better than sons and daughters; I will give them an everlasting name that will not be cut off.*

iv) **QUESTION: What real attraction can this promise have to those who do not love and revel in God's glory?**

- a) What did Moses ask to see? God's glory!
- b) What do we ask to see? God's benefits.
- c) Moses wanted to see who God is, we settle for what God can do.
- d) What is the problem with this?
 - 1) Love does not flourish where the relational goal is selfish.
 - 2) Rather disappointment, discouragement, and faithlessness flourish.
 - 3) Love flourishes where the goal is knowing the person not merely getting from the person what we perceive they can do for us.

v) **QUESTION:** What difference does it make, having reached this conclusion, if the open door is not a door for us to go and do, but a door for us to enter in and see? (The veil removed.)

(4) The call to understanding and action

g. Revelation of the King to the Church at Laodicea (3:14-22)

(1) Revelation of the King

(a) GENERAL NOTES

i) Regarding Laodicea

- a) In a valley/region that includes Colosse and Hieropolis
- b) Suffered significant damage in earthquake during reign of Nero (AD 60)
 - 1) City destroyed
 - 2) Refused Roman reconstruction funding
 - 3) Reconstruction through private funding of wealthy local citizens
- c) Economics
 - 1) Wealthy banking city
 - 2) Famous glossy black wool used undyed in clothing
 - 3) Famous source of mineral used in eyesalve
 - > Medical school specializing in ophthalmology at Laodicea
 - > Sold more patent medicine than had physicians
- d) Geology
 - 1) Water in the Lycus Valley
 - > At Colossae: cold and potable
 - > At Hieropolis: hot (to the boiling point), mineral laden (medicinal), potable only after cooling in jars
 - > At Laodicea: no potable water

ii) Regarding the Letter to Laodicea

- a) Few OT parallels in this letter. (They are not absent entirely, they are just not as numerous as in other six letters)
- b) Several direct parallels with Epistle to Colossians (a nearby city)
 - 1) While there are more parallels with the Colossian letter here than with the whole OT
 - 2) There are hardly any parallels or points of contact with the Colossian letter anywhere else in Revelation.

iii) Regarding this description of the King:

- a) While the description of the King in each of the previous letters have parallel to the Patmos vision of the King in the chapter 1, this letter has no such parallels.
- b) In the context of Revelation, these are new revelations.
 - 1) Perhaps there is an implied or inherent suggestion that when it comes to the divine King and His kingdom, He is not less than He has revealed in the past but He is also more than He has revealed.

- 2) This would lead readers to reflect carefully on their assumptions regarding the King, themselves, the Kingdom, and the status of their relationship with the King and His kingdom.
- (b) The One Who is
- i) the Amen,
 - a) The most clearly OT reference in this letter
 - 1) **Isaiah 65:16 (ESV)** *So that he who blesses himself in the land shall bless himself by the God of truth, and he who takes an oath in the land shall swear by the God of truth; because the former troubles are forgotten and are hidden from my eyes.*
 - > אֱמֵן - Amen!
 - > God of truth = God of Amen!
 - 2) Word denoting certainty/truthfulness based on God's character
 - b) By using this word (Amen), Christ applies to Himself a word used only of God in the OT
 - ii) the faithful and true witness,
 - a) Faithful and True
 - 1) Reflection or restatement of the "Amen" idea
 - 2) Faithful - eternal reliability (duration)
 - 3) True - Exactness in description (quality)
 - b) Witness
 - 1) Witness to what?
 - > the person of God as revealed in the word of truth
 - > The certainty of the promises of God
 - In the gospel for salvation
 - In the gospel for strength
 - In the gospel for righteousness
 - In the gospel for the eventual triumph of the King and establishment of His perfect Kingdom
 - In the gospel certainty of judgment and/or reward (the justice and mercy of God)
 - > The veracity of the condition of the church of God
 - > The accuracy of the requirements of God for the church of God
 - > The urgency of the warnings of God to the unrepentant
 - 2) **QUESTION:** How does this particular title relate to the condition of the church at Laodicea?
 - > We're going to discover that the primary issue for which this church is

condemned by Christ has to do with the idea of witness

iii) the beginning of God's creation

a) There is some evidence in Laodicea, as there is today, that some in the church were tending to think of Christ as merely one way among many to worship God, or that he was somehow so integral a part of creation as to be owed no worship at all, or at least, not worthy of more worship than other deities.

1) There is scant evidence of a Jewish community in Laodicea, but the evidence that exists is "absolute"

2) It could be that Judaism in Laodicea succumbed to enculturation to the point the Jews become absorbed in the ethnic mix and no longer stand out as a people defined by theology or religious practice.

b) This title/revolution, as does the parallel passage in Colossians, expresses such a misguided view.

c) **Colossians 1:15-20 (ESV)** ¹⁵ *He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation.* ¹⁶ *For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things were created through him and for him.* ¹⁷ *And he is before all things, and in him all things hold together.* ¹⁸ *And he is the head of the body, the church. He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in everything he might be preeminent.* ¹⁹ *For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell.* ²⁰ *and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of his cross.*

1) If all things that were created were created by him, he could not have been created

2) The point here is source not sequence

d) These words of the preeminence of Christ combat any tendency in the district in which Laodicea and Colosse were located to syncretistic neutralization of the uniqueness of Christ as God alone.

(c) The titles Jesus uses are a powerful invitation/exhortation to the Laodicean Christians "to stop compromising and emulate him so that they will also be zealous 'faithful and true witnesses.'" Beale p. 302

(2) Revelation of the Heart Condition of the Church

(a) I know your works: Lukewarm

i) NOTE: It is the works of the Laodicean church that Jesus describes.

a) The works are judged

b) But the cure for wrong works is a repentant heart!

ii) NOTE: "This church needs an injection of Christ's resurrection power, since they are in the worst condition of the churches in the letters." Beale 302

- a) No faithful remnant as in Smyrna
 - b) No degree of commendation
- iii) You are neither hot nor cold
 - a) zestos - boiling hot
 - b) xliaros - lukewarm tepid
 - c) psuxros - cold
- iv) Would that you were either hot or cold - metaphor based on real local conditions not presumed spiritual conditions
 - a) Medicinal - hot
 - b) Potable - cold
 - c) Of equal desirability
 - > Would that you were effective, functional, useful
 - > The church exists but there is no spiritual profit in her existence
 - > “So the [Laodicean] church was judged for its ineffectiveness rather than its half-heartedness, for the barrenness of its works (see v. 15a) rather than its spiritual temperature.” Hemer pg. 187
 - > This church is essentially useless:
 - Their witness is either totally non-existent
 - Or consistently compromised to be utterly ineffective
 - d) A church cannot excuse its ineffective work by quoting its supposed spiritual health!
 - 1) **QUESTION:** At what work was the church at Laodicea ineffective?
 - > Answering this question is where we discover the connection with the titles Jesus uses to introduce himself to these Christians
 - > They are utterly ineffective at being to the people of their city what Christ Himself is to them, the faithful and true witness!
- v) I will spit you out of my mouth!
 - a) “I am about to” spit you out
 - 1) Grk. *mello*
 - 2) Possibilities:
 - > Announcement of intent to judge - I am ready to spit you out
 - > Announcement of unwilling reaction - “I am about to”; this is not what I want to do but what is the natural reaction to what you are.
 - b) Just as the citizens of Laodicea would spit out (vomit) the calcium carbonate laden local waters were they to drink them, Christ will spit out this church for presenting itself as “drinkable” when in fact, it is “bad water.”

- 1) It is mercy to inform them
 - 2) It is mercy to offer them a cure for their “bad water.”
 - 3) Christ is not willing, I think, to simply jettison believers who lose their way.
 - > **Exodus 34:6 (ESV) *The LORD passed before him and proclaimed, “The LORD, the LORD, a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness,***
 - > **Numbers 14:18 (ESV) *‘The LORD is slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love, forgiving iniquity and transgression, but he will by no means clear the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children, to the third and the fourth generation.’***
 - > **Nehemiah 9:17 (ESV) *They refused to obey and were not mindful of the wonders that you performed among them, but they stiffened their neck and appointed a leader to return to their slavery in Egypt. But you are a God ready to forgive, gracious and merciful, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love, and did not forsake them.***
 - c) What we need to know now is, what does Christ know about this church that they, themselves, seem not to know.
- (b) You say, but I say
- i) You say v.17a
 - a) I am rich, I have prospered - “I am good water!”
 - 1) Their response represents total buy in to the pagan philosophy of good vs evil (yin/yang; karma)
 - 2) This is the idea that good things happen to good people and bad things happen to bad people.
 - 3) Both prosperity and adversity are seen as just bestowments based on personal conduct, the expression of one’s position of favor or disfavor with the “gods.”
 - 4) Phrase in Hosea
 - > **Hosea 12:7-8 (ESV) *7 A merchant, in whose hands are false balances, he loves to oppress. 8 Ephraim has said, “Ah, but I am rich; I have found wealth for myself; in all my labors they cannot find in me iniquity or sin.”***
 - > Israel thinks their economic prosperity, gained by alliances with neighbor nations (which included, and were sometimes based in, religious compromise and the adoption of foreign gods) is an indication of a favorable relationship with God.
 - 5) Very likely the Laodicean church has engaged in just such compromise and falsely

attributes their prosperity to divine acceptance of their treason.

< **“Wealth does not equal faithfulness!”**

> Prosperity theology does not stand before the King of Revelation 3:17

- 6) It is very likely that, given the historical and cultural context in ancient Asia Minor, that the only reason the Laodicean church is wealthy and prosperous is because “of some significant degree of willing cooperation with the idolatrous trade guilds and economic institutions of their culture.” Beale p. 304

b) I need nothing

- 1) They think that because they have what they need materially they need nothing spiritually
- 2) Therefore, what they are really saying is that they have it made by their own hands, not by the word (Christ) and work (Spirit) of God and therefore have no need of Christ.
- 3) **QUESTION:** Why would they work effectively at witnessing for a God they perceive no real need of? Could they not just worship such a God and not witness since he would be of little matter or consequence to others prospering without him?
- 4) Spiritual compromise made their witness to Christ impotent in its effect.

ii) The King says,

- a) You are wretched
- b) You are pitiable
 - 1) You are poor
 - 2) You are blind - “The church in Laodicea, the city where they claimed to treat physical myopia, was blind to its spiritual blindness.” Hemer pg. 199
 - 3) You are naked
- c) Essential proclamation: You are on the verge of being considered an unbelieving community, no different than the rest of the pagan world.
 - 1) Compromise with the world does not demonstrate genuine Christian discipleship
 - 2) The absence of witness does not demonstrate genuine Christian discipleship
 - 3) **If there is no evidence of genuine Christian discipleship, then one might well conclude there are no genuine Christian disciples.**

(3) Revelation of Response Required - Repent

(a) v. 18 Buy from me: the King is the only source for spiritual need!

i) The King as source of all essentials for His people

- a) **Isaiah 55:1 (ESV)** ¹ *“Come, everyone who thirsts, come to the waters; and he who has no money, come, buy and eat! Come, buy wine and milk without money and without price.*
- b) **Colossians 2:1-3 (ESV)** ¹ *For I want you to know how great a struggle I have for you and*

for those at Laodicea and for all who have not seen me face to face,² that their hearts may be encouraged, being knit together in love, to reach all the riches of full assurance of understanding and the knowledge of God's mystery, which is Christ,³ in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.

- ii) Currency in the kingdom = self-surrender
 - a) **1 John 2:15-17 (ESV)** ¹⁵ *Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him.* ¹⁶ *For all that is in the world—the desires of the flesh and the desires of the eyes and pride of life—is not from the Father but is from the world.* ¹⁷ *And the world is passing away along with its desires, but whoever does the will of God abides forever.*
 - b) **2 Corinthians 6:17 (ESV)** ¹⁷ *Therefore go out from*
 - c) *their midst, and be separate from them, says the Lord, and touch no unclean thing; then I will welcome you,*
- iii) Gold
 - a) Purified and genuine
 - 1) **Psalms 66:10 (ESV)** ¹⁰ *For you, O God, have tested us; you have tried us as silver is tried.*
 - 2) **Zechariah 13:9 (ESV)** ⁹ *And I will put this third into the fire, and refine them as one refines silver, and test them as gold is tested. They will call upon my name, and I will answer them. I will say, 'They are my people'; and they will say, 'The LORD is my God.'"*
 - 3) **Isaiah 1:25 (ESV)** ²⁵ *I will turn my hand against you and will smelt away your dross as with lye and remove all your alloy.*
 - b) Cleansing through suffering - (see v. 19)
 - 1) To stand up for Jesus is to stand out in pagan culture
 - 2) To stand out is to become a target for cultural opposition (persecution)
 - 3) Persecution almost always begins with loss of community influence, then loss of economic opportunity, then loss of possessions, then loss of freedom, then loss of life.
 - c) "The Laodiceans are under obligation to 'refine' themselves in order to gain spiritual 'riches' in the same manner as the church of Smyrna has done." Beale p. 305
 - 1) The "refining" most certainly infers correcting their ineffective witness to Christ thus drawing attention to their counter-cultural faith position and inviting economic and physical persecution
 - 2) "Faithfulness," however, is both a better possession (gold purchased from the King) and a better promise (throne.)

- 3) “Peace is dearly bought at the cost of spiritual stagnation, where there is not interest enough felt in religion to contend about it at all.” Jamieson, R., Fausset, A. R., & Brown, D. (1997). *Commentary Critical and Explanatory on the Whole Bible* (Vol. 2, p. 562). Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc.
- iv) Garments (white)
 - a) Some local pagan religions note that in “visions” white is the color of death and black the color for living mourners.
 - b) Christ calls for the church to seek white garment, probably
 - 1) As a contrast to local superstition
 - 2) As denoting not only the imputation of righteousness, but the impartation of Christ’s righteousness as well
 - 3) As a clear representation that the Laodiceans cannot correct their spiritual condition with their own resources (the local wool is glossy black and cannot be made white), but must rely on that which comes from Christ.
- v) Salve
 - a) A medicinal mineral and a medical school have helped make Laodicea wealthy.
 - b) All their medicines and wisdom cannot help them.
 - c) What they need must be sought from the King who is the source of true vision!
- vi) Their spiritual condition can only be reversed by a renewed, fervent relationship with the King by “buying” true spiritual resources from Him!
 - a) Yes, doing so will bring persecution and poverty
 - b) However, doing so will also reveal the King is the only wealth they truly NEED!
- (b) Those whom I love, I reprove and discipline
 - i) “I” is emphatic (*ego philo*), denoting the King rather than some other cause of discomfort
 - ii) Love revealed in discipline - the King’s motivation here is love, not justice
 - a) **Job 5:17 (ESV)** “Behold, blessed is the one whom God reproves; therefore despise not the discipline of the Almighty.
 - b) **Proverbs 3:11–12 (ESV)** My son, do not despise the LORD’s discipline or be weary of his reproof, for the LORD reproves him whom he loves, as a father the son in whom he delights.
 - c) **Hebrews 12:5–6 (ESV)** And have you forgotten the exhortation that addresses you as sons? “My son, do not regard lightly the discipline of the Lord, nor be weary when reproved by him. For the Lord disciplines the one he loves, and chastises every son whom he receives.”
 - iii) Therefore, because you are loved, and because I have revealed my love to you:
 - a) Be zealous
 - 1) Same root word as “hot”
 - 2) Indicates a lifelong lifestyle of enthusiasm for the King, His word, and His kingdom

- b) Repent - the call to initial repentance, and to a lifestyle of repentance, is always based in Christ's love for us and His desire that none should perish but all should come to repentance.
 - iv) "Christ encourages the Laodicean Christians to understand that the preceding indictments are not yet indications of his judicial wrath toward them but marks of His 'love' for them as children." Beale 307
- (c) I stand at the door and knock
 - i) **QUESTION: Who is the "I" that stands at the door in this context? It is Christ, the King who loves and rebukes and disciplines!**
 - ii) This is not an invitation for the Laodicean Christians to get re-saved, as if they have lost their salvation or have been indicted as unbelievers, but to renew themselves in a fervent, uncompromising relationship with Jesus the King; a relationship that has already begun but is falling to neglect.
 - a) Certainly some in the fellowship at Laodicea professed to know Christ but never had; this comes as an exhortation to conversion, of course.
 - b) However, the majority must have had a genuine conversion experience but have failed, through compromise with the world, to live up to the radical lifestyle implications of their confession; this comes as an invitation to genuine revival.
 - 1) Still, if they do not repent and open the door, it will indicate they were never "saved."
 - 2) Faith AND obedience are always the test of the redeemed heart.
 - **James 2:17 So also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead.**
 - > It is not that we will never sin, or even fall away.
 - > The question is, what will we do when the King reveals our heart to us?
 - c) The fact of his presence at the door and his present knocking is more added weight to the call to repentance than foreshadowing his final return.
 - iii) Hear my voice
 - a) Roman rulers
 - 1) do not request, they take
 - 2) impose their presence on households demanding lodging, food, supplies, and additional taxes
 - b) The request for entrance, the request for acceptance and fellowship, comes out of genuine desire for authentic relationship, not as demand for submitted service (though how much more does the eternal, divine King deserve such service than the Roman rulers and soldiers!)
 - iv) Open the door
 - a) Local imagery
 - 1) The King does not open on His own, either by force or conniving
 - 2) The city straddles the intersection of four major trade routes.
 - > There are four major gates to the city

- > A latecomer must knock upon the gates and seek entrance;
 - being denied if the gatekeeper thought the traveler sought only illicit access to the wealth store in the city's banks.
 - The request for entrance is a request of intrinsic trust
 - b) Promises
 - 1) I will come in
 - 2) I will eat with him and he with me.
 - c) The King's coming "is not a threat but a precious promise for the individual who will invite him, and the [dinner] of which he speaks is not extorted with insult, but 'the symbol of enduring friendship.'" Hemer pg. 204
 - (4) Revelation of Reward for Faithfulness
 - (a) To the one who overcomes: spiritual blindness and ineffectiveness
 - (b) I will grant to him to sit with me on my throne
 - i) A local family was granted a kingship after resisting an invasion
 - ii) After resisting the invasion of spiritual lukewarmness, you, too, may be granted a throne
 - iii) "Christ promises that if those in the church overcome pressures to accommodate to idolatry and resist taking a low profile in their witness, they will inherit a ruling position with him." Beale p. 309
 - iv) NOTE:
 - a) The throne promised is not an independent throne,
 - 1) but a share in the throne that rightfully belongs to King Jesus
 - 2) Not as equal partners, but as exalted children
 - b) There is no independence in the Kingdom from the King
 - 1) **James 1:17 Every good gifting and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or nor shadow due to change.**
 - 2) There is no room for selfish humanism in the kingdom of great King!
 - (5) Final Admonition: He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches."
 - 2. The Revelation of the King to the Churches (see above)
 - 3. Summary from Trent - TRENCH notices; The order of the promises in the seven epistles corresponds to that of the unfolding of the kingdom of God its first beginnings on earth to its consummation in heaven.
 - a. To the faithful at Ephesus: (1) *The tree of life in the Paradise of God* is promised (Rev 2:7), answering to Ge 2:9.
 - b. Sin entered the world and death by sin; but to the faithful at Smyrna it is promised, they *shall not be hurt by the second death* (Rev 2:11).
 - c. The promise of the *hidden manna* (Rev 2:17) to Pergamos brings us to the Mosaic period, the Church in the wilderness.
 - d. That to Thyatira, namely, triumph *over the nations* (Rev 2:26, 27), forms the consummation of the kingdom in prophetic

- type, the period of David and Solomon characterized by this *power of the nations*. . . .
- e. The scenery of the last three passes from earth to heaven, the Church contemplated as triumphant, with its steps from glory to glory.
- (1) Christ promises to the believer of Sardis not to blot his name out of the book of life but to confess him before His Father and the angels at the judgment-day, and clothe him with a glorified body of dazzling whiteness (Rev 3:4, 5).
 - (2) To the faithful at Philadelphia Christ promises they shall be citizens of the new Jerusalem, fixed as immovable pillars there, where city and temple are one (Rev 3:12); here not only individual salvation is promised to the believer, as in the case of Sardis, but also privileges in the blessed communion of the Church triumphant.
 - (3) Lastly, to the faithful of Laodicea is given the crowning promise, not only the two former blessings, but a seat with Christ on His throne, even as He has sat with His Father on His Father's throne (Rev 3:21)

(I. The Revelation of the King and the Restoration of the Kingdom

A. The Revelation of the King to His Subjects

1. To the apostle John
2. To the churches and their “angels”

B. The Revelation of the Restoration of the Kingdom (“Things that are to take place after this” 1:19)

(Rev. 4:1-22:6)

1. Introductory Observations

a. Structure of the Remaining Chapters suggests fulfilment of Lord’s Prayer:

(1) Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done, **on earth as it is in heaven**

- (a) Movement in the sections is often from heaven to earth
- (b) Or focuses on activity on earth directed from heaven
- (c) The result is that God’s will is done on earth as it is in heaven

(2) **QUESTION:** Since, in the inauguration of the Kingdom, God’s will is done on earth as it is in heaven, does my life show evidence that God’s Kingdom has already been inaugurated in my heart?

b. “After this” marks major sections

(1) 4:1-6:17

(a) Vision here centered on the throne

(b) Prepositions

- i) Surrounding the throne
- ii) Before the throne
- iii) Around the throne
- iv) From the throne
- v) In the throne
- vi) Encircling the throne

(c) Only after focusing on the throne does the vision expand to the remainder of creation

- i) Heavens
- ii) Earth
- iii) Under the earth
- iv) The seas

(d) By the end of chapter six all the spiritual and physical locations where the activities of the rest of the revelation take place have been accounted for.

(2) 7:1-8 John seems to look out from the area of the throne to the four corners of the earth

(3) 7:9-14:20 John’s attention returns to the throne in heaven

(4) 15:1-17:18 Sign in heaven (second of two)

(5) 18:1-24 Movement from heaven to earth

(6) 19:1-22:7 View of heaven come to earth!

- c. **QUESTION:** If the throne of God, and more specifically the Lamb upon the throne (and His activity) is the focus of heaven and the restored earth, what is the focus of your life?
 - d. Three Realms of the single Kingdom
 - (1) The earth - see John's vision of the King which took place on Patmos
 - (a) Revelation of Jesus
 - i) Personal revelation to John of Jesus
 - ii) The "first voice" of 1:10
 - (b) Revelation of Jesus to each of the seven churches
 - (2) Heaven - see John's vision of heaven which required him to "come up here"
 - (3) Personal experience (human heart) - this is the point of the entire kingdom: the supremacy of Christ in the human heart and experience
2. The Focus of the Revelation: The King Upon the Heavenly Throne (Rev. 4:1-6:17)
- a. "After this" - does not necessarily indicate linear historical movement (timeline)
 - (1) Movement beyond the letters which were the revelation of the relation of the King to the heart condition of the churches
 - (2) Movement in time from one vision to another
 - (3) Movement in context from earth to heaven
 - (4) Movement in message from what is to what will take place
 - (a) Christ has revealed what He knows about the condition of the church in order to prepare her for the commencement of the final transition to the eternal kingdom
 - (b) Now Christ will reveal the method, the process, of the transition
 - b. View of the Throne Room (4:1-11)
 - (1) The Throne Room First (revisited)
 - (a) If the entire book of Revelation from this point forward is the fulfilment of "Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven,"
 - (b) And if each section begins with a view of the King (in person or on the throne), giving the person of the King priority over all that happens in relation to the kingdom,
 - (c) And if there is a lesson here for life in general,
 - (d) Then, here are the **questions**:
 - i) Do I regularly take time to worship before the throne of God in order to bask in His glory?
 - ii) Do I actively pursue the glory of God as a priority in all that concerns me?
 - iii) Does my life reflect "self-assumption" (the idea that since I am a Christian whatever I say or do pleases God and I have no need to engage with Him in any extraordinary way) or does my life reflect Christ-absorption (Christ is all and in all and in Him we live and move and have our being)?
 - a) **Matthew 10:37-38 (ESV)** ³⁷ *Whoever loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of*

me, and whoever loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me.³⁸ And whoever does not take his cross and follow me is not worthy of me.

- b) **Luke 14:26-27 (ESV)** ²⁶ *“If anyone comes to me and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he cannot be my disciple.”* ²⁷ *Whoever does not bear his own cross and come after me cannot be my disciple.*

- c) Practical example:

- 1) **James 4:13-15 (ESV)** ¹³ *Come now, you who say, “Today or tomorrow we will go into such and such a town and spend a year there and trade and make a profit”—* ¹⁴ *yet you do not know what tomorrow will bring. What is your life? For you are a mist that appears for a little time and then vanishes.”* ¹⁵ *Instead you ought to say, “If the Lord wills, we will live and do this or that.”*
- 2) “If the Lord wills” is Kingdom language
 - > Demonstrates general priority consideration for the will of God appropriate for the people of God
 - > Exhibits active personal consideration of the will of God for the subject of the Kingdom

- (e) **Starting with a view of the throne room in heaven evokes weighted suggestion that everything in the life of a Kingdom citizen should revolve around the One on the throne, if, in fact, God’s will is to be done on earth as it is in heaven.**

- (2) “I looked, and behold a door standing *open* in heaven.” (4:1)

- (a) Jesus set before the church in Philadelphia an “open door which no one is able to shut.”

- i) **QUESTION:** Does this open door provide any interpretive suggestions for the open door granted the Philadelphian church?

- a) The open door in this context represents intentional access to the mind of God and the plan of God for the world.
- b) Jesus, the door, given to the church, also provides access to the mind of God and the plan of God for the world.

- ii) *Perhaps the King’s intent all along was not only to provide motivation for engagement but understanding of the privileged access to God they had through Him as motive for faithfulness.*

- iii) **Faithfulness (faith + obedience) is the key to successful Kingdom living now AND the transition to the eternal Kingdom when that time comes.**

- (b) Jesus sets before John an open door in heaven, which, presumably, only Jesus can open

- i) “Open”

- a) When others saw heaven opened

- 1) Citations
 - > **Ezekiel 1:1 (ESV)** *In the thirtieth year, in the fourth month, on the fifth day of the month, as I was among the exiles by the Chebar canal, the heavens were opened, and I saw visions of God.*
 - > **Matthew 3:16 (ESV)** *And when Jesus was baptized, immediately he went up from the water, and behold, the heavens were opened to him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and coming to rest on him;*
 - > **Acts 7:56 (ESV)** *And he said, "Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God."*
 - > **Acts 10:11 (ESV)** *and saw the heavens opened and something like a great sheet descending, being let down by its four corners upon the earth.*
- 2) Note: John does not see who opened the door, suggesting that it is not who opens the door or how it is open that matter but that it is open.
- 3) More than that, it seems to prepare for the truly unique invitation that follows: "Come up here."
 - > Other have seen heaven open
 - > Others have seen something descend from heaven
 - > No one has been invited to come up into heaven
- b) Other thoughts regarding things being "open" or "shut" in heaven
 - 1) Jesus "opens" in Revelation
 - > Occasions
 - 3:7 Jesus opens and no one shuts
 - 3:8 Jesus opens a door for the church
 - 5:1-9 Jesus opens a scroll
 - 6:1-12; 8:1 Jesus opens seven seals
 - > What do these occasions of "opening" tell us about the One who opens?
 - He has the authority to open
 - He has now in eternity, and will have within time, the opportunity to open what is shut to every one else
 - 2) Others "open"
 - > Citations
 - 3:20 "anyone hears my voice and opens the door"
 - 4:1 "a door standing open in heaven"
 - 9:2 a star fallen from heaven and given the key to the shaft of the bottomless pit; he opened the abyss

- 10:2,8 “an open scroll” in the hand of an angel John is commanded to eat
- 11:19 God’s temple in heaven was opened
- 12:16 the earth opened its mouth to swallow the flood that threatened the woman giving birth
- 13:6 the beast is allowed to open his mouth and utter blasphemies
- 15:5 the sanctuary of the tent of witness is opened
- 19:11 Heaven opens for the rider on a white horse
- 20:12 The books of life and deeds are opened

> **QUESTION:** What conclusions can we make regarding the theme of “open” in the Revelation?

3) “Shut”

- > 11:6 The two witnesses have the power to shut the sky, that no rain may fall during the days of their prophesying, and they have power over the waters to turn them into blood and to strike the earth with every kind of plague, as often as they desire.
- > 20:3 and threw him into the pit, and shut it and sealed it over him, so that he might not deceive the nations any longer, until the thousand years were ended. After that he must be released for a little while.
- > 21:25 and its gates will never be shut by day—and there will be no night there.

4) Open/shut, considered figuratively,

- > are images of power and authority in each of these scenarios
- > indicate beginnings and endings
- > indicate the old passing away and all things becoming new
- > indicates an opportunity to understand
 - Presumably the open door represents an invitation to join Christ where He is
 - Invitation to join Him in His understanding of events as they unfold in both the spiritual world (heaven) and the natural world (earth) and the cosmic world (systems)

5) **QUESTION:** Do we appreciate the honor and the act of glory inherent in God sharing His mind and plan (Himself) with us?

- > If so, then our response should begin with worship
- > And proceed with faithfulness!

- (a) The identity of the first voice
 - i) Reasons to think the One speaking is Jesus rather than any of the others who speak to John in Revelation
 - a) The voice is identified as the “first” (in a series) or “premier/greatest” (among all others) or the “outset”(as a matter of timing)
 - 1) So, either there was one voice which commanded John to write and another voice that commanded John what to write and the voice in chapter four is the first of those two voices, or
 - 2) There is only one speaker to this point and John is referencing that speaker, or,
 - 3) John is referencing the position of the speaker in relation to all else that is said and done: Jesus
 - b) Revelation 1:1 announce the message of “the things that must soon take place” was given to Jesus to give to His servants, making sense then that Jesus is the one inviting John to “Come up here and I will show you what must soon take place.”
 - ii) Reasons to think the first voice is The Spirit of God
 - a) **1:10 *I was in the Spirit on the Lord’s day, and I heard behind me a loud voice like a trumpet . . .***
 - b) This identified the source of the first voice, but notice that in both cases John’s ability to hear and comprehend the Voice depended on his being “in the Spirit.” (4:2)
 - 1) “in the Spirit”
 - > To see into heaven
 - > To see what is to be seen in heaven
 - 2) Jesus said, “True worshipers must worship the Father in spirit and in truth.”
 - 3) In the Spirit must mean at least two things
 - > In an intimate relationship with the Spirit
 - > In a condition or state in which the Spirit is in full control
 - 4) Examples
 - > Ezek 37:1 *The hand of the LORD was upon me, and he brought me out in the Spirit of the LORD and set me down in the middle of the valley; it was full of bones.*
 - > Matt 22:43 *He said to them, “How is it then that David, in the Spirit, calls him Lord, saying,*
 - > Luke 2:27 *And he came in the Spirit into the temple, and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to do for him according to the custom of the Law,*
 - > Acts 19:21 *Now after these events Paul resolved in the Spirit to pass through*

Macedonia and Achaia and go to Jerusalem, saying, “After I have been there, I must also see Rome.”

- > Rom 8:9 *You, however, are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if in fact the Spirit of God dwells in you. Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him.*
 - Many people, professing faith in Jesus Christ, are not filled with the Spirit.
 - Jesus said we would be known by the fruit of our lives.
 - The fruit that should be common to all truly redeemed, regenerate, Spirit-filled believers, is the fruit of the Spirit.
 - **Galatians 5:22-23 (ESV) ²² But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, ²³ gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.**
 - **Where these fruit are not evident in ever increasing quality and quantity, we ought to question whether we are in the Spirit.**
- > Eph 6:18 *praying at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication. To that end keep alert with all perseverance, making supplication for all the saints,*
- > Rev 21:10 *And he carried me away in the Spirit to a great, high mountain, and showed me the holy city Jerusalem coming down out of heaven from God,*

- iii) Reasons to think the first voice could be some other messenger
 - a) Revelation 1:2 mentions that Jesus sends an “angel” to John
 - b) Beings other than Jesus speak to John throughout the Revelation
- (b) The message of the first voice
 - i) “Come up here”
 - a) Up here from where you are in location: earth to heaven
 - b) Up here from where you in perspective: earthly to heavenly
 - c) Up here from where you are in understanding: earthly to heavenly
 - ii) “I will show you” -
 - a) The revelation of Jesus Christ which God gave to him to give to his servants
 - 1) A revelation of Himself expanded in relation to the seven churches
 - 2) A revelation of the heart condition of the churches as well as essential strategies for successful preparation
 - b) A revelation of “what must take place after this.”

- 1) The Father gave the Son a revelation to give out
 - 2) The Son obeys the Father in all things
 - iii) **This book (Revelation) is a gift from God directly to you through the hands and heart of Jesus Himself.**
- (4) What John sees once through the door: Throne in heaven (4:2-11)
 - (a) The description of the occupant of the throne, the throne room, and the activities of the heavenly court
 - i) The one seated on the throne
 - a) Personal description
 - 1) One seated on the throne: who gets to sit in a throne room?
 - 2) Appearance of jasper and carnelian: His personal appearance
 - 3) Emerald rainbow surrounds the throne
 - b) Perception description
 - 1) From the throne came flashes of lightning
 - 2) From the throne came rumblings and peals of thunder
 - 3) Before the throne were seven torches of fire
 - 4) Sea of glass
 - c) Perpetual description: lives forever and ever (4:10)
 - d) **QUESTION: Take a moment and give your spirit a chance to encounter this One Whom John sees seated on the throne.**
 - 1) He is exalted, glorious, breathtaking, awesome
 - 2) What is missing from this scene? (Fear)
 - 3) Why is John not afraid? (cf. 1:17)
 - ii) The ones around the throne (4:4-8)
 - a) twenty four elders
 - 1) White garments
 - 2) Golden crowns
 - b) twenty four thrones
 - c) four living creatures
 - 1) on each side of the throne
 - 2) full of eyes
 - in front and behind
 - around and within
 - 3) impressions:
 - like a lion
 - like an ox

- with the face of a man
 - like an eagle in flight
 - 4) six wings
 - iii) perpetual praise (4:9-11)
 - a) By the living creatures
 - 1) Holy, holy, holy:
 - 2) Isaiah 6
 - 3) By the twenty-four elders
 - 1) Cast crowns before the throne
 - 2) Sing of God's worthiness
 - iv) The ones before the throne
 - a) Seven spirits of God
 - b) Seven burning torches
 - c) Sea of glass like crystal
- (b) Observations
 - i) The vision of the King precedes all other revelations
 - a) Chapter one - before anything else, a vision of the king
 - b) Chs 2-3 - before each letter, a vision of the king
 - c) Chs 4-22 - before everything else, a vision of the king
 - ii) **QUESTION:** What do human beings require in order to understand spiritual things and the intent of God for the world and for their lives?
 - a) A vision of the King:
 - b) seeing and savoring the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ
 - 1) **2 Corinthians 4:6 (ESV) 6 For God, who said, "Let light shine out of darkness," has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.**
 - 2) **QUESTION:** Why has God shone in our hearts to give the light of the glory of God?
 - > To fill us with the knowledge of the glory as a personal experience
 - > To fill the earth with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord through us
 - 3) **God works in faithful believers to accomplish His mission to fill the earth with the knowledge of His glory**
 - 4) **QUESTION:** How will we know that God's Kingdom has finally been established on the earth forever?
 - > When the earth is filled with the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea.

> When God's will is done on earth as it is in heaven.

- (c) The environment of the King
- i) Immense
 - ii) Glorious
 - iii) Filled with praise for the One in the center
 - a) No selfish pursuits
 - b) No regrets
- (d) Sets an expectation for the fulfilment of the Lord's Prayer request: "**Thy will be done** on earth as it is in heaven!"
- i) **QUESTION:**
 - a) Who are those who sit on the thrones that surround God's throne but those who sought God's will on earth and obeyed His will as those in heaven do?
 - b) What then should be our personal pursuit in preparation for dwelling in the eternal Kingdom?
 - 1) God's will for the world
 - > God desires justice and righteousness **Am 5:24** See also **Ps 33:5; Isa 5:7; Jer 9:24; Mic 6:8**
 - > God desires honesty and truth **Pr 12:22** See also **Ex 20:16** pp **Dt 5:20; Lev 19:35-36; Pr 11:1; Zec 8:16-17**
 - > God desires harmony and peace **1Ti 2:2-3** See also **Isa 2:3-4** pp **Mic 4:2-3; Isa 11:6-9**
 - > God desires the world to be saved **1Ti 2:4** See also **Eze 18:23; 33:11; Mt 18:14; Jn 3:16-17; 2Pe 3:9**
 - 2) God's will for his redeemed people
 - > God desires loving obedience **Mt 22:35-38** pp **Mk 12:28-29** pp **Lk 10:27** See also **Dt 6:5**
Scripture regularly makes obedience to God a higher priority than performing religious acts: Ps 51:16-17; Isa 1:11; Jer 7:22-23; 1Jn 2:5
 - > God desires worship **1Pe 2:9** See also **Ps 100:4; Isa 45:23; 1Th 5:18; Rev 1:6**
 - > God desires holiness **1Th 4:3** See also **Lev 19:1-2; 1Co 1:2; Col 1:22; 1Th 4:7; Heb 10:10; 1Pe 1:15-16**
 - > God desires love for one another **Jn 13:34-35** See also **Lev 19:18; Mt 22:39** pp **Mk 12:31** pp **Lk 10:27; Jn 15:12-13; Gal 5:14; 1Jn 3:11**
 - > God desires high moral standards **1Pe 2:15** See also **Mt 5:16,48; 1Pe 3:4**
 - > God's will may involve suffering **1Pe 3:17** See also **Ac 14:22; 21:13-14; Heb 12:5-7; 1Pe 4:19**

- 3) Proper responses to God's will
 - > Discovering God's will **Eph 5:17** *See also* **Ro 2:18; Col 1:9**
 - > Obeying God's will **Mt 7:21** *See also* **Ezr 10:11; Mt 12:50** pp Mk 3:35; **Eph 6:6; Heb 13:21; Jas 4:15**
 - > Praying for God's will **Mt 6:10** *See also* **Ps 143:10; Mt 26:42; Jn 14:13-14; 1Jn 5:14**
 - > Making radical changes to do God's will **Ro 12:2** *See also* **Ro 8:5; Gal 5:16-17; Jas 1:20; 1Pe 1:14; 4:2; 1Jn 2:15-17**

Manser, M. H. (2009). *Dictionary of Bible Themes: The Accessible and Comprehensive Tool for Topical Studies*. London: Martin Manser.

- c. The Commencement of Restoration (Reclaiming the "Earthly Throne") (Rev. 5:1-22:5)
 - (1) The Worthiness of the Lamb to Restore Dominion Over Creation to Mankind (5:1-14)
 - (a) **INSTRUCTIONS:**
 - i) Please read Revelation 5:1-14, Genesis 1:1-31, 3:1-24; Habakkuk 2:14; Daniel 7:13-14; Matthew 24:3-14; John 2:29-37, 12:27-31. These Scriptures, and a few others, from the background for understanding the events John records in the vision of Revelation 5.
 - ii) The following questions refer specifically to Revelation 5:1-14 unless otherwise noted. Please do not use commentaries to answer these questions. Prayerfully ponder them and jot down your musings for discussion. *(Commentators align their exposition with the assumptions they make regarding the theme and direction of the book they are commenting on. If you rely on commentaries in answering the questions, you are more likely to respond out of their interpretive agenda than the direction we have been taking in our study. Read the above Scripture passages, then ponder these questions on your own. Thanks!)*
 - (b) **Revelation 5:1-5 (ESV)**
 - i) ¹ ***Then I saw in the right hand of him who was seated on the throne a scroll written within and on the back, sealed with seven seals.***
 - a) Who does the scene open with? Him who was seated on the throne (God)
 - b) What is God doing? Holding out a scroll
 - c) What do we know about scrolls in general? They are vehicles for communication
 - d) What does the physical description of the of the scroll suggest about its identity and importance?
 - 1) It is written on front and back and sealed with seven seals.
 - 2) This suggests that a lot of detailed communication is included in the scroll.
 - 3) The seven seals suggests the content of the seals is highly important or precious and to be treated with great gravity. (Otherwise, if it were an ordinary message, one seal

- would have been enough.)
- 4) The seven seals also suggest that the contents of this document are complete, they reveal all of whatever it is intended to communicate.
- e) What is the significance of the detail that the scroll is in the “right hand of him who was seated on the throne”?
- 1) The “right hand” is often a figure of power and authority in the Bible.
 - 2) That the scroll is in the right hand of the Him who is seated on the throne suggests that the scroll belongs to Him, that the message of the scroll is from Him, and that the recipient of the scroll is determined by Him, and will be authorized by Him for whatever action it calls for.
- ii) ² *And I saw a mighty angel proclaiming with a loud voice, “Who is worthy to open the scroll and break its seals?”*
- a) Why do you think John includes the detailed description of the angel as a “mighty” or “strong” angel?
 - 1) **Psalm 103:20 (ESV)** ²⁰ *Bless the LORD, O you his angels, you mighty ones who do his word, obeying the voice of his word!*
 - 2) The word points to their capacity for obedience, faithfulness, integrity of service and ability to accomplish all God requires of them without hesitation or potential for failure.
 - 3) The loud voice is necessary to be heard to the far reaches of creation and heaven.
 - b) What is the angel’s question?
 - 1) “Who is worthy to open the scroll and break its seals?”
 - 2) Worthy? Why worthy?
 - Worthiness for the message is determined by the sender.
 - Worthiness means you are the one intended by Him who sits on the throne to receive the benefits of the contents of the scroll.
 - Worthiness means you meet all the previously prescribed criteria as the genuine intended recipient.
 - c) We know God intends someone to open and read the scroll.
 - 1) We know God intends for someone to receive whatever benefit, authority, or blessing is contained in the scroll because the scroll is lying on an open hand.
 - 2) We know there is an expectation that someone will qualify to open the scroll.
- iii) ³ *And no one in heaven or on earth or under the earth was able to open the scroll or to look into it,* ⁴ *and I began to weep loudly because no one was found worthy to open the scroll or to look into it.*
- a) What is the response to the question?

- 1) No one in all creation, natural or supernatural, is found who meets the criteria of Him who sits on the throne as the one intended to possess and implement the contents of the scroll.
- b) How widespread is the search for a worthy candidate? What is significant about these parameters?
 - 1) The inquiry went out to the full extent of the heavenly and earthly realms.
 - 2) No man, beast, bird, angel, or demon, or any other creature, dead or alive, was found to meet the criteria to be the intended possessor of the scroll.
 - This means that the contents of the scroll, presuming the contents created by God reflect the goodness and character of God, can never be realized outside the mind and will of God.
 - That means no blessing in the scroll can be realized in creation because the scroll will remain sealed and the will and purpose and heart of God sealed away as long as the scroll lays unopened on his hand.
- c) Why does John begin to weep loudly when no one is found to open the scroll?
 - 1) God's purpose in creation is "to fill the earth with the knowledge of His glory," that's why he created human beings in his image, it is why he made them to procreate and fill the earth and why He imparts something of Himself in their unions (see Malachi 2:15).
 - 2) If there is no one to open the scroll, assuming the scroll contains the thoughts and purposes of its author, and assuming that Him who sits on the throne is the author of the document, then the contents of that scroll, whatever it is and whatever is inside, express the glory of God, and if the scroll cannot be opened by anyone in creation, then the glory contained in it cannot be manifest in creation, and if something of the knowledge of the glory (the contents of the scroll) cannot be manifest in creation then God's purpose for creation cannot be fulfilled.
 - 3) If God's purpose for creation cannot be fulfilled and realized, then the world will continue as it has since the fall without hope of final redemption and restoration.
 - 4) And that is a hopeless situation worth weeping long and loudly over!
- iv) ⁵ ***And one of the elders said to me, "Weep no more; behold, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has conquered, so that he can open the scroll and its seven seals."***
 - a) What words does the elder offer to console John in his grief?
 - 1) There is one who can open the scroll.
 - 2) That means there is one who meets all the criteria and intent of Him who sits on the throne to take and possess the scroll, and therefore, to realize the fulfilment of God's

purposes in creation.

- b) What is the most essential verb in the elder's conciliatory response to John's grief?
 - 1) Conquered
 - 2) It means that the Lion of the tribe of Judah has proved his worthiness
 - 3) It means that the Root of David has overcome the obstacles that prevented all others
 - 4) It means that this worthy one has done everything necessary to possess the scroll and manifest its contents
- v) Look again at Revelation 5:1-5. What is going on here in these verses? What is John seeing? (*DO NOT CONSULT YOUR STUDY HELPS. Just prayerfully think about this question.*)
 - a) **Romans 8:19-25 (ESV)** ¹⁹ *For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the sons of God.* ²⁰ *For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of him who subjected it, in hope* ²¹ *that the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to corruption and obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God.* ²² *For we know that the whole creation has been groaning together in the pains of childbirth until now.* ²³ *And not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies.* ²⁴ *For in this hope we were saved. Now hope that is seen is not hope. For who hopes for what he sees?* ²⁵ *But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience.*
 - b) John sees the beginning of the final restoration of creation to pre-fall perfection.
 - 1) What was the condition of creation prior to the fall?
 - 2) What was the condition/position of man in relation to God and creation prior to the fall?
 - He was morally perfect in relation to God
 - He was positionally perfect in relation to creation
 - **Genesis 1:26-28 (ESV)** ²⁶ *Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth."* ²⁷ *So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.* ²⁸ *And God blessed them. And God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it, and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth."*
 - c) What did human beings lose in the fall?
 - 1) Moral perfection in relation to God / **Holiness**

- 2) Positional perfection in relation to creation / **Dominion**
- 3) Three essential changes as a result of the fall
 - Devil exalted as the ruling authority over the will of humans
 - > **Matthew 4:8-10 (ESV)** ⁸ *Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory. ⁹ And he said to him, “All these I will give you, if you will fall down and worship me.” ¹⁰ Then Jesus said to him, “Be gone, Satan! For it is written, ““You shall worship the Lord your God and him only shall you serve.”*
 - > **John 12:31 (ESV)** ³¹ *Now is the judgment of this world; now will the ruler of this world be cast out.*
 - > **Ephesians 2:2 (ESV)** *2 in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience—*
 - Death enters as just punishment for disobedience
 - Dominion is forfeit (and thus the effects of the curse)
- d) What, therefore, needs to be restored in order for God’s plan for creation to be fully and completely realized?
 - 1) Moral perfection in relation to God
 - 2) Positional perfection in relation to creation
 - 3) Three essential must be restored
 - Devil must be defeated
 - Death must be conquered
 - Dominion must be reclaimed
- e) How are human beings restored to moral perfection in relation to God?
 - 1) Through the redemptive work of God in Jesus Christ
 - 2) What was Christ’s work in redemption?
 - To die on the cross the death we all deserve thereby satisfying God’s righteous requirement for justice
 - To live in perfect relation with God, in faith, filled with the Spirit, and without sin
 - To be in all ways, what Adam was supposed to be, and to adequately suffer the punishment (death) for all Adam ruined.
 - Specifically, through faith in Christ, the divinely provided second Adam and sacrifice for the first Adam’s sin

- f) So what we are seeing is the restoration by the second Adam of all the first Adam lost in the fall.
 - 1) Moral perfection (in Christ) in relation to God for the human race
 - 2) Positional perfection (in Christ) in relation to creation
 - g) How are human beings restored (in Christ) to positional perfection in relation to creation? This is what the rest of chapter five describes for us.
- (c) **Revelation 5:6-14**
- i) ⁶ *And between the throne and the four living creatures and among the elders I saw a Lamb standing, as though it had been slain, with seven horns and with seven eyes, which are the seven spirits of God sent out into all the earth.*
 - a) What is the key feature of the description of the Lamb that John records three times in Revelation 5:6-14?
 - 1) 5:6 “. . . a Lamb standing, as though it had been slain . . .”
 - 2) 5:9 “Worthy are you to take the scroll . . . for you were slain . . .”
 - 3) 5:12 “. . . Worthy is the Lamb who was slain . . .”
 - b) Why is it important that John sees a Lamb when he looks after he is told to expect a Lion (of the tribe of Judah)?
 - 1) **John 1:29-34 (ESV)** ²⁹ *The next day he saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, “Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!”* ³⁰ *This is he of whom I said, ‘After me comes a man who ranks before me, because he was before me.’* ³¹ *I myself did not know him, but for this purpose I came baptizing with water, that he might be revealed to Israel.”* ³² *And John bore witness: “I saw the Spirit descend from heaven like a dove, and it remained on him.”* ³³ *I myself did not know him, but he who sent me to baptize with water said to me, ‘He on whom you see the Spirit descend and remain, this is he who baptizes with the Holy Spirit.’* ³⁴ *And I have seen and have borne witness that this is the Son of God.”*
 - 2) Consider the designation “Lamb of God.” What does John already know about the Lamb, his identity and purpose?
 - John knows the Lamb is Jesus, the Son of God
 - John knows that Christ, in His death on the cross, takes away the sins of the world
 - 3) What is important, in this context, that Jesus takes away the sins of the world?
 - The Lamb, by His sinless life of perfect faithfulness, conquers Satan who was given authority and power as a result of human sin
 - The Lamb, by His voluntary and undeserved death on the cross and His

subsequent resurrection from the dead, satisfies the righteous demands of divine justice and breaks the stranglehold of death on the human race

- The Lamb, who restores the moral perfection of the human race relative to God is now in the position to restore the positional perfection of the human race relative to creation

- c) What is revealed about the Lamb by the positional words (“between” and “among”) John uses in his description of the scene before him?
 - 1) “between” suggests linkage or bridge
 - 2) “among” suggests belonging, identification
- d) What personal characteristics are generally described by “horns” and “eyes” in Scripture? *(Feel free to use a concordance to find cross references, BUT NO COMMENTARIES!)*
 - 1) Horn = strength
 - 2) Eyes = wisdom or knowledge (also presence)
- e) What does the description of seven horns and seven eyes suggest about the Lamb?
 - 1) The Lamb is all-powerful (seven horns)
 - 2) The Lamb is all-knowing (seven eyes)
 - 3) The Lamb is all-present (seven spirits which are sent out into all the earth)
 - 4) The Lamb is Almighty God

ii) ⁷ ***And he went and took the scroll from the right hand of him who was seated on the throne.***

- a) What action does the Lamb take in relation to the scroll?
 - 1) The Lamb fearlessly approaches Him Who is seated on the throne takes the scroll as the One Who is worthy and as the One for Whom the scroll has always been intended.
- b) What does this action suggest about the Lamb’s character and relationship to Him who is seated on the throne?

iii) ⁸ ***And when he had taken the scroll, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb, each holding a harp, and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints. ⁹ And they sang a new song, saying,***

“Worthy are you to take the scroll and to open its seals, for you were slain, and by your blood you ransomed people for God from every tribe and language and people and nation, ¹⁰ and you have made them a kingdom and priests to our God, and they shall reign on the earth.”

Excursus:

The Difference in Wording Between the KJV and Modern Translations of Revelation 5:10

Blog Post by Alan E. Kurshner

<http://www.aomin.org/aoblog/index.php/2007/06/16/revelation-59-10-1st-person-us-or-3rd-person-them/>

Revelation 5:9-10 1st Person (“us”) or 3rd Person (“them”)?

In the past, I have been asked more than once what the correct readings are in Revelation 5:9-10. Once again, today someone emailed me asking whether the King James Version readings are correct, or the modern translations are more faithful to the original reading. So this has prompted me to write a brief post explaining these variants. There are at least three related variant readings in these two verses that concern us here. We will address the first two in v.10, followed with the third in v.9. Here is the text,

“And hast made *us* [*hemas*] unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth.” (Revelation 5:10 KJV)

“You have made *them* [*autous*] to be a kingdom and priests to our God; and they will reign upon the earth.” (Revelation 5:10 NASB)

This verse is part of a praise song that the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders are singing regarding the Lamb’s redemptive victory of God’s elect of a diverse people (the Church). But between the KJV and modern translations there is a significant difference: Are the four living creatures and twenty-four elders claiming that they (“us”) have been redeemed? (according to the KJV reading). Or are they singing, not about themselves, but about a body of people (“they”) who are not found in this heavenly scene (according to the modern translations)?

The question of which reading is correct is quickly solved by examining the support of the manuscripts. First, by far, most of the majority of the witnesses testify to “them.” This is an interesting point because King James Only advocates often use the “majority” argument as a defense for their readings. They cannot in this case. But the majority argument in itself does not prove this point. More importantly, the earliest and the best manuscripts support “them.” As far as the Textus Receptus (KJV) reading of “us,” it is found in a minimum of patristic and versional witnesses. There is no question that “them” is the reading that would be found in the original text. And therefore the KJV contains the inferior reading, and the modern translations have the correct reading.

One wonders, then, why King James Only advocates make a mountain out of this variant in light of the prodigious hard historical and textual data? For those who are familiar with pretribulationism, you may guess why. Here is their reasoning:

- i. Since the KJV says, “made us,” then the four living creatures and the elders are (or represent) the church.
- ii. Since the living creatures and the elders are in heaven, therefore the church must be in heaven.
- iii. And since the church is in heaven, and the vision of the Beast and the Great Tribulation against God’s people is yet to unfold, the church has been “raptured” before all that persecution.

But as noted above, the first premise rests on a phantom support of textual data. But only the most recalcitrant KJVO advocate will be unmoved from this Tradition.

One other variant in this verse should be mentioned briefly regarding the persons of the action (1st or 3rd). The KJV reads,

“we shall reign” (basileusomen)

Modern translations read,

“they will reign” (basileusousin)

Once again the KJV reading is attested by nothing of significance. Whereas, the modern reading, “they”, is attested by the vast majority of manuscripts, and the earliest and best of them. It is obvious that the scribal replacement of “they” with “we” was intended to conform with the agreement of the 1st person plural of the previous “us.”

Moving on. In v.9 we have a similar variant reading:

“And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed **us to God** by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation;” (Revelation 5:9 KJV)

“And they sang a new song, saying, “Worthy are You to take the book and to break its seals; for You were slain, and **purchased for God** with Your blood men from every tribe and tongue and people and nation.” (Revelation 5:9 NASB)

Notice how the KJV contains, “us”, which is absent from the NASB and modern translations. Again, textual considerations will help us to clarify this discrepancy. Though there are not many manuscript witnesses that testify to “purchased for God,” it is supported by the best witness to Revelation, Codex A. Further, the internal evidence of the shorter reading explains the emergence of other longer readings. That is, there was a scribal tendency to “clarify” ambiguous readings. And in this case, it makes much more sense that a scribe would add an object to clarify who is being purchased, rather than a scribe omitting the object of God’s purchasing.

With this understanding, one can see now why scribes in the following verse 10 would change the inconsistency of the third person pronoun to the first person so as to have agreement with the “us” in verse 9.

(Incidentally, since the four living creatures are clearly celestial beings, it is absurd to argue that they have been redeemed.)

11 Then I looked, and I heard around the throne and the living creatures and the elders the voice of many angels, numbering myriads of myriads and thousands of thousands,¹² saying with a loud voice,

“Worthy is the Lamb who was slain, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and might and honor and glory and blessing!”

¹³ And I heard every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth and in the sea, and all that is in them, saying,

“To him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb be blessing and honor and glory and might

forever and ever!”

¹⁴ *And the four living creatures said, “Amen!” and the elders fell down and worshiped.*

- a) What is the universal response to the Lamb’s action regarding the scroll? (And what should be the universal response to the Lamb’s action in our lives?)
 - 1) **WORSHIP!**
 - b) What aspect of the Lamb’s person does the worship focus on here?
 - 1) **Worthiness of His person as a result of the faithfulness of His actions to the plan and purpose of God.**
 - c) What makes the Lamb worthy?
 - 1) By His blood - His personal, faithful, sacrificial obedience to the divine plan
 - 2) He ransomed people for God
 - 3) He made them a kingdom and priests to God
 - d) What will the ransomed, re-purposed people of God do as a result of the Lamb’s activities?
 - 1) He makes them to rule upon the earth.
 - e) The Lamb acts. List all those who respond. Who is omitted?
 - 1) Four living creatures
 - 2) Twenty four elders
 - 3) Angels beyond number
 - 4) Every creature
 - in heaven
 - and on earth
 - and under the earth
 - and in the sea
 - and all that is in them
 - > **Philippians 2:9-11 (ESV) ⁹ Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, ¹⁰ so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.”**
 - > NO ONE is omitted!
 - f) What does this all-encompassing, universal worship represent?
 - 1) (See Habakkuk 2:14)
 - 2) The utter and final completion of God’s mission in creation, that the earth (Creation) might be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord as the waters cover the sea!
- (d) Consider the background Scriptures I’ve asked you to read and what you know from Scripture of Jesus, his

sinless life, his death on the cross, and his resurrection. What three things, besides the possibility of personal forgiveness for sins, are accomplished in the redemption purchased by Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God?

- i) Destroyed the works of the devil
- ii) Conquered death
- iii) Restores dominion

(e) **What more does Jesus have to do in your life to be worthy of your perpetual praise and worship?**

- i) Martyn Lloyd-Jones - "If your understanding of the book of Revelation does not help you to rejoice, you are misunderstanding it."
- ii) David Jeremiah - "Our conduct today is affected by what we know of tomorrow."

(f) **Summary of Chapter 5**

- i) God's will regarding creation, comprising the contents of the scroll, is intended to be expressed and implemented within creation, thus the scroll is offered and the search for one worthy to open it is carried out in creation.
- ii) Within the sphere of creation (all that is not God Himself) nothing/no one, not even a mighty angel, was found worthy to introduce the fullness of God's self-revelation (glory) into the experiential sphere of creation until Jesus Christ, the Lamb who was slain.
- iii) The Lamb who was slain was found worthy reason of the redemptive work of His life, death, resurrection, and ascension to the throne, to take and open the scroll, thus revealing and implementing the fullness of God's glory into creation.
- iv) The activities of the Lamb while in creation produced spiritual benefits for creation including ransom of human beings (v. 9), renewed relationship of human beings with God (v. 10a), and restored dominion (v. 10b): in his life and death, Christ destroyed the works of the devil, in his resurrection, Christ triumphed over and destroyed death, at His ascension to the right hand of the Father and His enthronement, Christ restored dominion to human race.
- v) The worthiness and authority of the Lamb to reveal and implement the contents of the scroll (the mind and will of God for creation) is sealed by the worship and testimony (acts of submission and subjection) by the representatives of spiritual creation (living creatures), by the representatives of God's people (elders), by the host of angels, and by the entirety of physical creation.

(2) **The Worthy Lamb on the Throne Opens the Seals (6:1-8:1)**

(a) **Preparation of the Earth for a New King and Kingdom**

i) **Notes**

- a) ***Because the Lamb is worthy, by virtue of His sinless life and substitutionary death, he has authority, right, and privilege to break the seals, reveal, and implement the divine will recorded in the scroll.***

- 1) The Lamb takes the scroll from the right hand of Him who sits on the throne

- 2) His right to take the scroll was won by the Lamb's faithful actions in the past (in relation both to the persons in heaven and to John)
 - The Lamb "had been slain"
 - "by Your blood You ransomed"
 - "Who was slain"
- b) Note when each of the losses of the fall are recovered
 - 1) Destruction of the works of the devil - on the cross in the past
 - 2) Defeat of death - at the resurrection in the past
 - 3) *The essence of dominion (sovereignty) is restored with Christ's ascension to the right hand of the Father, where He is seated (Col. 3:1-2; Hebrews 1:3)*
 - Based on Colossians 3:1-2 and Hebrews 1:3, when was Christ enthroned in heaven? At his ascension.
 - The scene John is recording, in relation to time, should be understood as happening at the time of Christ's ascension
 - > Inaugurated eschatology
 - > The events described for the end times in OT prophecy begin, in real time, with the completion of Christ's personal redemptive work on earth
 - (The elders seated on the thrones in chs 4/5 would certainly not have been inaugurated and seated before Christ from whom alone any authority for their reign must come. We are "blessed with every spiritual blessing in the heavenlies IN CHRIST, not without Christ!")
- c) *However, just as the original earth / creation was prepared for man, and through his dominion, for being filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, so the current earth must be prepared for the redeemed and ransomed people of God through whom the whole earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord.*
- d) *So, the events of the seals are the expansion in real time of the dominion of the crucified, risen, and exalted Christ from a kingdom of the heart to a kingdom that includes all creation.*
 - 1) *What this means, then, is that the events of the four horsemen are not events reserved solely for some future apocalyptic tribulation, but are an explanation of the current troubles and difficulties the world and the church experience while awaiting the final return of Jesus and the consummation of the eternal kingdom.*
 - 2) *While it does not mean there is not to come a specific time of increased affliction and terror, it does mean that all the troubles the world and the church face now, and*

have faced for the last 2000 years are part of God's sovereign expansion of the sovereign reign of the sovereign Christ in all the earth

- Is this the "great tribulation?" Yes!
- Could it get worse? Most likely!
- Is the tribulation evidence of the Devil's final effort to deny Christ His kingdom?
 - > Only partially.
 - > In a greater sense, it is the expression of the sovereignty of the Lamb to restore all of creation to God-glorifying, redeemed human dominion.

ii) Overview Notes

- a) Chapter 6 is the unfolding of the sovereign work of the Lamb in human history subsequent to His ascension and prior to His final return.
- b) Chapter 6 expounds the current experiential reality of 1st century Christians as they face severe and even deadly persecution at the hands of unbelievers
- c) Chapter 6 seems, in many ways, to parallel Jesus' teaching in Matthew 24
 - 1) Jesus' description of end time events point to
 - > The sign of His coming
 - > The end of the age (which they assume will commence at his return)
 - 2) These parameters, connected with Rev 6, could indicate that the events and results of the breaking of the seals are signs of coming judgment and not the judgment itself.
 - 3) Therefore, if the events and results described in the first 5 seals are explanations of world events and conditions since the redeeming work of Jesus, they can be considered signs that give evidence in real time to what is coming, but are not themselves what is coming, and thus give encouragement as evidence that the consummation of all things is coming and has not yet arrived
 - > Precluding any conclusion that God has forgotten or abandoned His faithful people
 - > Supporting hope that they will yet see the fullness of the glory of God realized in all the earth.

iii) Comparisons and Connections of Matthew 24 with Rev 6

- a) v. 5 and the white horse
- b) v. 6 and the red horse
- c) v. 7 and the black horse
- d) v. 9 the pale horse

- e) vv. 9, 13 and the 5th seal
- f) v. 29 and the 6th seal
- g) **Matthew 24:14 (ESV)** ¹⁴ *And this gospel of the kingdom will be proclaimed throughout the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come.*
 - 1) The end does not come until the gospel is proclaimed throughout the whole earth
 - 2) What does the gospel describe?
 - > The worthiness of the Lamb
 - > **Revelation 5:9-10 (ESV)** ⁹ *And they sang a new song, saying, “Worthy are you to take the scroll and to open its seals, for you were slain, and by your blood you ransomed people for God from every tribe and language and people and nation, ¹⁰ and you have made them a kingdom and priests to our God, and they shall reign on the earth.”*
 - 3) Why is the gospel important?
 - > Because through it the knowledge of the glory of the LORD is restored in human hearts
 - Romans 1:16-17
 - Through salvation and sanctification human beings are turned into the likeness of Jesus Christ
 - Jesus is the radiance of God’s glory, therefore, in some sense, when God saves a person, that person becomes, to some degree, a radiance of God’s glory, just as Jesus is.
 - > As the gospel proceeds to the furthest corners of the world, the knowledge of the glory of the covers the earth
 - 4) Therefore, when the gospel has been proclaimed throughout the whole earth,
 - > assuming that proclamation includes completing all the work the gospel is intended to do in the world,
 - > the whole earth will have been filled with the knowledge of the glory of the LORD
 - 5) BUT UNTIL THEN . . .
- h) **Matthew 24:34 (ESV)** ³⁴ *Truly, I say to you, this generation will not pass away until all these things take place.*
 - 1) The people standing and listening to Jesus speak would experience the events and conditions Jesus just described
 - 2) There is some question regarding how “this generation” is to be understood
 - > In the Septuagint and in the NT, where the word is used most frequently in the

- Synoptic Gospels, the word has the sense of “contemporaries.”
- > The phrase “all these things” rules the interpretation: the generation that sees “all these things,” not the generation that sees some of them but the generation that sees “all these things,” this is the generation that will not pass away until they see “all these things” take place.
- 3) More relevant, it seems, is the realization that beginning with them, they and the world would experience these conditions to various degrees within real time until the purpose of these conditions is fulfilled and Christ returns to establish His final kingdom (which is what the question was about in the first place.)
- i) **Matthew 24:44 (ESV) ⁴⁴ *Therefore you also must be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect.***
- 1) The purpose of the entire discourse is to encourage faithfulness in the disciples regardless of the experiential context in which they live
 - > This is also the message of the book of Revelation as a whole
 - > And of the seven letters which identify the original audience
 - > And of any of its parts, as the function of the whole is served by all its parts.
 - 2) Life experiences, especially the difficult ones, should serve to strengthen their resolves to remain faithful to the end, whenever that may come.
 - > Many people experience pain, sorrow, tribulation, and affliction as signs God has abandoned them or is displeased with them.
 - > Jesus and John encourage Christians to view the flow of human history since the cross, the resurrection, and the ascension of Jesus, as the evidence the King is coming!
 - 3) A note on what faithfulness/ “enduring to the end” requires (see letters to the 7 churches)
 - > Personal holiness
 - > Spiritual intimacy (return to your first love)
 - > Physical endurance
 - > Emotional resolve
 - > Doctrinal understanding

- **2 Peter 3:18 (ESV) ¹⁸ *But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To him be the glory both now and to the day of eternity. Amen.***

 - > Love, love, love
 - > Willful commitment

- 4) Every effort to restore human dominion will fail until the King Himself restores dominion in Himself at the last day.
- iv) 6:1 - "Now" represents the immediate continuation of the vision recorded in chs 4/5
- (b) The Lamb Expresses Divine Sovereignty Over ALL Circumstances for ALL people (Rev. 6:1-8)
 - i) Common Observations
 - a) The seal is opened by the Lamb
 - 1) Who has been slain
 - 2) Who is standing at the throne
 - 3) Who has been found worthy
 - 4) Who is releasing the revelation contained in the scroll into creation's experience
 - b) The command is uttered by the cherubim: "Come!"
 - 1) Why do the cherubim utter the command rather than the Lamb?
 - 2) **Ezekiel 1:12, 19-20**
 - 3) The Spirit in the living creatures is the Spirit of the Lamb, so their obedience to the Spirit is immediate, accurate, and authoritative.
 - c) The response is offered by the horse
 - d) The result is enacted by the rider
 - 1) The results COULD be enacted sequentially but, according to Beale, are more likely simultaneous for the following reasons

The fourth seal summarizes the prior three

The passages that form the background for this vision (Ezekiel 14:11; Zech 1:18; Mt Jesus' eschatological discourse in the gospels) portray events of tribulation occurring simultaneously

 - The glorified saints in Rev 6:9-11 appear to have suffered under all four trials portrayed in the seals
 - There is, however, a discernible historical pattern:
 - > Conquest
 - > Bloodshed
 - > Famine
 - > Death
 - 2) The results of the sovereign command of the Lamb are enacted globally from the moment of the command until the command is retracted.
 - 3) **The results of the sovereign command of the Lamb are enacted universally upon all mankind (though limited in number in one instance) regardless of spiritual condition or profession of faith**

- e) In regards to the broken seals, divine commands, and disastrous results, the church is called, in its experience of God's sovereignty expressed in and through Christ, the Lamb of God Who was slain, to acknowledge three perpetual truths:
 - 1) The sovereign Lamb acts in human history to purify the church by testing their faith in preparation for final restoration of creation to redeemed human dominion for God's glory
 - 2) The sovereign Lamb acts in human history to punish unbelievers in preparation for final restoration of creation to redeemed human dominion for God's glory
 - 3) The effect of these two purposes
 - The sovereign Lamb acts in human history for repentance among believers for their joy in Him
 - The sovereign Lamb acts in human history for repentance among unbelievers for their salvation in preparation for final restoration of creation to redeemed human dominion for God's glory
 - Leviticus 26:18-28; Ezekiel 14:12-21; Zechariah 1:8-15, **6:1-8**)
- ii) Horses, Riders, Results
 - a) See "Flow of Dominion in Human History" chart for summary/overview of contemporary relevance of seven seals
 - 1) The death and resurrection of Jesus Christ is **THE** pivotal event of post-fall human history
 - 2) Upon His death, resurrection, and ascension the entire position of the human race in relation to God, the devil, and creation changed.
 - Previously, history was filled with the Satan-inspired efforts of human beings to restore dominion on their terms by their efforts
 - Post-ascension, history is filled with the ongoing expressions of restored dominion by the One worthy to release the will of God for creation into creation.
 - b) The First Seal (Rev. 6:1-2)
 - 1) White Horse and Conqueror
 - Bow
 - Crown (given)
 - Conquering and to conquer
 - 2) Who is the rider on the white horse? Jesus or Satan/Devil/Evil
 - Jesus
 - > Psalm 45:3-5 mentions an Israelite king who defeats his enemies with

arrows as he rides on victoriously (considered by Heb 1:8 as a messianic prophecy)

- > Rev 19:11-16 Christ, with diadems on his head, rides on a white horse and defeats his enemies

- > Rev 14:14 Christ, the Son of Man, comes riding on white cloud, wearing a golden crown, carrying a weapon in his hand, and being commanded to do something by an angelic being

- > Christ conquers elsewhere in Revelation

- > Some Synoptic passages place the universal proclamation of the gospel before the beginning of some of the messianic woes and before the Son of Man's coming in judgment

- > "White" is used without exception elsewhere in Revelation pertaining to the holiness of God, Christ, or the saints

- > This horseman is different than the other in that there is no specific "woe" related to him or his activity

- Devil/Satan/Evil

- > Conquering is used elsewhere of the beast oppressing the saints

- > In the OT background passages, the horse are depicted as all being of the same nature

- > Revelation 12-13 depict Satan as deceiving by imitating Christ's appearance

- > The prophecy of "false Christs and false prophets" who will come in Christ's name and "mislead" is mentioned first in each of the versions of the Synoptic apocalypse (Mark 13:5-6; Mat 24:4-5; Luke 21:8)

- > From a literary perspective, since each horse and rider is introduced and treated exactly the same in each paragraph, there is good reason to understand that they are meant to communicate parallel ideas of evil

- > Less convincingly, but worth noting, it is awkward to have Christ open a seal that contains a vision in which he is also the subject

- > If the fourth horseman, death, is to be understood as a summary of the first three, then the first one must be evil

- > A parallel with the demonic forces of 9:7

- A messenger of divine judgment whose arrows of woe are the next three horsemen

3) The first rider likely represents a satanic force attempting to defeat and oppress

believers spiritually through deception, persecution, or both

- The antiChrist
- Governments that persecute Christians
- The devil's servants in general
- Keep in mind

> Paul declares that the devil appears as an "angel of light"

> John reminds the church that the spirit of antichrist is already in the world and many antichrists have already gone out

> **Any attempt of the evil one to mimic the authority and success of the worthy One are doomed to failure from the beginning because they are ultimately decreed by God to contribute to the establishment of His kingdom and glory!**

4) The authorization for the rider comes from the divine throne

- "It was given him"
- Beale "The clause is used in commissioning both good and evil intermediary agents and is best understood in the specific sense of a divine authorization to perform a role rather than the more general idea of "permit, allow."
- **This direct authorization from the hand of our good, gracious, sovereign Redeemer and King encourages us to persevere when suffering at the hands of enemies and evil**

c) The Second Seal (Rev. 6:3-4)

1) Red Horse and War (Civil Unrest)

- Permitted to take peace from the earth - nothing added in, peace taken out
- So that, men should slay one another - without peace men resort to violence
- A great sword (given)

2) How do persecution of the church, abortion, violence, and war fit the picture of the red horse?

3) Why do nations war against one another? What is the motivating slogan for abortion? Why do men and women enact violence against one another? Why does one religion persecute another? What are they striving to achieve for themselves?

4) Why would the sovereign Lamb will the futile effort of sinful man to pursue dominion on their terms?

- **Romans 5:20-21 (ESV) ²⁰ Now the law came in to increase the trespass, but where sin increased, grace abounded all the more, ²¹ so that, as sin reigned in death, grace also might reign through righteousness leading to eternal life**

through Jesus Christ our Lord.

- **1 Corinthians 15:24-25 (ESV)** ²⁴ *Then comes the end, when he delivers the kingdom to God the Father after destroying every rule and every authority and power.* ²⁵ *For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet.*

d) The Third Seal (Rev. 6:5-6)

1) Black Horse and Famine

- Pair of scales
- A “seeming” voice in the midst of the living creatures
 - > A quart of wheat for a denarius”
 - > “Three quarts of barley for a denarius”
 - > “Do not harm the oil and wine!”

2)

e) The Fourth Seal (Rev. 6:7-8)

1) Pale Horse and Death / Hades

2) Summary of the previous three riders

(c) The Fifth Seal - Martyrs cry for justice (Rev. 6:9-11)

i) Where do these souls come from?

- a) They had been slain for the word of God
- b) They had been slain for they witness they had borne

ii) When were they likely slain for the word and the testimony?

iii) What do we know from the text regarding these souls?

- a) They are under the altar. - Sacrifice
- b) They were slain for their testimony to Christ

1) **Their Attitude: Philippians 3:7-11 (ESV)** ⁷ *But whatever gain I had, I counted as loss for the sake of Christ.* ⁸ *Indeed, I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ* ⁹ *and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which comes through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God that depends on faith—* ¹⁰ *that I may know him and the power of his resurrection, and may share his sufferings, becoming like him in his death,* ¹¹ *that by any means possible I may attain the resurrection from the dead.*

2) **Their Action: Philippians 3:12-16 (ESV)** ¹² *Not that I have already obtained this or am already perfect, but I press on to make it my own, because Christ Jesus has made*

me his own. ¹³ Brothers, I do not consider that I have made it my own. But one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, ¹⁴ I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus. ¹⁵ Let those of us who are mature think this way, and if in anything you think otherwise, God will reveal that also to you. ¹⁶ Only let us hold true to what we have attained.

- c) They cry out to the Sovereign Lord for justice
- d) They are each given a white robe and a command to wait peacefully
- e) They are to wait for others who will also be slain as they were (and for the same reasons)
- iv) What does the response to the souls under the altar suggest to those who remain faithful and endure persecution (even death) in this world as Christ expands His restored dominion in the world?
 - a) Some will face persecution and death as part of God's will for them
 - b) There will be others who trust Christ as they had
 - c) Persecution (and even death) have purpose in the divine plan
 - d) Death does not end in death for souls that trust in Christ
 - e) God will ~~impart justice and satisfaction on behalf of His beloved~~
 - f) Therefore, he can be trusted regardless of the degree of persecution such trust engenders in this world.
 - g) Therefore, saints, be fearless and testify all the more!
- (d) The Sixth Seal (Rev. 6:12-7:17)
 - i) Physical Effects (Rev. 6:12-14)
 - a) Earthquake
 - b) Cosmic convulsions
 - ii) Spiritual Effects (Rev. 6:15-7:17)
 - a) General Panic
 - 1) All people attempt to hide
 - 2) All people recognize the "great day of the wrath" of Him Who is seated on the throne and of the Lamb
 - 3) All people recognize personal culpability: "Who can stand?"
 - b) 144,000 sealed (7:1-8)
 - 1) Chapter seven is the answer to the seemingly "rhetorical" question of 6:17, "Who can stand?"
 - The peoples of the world, having no hope, knowing not God, think none can stand before His wrath, because all they see is His wrath.
 - > **1 Corinthians 2:14 (ESV)** ¹⁴ *The natural person does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are folly to him, and he is not able to*

understand them because they are spiritually discerned.

> If it were not for the “revelation of Jesus Christ which God gave to him to give to his bondservants” even the faithful might not know the answer to the question!

- They will not ascribe to Him mercy in Christ because they will not submit to Christ

- Therefore, they think none can stand.

- **What they discover is that all who are elect and redeemed by God in Christ can and DO stand before Him in His glory in His kingdom before His throne untouched by wrath!**

> Besides the sheer weight of the authority of Christ’s command in the great commission, this fact illustrates the need for Christians to know the answer to the question, “Who can stand?” and extend the invitation of the gospel NOW!

2) Four angels at the four corners holding back the four winds

- Who or what are these angels/messengers?

> Are they the four horsemen of the earlier vision whose mission is delayed?

- What are the four winds?

> Angels?

Psalm 104:4 (ESV) *he makes his messengers winds, his ministers a flaming fire.*

> Armies?

Jeremiah 49:36 (ESV) ³⁶ *And I will bring upon Elam the four winds from the four quarters of heaven. And I will scatter them to all those winds, and there shall be no nation to which those driven out of Elam shall not come.*

> Natural Force

Daniel 7:2 (ESV) ² *Daniel declared, “I saw in my vision by night, and behold, the four winds of heaven were stirring up the great sea.*

> Compass Directions

Daniel 8:8 (ESV) ⁸ *Then the goat became exceedingly great, but when he was strong, the great horn was broken, and instead of it there came up four conspicuous horns toward the four winds of heaven.*

> Extent of the Whole World?

Ezekiel 37:9 (ESV) ⁹ *Then he said to me, “Prophesy to the breath; prophesy, son of man, and say to the breath, Thus says the Lord GOD: Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe on these slain, that they may live.”*

Daniel 11:4 (ESV) ⁴ *And as soon as he has arisen, his kingdom shall be broken and divided toward the four winds of heaven, but not to his posterity, nor according to the authority with which he ruled, for his kingdom shall be plucked up and go to others besides these.*

Zechariah 2:6 (ESV) ⁶ *Up! Up! Flee from the land of the north, declares the LORD. For I have spread you abroad as the four winds of the heavens, declares the LORD.*

Zechariah 6:5 (ESV) ⁵ *And the angel answered and said to me, “These are going out to the four winds of heaven, after presenting themselves before the Lord of all the earth.*

Matthew 24:31 (ESV) ³¹ *And he will send out his angels with a loud trumpet call, and they will gather his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.*

Mark 13:27 (ESV) ²⁷ *And then he will send out the angels and gather his elect from the four winds, from the ends of the earth to the ends of heaven.*

3) Another angel

- ascending from the rising of the sun
- calls out to the four angels: Do not harm . . . until we have sealed the bondservants of our God on their foreheads.
 - > All commands issued by angels are commands issued by the King
 - > There is only ONE sovereign will in the Kingdom of the Lamb
 - > God elects from among the entire population those He will save from wrath
- The Seal of the Living God
 - > Scriptures Where God Seals a Person or People

Genesis 4:15 (ESV) ¹⁵ *Then the LORD said to him, “Not so! If anyone kills Cain, vengeance shall be taken on him sevenfold.” And the LORD put a mark on Cain, lest any who found him should attack him.*

Exodus 12:13 (ESV) ¹³ *The blood shall be a sign for you, on the houses where you are. And when I see the blood, I will pass over you, and no plague will befall you to destroy you, when I strike the land of Egypt.*

Exodus 31:13 (ESV) ¹³ *“You are to speak to the people of Israel and say, ‘Above all you shall keep my Sabbaths, for this is a sign between me and you throughout your generations, that you may know that I, the LORD, sanctify you.’*

Deuteronomy 11:18 (ESV) ¹⁸ *“You shall therefore lay up these words of mine in your heart and in your soul, and you shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes.*

John 6:27 (ESV) ²⁷ *Do not work for the food that perishes, but for the food that endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man will give to you. For on him God the Father has set his seal.”*

2 Corinthians 1:22 (ESV) ²² *and who has also put his seal on us and given us his Spirit in our hearts as a guarantee.*

2 Timothy 2:19 (ESV) ¹⁹ *But God’s firm foundation stands, bearing this seal: “The Lord knows those who are his,” and, “Let everyone who names the name of the Lord depart from iniquity.”*

- Effects of “Sealing”
 - > Sealing enables the sealed to respond in faith to the trials through which they must pass. cf. Rev. 9:4
 - > Sealing indicates ownership or special relationship
- Some (many) commentators are satisfied that the “bondservants” of 7:3 refer to the “bondservants” of 1:1 making the 144000 sealed merely an illustration of God’s activity toward all believers before the end comes
- Who are the 144,000?

ch. 14

144,000

Numbered

From every tribe of the sons of Israel

Sealed with God's seal (blood?)

Forehead

Mt. Zion

Exclusive song known only to them

Undefiled virgin men

Follow the Lamb wherever He goes

Firstfruits

Blameless

- 4) 144,000 sealed from every tribe of the sons of Israel
- **Ezekiel 9:4-5 (ESV)** ⁴ *And the LORD said to him, "Pass through the city, through Jerusalem, and put a mark on the foreheads of the men who sigh and groan over all the abominations that are committed in it."* ⁵ *And to the others he said in my hearing, "Pass through the city after him, and strike. Your eye shall not spare, and you shall show no pity.*
 - Who are these 144,000 from "every tribe of the sons of Israel?"
Multitude
- Numberless
- From every nation, all tribes, people, languages
- Washed in the blood
- Robes
- Before the throne
- Song known to entire multitude (common song)
- Includes married folks and non-virgins and women
- Surrounds the throne
- Harvest
- Redeemed
- this does not appear to be a general symbolic description of the church but of specific number of Jews (in keeping with God's purpose in election)
 - The reference here should be combined with the reference in chapter 14 (I think)
 - > They are specifically numbered - 144,000 (12,000 each from 12 tribes)
 - > They are specifically located - Mt Zion
 - > They are specifically observed - singing
 - > They are specifically assigned - new song
 - > They are specifically described - virgin men
 - > They are specifically associated - follow the Lamb
 - > They are specifically redeemed - firstfruits
 - > They are specifically commended - blameless
 - These are Jews to whom God has or will give faith at or before the opening of the 6th seal
 - They seem to fulfill the role of "royal guard" or "personal companions" for the Lamb, an elite group, hand selected to serve.

- > If Jesus the Savior had a complement of 12 disciples
 - > Should not Jesus the Triumphant King have a complement of 12x12000 disciples?
 - > I think the symbolism here refers to Jesus and not the 144,000
 - Thus, this 144,000 fulfills the purpose of Israel and God's covenant promises to that nation.
 - They may represent, not the church, but the totality of the remnant of ethnic Israel that will be saved in accordance with God's promises to Abraham and his children,
 - however, Paul's claim that only people of faith are truly Abraham's children may come into play here, but, if so, these people are clearly saved as a result of the saving work of God as any other person of faith is.
- c) Multitudes worship (7:9-17)
- 1) I believe this multitude is to be understood as distinct from the 144,000 previously identified.
 - 144,000 = Jews (because God made specific promises to specific family)
 - Multitude = Church (because God made general promises to the world)
 - Both by the saving work of God in Christ
 - If you are a Jewish Christian facing persecution, here is your hope in both yours and your people's ultimate redemption
 - If you are a Gentile Christian, here is your hope for your and the your church's ultimate redemption
 - 2) Description
 - Great, diverse, innumerable multitude (as opposed to any specific number from any specific ethnic group)
 - Standing before the throne and the Lamb (not in court but as the court)
 - In white robes (re: wedding garments?)
 - With palm branches in their hands ("Palm Sunday")
 - Crying out with a loud voice (remember the sound of the mob that crucified Him?)
 - 3) Identity
 - Who are these?
 - > Specific intent that their identity be revealed
 - > Only God (heaven) can reveal the identity of those whom God has saved and kept for this moment

- Two Characteristics
 - > Ones coming out of the great tribulation
 - > Washed their robes in the blood of the Lamb
- 2nd “mass description” since chapter 4:

#1

5:9-10

You ransomed people to God
 From every tribe and language and people and nation
 You have made them a kingdom (subject to a king)
 You have made them priests to our God
 They shall reign on the earth

#2 7:15-17

They are before the throne of God
 From every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages
 He who sits on the throne will shelter them in His presence
 They shall serve Him day and night in His temple
 They shall hunger no more, nor thirst, nor suffer the effects of the sun

- The grace of 7:15 - 17 is not reserved for those alone who are saved during some 7 year period in history but for all who are saved between Calvary and the Return.
 - > This the grace all the redeemed may expect in eternity
 - > Of what comfort would it be to the churches of Asia Minor if some future people are amassed before the throne but there is not statement of their own presence before the throne.
- The “great tribulation” of 7:14 refers to the entire church age from the crucifixion of Jesus to His final triumphant return.
- What makes the church age the “great tribulation” as opposed to the broadly held interpretation of a seven year period?
 - > The key difference is Jesus **(Revelation 12)**
 - * Before Christ - the dragon focused on the woman to prevent Christ
 - * After Jesus - the dragon focuses on Christ’s defeat by defeating His people
 - > The people of God are no longer just the Jews and those living by faith under Law
 - > **Revelation 12:17 (ESV) *Then the dragon became furious with the woman and went off to make war on her offspring, on those who keep the commandments of God (Jews) and hold to the testimony of Jesus (Christians).***
 - > The great tribulation of 7:14 is the period of time when the dragon

specifically wages war against the faithful people of God, i.e., the church and the church age.

> Ephesians 6! **The Christian life is a battle because of the focused intent and activity of the evil one to defeat Christ by defeating and devouring His people.**

- (e) Spiritual Warfare as Characteristic of the Church in the Great Tribulation Church Age
 - i) Understanding the life of faith as a battle which the church wins through Christ (the multitude before the throne proof of victory) provides the fundamental encouragement of this book to its original audience.
 - a) **Revelation 12:17 (ESV) *Then the dragon became furious with the woman and went off to make war on her offspring, on those who keep the commandments of God (Jews) and hold to the testimony of Jesus (Christians).***
 - b) **Ephesians 6:12 (ESV) ¹² *For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places.***
 - 1) This war is life for the Christian in the church age, from the ascension of Jesus to His final return
 - 2) This is spiritual warfare
 - ii) Spiritual Warfare
 - a) *The struggle against the forces of evil, which is a constant feature of the life of faith. Scripture locates the origins of spiritual warfare in the rebellion of Satan and his angels against God and affirms the hope of God's final victory over such forces through Jesus Christ's death and resurrection. Manser, M. H. (2009). Dictionary of Bible Themes: The Accessible and Comprehensive Tool for Topical Studies. London: Martin Manser.*
 - b) Causes of Spiritual Warfare
 - 1) Fall of Satan and his angels Rev 12:3-4, 7-10
 - 2) Satan and his army comprise a well-organized army Eph 6:12
 - 3) Satan persecutes the church Rev 12:17; 13:17
 - 4) Satan opposes the gospel 2 Cor 4:4
 - 5) Satan attacks individual believers Luke 21:31-32
 - c) Enemies in Spiritual Warfare
 - 1) The World
 - **James 4:4 (ESV) ⁴ *You adulterous people! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God.***
 - > In the Bible, as in ordinary speech, 'the world' may refer to the physical

world of God's creation or to the people who inhabit that world (Ps 90:2; 98:7,9; Matt 25:34; John 3:16; Rom 10:18).

> Because of sin, the world has become a place where Satan rules in people's lives (John 12:31; Rom 5:12; 2 Cor 4:4; 1 John 5:19).

> Therefore, the Bible frequently speaks of the present world, or present age, as something that is evil and that is opposed to God (John 7:7; 17:25; James 4:4; 1 John 2:15).

> The world in this sense is the world of sinful mankind along with all the wrong attitudes that characterize sinful mankind.

- The world hates Christians **John 15:19-20 (ESV)** ¹⁹ *If you were of the world, the world would love you as its own; but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you.* ²⁰ *Remember the word that I said to you: 'A servant is not greater than his master.' If they persecuted me, they will also persecute you. If they kept my word, they will also keep yours.*
- The world has its own false teaching and religion **Colossians 2:8 (ESV)** ⁸ *See to it that no one takes you captive by philosophy and empty deceit, according to human tradition, according to the elemental spirits of the world, and not according to Christ.*
- The world seeks to seduce Christians **1 John 2:16 (ESV)** ¹⁶ *For all that is in the world—the desires of the flesh and the desires of the eyes and pride of life—is not from the Father but is from the world.*

2) The Flesh

- **Galatians 5:17 (ESV)** ¹⁷ *For the desires of the flesh are against the Spirit, and the desires of the Spirit are against the flesh, for these are opposed to each other, to keep you from doing the things you want to do.*
- **1 Peter 2:11 (ESV)** ¹¹ *Beloved, I urge you as sojourners and exiles to abstain from the passions of the flesh, which wage war against your soul.*
- refers to sinful human nature (Rom 8:5; Eph 2:3).
- The whole nature of man is infected by sin from birth.
 - > Adam, as the father and head of all mankind, rebelled against God and corrupted man's nature from the beginning.
 - > Each human being, because of his union with Adam, is born with this sinful nature (Ps 51:5; Rom 5:12; 7:18).
- Human nature (the flesh) is directed and controlled by sin, and rebels against

God's law.

- > It is incapable of being reformed and produces all the evil in man.
- > Like a deadly disease it cannot be cured, and leads only to moral decay and death (Rom 7:5; 8:6-8; Gal 6:8; Col 2:23).
- > The evil results of the flesh affect every part of the life and activity of man (Gal 5:19-21; cf. Matt 7:18).
- Although Jesus was born with a human nature, his nature was not affected by sin.
 - > By living in complete obedience to God's law, dying for sin and rising victoriously from the dead, he condemned the flesh, so that mankind might no longer be enslaved by it (Rom 8:3-4; Heb 2:14-15; 4:15).
- When a person trusts in the saving power of Christ, he receives new life and freedom through the Spirit of Christ who comes to dwell within him.
 - > But the flesh is not destroyed. The believer still lives in a world where everything, even his own nature, suffers from the effects of sin.
 - > The original sinful human nature remains with him till the end of his present earthly existence, but through Christ he is now free from its power (Rom 6:14,18; 8:1-2,10-12; see Justification).
- Therefore, there is a continual conflict in the life of the believer, the flesh fighting against the Spirit (Rom 8:5; Gal 5:17).
 - > Before the believer had trusted in Christ and become indwelt by the Spirit, the flesh had ruled him as a cruel master.
 - > If, now that he is a believer, he readily gives in to the flesh, it will soon bring him under its power again.
 - > In view of this, the believer must ensure that his behaviour is controlled and directed by the Spirit (Rom 6:12-18; 8:4,13; 1 Cor 3:1-3; Gal 5:16).
 - > He has no obligation to the flesh; he owes it nothing.
 - > He must neither trust in it nor give it any opportunity to satisfy its evil desires (Rom 8:12; 13:14; Phil 3:3).
- Christ has condemned the old nature by his crucifixion (Rom 6:6; 8:3).
- The person who belongs to Christ must accept this by faith and show it to be true by living according to his new nature (Rom 6:7-14; Gal 2:20; 5:24; Eph 4:22,24; Col 2:11; 3:5-10).

The AMG Concise Bible Dictionary.

3) The Devil

- The devil is an enemy **1 Peter 5:8 (ESV)** ⁸ *Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour.*
 - The devil seeks to tempt Christians **1 Thessalonians 3:5 (ESV)** ⁵ *For this reason, when I could bear it no longer, I sent to learn about your faith, for fear that somehow the tempter had tempted you and our labor would be in vain.*
 - The devil seeks to deceive **2 Corinthians 11:3 (ESV)** ³ *But I am afraid that as the serpent deceived Eve by his cunning, your thoughts will be led astray from a sincere and pure devotion to Christ.*
 - The devil constantly seeks to accuse believers **Revelation 12:10 (ESV)** ¹⁰ *And I heard a loud voice in heaven, saying, "Now the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God and the authority of his Christ have come, for the accuser of our brothers has been thrown down, who accuses them day and night before our God.*
- d) Spiritual Warfare as Conflict
- 1) *The warfare believers must fight is spiritual, personal, intense and continual. It calls for courage, determination and prayer, and therefore believers must stand in God's strength and use the armour he has provided.* Manser, M. H. (2009). Dictionary of Bible Themes: The Accessible and Comprehensive Tool for Topical Studies. London: Martin Manser.
 - 2) General Descriptions of Spiritual Warfare
 - Spiritual warfare is spiritual Eph 6:12
 - Spiritual warfare is personal Luke 22:31-32
 - Spiritual warfare is strenuous Heb 12:4
 - Spiritual warfare is continual Eph 6:13
 - 3) Methodologies for Christians
 - Fight with courage 1 Cor 16:13
 - Fight with determination 1 Tim 6:12
 - Fight with watchfulness 1 Peter 5:8
 - Fight with prayer Eph 6:18
 - Fight with God's strength Eph 6:10
 - Fight with God's armor Eph 6:11
- e) Spiritual Victory in Spiritual Warfare
- 1) Victory is certain
 - **Revelation 12:10 (ESV)** ¹⁰ *And I heard a loud voice in heaven, saying, "Now the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God and the authority of*

his Christ have come, for the accuser of our brothers has been thrown down, who accuses them day and night before our God.

- **Revelation 12:11 (ESV)** ¹¹ *And they have conquered him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, for they loved not their lives even unto death.*

2) Victory is an act of God

- *God is the source of all victory, which he grants to those who obey his commands and put their confidence in him. This principle holds true in all believers' conflicts, whether physical or spiritual.*
- God is the source of all victory Dt 20:1-4
- Victory is achieved by God, not people Ps 20:7-8
- Victory should be ascribed to God Ps 118:15
- Victory depends on faithfulness
 - > God grants victory to those who are faithful to him 1Ch 22:13
 - > Unfaithfulness to God brings defeat Nu 14:41-43
- God is able to work through defeat Ge 50:20

3) Victory comes to believers through Christ

- Christ's victories
 - > Over sin and temptation Heb 4:15
 - > Over the world John 16:33
 - > Over the devil 1 John 3:8
 - > Over death Acts 2:24
 - > Over every enemy 1 Cor 15:24-25
- Believers gain victory through Christ
 - > Over the power of sin Rom 7:24-25
 - > Over temptation 1 Cor 10:13
 - > Over the world 1 John 5:4
 - > Over the devil Rev 12:10-11
 - > Over death 1 Cor 15:22-23
- Believers share in Christ's victory
 - > **Romans 8:37 (ESV)** ³⁷ *No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us.*
 - > **1 Corinthians 15:57 (ESV)** ⁵⁷ *But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.*
 - > **1 John 5:4-5 (ESV)** ⁴ *For everyone who has been born of God overcomes*

***the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world—our faith. ⁵
Who is it that overcomes the world except the one who believes that Jesus is
the Son of God?***

- (f) The Seventh Seal (Rev. 8:1)
 - i) Continuation of 6:17, taking chapter 7 as a parenthetical answer to the question of 6:17
 - ii) Two sequences have ended
 - a) Sequence of vision for the churches (Chs 2-3)
 - b) Sequence of seven seals (Chs 4-8:1)
 - c) New sequence is coming (7trumpets/7 bowls)
 - iii) Seventh Seal: 30 Minutes of Silence in Heaven
 - a) The silence that ensues at the opening of the seal is both the context and the substance of the opening.
 - 1) Just as there were horses and riders and actions with the first seals
 - 2) There is silence with the seventh seal
 - Explaining the silence explains the seventh seal
 - > Don't treat the silence as a secondary effect
 - > The silence IS the seventh seal
 - The seven trumpets and seven bowls that follow either describe the consequences of what happens during the silence or are the events that motivate the silence.
 - I think we have to understand the silence in order to understand the next sequences of trumpets and bowls
 - b) Notice that the silence comes when the scroll, once sealed, is now fully accessible to be read and obeyed.
 - 1) God's will for the world, His eternal plan for creation, can now be implemented and consummated.
 - 2) The divine pronouncement of eternal intent is finally available to be realized at the hand of the Lamb who was slain
 - 3) Is heaven dumbstruck at the magnitude of the glory of the plan thus revealed?
 - God's will for the world is fully revealed
 - God's will for the world is fully ready to be implemented
 - What must occur for God's will (His kingdom) to be fully realized on earth?
 - > What do we know already to be true about the world?
 - The world is the legal realm of the evil one
 - The world is at enmity with God

The world is corrupt, filthy, guilty

The world deserves judgment

> What is the final obstacle that must be removed in order for the entire world to be regenerate?

Romans 2:4 (ESV) 4 Or do you presume on the riches of his kindness and forbearance and patience, not knowing that God's kindness is meant to lead you to repentance?

2 Peter 3:9 (ESV) 9 The Lord is not slow to fulfill his promise as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance.

Revelation 6:11 Then they were given white robes and told to rest a little longer (*be patient*), until the number of their fellow servants and their brothers should be complete, who were to be killed as they themselves had been.

> **God's justice must replace God's patience in order for God's final purpose in the world to be fully realized.**

c) What would cause the seraphim to cease to cry out?

1) **Revelation 4:8 (ESV)** *⁸ And the four living creatures, each of them with six wings, are full of eyes all around and within, and day and night they never cease to say, "Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord God Almighty, who was and is and is to come!"*

2) **Isaiah 6:1-9**

- The seraphim announce the reality of heaven: holy
- Isaiah announces the reality of himself and his people: unclean
- The seraph announce the correction by which Isaiah's reality is conformed to heaven's reality
 - > Guilt removed
 - > Sin atoned for
- The LORD announces request for representative:
 - > Who?
 - > Isaiah offers himself

3) But now, in Revelation, who goes in the name of the LORD? Jesus!

4) For what reason does Jesus now go forth?

- Judgment - Isaiah's guilt had to be judged
- Final redemption - Isaiah's guilt had to be cleansed
- Establishment of the eternal kingdom - Only then could Isaiah be sent on kingdom matters

- d) What would cause the living creatures and the elders to cease their praise?
- 1) Could it be that from the very inception of creation to this moment God has never poured out wrath without tempering it with mercy (Noah and the Flood), but at this time, there is only wrath and heaven is stunned at the purity of His holiness released upon the earth?
 - 2) They know the effect of God's unbound glory in heaven but now they see the effect upon creation.
- e) Notice, if there is silence in heaven, then even the rumblings of thunder from the throne are silent. Even God makes no sound!
- 1) No prayers are being answered
 - 2) No commands are being given
 - 3) No mercy is being offered
 - 4) No revelation, no word is being sent
 - 5) For four hundred years no word of God was given prior to the first coming of Jesus, and now, there is again silence before the second coming of Jesus
 - 6) **All of heaven holds its breath in anticipation of the verdict that precede the return of the King!**
 - 7) **QUESTION:** Jesus is coming. What is your response?
- f) Scripture Assists to Understanding Silence in Heaven:
- 1) **Zephaniah 1:7 (ESV)** ⁷ *Be silent before the Lord GOD! For the day of the LORD is near; the LORD has prepared a sacrifice and consecrated his guests.*
 - 2) **Zephaniah 1:14-18 (ESV)** ¹⁴ *The great day of the LORD is near, near and hastening fast; the sound of the day of the LORD is bitter; the mighty man cries aloud there. ¹⁵ A day of wrath is that day, a day of distress and anguish, a day of ruin and devastation, a day of darkness and gloom, a day of clouds and thick darkness, ¹⁶ a day of trumpet blast and battle cry against the fortified cities and against the lofty battlements. ¹⁷ I will bring distress on mankind, so that they shall walk like the blind, because they have sinned against the LORD; their blood shall be poured out like dust, and their flesh like dung. ¹⁸ Neither their silver nor their gold shall be able to deliver them on the day of the wrath of the LORD. In the fire of his jealousy, all the earth shall be consumed; for a full and sudden end he will make of all the inhabitants of the earth.*
 - 3) **Zechariah 2:13 (ESV)** ¹³ *Be silent, all flesh, before the LORD, for he has roused himself from his holy dwelling.*
 - 4) **Habakkuk 2:20 (ESV)** ²⁰ *But the LORD is in his holy temple; let all the earth keep*

silence before him.”

- g) Silence:
- 1) The silence represents God’s final judgement on the earth and its inhabitants
 - 2) Silence is an indication that God has heard the saints’ prayer for justice (6:10)
 - 3) Silence is indicative of a revelatory announcement by God as He pronounces final judgment
 - 4) Silence in relation to temple liturgy (what happens when God is in his holy temple)
 - Trimming of the seven lamps (Rev 2-3)
 - Slaying of the sacrificial lamb (Rev 5:6)
 - Pouring of the sacrificial blood at the base of the altar (Rev 6:9)
 - Offering of incense during a time of silence and prayer (Rev 8:1, 4-5)
 - The burnt offering and drink offering (Rev 16:1) together with the sounding of trumpets (Rev 8:6)
 - Singing of psalms (Rev 19:1-8)
 - 5) Silence underscores the gravity of the crisis incurred by final judgment
 - Humanity is hushed by the seriousness of the imminent judgment
 - No defense, only awe at the righteousness, severity, and deservedness of judgment

(3) The Final Judgment Before the Final Return of the Forever King (Rev. 8:2-20:15)

(a) What is the effect of the judgment rendered in 8:1?

- i) This question takes the silence of 8:1 as the occasion for the final judgment pronouncement from the One who sits upon the throne.
 - a) Verdict is rendered. 8:1
 - b) Sentence is applied. 8:2-20:15
- ii) Seven angels given seven trumpets are introduced 8:2
 - a) “who stand before God”
 - 1) **QUESTION:** What does intimate proximity to the throne suggest about these servants?
 - 2) **QUESTION:** Consider then, what does it mean that the multitude is “before the throne?”
 - b) “given” suggests that all that follows as a result of the actions of these angels and their trumpets come not from the angels but from the One who gave them their instruments and assignments.
 - c) The events described are the will of the King!
- iii) Another angel with a golden censer is introduced 8:3-5

(b) The Angel and the Golden Censer

i) Another angel -

- a) reinforcing the idea that angels are the messengers and enactors of the divine will
- b) “came and stood at the altar with a golden censer”
- c) Given much **incense** to offer

1) With the prayers of the saints

- Gr. *Tais* - “to the prayers of the saints”
- The incense gives efficacy to the prayers, empowers the prayers to be heard and answered
- The voicing of human interest alone, even if from the saints, is not enough
- Only the presence and sacrifice of Christ moves God to act on behalf of His people.

2) Smoke of the incense and prayers rise before God

- **QUESTIONS:**

- > Who gives the incense?
- > What do we know about the nature of incense and its sign in worship?
- > What Scriptures provide clues to the source of this incense?

Ephesians 5:2 (ESV) ² And walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.

2 Corinthians 2:15 (ESV) ¹⁵ For we are the aroma of Christ to God among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing,

- The incense that is poured out before God in the moment of final judgment may well be the reality of Christ’s suffering and death on behalf of the saints whose lives and prayers are now included in this offering
- Thinking of the persecuted Christians who first received this revelation, one can understand how knowing God remembers both the suffering of Christ and their suffering at the moment of judgment could be hugely encouraging and motivating for continued faithfulness and endurance on their part
- God hears the prayers of the saints on account of Christ, who did not fail and therefore retains the Father’s perpetual attention.

d) Angel fills the censer with fire from the altar and threw it on the earth

1) Scripture Parallels

- **Isaiah 6:7 (ESV) ⁷ And he touched my mouth and said: “Behold, this has touched your lips; your guilt is taken away, and your sin atoned for.”**
- **Ezekiel 10:2 (ESV) ² And he said to the man clothed in linen, “Go in among**

the whirling wheels underneath the cherubim. Fill your hands with burning coals from between the cherubim, and scatter them over the city.” And he went in before my eyes.

- **Luke 12:49 (ESV)** ⁴⁹ *“I came to cast fire on the earth, and would that it were already kindled!*

2) Fire from the altar cleanses, purifies, sanctifies, makes holy

3) Application

- of the guilty verdict
- the means and occasion of purification from guilt

ii) Response from the Throne (cf. 4:5; 11:19; 16:18)

a) Responses

1) Peals of thunder

2) Flashes of lightning

3) An earthquake

- Appears only here to demonstrate that the effect of the heavenly action is felt on earth
- No earthquakes in heaven where there is no earth
- Cf. **Rev 4:5** *From the throne came flashes of lightening, and rumblings, and peals of thunder . . .*

b) Parallel

1) **Exodus 19:16-19 (ESV)** ¹⁶ *On the morning of the third day there were thunders and lightnings and a thick cloud on the mountain and a very loud trumpet blast, so that all the people in the camp trembled. ¹⁷ Then Moses brought the people out of the camp to meet God, and they took their stand at the foot of the mountain. ¹⁸ Now Mount Sinai was wrapped in smoke because the LORD had descended on it in fire. The smoke of it went up like the smoke of a kiln, and the whole mountain trembled greatly. ¹⁹ And as the sound of the trumpet grew louder and louder, Moses spoke, and God answered him in thunder.*

2) **QUESTION:**

- What is the outcome of this occasion?
- God becomes “king” of His people.
- The request in Samuel for a king is a functional rejection of the arrangement agreed to at Sinai
- Revelation 8ff is the judgment for rejection and restoration of the covenant that “makes” God king over His people

- (c) The Seven Trumpet Judgments (Rev. 8:6-11:19[?])
- i) NOTE: These and the bowls originate from the throne and not from the scroll.
 - a) Their origin is from God
 - b) The sphere of the action is creation
 - c) When God acts within creation that is called “sovereignty.”
 - ii) NOTE: Structural
 - a) Trumpet effect (1-4) directly affect the physical creation, the context for human existence
 - b) Trumpet effect (5-7) directly effect human experience, the quality of human existence
 - c) Rev 9:20-21
 - 1) indicate the intended result of the first six trumpets: repentance
 - 2) The rest of mankind that survives refuses to repent
 - 3) Suggests that the first six trumpets are a kind of “last call” before the outpouring of wrath and final judgment.
 - 4) That makes the first six trumpets an offer of mercy that is rejected proving God’s right to justice and mankind’s choice for punishment
 - **Romans 3:4 (ESV) *By no means! Let God be true though every one were a liar, as it is written, “That you may be justified in your words, and prevail when you are judged.”***
 - **Psalms 51:4 (ESV) *Against you, you only, have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight, so that you may be justified in your words and blameless in your judgment.***
 - iii) Against the earth (Rev. 8:6-13)
 - a) The First Trumpet (Rev. 8:7)
 - 1) Hail/Fire/Blood
 - **Exodus 9:24 (ESV) ²⁴ *There was hail and fire flashing continually in the midst of the hail, very heavy hail, such as had never been in all the land of Egypt since it became a nation.***
 - **Joel 2:30 (ESV) ³⁰ *“And I will show wonders in the heavens and on the earth, blood and fire and columns of smoke.***
 - 2) 1/3 of earth burned
 - 3) 1/3 trees burned
 - 4) All green grass burned
 - b) The Second Trumpet (Rev. 8:8-9)
 - 1) Burning Mountain
 - 2) 1/3 Sea becomes blood

- 3) 1/3 sea creatures die
- 4) 1/3 Ships Destroyed
- c) The Third Trumpet (Rev. 8:10-11)
 - 1) Star falls from heaven (Wormwood)
 - Used metaphorically in the Old Testament of the idolatry of Israel
 - > **Deuteronomy 29:18 (ESV)** ¹⁸ *Beware lest there be among you a man or woman or clan or tribe whose heart is turning away today from the LORD our God to go and serve the gods of those nations. Beware lest there be among you a root bearing poisonous and bitter fruit,*
 - of calamity and sorrow (Jer. 9:15; 23:15; Lam. 3:15, 19)
 - > **Jeremiah 9:15 (ESV)** ¹⁵ *Therefore thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel: Behold, I will feed this people with bitter food, and give them poisonous water to drink.*
 - > **Jeremiah 23:15 (ESV)** ¹⁵ *Therefore thus says the LORD of hosts concerning the prophets: "Behold, I will feed them with bitter food and give them poisoned water to drink, for from the prophets of Jerusalem ungodliness has gone out into all the land."*
 - > **Lamentations 3:15 (ESV)** ¹⁵ *He has filled me with bitterness; he has sated me with wormwood.*
 - Lamentations 3:19 (ESV)** ¹⁹ *Remember my affliction and my wanderings, the wormwood and the gall!*
 - of false judgment (Amos 5:7).
 - > **Amos 5:7 (ESV)** ⁷ *O you who turn justice to wormwood and cast down righteousness to the earth!*
 - 2) Blazing torch
 - 3) 1/3 rivers
 - 4) 1/3 springs of water
 - 5) many died from the poisoned waters (or the waters became undrinkable and they died of thirst)
 - d) The Fourth Trumpet (Rev. 8:12)
 - 1) Cosmic suppression
 - 2) 1/3 light reduced
 - 1/3 sun
 - 1/3 moon
 - 1/3 stars

- 1/3 of light darkened
- 1/3 of day kept from shining
- 1/3 of night
- 3) Consider not only the effect of lack of sunlight on growth processes and human mental health, but how, if all the regular indicators are crippled, will humanity measure the passage of time?
- e) Three Woes Pronounced
 - 1) One woe for each remaining trumpet
 - 2) Eagle
 - at the highest point of the sun's trace through the sky
 - "Eagle" rather than "angel" (based on better mss evidence)
 - 3) "to those who dwell on the earth"
 - **Revelation 3:10 (ESV)** ¹⁰ *Because you have kept my word about patient endurance, I will keep you from the hour of trial that is coming on the whole world, to try those who dwell on the earth.*
 - **Revelation 6:10 (ESV)** ¹⁰ *They cried out with a loud voice, "O Sovereign Lord, holy and true, how long before you will judge and avenge our blood on those who dwell on the earth?"*
 - "those who dwell on the earth" become the special focus of chapter 13
- f) Is the earth being punished or prepared?
 - 1) **Romans 8:18-25 (ESV)** ¹⁸ *For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us.* ¹⁹ *For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the sons of God.* ²⁰ *For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of him who subjected it, in hope* ²¹ *that the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to corruption and obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God.* ²² *For we know that the whole creation has been groaning together in the pains of childbirth until now.* ²³ *And not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies.* ²⁴ *For in this hope we were saved. Now hope that is seen is not hope. For who hopes for what he sees?* ²⁵ *But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience.*
 - 2) Glory is to be revealed
 - 3) The creation waits with eager longing for this revelation
 - The creation was subjected to futility
 - By God (see the curse of the ground in Gen. 3)

- In anticipation of the glory of release from bondage
 - > To corruption
 - > To freedom of the glory
 - The creation groans under the burden of bondage and seeks freedom
 - > Just as the Israelites groaned under the burden of slavery to Egypt
 - > Just as the Christian once groaned under the burden of sin
- g) What is the meaning of the first four trumpets?
- 1) The Four Trumpets provide irrefutable evidence of the arrival of redemption:
 - preparation for delivery (follow the birthing metaphor); intensity increases with imminence
 - Encouragement for Christians that may experience these upheavals
 - 2) Global destructive catastrophe signals the end of one kingdom and the arrival of another; the end of captivity and the beginning of freedom
- h) Why do the first four trumpets affect only 1/3?
- 1) The 1/3 designates limitation
 - 2) The four trumpets are not the final, inclusive judgment but are part of the process that reveals the unrepentant heart of human beings and the glorious righteousness of the coming Judge and judgment
- i) Should the effects of the trumpets be taken literally or figuratively?
- 1) Yes.
 - 2) Fire, for example, (1st trumpet) can mean flames or famine
 - **Ezekiel 5:2 (ESV) *A third part you shall burn in the fire in the midst of the city, when the days of the siege are completed. And a third part you shall take and strike with the sword all around the city. And a third part you shall scatter to the wind, and I will unsheathe the sword after them.***
 - **Ezekiel 5:12 (ESV) *A third part of you shall die of pestilence and be consumed with famine in your midst; a third part shall fall by the sword all around you; and a third part I will scatter to all the winds and will unsheathe the sword after them.***
 - 3) OT figurative imagery, if it is in mind in Revelation 8, points to a primarily figurative understanding of most elements of the four trumpet judgments
 - Exodus plagues are generally the historical precedent for the trumpets, not merely as physical parallels but as theological parallels: what God meant to accomplish in one He means to accomplish in the other
 - Babylon, as both oppressive city and world system, is pictured as a burning

mountain thrown into the sea in Jeremiah 51, and could indicate that the burning mountain of 8:8 is to be understood as judgment upon a particular incarnation of the rebellious world system that will soon be replaced by the kingdom of heaven.

Wormwood can stand in for the bitterness of suffering that comes upon those who reject God's will and rule in their lives, as in De 29:17-18.

- 4) However, the figurative use in the OT neither excludes nor requires exclusion of real life events or situations that provided accurate interpretation of God's actions in regards to His people and the world over which He is gloriously sovereign.
- 5) G.K. Beale, The Book of Revelation (NIGTC), pg. 485, "The fourth trumpet is the logical climax and emphasis of the first four trumpets and an emblem of the hardened unbelievers' spiritual separation from God. The darkness is figurative and refers to all those divinely ordained events intended to remind the church's idolatrous persecutors, and those within the church who have aligned themselves with the idolatrous culture, that their idolatry is vain, that they are separated from the living God, and that they are already undergoing a beginning form of judgment." Seems to me a literal darkness would communicate this message better than a figurative one that may never be seen or understood.
- j) Summary: The people of this world, people who deny God and His claim on their lives and His sovereignty over the world He created, rely on the things of creation for their daily living. Their trust in creation for their well-being takes on idolatrous proportions and ultimately brings God's judgment, for they have *"exchanged the truth about God for a lie and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever,"* (Romans 1:25, ESV).
- iv) Against the people and kingdoms of the earth (3 Woes)(Rev. 9:1-11:19)
 - a) **NOTE:** Woe Pronouncements
 - 1) What is the nature of "woe pronouncements" and how should they be received?
 - *ouai* - primary interjection of grief or of denunciation
 - Has the senses of "horror," "disaster," and/or "distress"
 - State of intense hardship or distress
 - > "How greatly one will suffer"
 - > "What terrible pain will come"
 - The point of the pronouncement seems to be mercy.
 - > The seals and trumpets thus far have been nothing short of calamitous.
 - > Can a desire for human repentance be discerned in the reluctance of God to

bring the world to a swift and sudden desperate end?

2) In Revelation

- **Revelation 8:13 (ESV)** ¹³ Then I looked, and I heard an eagle crying with a loud voice as it flew directly overhead, “Woe, woe, woe to those who dwell on the earth, at the blasts of the other trumpets that the three angels are about to blow!”
 - > The woes pronounced will come on the world from the hand of God in accord with His plan to utterly punish sin and graciously establish His final kingdom in the world.
 - > This woe pronouncement is both judgment and mercy.
- **Revelation 12:12 (ESV)** ¹² Therefore rejoice, O heavens and you who dwell in them! But woe to you, O earth and sea, for the devil has come down to you in great wrath, because he knows that his time is short!”
 - > The woe pronounced here is perpetrated by the devil.
 - > This woe seems to give a reason for the current conditions (thus encouraging the saints to faith) and a warning of the need to not get caught up in the devil’s desperate plots.

3) **Isaiah 5:8-6:5 (ESV)**

- ⁸ Woe to those who tear house to house, who add field to field, until there is no more room, and you are made to dwell alone in the midst of the land.
- ¹¹ Woe to those who rise early in the morning, that they may run after strong drink, who tarry late into the evening as wine inflames them! ¹² They have lyre and harp, tambourine and flute and wine at their feasts, but they do not regard the deeds of the LORD, or see the work of his hands.
- ¹⁸ Woe to those who draw iniquity with cords of falsehood, who draw sin as with cart ropes, ¹⁹ who say: “Let him be quick, let him speed his work that we may see it; let the counsel of the Holy One of Israel draw near, and let it come, that we may know it!”
- ²⁰ Woe to those who call evil good and good evil, who put darkness for light and light for darkness, who put bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter!
- ²¹ Woe to those who are wise in their own eyes, and shrewd in their own sight!
- ²² Woe to those who are heroes at drinking wine, and valiant men in mixing strong drink, ²³ who acquit the guilty for a bribe, and deprive the innocent of his right! ²⁴ Therefore, as the tongue of fire devours the stubble, and as dry grass sinks down in the flame, so their root will be as rottenness, and their blossom

go up like dust; for they have rejected the law of the LORD of hosts, and have despised the word of the Holy One of Israel. ²⁵ Therefore the anger of the LORD was kindled against his people, and he stretched out his hand against them and struck them, and the mountains quaked; and their corpses were as refuse in the midst of the streets. For all this his anger has not turned away, and his hand is stretched out still. ²⁶ He will raise a signal for nations far away, and whistle for them from the ends of the earth; and behold, quickly, speedily they come! ²⁷ None is weary, none stumbles, none slumbers or sleeps, not a waistband is loose, not a sandal strap broken; ²⁸ their arrows are sharp, all their bows bent, their horses' hoofs seem like flint, and their wheels like the whirlwind. ²⁹ Their roaring is like a lion, like young lions they roar; they growl and seize their prey; they carry it off, and none can rescue. ³⁰ They will growl over it on that day, like the growling of the sea. And if one looks to the land, behold, darkness and distress; and the light is darkened by its clouds.

- ¹ In the year that King Uzziah died I saw the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up; and the train of his robe filled the temple. ² Above him stood the seraphim. Each had six wings: with two he covered his face, and with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew. ³ And one called to another and said: "Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory!" ⁴ And the foundations of the thresholds shook at the voice of him who called, and the house was filled with smoke. ⁵ And I said: "Woe is me! For I am lost; for I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; for my eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts!"

4) Habakkuk

- The prophet Habbakuk delivers five "woes" to the city and kingdom of Babylon.
- These five woes announce God's judgment upon the city and its imminent fall.
- Babylon is condemned for confiscating the goods of other peoples, accumulating unjust gain, building an empire by bloodshed, abusing her neighboring countries, and especially for the folly of worshipping gods of wood and stone ([Hab. 2:6, 9, 12, 15, 19](#)).
- These "woes" make up a Taunt Song which the prophet delivers ([Hab. 2:6–20](#)).
- The woes will come to pass because the Lord already rules the earth from His holy heavenly Temple and God's Kingdom will rule on earth when the Messiah comes again ([Hab. 2:14, 20](#)).

5) Jesus

- **Matthew 11:21 (ESV)** ²¹ “Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! For if the mighty works done in you had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes.
- **Matthew 18:7 (ESV)** ⁷ “Woe to the world for temptations to sin! For it is necessary that temptations come, but woe to the one by whom the temptation comes!
- **Matthew 23:13 (ESV)** ¹³ “But woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you shut the kingdom of heaven in people’s faces. For you neither enter yourselves nor allow those who would enter to go in.
- **Matthew 23:15 (ESV)** ¹⁵ Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you travel across sea and land to make a single proselyte, and when he becomes a proselyte, you make him twice as much a child of hell as yourselves.
- **Matthew 23:16 (ESV)** ¹⁶ “Woe to you, blind guides, who say, ‘If anyone swears by the temple, it is nothing, but if anyone swears by the gold of the temple, he is bound by his oath.’
- **Matthew 23:23 (ESV)** ²³ “Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you tithe mint and dill and cummin, and have neglected the weightier matters of the law: justice and mercy and faithfulness. These you ought to have done, without neglecting the others.
- **Matthew 23:25 (ESV)** ²⁵ “Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you clean the outside of the cup and the plate, but inside they are full of greed and self-indulgence.
- **Matthew 23:27 (ESV)** ²⁷ “Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you are like whitewashed tombs, which outwardly appear beautiful, but within are full of dead people’s bones and all uncleanness.
- **Matthew 23:29 (ESV)** ²⁹ “Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you build the tombs of the prophets and decorate the monuments of the righteous,
- **Matthew 26:24 (ESV)** ²⁴ The Son of Man goes as it is written of him, but woe to that man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed! It would have been better for that man if he had not been born.”
- **Luke 6:24 (ESV)** ²⁴ “But woe to you who are rich, for you have received your consolation.

- **Luke 6:25 (ESV)** ²⁵ “Woe to you who are full now, for you shall be hungry. “Woe to you who laugh now, for you shall mourn and weep.
 - **Luke 6:26 (ESV)** ²⁶ “Woe to you, when all people speak well of you, for so their fathers did to the false prophets.
 - **Luke 11:42 (ESV)** ⁴² “But woe to you Pharisees! For you tithe mint and rue and every herb, and neglect justice and the love of God. These you ought to have done, without neglecting the others.
 - **Luke 11:43 (ESV)** ⁴³ Woe to you Pharisees! For you love the best seat in the synagogues and greetings in the marketplaces.
 - **Luke 11:44 (ESV)** ⁴⁴ “Woe to you! For you are like unmarked graves, and people walk over them without knowing it.”
 - **Luke 11:46 (ESV)** ⁴⁶ And he said, “Woe to you lawyers also! For you load people with burdens hard to bear, and you yourselves do not touch the burdens with one of your fingers.
 - **Luke 11:47 (ESV)** ⁴⁷ Woe to you! For you build the tombs of the prophets whom your fathers killed.
 - **Luke 11:52 (ESV)** ⁵² Woe to you lawyers! For you have taken away the key of knowledge. You did not enter yourselves, and you hindered those who were entering.”
 - **Luke 17:1 (ESV)** ¹ And he said to his disciples, “Temptations to sin are sure to come, but woe to the one through whom they come!
 - **Jude 1:11 (ESV)** ¹¹ Woe to them! For they walked in the way of Cain and abandoned themselves for the sake of gain to Balaam’s error and perished in Korah’s rebellion.
- 6) Purpose for such pronouncements
- declare God’s judgment
 - invite human repentance
- b) **NOTE:** Vengeance as God’s Privilege (cf. Rev. 6:10)
- 1) Keep in mind that a principal function of the Revelation is encouragement for persecuted believers who may wonder if the misery of their life experience has any real meaning.
 - 2) There is also the plea in Rev 6:10 of the martyrs under the altar.
 - 3) Revelation serves as an expansion of Covenant expression: the benefits of lifelong grace.
 - 4) One of the benefits of our covenant relationship with God: Vengeance belongs to God

- **Leviticus 19:18 (ESV)** ¹⁸ You shall not take vengeance or bear a grudge against the sons of your own people, but you shall love your neighbor as yourself: I am the LORD.
- **Deuteronomy 32:35 (ESV)** ³⁵ Vengeance is mine, and recompense, for the time when their foot shall slip; for the day of their calamity is at hand, and their doom comes swiftly.'
- **Deuteronomy 32:41 (ESV)** ⁴¹ if I sharpen my flashing sword and my hand takes hold on judgment, I will take vengeance on my adversaries and will repay those who hate me.
- **Deuteronomy 32:43 (ESV)** ⁴³ "Rejoice with him, O heavens; bow down to him, all gods, for he avenges the blood of his children and takes vengeance on his adversaries. He repays those who hate him and cleanses his people's land."
- **Isaiah 34:8 (ESV)** ⁸ For the LORD has a day of vengeance, a year of recompense for the cause of Zion.
- **Isaiah 35:4 (ESV)** ⁴ Say to those who have an anxious heart, "Be strong; fear not! Behold, your God will come with vengeance, with the recompense of God. He will come and save you."
- **Isaiah 47:3 (ESV)** ³ Your nakedness shall be uncovered, and your disgrace shall be seen. I will take vengeance, and I will spare no one.
- **Jeremiah 15:15 (ESV)** ¹⁵ O LORD, you know; remember me and visit me, and take vengeance for me on my persecutors. In your forbearance take me not away; know that for your sake I bear reproach.
- **Jeremiah 50:15 (ESV)** ¹⁵ Raise a shout against her all around; she has surrendered; her bulwarks have fallen; her walls are thrown down. For this is the vengeance of the LORD: take vengeance on her; do to her as she has done.
- **Jeremiah 51:6 (ESV)** ⁶ "Flee from the midst of Babylon; let every one save his life! Be not cut off in her punishment, for this is the time of the LORD's vengeance, the repayment he is rendering her.
- **Jeremiah 51:36 (ESV)** ³⁶ Therefore thus says the LORD: "Behold, I will plead your cause and take vengeance for you. I will dry up her sea and make her fountain dry,
- **Ezekiel 25:17 (ESV)** ¹⁷ I will execute great vengeance on them with wrathful rebukes. Then they will know that I am the LORD, when I lay my vengeance upon them."
- **Micah 5:15 (ESV)** ¹⁵ And in anger and wrath I will execute vengeance on the

nations that did not obey.

- **Nahum 1:2 (ESV)** ² The LORD is a jealous and avenging God; the LORD is avenging and wrathful; the LORD takes vengeance on his adversaries and keeps wrath for his enemies.
 - **2 Thessalonians 1:5-8 (ESV)** ⁵ This is evidence of the righteous judgment of God, that you may be considered worthy of the kingdom of God, for which you are also suffering— ⁶ since indeed God considers it just to repay with affliction those who afflict you, ⁷ and to grant relief to you who are afflicted as well as to us, when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with his mighty angels ⁸ in flaming fire, inflicting vengeance on those who do not know God and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus.
 - **Hebrews 10:26-32 (ESV)** ²⁶ For if we go on sinning deliberately after receiving the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, ²⁷ but a fearful expectation of judgment, and a fury of fire that will consume the adversaries. ²⁸ Anyone who has set aside the law of Moses dies without mercy on the evidence of two or three witnesses. ²⁹ How much worse punishment, do you think, will be deserved by the one who has trampled underfoot the Son of God, and has profaned the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified, and has outraged the Spirit of grace? ³⁰ For we know him who said, “Vengeance is mine; I will repay.” And again, “The Lord will judge his people.” ³¹ It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.
 - **Psalms 94:1 (ESV)** ¹ O LORD, God of vengeance, O God of vengeance, shine forth!
 - **Romans 12:19 (ESV)** ¹⁹ Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave it to the wrath of God, for it is written, “Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord.”
- 5) To the degree the seven trumpets are God’s response to the injustices perpetrated on the saints, this is a picture of what happens when the saints leave vengeance in the hands of God.
- 6) **QUESTION: What does this topic of “vengeance” reveal about the Person and purpose of Jesus Christ?**
- There is only One who can act justly, rightly, and sufficiently to not only judge but mete out justice
 - Even though the faithful may cry out for vengeance, in the sense of moral imperfection, we cannot avenge ourselves because we can never really know

that some sin of ours does not deserve the treatment, or even death, handed out by the world.

- That Christ alone avenges His people, rather than giving them the opportunity to avenge themselves, further demonstrates that every aspect of their existence, temporal and eternal, depends on Him. (He does not give His glory to another.)
- All human destiny rests in the hands of the perfect Adam. Christians may judge angels (according to Peter) but Christ retains the power and authority to judge humans.
- Christ's perfections mean He really is "better" than any other human and thus qualified to avenge.

c) The Fifth Trumpet (First Woe)(Rev. 9:1-12)

1) General Observations

- These woes, like the final plagues in the Exodus account, intensify in misery for those who live in rebellion against God and as a threat to His people
- The first and second woes (trumpets 5/6) are judgments, not wrath (final judgment), meant to reveal to humanity the hardness of their own hearts and the futility of any attempt to save themselves.
- The end result of trumpets 5 & 6, in the hearts of the wicked inhabitants of the world, is final rebellion. There is no repentance.
- Some of the language used in the trumpet judgment accounts could reflect fulfilment of Christ's promise to the Philadelphian church.
 - > **Revelation 3:10 (ESV)** ¹⁰ *Because you have kept my word about patient endurance, I will keep you from the hour of trial that is coming on the whole world, to try those who dwell on the earth.*
 - > Doesn't seem to be parallel with the Smyrna congregation because their tribulation is to test them; this tribulation is to test the "unsealed."

2) Symbols used

- Star fallen from heaven given key
 - > John sees the star (or angel) as already in a fallen state
 - Isaiah 14:12-15 (ESV)** ¹² *"How you are fallen from heaven, O Day Star, son of Dawn! How you are cut down to the ground, you who laid the nations low! ¹³ You said in your heart, 'I will ascend to heaven; above the stars of God I will set my throne on high; I will sit on the mount of assembly in the far reaches of the north; ¹⁴ I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will make myself like the Most High.' ¹⁵ But you are brought down to Sheol,*

to the far reaches of the pit.

Jesus (Luke 10:18 [ESV] *I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven.*)

Revelation 12:9 *And the great dragon was thrown down, that ancient serpent, who is called the devil and Satan, the deceiver of the whole world—he was thrown down to the earth, and his angels were thrown down with him.*

Beale: This is an angel representing sinful people undergoing judgment along with those people. His role is to inflict woe on humanity because Christ has begun to judge him.

> The entire work of this fallen angel lies under the sovereign authority of Christ (the angel is given the key.)

Neither Satan nor his evil servants can any longer unleash the forces of hell on earth unless they are given power to do so by the resurrected Christ.

The saints are to remember this sovereignty of God and of the Lamb when the forces of evil direct their attacks against them. God's purpose is served even by the denizens of the abyss!

Excursus for Clarity and Reconnection with Theme

Let's remember, before we move farther into the 5th trumpet and on our way to the final judgment and the implementation of the final kingdom, what this letter is all about.

First, it is a revealing of truth as God knows it regarding the future institution of the eternal reign of Christ over all creation. It is the account of the final restoration of dominion over creation to Whom and where it belongs.

Second, it records the fulfilment of a plan which has been in place from before the creation of the world. There has never been a moment in the history of the world that God has not sovereignly acted to fulfill His plan to fill the earth with the knowledge of His glory. Heaven is filled with His glory, but only through the fall of man and God's redemptive plan of salvation through Jesus Christ can creation, the realm of humankind, be fully aware of the immensity of God's goodness and the infinite depth of His love.

Third, we ought to bear in mind that, while the churches to whom this letter is written may or may not have been thoroughly instructed in Jewish apocalyptic, they most certainly would have, at least, been exposed to Jesus' teaching regarding the end of time, especially any description Jesus might have given (as later recorded in the gospels) regarding the process of transition between kingdoms. Therefore, they will have, I suspect, at least have heard of Jesus' words in Matthew 11:12 (see note below) about the aggressive reaction of the world to the coming of Christ and his kingdom.

Fourth, this letter serves as an encouragement for those facing challenges that might otherwise steal their joy or corrupt or undermine their faith in the character of God's promises to them in Christ. They are facing persecution and affliction. They are facing the anger and angst of a lost world enslaved to the spiritual powers of evil. They need to know not only that God is aware of their suffering (as they would know through Christ's words to them) but that God has a plan for responding to the world's aggressive opposition and the ability to actually implement His promised kingdom.

So, consider what Jesus said in Matthew 11:12 and let these words help make sense of what we are seeing in Revelation 9 and forward.

Matthew 11:12 *From the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven has suffered violence, and the violent take it by force.*

The meaning here is the arrival of the kingdom is aggressively contested, attacked, or hampered by contentious opponents and that enemies of the kingdom oppose its arrival aggressively blocking others who may wish to enter from doing so.

We are thus brought f. to the pass. interpretation in malam partem which refers the "violence" to the enemies of the divine rule, i.e., that it is contested, attacked or hampered by contentious opponents. This explanation has a twofold advantage. It corresponds to most of the linguistic parallels. And the second part of the saying can be construed in the same sense as an elucidation of the hostile "violent", namely, that it is taken from men by the violent. The surest key to what is meant by "violent" is given by Mt. himself in the only other place in his Gospel in which this word occurs: . . . (13:19). In this context it means taking the seed away from someone. Hence in our present saying, if we are to use a similar instance for the purpose of interpretation, the meaning is that by . . . violent enemies close the kingdom to men, not allowing those who desire to enter to do so (Mt. 23:13). If this is correct, then in the description of the present state of the divine rule we have urgent emphasis on the fact that it is hampered by all the hostile forces which in the days of Jesus seek to foil His work. The strongly negative tone of the utterance is striking. It is partly explained, however, by the first passage in this whole series of sayings concerning John the Baptist; for we are told at the outset that John as a . . . is in the prison of the . . ., and this dominates the whole section. Indeed, as we have seen already, the note of repentance is found right on into the story of the sulking children, so that in the context there is a special reason for this reference to the forces which hamper the . . . All that we read elsewhere in Mt. shows that Jesus has in view the forces which were opposed to Him in the Judaism of His day. Schrenk, G. (1964–). G. Kittel, G. W. Bromiley, & G. Friedrich (Eds.), *Theological dictionary of the New Testament* (electronic ed., Vol. 1, pp. 611–612). Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans.

So, given the aggressive and violent nature of the opposition to the kingdom, it should not surprise us that it will take intense and even violent action to displace the former kingdom in favor of the kingdom of God. Even in the world, where one party violently opposes the ascension of another at least three actions have to take place on the part of the new ruler:

1. The former authority, be it an individual or a system, must be removed.
2. Sympathizers with the former regime must be either persuaded or removed
3. Infrastructure that supported the former ruler must be either removed or repurposed.

- Bottomless pit (locked)
 - > Biblical Context for the Abyss
 - Wisdom is not found in the abyss (Job 28:14)
 - The abyss is the dwelling place of the dead (those separated from life) Job 33:22
 - The abyss is the place of destruction appropriate for bloodthirsty, deceptive humans (Ps. 55:23)
 - The abyss is a place of justice (Ps 55:23)
 - The abyss is a place from which none who go there ever return (Ez 36:20)
 - Demons fear the abyss (Luke 8:31)
 - Fallen angels are held in the abyss until Judgment (2 Peter 2:4)
 - Jude 6 *And the angels who did not stay within their own position of authority, but left their proper dwelling, he has kept in eternal chains under gloomy darkness until the judgment of the great day . . .***
 - > The Abyss in Revelation
 - Abyss is locked (9:1)
 - Abyss may only be opened at the command and for the purpose of God (9:2)
 - Abyss is a place of active judgment, ruin, destruction = smoke (9:2)
 - Abyss dwellers have a king who exists under divine judgment (9:11)
 - The beast dwells in the abyss (11:17)
 - All that dwells in the abyss is under judgment
 - All that comes from the abyss delivers judgment
 - Abyss is a place for rebellious (20:3)
 - > Conclusions
 - Abyss is prepared by God
 - Abyss is filled by God
 - Abyss is contained by God
 - Abyss is opened by God's command alone
 - Abyss and those imprisoned there serve God's purpose under judgment
- Thick, sky darkening smoke
 - > Joel 2:1-30
 - How might this passage in Joel relate to the events described in Revelation 9:1-12?
 - Both passages describe events related to the "day of the LORD" Rev

6:17

Both passages rely on the description of a destructive locust swarm to communicate God's actions in relation to His people

- Both passages (one directly and the other indirectly) call God's people to repentance and faithfulness as response to the day of the LORD (an instruction that, if followed, will set God's people apart from the people of the world who will suffer harm from the locusts, but not repent, and not receive the reconstructive grace of God.)

- In the Joel passage, the Lord's coming is in the outpouring of the Holy Spirit who establishes God's kingdom in the hearts of His people (a spiritual kingdom). In the Revelation passage, the Lord's coming is in the imminent return of Jesus Christ who will establish God's kingdom in the realm of physical creation (an eternal, spiritual and physical kingdom.)

- > Smoke as sign of judgment

- Locusts on the earth (function)

- > Given power

- > Do not harm green plants (limit contrary to nature)

- > Harm only those not sealed (limit contrary to spiritual nature)

- > Torment (not kill) for five months (limited to the normal life span of most species of locust)

- > Torment likened to natural scorpion sting: all over pain and misery that cannot be lessened or relieved, only experienced and endured

- People will long for death but not be able to die

- > Immortality in pain (foreshadowing)

- > "Physical death is no remedy for the torment of an evil conscience."

- > Some have likened this to the desire for suicide but without either the courage or the despair to carry it out.

- Locusts (Appearance [Meaning])

- > Horses prepared for battle - conquest or war or conflict

- > Crowns of gold on their heads - authority

- > Human-like faces - familiar, recognizable, deceitful

- > Women's hair - alluring

- > Lion's teeth - devouring, dangerous

- > Breastplates of iron - invulnerable, unmoveable, without mercy, unstoppable

- > Wings - agile, mobile,
- > Scorpion tails - threatening, pain producing
- > King: united, rallied, led
- 3) Release of Apollyon
 - Angel of the bottomless pit
 - Heb. *Abbadon* (Destruction)
 - Gr. *Apollyon* (Destroyer)
- 4) Physical torment for 5 months - after 5 months of torment, sinful human beings would be ready for 1) a leader to lead them, 2) a war to fight - they will be looking for someone to blame.
- d) The Sixth Trumpet (Second Woe - Rev. 9:13-11:14)
 - 1) 1st Vision (Rev. 9:13-21)
 - Angel blew trumpet
 - John heard
 - “Voice”

From the four horns of the golden altar before God

- > Revelation 6:9 (ESV) ⁹ When he opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of those who had been slain for the word of God and for the witness they had borne. **Place of rest**
- > Revelation 8:3 (ESV) ³ And another angel came and stood at the altar with a golden censer, and he was given much incense to offer with the prayers of all the saints on the golden altar before the throne, **Place of prayer**
- > Revelation 8:5 (ESV) ⁵ Then the angel took the censer and filled it with fire from the altar and threw it on the earth, and there were peals of thunder, rumblings, flashes of lightning, and an earthquake. **Place of judgment**
- > Revelation 9:13 (ESV) ¹³ Then the sixth angel blew his trumpet, and I heard a voice from the four horns of the golden altar before God, **Place of instruction/command/authority**
- > Revelation 11:1 (ESV) ¹ Then I was given a measuring rod like a staff, and I was told, “Rise and measure the temple of God and the altar and those who worship there, **Place of worship**
- > Revelation 14:18 (ESV) ¹⁸ And another angel came out from the altar, the angel who has authority over the fire, and he called with a loud voice to the one who had the sharp sickle, “Put in your sickle and gather the clusters from the vine of the earth, for its grapes are ripe.” **Place of obedience**

> Revelation 16:7 (ESV) ⁷ And I heard the altar saying, “Yes, Lord God the Almighty, true and just are your judgments!” **Place of true testimony**

“Release the four angels bound at the great river Euphrates”

> Were bound, limited, restrained in advance

> Had been prepared for an exact hour

> Had specific purpose with specific limit: kill 1/3 mankind

> Released by the command of one who had authority over them to pursue their nature for His purpose

- Great Army w/ 3 Deadly Plagues

> 200,000,000 or numberlessly huge?

> War Horses

3 Plagues

> Fire

> Smoke

> Sulfur

“Coming out of their mouths”

> Deception

> Spiritual death

> Physical death

- 1/3 mankind killed

- Power in their mouths and their “serpent” tails

- No repentance among survivors

2) 2nd Vision (Rev. 10:1-11)

General Observations:

1. Two questions: No matter where we are in the book, two questions remain relevant. First, since this book is both a revelation from Jesus and a revelation of Jesus, it is important to ask, what is Jesus telling us about Himself in this passage. It is also useful to ask, since we are approaching this book as the final chapter in God’s story of fully manifesting His glory in creation, how this passage expounds or expands God’s plan for the transition of this world and mankind from the kingdom of darkness to the Kingdom of His Son.

2. Commentators often separate chapters 10 and 11 from the flow of the text as being parenthetical. I don’t see this as being necessary. Chapters 10 and 11 are part of what John saw in relation to the sixth trumpet. It is not until 11:14 that we are informed the vision related to the sixth trumpet is complete, and the third woe/seventh trumpet set to being (at 11:15). So the questions are, is there a thematic link between the demonic army described in chapter 9, the oath of the angel sworn in chapter 10 and the two witnesses of chapter 11; if there is a link, what is it and how does it serve the larger picture of revealing Jesus and the transition of kingdoms taking place in the book?

3. cursory examination reveals that throughout chapters 9-11 John not only sees events, he receives auditory instruction within the vision of the sixth trumpet (9:13; 10:4, 8, 9, 11; 11:1, [12, the witnesses heard a loud voice from heaven]. The seven thunders are also said to have “uttered their voices,” words John was prohibited from revealing.) The section could be analyzed based on what John heard as much as what John saw. It seems the voice of God, the verbal revelation of his mind, will, and heart, guides the impact of the vision here. God is both controlling events and guiding the understanding of those events so that they will be interpreted adequately and correctly.

- Angel with Scroll (Rev. 10:1-7)

> Mighty angel

1. The word “mighty” here is *ισχυρον* and means strength or power, but with the emphasis on self-possession of strength. The wielder of the power is also the source of the power.
2. Angels, though strong, as messengers are typically understood to have power on assignment (their authority and ability come from God).
3. This use of the word “mighty” (not to be confused with the word “*dunamis*”) suggests that this angel is inherently different than other angels we have encountered in this book. The further descriptions support this interpretative conclusion.
4. The designation “angel” can be understood as nominative, naming a being or class of being, or it can be understood as titular, naming a position or task. The Greek word “*angelos*” means both “angel” and “messenger.” It is not unreasonable to see here a title for Jesus rather than an identification of what type of being is seen and heard here.

Coming down from heaven

1. This angel is not fallen but is either sent on a mission or has come under his own will.
2. He does not come up from the pit or out of other bondage. He is not under indement, so one might expect, given the context, that he is come with either a message of or an application of divine judgment.

Described like Jesus

1. Wrapped in a cloud: This description seems to support the idea that this is no ordinary angel but Jesus Himself. All these descriptive elements occur in the Bible in relation to God Himself, or, more specifically, to Christ

Clouds in Revelation

Revelation 1:7 (ESV) ⁷ *Behold, he is coming with the clouds, and every eye will see him, even those who pierced him, and all tribes of the earth will wail on account of him. Even so. Amen.*

Revelation 10:1 (ESV) ¹ *Then I saw another mighty angel coming down from heaven, wrapped in a cloud, with a rainbow over his head, and his face was like the sun, and his legs like pillars of fire.*

Revelation 11:12 (ESV) ¹² *Then they heard a loud voice from heaven saying to them, “Come up here!” And they went up to heaven in a cloud, and their enemies watched them.*

Revelation 14:14–16 (ESV) ¹⁴ *Then I looked, and behold, a white cloud, and seated on the cloud one like a son of man, with a golden crown on his head, and a sharp sickle in his hand.* ¹⁵ *And another angel came out of the temple, calling with a loud voice to him who sat on the cloud, “Put in your sickle, and reap, for the hour to reap has come, for the harvest of the earth is fully ripe.”* ¹⁶ *So he who sat*

on the cloud swung his sickle across the earth, and the earth was reaped.

Clouds in the NT

In the Gospels

Transfiguration

Matthew 17:5 *He was still speaking when, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them, and a voice from the cloud said, "This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased; listen to him."*

Mark 9:7 *And a cloud overshadowed them, and a voice came out of the cloud, "This is my beloved Son; listen to him."*

Luke 9:34-35 *As he was saying these things, a cloud came and overshadowed them, and they were afraid as they entered the cloud. And a voice came out of the cloud, saying, "This is my Son, my Chosen One; listen to him!"*

Parousia

Matthew 24:30 *Then will appear in heaven the sign of the Son of Man, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.*

Matthew 26:64 *Jesus said to him, "You have said so. But I tell you, from now on you will see the Son of Man seated at the right hand of Power and coming on the clouds of heaven."*

Mark 13:26 *And then they will see the Son of Man coming in clouds with great power and glory.*

Mark 14:62 *And Jesus said, "I am, and you will see the Son of Man seated at the right hand of Power, and coming with the clouds of heaven."*

Luke 21:27 *And then they will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory.*

In the Letters

Physical Clouds

Acts 1:9-11 *And when he had said these things, as they were looking on, he was lifted up, and a cloud took him out of their sight. And while they were gazing into heaven as he went, behold, two men stood by them in white robes, and said, "Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into heaven? This Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, **will come in the same way as you saw him go into heaven.**"*

1 Thessalonians 4:17 *Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we will always be with the Lord.*

Spiritual/Divine Clouds

1 Corinthians 10:1-2 *For I do not want you to be unaware, brothers, that our fathers were all under the cloud, and all passed through the sea, and all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea,*

Metaphorical Clouds

Hebrews 12:1 *Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us,*

Jude 12 *These are hidden reefs at your love feasts, as they feast with you without fear, shepherds feeding themselves; waterless clouds, swept along by winds; fruitless trees in late autumn, twice dead, uprooted;*

Clouds in the OT

Exod 13:21-22 *And the LORD went before them by day in a pillar of cloud to lead them along the way, and by night in a pillar of fire to give them light, that they might travel by day and by night. The pillar of cloud by day and the pillar of fire by night did not depart from before the people.*

Exod 14:24 *And in the morning watch the LORD in the pillar of fire and of cloud looked down on the Egyptian forces and threw the Egyptian forces into a panic,*

Exod 16:10 *And as soon as Aaron spoke to the whole congregation of the people of Israel, they looked toward the wilderness, and behold, the glory of the LORD appeared in the cloud.*

Exod 19:9 *And the LORD said to Moses, "Behold, I am coming to you in a thick cloud, that the people may hear when I speak with you, and may also believe you forever." When Moses told the words of the people to the LORD,*

Exod 24:16 *The glory of the LORD dwelt on Mount Sinai, and the cloud covered it six days. And on the seventh day he called to Moses out of the midst of the cloud.*

Exod 33:9 *When Moses entered the tent, the pillar of cloud would descend and stand at the entrance of the tent, and the LORD would speak with Moses.*

Exod 34:5 *The LORD descended in the cloud and stood with him there, and proclaimed the name of the LORD.*

Exod 40:38 *For the cloud of the LORD was on the tabernacle by day, and fire was in it by night, in the sight of all the house of Israel throughout all their journeys.*

Lev 16:2 *and the LORD said to Moses, "Tell Aaron your brother not to come at any time into the Holy Place inside the veil, before the mercy seat that is on the ark, so that he may not die. For I will appear in the cloud over the mercy seat.*

Num 11:25 *Then the LORD came down in the cloud and spoke to him, and took some of the Spirit that was on him and put it on the seventy elders. And as soon as the Spirit rested on them, they prophesied. But they did not continue doing it.*

Lam 3:44 *you have wrapped yourself with a cloud so that no prayer can pass through.*

Ezek 1:4 *As I looked, behold, a stormy wind came out of the north, and a great cloud, with brightness around it, and fire flashing forth continually, and in the midst of the fire, as it were gleaming metal.*

Dan 7:13 *"I saw in the night visions, and behold, with the clouds of heaven there came one like a son of man, and he came to the Ancient of Days and was presented before him.*

Clouds, in reference to God, "indicate His unapproachableness, His infinite majesty, His consuming power toward sin, which cannot live before His uncovered glory, and yet His drawing near to communicate with the dwellers upon earth." (From, "The Apocalypse")

2. With a rainbow over his head

Rainbow in the OT

Genesis 9:13-16 (ESV) ¹³ *I have set my bow in the cloud, and it shall be a sign of the covenant between me and the earth.* ¹⁴ *When I bring clouds over the earth and the bow is seen in the clouds,* ¹⁵ *I will remember my covenant that is between me and you and every living creature of all flesh. And the waters shall never again become a flood to destroy all flesh.* ¹⁶ *When the bow is in the clouds, I will*

see it and remember the everlasting covenant between God and every living creature of all flesh that is on the earth.”

Ezek 1:28 *Like the appearance of the bow that is in the cloud on the day of rain, so was the appearance of the brightness all around. Such was the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the LORD. And when I saw it, I fell on my face, and I heard the voice of one speaking.*

The rainbow belongs to God, is an “invention” of God’s, and carries a message from God in regards to Himself as a covenant-making, covenant-keeping God. Some have stolen the symbol in our world, taking it as a symbol of the godless and those who refuse God’s creation covenant. But neither the symbol or the reality belong to sinful men and Christ retains it as a crown of His faithfulness both to Him Who sits on the throne and to the expression of God’s included on the scroll in his hand.

We never read of anyone surrounded by a rainbow other than God. As the clouds are “indicative of Divine judgment . . . the rainbow is indicative of Divine mercy in the midst of judgment and a covenant of security to the believing, even though everything seem to be going to destruction.” (From “The Apocalypse”)

3. Face like the sun

Revelation 1:16 (ESV) ¹⁶ *In his right hand he held seven stars, from his mouth came a sharp two-edged sword, and his face was like the sun shining in full strength.*

Matthew 17:2 (ESV) ² *And he was transfigured before them, and his face shone like the sun, and his clothes became white as light.*

4. Legs like pillars of fire

See the descriptions of the “pillar of fire” that led the Israelites through the desert in the Exodus account.

5. Little scroll in his hand

6. One foot on land one on sea

In Deuteronomy 11:24 and again in Joshua 1:3 God makes this promise to His people: “Every place that the sole of your foot will tread upon I have given to you.” Imagine if God gave the Israelites a certain geographic real estate based on their walking on it and taking possession of it, what it must mean for Christ, with the title-deed for the earth open in Hand, to have one foot on the land and one on the sea!

7. Calls out with a voice like a lion roaring

Jeremiah 25:29-31 (ESV) ²⁹ *For behold, I begin to work disaster at the city that is called by my name, and shall you go unpunished? You shall not go unpunished, for I am summoning a sword against all the inhabitants of the earth, declares the LORD of hosts.’* ³⁰ *“You, therefore, shall prophesy against them all these words, and say to them: “‘The LORD will roar from on high, and from his holy habitation utter his voice; he will roar mightily against his fold, and shout, like those who tread grapes, against all the inhabitants of the earth.’* ³¹ *The clamor will resound to the ends of the earth, for the LORD has an indictment against the nations; he is entering into judgment with all flesh, and the wicked he will put to the sword, declares the LORD.’*

Joel 3:16 (ESV) 16 The LORD roars from Zion, and utters his voice from Jerusalem, and the heavens and the earth quake. But the LORD is a refuge to his people, a stronghold to the people of Israel.

Amos 1:2 (ESV) 2 And he said: “The LORD roars from Zion and utters his voice from Jerusalem; the pastures of the shepherds mourn, and the top of Carmel withers.”

Seven thunders (heard then hidden)

Our ignorance of the content of the seven thunders is intentional. God retains His right to mystery. He does not give John permission to write down what he has heard, though recording what he sees and hears has been his purpose in this revelation to this point. The mystery intrigues commentators. I will note that “thunders” throughout the Revelation seem to express communication from Him Who sits on the throne. Seven, as a symbol, repeatedly points to the completeness of that which is numbered. So, with those two ideas in mind, I imagine the thunders to be God’s complete response to Christ’s active taking of control over the transition to restored dominion, whatever that may mean.

“These seven thunders utter themselves in full sympathy with the proceeding, and the righteous vengeance of the throne of the eternal majesty vocalizes the sentences to be visited upon the guilty and still rebellious world” (cf. 9:20-21). From “The Apocalypse”

- > Oath Sworn
- Raised right hand to heaven
- Swore by Creator
- No more delay in the fulfillment of God’s plan for creation

Not everyone holds that the “mighty angel” of these verses is Jesus, so we ought to ask, what is the point, in the scope of the message of this book, in identifying Jesus as the angel. Why is Jesus presented in this passage? I believe the answer is this: we have seen the Lion of the tribe of Judah take and open the scroll, a testimony to His worthiness as perfect man, to restore dominion to mankind, but we have not yet seen the Son of Man actually begin to take dominion over the earth. I believe with the sixth seal, especially here in chapter 10, we see Jesus act upon His right to reign. He has been acknowledged as worthy. Here we see Him acting on the rights and privileges granted in the scroll in relation to earth and creation. Here in these verses to we begin to see the fulfillment of **Hebrews 2:8-9**.

“The mystery of God us nothing more nor nothing less that the final sum of all God’s revelations and doings for the reinstatement of man to his lost inheritance [dominion].” From “The Apocalypse”

The oath sworn by the “mighty angel” identifies the “mystery of God”/consummation of all things to be

1. True gospel - all that God foretold about the fulfillment of redemption’s global/cosmic plan will come to pass
2. Accomplished in the seventh trumpet
3. Certain after a long delay
4. Certain, though it be slow.

- d. The Perspective Changes: From heaven to earth
- (1) John and the Scroll (Rev 10:8-11)
- (a) What?
- i) Voice from heaven spoke to John again
 - a) Voice from v. 4
 - b) Is this the voice that spoke in 4:1?
 - ii) "Go,
 - a) Take the open scroll
 - b) from the hand of the angel
 - iii) John obeys
 - a) Went away (*apo*) to the angel
 - b) "Demanded" the scroll
 - iv) The angel speaks to John
 - a) Take
 - b) Eat
 - 1) Bitter
 - 2) Sweet
 - v) John obeys and experiences the effects he was prepared for by the angel
 - vi) John told the reason for his experience
- (b) So what?
- i) The voice that in 4:1 said to John, "Come up here!" now seems to instruct him to "go down there," for the angel to whom John is instructed to go stands aside land and sea.
 - a) The movement here is from heaven to earth.
 - b) It is likely that whereas the earlier prophecies have been from heaven's perspective, or about the ramifications of Christ's work on earth for heaven, the remaining prophecies in the book will be from earth's perspective, or about the ramifications for earth of Christ's work in heaven.
 - c) There is no clear evidence in the remainder of the book that John is called back to heaven, and the general tone of events and visions are earth related.
 - ii) The scroll in the angel's hand is open.
 - a) There is a change of word use in these verses.
 - 1) In verse 8 the scroll is referred to as *biblion*.
 - 2) However, in verses 2, 9, 10 the scroll is referred to as *biblaridion*, which is a diminutive form. (Eg., [sp] Papa vs Papacito) Thus there is "scroll" and "little scroll." (Or, in some versions, "book" and "little book.")

- b) The book/scroll is open
 - 1) The contents are not secret
 - 2) Its contents are available for reading, studying, assimilating, and disseminating.
- iii) John responds with confidence and courage to the voice from heaven that instructs him to take the scroll from the hand of an angel astride the land and sea.
 - a) The last time (and the next time) John encounters an angel he falls at its feet in worship.
 - b) But at this moment, John is consumed with faith and faithfulness. He has been sent on a mission.
 - c) He seems to expect the angel to recognize the validity of his mission as though the angel would be aligned with the voice from heaven in regard to his mission.
- iv) The angel expands and advances John's mission: Take AND eat.
 - a) Take: possess the scroll
 - b) Eat:
 - 1) assimilate the contents, make them personal, let them become part of you.
 - 2) By describing the effect the scroll would have on John, the angel prepares John not merely to possess the scroll but for the scroll to possess John.
 - The scroll may please/delight John or embitter/sicken John
 - John has no control over the timing or extent of the scroll's effects
 - c) John must surrender to the voice from heaven, the instruction of the angel, and the effect of the scroll.
- v) John obeys the angel.
 - a) He trusts the voice from heaven and the angel
 - b) He accepts the effects of the scroll (as a result of handling the scroll as instructed.)
 - c) He does not, at the moment, know why he is to suffer, he simply knows trustworthy sources have commanded and prepared him and he is pleased to obey in faith without hesitation.
- vi) Upon his obedience, he is given the reason
 - a) John must prophecy again
 - 1) There is a clear demarcation here between the prophetic ministry prior to this point and what must now follow
 - 2) It is not necessarily a qualitative difference as much as a contextual difference.
 - John has been prophesying about what he has seen in heaven
 - Now he will be prophesying about "earth" related things: "many peoples and nations and languages and kings"
 - b) Authority to prophecy about human race (presumably in regards the content of the scroll, which he has now internalized)

- (c) Now what?
 - i) Do I listen, through the Spirit and the word, for God to speak to me, or do I assume that whatever I am doing is God's will and he has not special plan for me?
 - ii) When God speaks, do I require a "why" before I will act, especially when I think there may be unpleasant consequences?
 - iii) Do I accept that proclaiming the gospel means declaring God's judgment on sin as well as His love for sinners?
 - iv) Do I live in fear of man or fear of God?
- (2) 3rd Vision (Rev 11:1-13)
 - (a) John's Commission (Rev. 11:1-3)
 - i) Commission (Rev. 11:1-2)
 - a) Questions
 - 1) Why measure a temple that does not exist?
 - 2) How does this action of measuring fit with John's commission?
 - At one level it presents a warning to John's audience: are you a worshiper or a trampler?
 - It also presents a challenge: Do you offer sacrifices or sacrilege?
 - b) Assumptions
 - 1) God is well aware of what John knows and does not know about the OT
 - 2) God will use what John knows as part of what John must preach and teach in regards to this Revelation
 - 3) When determining John's actions in this commission we should bear in mind what John might know
 - That Herod's temple was destroyed in 70 AD
 - Ezekiel is also called to measure a temple, as recorded in Ezekiel 44-48
 - 4) Ezekiel's temple measuring vision informs John's assignment
 - The measuring in Ezekiel precedes the return of the glory!
 - Ezekiel measured a 500 cubit buffer outside the temple between the holy and the common. John is instructed to leave the same area unmeasured and reserved for trampling for 42 months.
 - The interior area of Ezekiel's temple was dedicated to fellowship with God and fellowship with one another (dining rooms) under God's provision.
 - Ezekiel is told to preach/teach his findings as a warning against Israelite abominations.
 - Ezekiel's measurements seem to reestablish the holiness, majesty and glory of

God in His temple and among His people

- The measuring inaugurates a new ministry of holy vs unholy
- The measuring precedes the establishment of Israel as a theocratic kingdom with princes who rule under God and for His glory

c) Content

- 1) Verse 1 opens not with “then” or “after this,” but with “and” (kai) suggesting a continuation of the previous thought and not a new vision.
- 2) Given a measure rod like a staff
 - Does John’s measuring demonstrate continuity with and continuation of God’s kingdom restoration plan across 2 covenants and 2 peoples?
 - Given: (Suggests granting or bestowing of both privilege and responsibility)
 - > tools to accomplish the previous commission to prophesy
 - > What does John need but a tool that divides between right and wrong, error and truth, wisdom and foolishness, good and evil
 - kalamos (grk) - reed
 - > “a reed like a rod” - straightness and strength.
 - > A reed like a shepherd’s staff.
 - > Ps 23:6 “Thy rod and thy staff, they comfort me . . .”
- 3) Given instructions
 - Rise and measure the temple of God, and the altar, and those who worship there
 - > Verify its existence
 - > Verify its extent
 - > Verify its integrity/security (Nehemiah “measured” the extent of the damaged walls of Jerusalem prior to beginning reconstructive ministry.
 - The word for altar in this verse means “place of sacrifice;” could it refer to the entire area where sacrifices take place (and thus the entire life context of the church) and not just the single piece of temple furniture?
 - Do not measure the court outside the temple
- 4) Outer court
 - Is given over to the nations
 - They will trample the holy city for 42 months
 - > Same period of time is described three ways in Revelation
 - > Could the three represent John’s efforts to focus on the duration of time rather than the actual span of time?

> If the time reference is for the sake of communicating duration and limit, what time spans are possible?

- ii) Prophetic Support: The Two Witnesses (Rev. 11:3)
 - a) Authority is given to two witnesses
 - 1) Not merely messengers, who may distance themselves from the message
 - 2) These are representatives authorized with the authority of the King to speak and act on behalf of the King
 - 3) Here again is evidence for God's sovereignty: all authority in heaven and on earth has been given to the King and He is giving power throughout this book as HE sees fit for His glory and for His purpose
 - b) who will prophesy for 1260 days (42 months/3.5 years)
 - 1) The witnesses minister throughout the time the nations trample the holy city
 - 2) The witnesses oppose the arrogance of the nations and the indifference of Israel in relation to the King
- (b) Two Witnesses (Rev. 11:4-12)
 - i) Given authority to prophesy
 - a) **Matthew 28:18-20 (ESV)** ¹⁸ *And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. ¹⁹ Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰ teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age."*
 - b) **Acts 1:7-8 (ESV)** ⁷ *He said to them, "It is not for you to know times or seasons that the Father has fixed by his own authority. ⁸ But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth."*
 - 1) The disciples are authorized to witness and make disciples of the nations among the nations
 - 2) The two witnesses of Revelation 11 are restricted to Jerusalem and the nations present there, apparently, and are prophesying truth and judgment (apparent from the reaction) rather than disciple making
 - ii) Clothed in Sackcloth
 - a) The witnesses, much like Jesus, present a humble grace that masks incredible power
 - b) While the Savior came to give life through His own death, the witnesses appear to bring death on others until their own death (there appears little redemptive response to their humility)
 - c) There is a visual witness in their dress and demeanor as well as a verbal witness

- iii) Figurative names from Zechariah 4:1-14
 - a) Two olive trees/Two lampstands
 - b) The olive trees in Zechariah's vision are identified as Joshua the high priest and Zerubbabel the governor
 - c) The vision as a whole assures the people that these two messengers of God, filled and supplied with the Holy Spirit, will, in fact, accomplish and complete the work of rebuilding the second temple
 - d) Suggests
 - 1) that John's vision of the two witnesses testifies to the certainty of God completing the work He has begun of establishing His eternal kingdom and filling all creation with the knowledge of His glory
 - 2) AND of being right and just in doing so have gone to great extremes to notify those who dwell on the earth of His plan and inviting them to share in it.
 - e) That stand before the Lord of the earth
 - 1) **Deuteronomy 10:8 (ESV) ⁸ *At that time the LORD set apart the tribe of Levi to carry the ark of the covenant of the LORD to stand before the LORD to minister to him and to bless in his name, to this day.***
 - 2) Those who stand before the Lord
 - Minister to him
 - Bless His name
 - Exist for His glory and the full expression of His glory among all creation
 - The altar of incense and the table of showbread were said to "stand before the Lord" in the tabernacle and temple
 - Moses, Samuel, and Jeremiah are all called by God those who stood before Him and were representatives of God to God's people
- iv) Authorizations
 - a) They are protected from harm (ensuring the completion of their prophesying task)
 - 1) If anyone would harm them, fire pours from their mouths and consumes their foes
 - 2) This is how any intending harm to the witnesses is doomed to die
 - God's commitment to the success of this mission (no weapon that is formed against you will prosper)
 - I think this action on God's part rules out the church or the gospel as interpretive resolutions for the identity of the witnesses
 - b) They are empowered to use creation to gain human attention to their message
 - 1) Have the power to shut the sky that no rain may fall during the days of their

- prophesying
 - 2) Have power over the waters to turn them to blood
 - 3) Have power to strike the earth with every kind of plague, as often as they desire
 - 4) Like Moses convincing Pharaoh, God puts creation at the disposal of His witnesses to gain attention and submission to His message
 - v) Outcomes
 - a) They will finish their testimony
 - 1) Their testimony will not be cut off prior to completion
 - 2) God's plan includes both a beginning and an end (he will not hold His justice forever)
 - b) The beast that rises from the bottomless pit
 - 1) Will make war on them - a simple assassination plan will not succeed
 - 2) Will conquer them
 - This is the last conquering the evil one will do
 - Just as Satan may have felt victory at the death of Christ until the resurrection, so any rejoicing at the deaths of these two witnesses will be equally short lived
 - No plan of God's is thwarted by the activities, no matter how drastic, of the evil one
 - 3) Will kill them -
 - this would not be possible without God's assent (given how God has already empowered these messengers
 - Their deaths serve God's purpose, not the purposes of the evil one who slays them.
 - This is an important message for the faithful living under persecution
 - c) Their bodies will lie undisturbed in the streets of Jerusalem for 3.5 days
 - 1) Jerusalem identified
 - Sodom - human corruption of God's plan
 - Egypt - human enslavement of God's people
 - "where their Lord was crucified" - human rejection of God's person
 - Just as Jesus represents God's salvation potential for the entire human race, Jerusalem represents man's sin potential rejecting God as the entire human race
 - 2) Spectacle for the nations - not "all" but "some" - does this suggest that some have heard and loved this final witness to the justice and mercy of God?
 - 3) Refuse to bury - some have authority to deny decency
 - 4) Nations will rejoice/party because of end of torment
 - d) A breath of life from God enters them

- 1) They stand on their feet
- 2) Great fear falls on all those who saw them
- 3) A loud voice from heaven says, “Come up here!”
 - They went up to heaven in a cloud
 - Their enemies watched them
- (c) Earthquake (Rev. 11:13)
 - i) At the hour the witnesses answer the call to ascend, a great earthquake
 - ii) 1/10 of the city (a tithe?) falls
 - iii) Seven thousand in Jerusalem killed
 - iv) Terrified survivors give glory to God
- (3) Transition Announcement (Rev 11:14)
 - (a) Second woe passed, third woe coming soon
 - (b) Not necessarily a temporal statement as much as a list statement (order of vision rather than timing of events)
 - i) If you are building a timeline then this is a notice of sequence of events
 - ii) If you are following a report then this is a notice of order of visions
- e. The Seventh Trumpet (Third woe - Rev. 11:15-19)
 - (1) Proclamation of the New Kingdom(Rev. 11:15-18)
 - (a) Trumpet sounds
 - i) At the opening of the seventh seal there was silence, which we took to be a universal response of awe to the ascension of the king in power
 - a) the king rising from the throne to speak his ultimate, final will in regards to a matter
 - b) The judge entering the courtroom to pronounce sentence.
 - ii) At the seventh trumpet, there is “loud sound, commotion, singing” / worship
 - a) As if heaven has held its breathe awaiting the announcement from the King and now exhales with exuberance at the expression of His glorious will
 - b) The three point shot from half court at the buzzer goes in!
 - 1) Imagine the encouragement of this moment if you have been the “underdog” throughout the game
 - 2) The church to whom John writes suffers under persecution and it is natural that doubt would plagued their thinking in the face of hostility
 - The seventh trumpet blows
 - The game is over
 - God wins! Jesus wins! The church wins!
 - (b) Choir Sings (loud!)
 - i) The **kingdom** of the world has become the **kingdom** of our Lord and of His Christ

- a) What does the word “kingdom” indicate?
 - b) The verb is passive and past tense in English. How is it parsed in Greek and what does it indicate regarding timing in relation to the seventh trumpet?
 - 1) When does the kingdom of God come?
 - 2) Does this fit into the now/not yet eschatology?
 - 3) How is the church encouraged in faithfulness when we do not yet see all things subject to Christ, but we see Christ and know that one day the one kingdom will become the other?
- ii) He shall reign forever and ever
 - a) How does the permanence of God’s reign inform our lives of faith and trust in the here and now?
 - b) We are often looking for “wiggle room” in the sphere of obedience. How does an eternal reign reduce “wiggle room”?
- (c) Audience worships (24 elders)
 - i) The enthroned elders
 - a) OT Prophets (or 12 sons of Israel) or a summary of the OT faithful
 - b) NT apostles or a summary of NT faithful
 - c) As a whole represent the faithful of all time.
 - ii) Humble elders
 - a) Fell on their faces
 - 1) Notice the elders/humans are often falling on their faces
 - 2) Angels never fall on their faces before God
 - 3) What does the difference in response suggest?
 - b) Worshipped God
 - 1) We give thanks to you
 - Lord God Almighty
 - Who was and is and who was (no “is to come” since He’s here!)
 - 2) You have taken your great power and begun to reign
 - Does this suggest that God does not reign before this?
 - Does this “begun to reign” suggest anything regarding a timeline of events?
 - A statement covering the entirety of creation history but explicitly God’s redemptive success
 - 3) The nations raged but your wrath came (which is greater AND more effective?)
 - How should we understand God’s wrath?
 - The time

- > For the dead to be judged
- > For the rewarding of your servants
(prophets and saints)
(Those who fear your name)
(Both small and great)
- > For the destroying of the destroyers of the earth
Who are the destroyers of the earth?

Humans

Demons (see the answer provided in ch 12)

- 4) A great battle has been raging and the time has come for God to bring the battle to an end.

- The battle is described in ch 12ff
- What if the content of chs 12-14:13 is a description of Satan's war against the children of the women of ch 12; a description of the spiritual battle waged during the church age?

What if what we are seeing in these chapters are not linear additions, but layered replay of what we have already seen but from a different perspective?

- (2) Earth Applauds (Phenomenon)(Rev. 11:19)
- f. Three Signs of the New Kingdom (Rev. 12:1-17:18)
- (1) Questions:
- (a) What assumptions about the entire book of Revelation assist us in understanding this section?
- i) Either God is outlining the flow of human history in order to prepare some future generation of the church for the transitional end time events that are coming
 - ii) Or, God is encouraging the church to whom the letter is addressed to understand the role of their life experience in the ongoing mission of God to ultimately fill the earth with the knowledge of his glory by finally establishing His eternal, glorious kingdom in a new heaven and new earth.
 - iii) or both
 - iv) If it is both, then we have to assume there are occasions within the book where one or the other theme takes interpretive precedent, even though the other is not totally excluded in that occasion.
- (b) What are "signs"?
- i) Formal definition
 - a) A mark by which persons or things are distinguished and made known.
 - b) *semeion* as an event with special meaning was inevitably an unusual or even miraculous type of occurrence, and in a number of contexts *semeion* may be rendered as 'miracle.'
 - c) generally refers to an object or occurrence that makes a particular insight or perception

- possible.
- d) In Scripture used generally of an address to the senses to attest the existence of supersensible and therefore divine power.
 - 1) The Ten Plagues
 - 2) The Lord's Supper
 - ii) Simple renderings that point to complex realities
 - a) Consider a simple "STOP" sign
 - 1) What does a STOP sign represent?
 - Public safety advice
 - Legal command
 - Personal decision
 - Cultural knowledge (language)
 - b) Signs represent realities greater than their content
- (c) How might "signs" differ from visions within the context of Revelation?
- i) Visions are the larger events being shown specifically to John which he is reporting
 - ii) Signs apparently occur within visions as part of the vision
 - a) Function, then, to bring greater clarity or advance the theme of the vision
 - b) Signs would need to be understood and interpreted on two levels
 - 1) The actual content of the sign
 - 2) The actual context of the sign
 - c) Sign cannot be properly understood outside its context
- (d) What are the content and context for these three signs?
- i) The ascension of the King to the throne (The Lamb takes the scroll)
 - ii) The removal of final obstacles to the eternal kingdom
- (e) What initial assumptions might control the way these signs are interpreted?
- i) If the book (the visions) are being interpreted as chronological sequence then the question applies: when do these events happen in relation to creation history?
 - ii) If the book is being interpreted in terms of personal encouragement and edification of a persecuted, beleaguered church, and not as historical sequence, then the question applies: What question (reality) do these signs answer/represent?
- (f) What is the significance of the two types of signs in chapters 12-19?
- i) Signs are either heavenly, communicating spiritual truth in earthly terms
 - ii) Or they are satanic, communicating spiritual lies in heavenly terms

iii)

| Heavenly Signs | Beastly Signs |
|----------------|---------------|
| 12:1 | 13:13-14 |
| 12:3 | 16:14 |
| 15:1 | 19:20 |

- (2) Flow of Human History Summarized and Revealed through Heavenly Signs Revelation 12:1-17:18 (ESV)
- (a) The Sign of the Woman in Labor on the Verge of Delivery 12:1-2
- i) This sign summarizes God's intent to fulfill within history the prophecy of Genesis 3:15.
 - ii) This sign gives the context for all of post-fall human history
 - iii) God works continually to fully express His glory in creation by bringing forth the redemption He promised at the beginning of creation.
- (b) The Sign of the Dragon and His Lingering War Against Heaven and Earth 13:1-14:11
- i) This sign summarizes the course of human history from God's eternal perspective outside of time and history.
 - a) History flows in linear detail for those who experience time
 - b) God, aware and sovereign over details but working from outside of time within time, works in wisdom and power to accomplish His overarching, undergirding, all inclusive purpose: the full and eternal expression of His glory in all creation, spiritual and physical
 - ii) The enemy opposes God's work and that opposition has immediate, direct effect upon those in time
 - iii) God works with the details of time and opposition to accomplish His plan that cannot be thwarted and will not be abandoned
- (c) The Sign of the Seven Bowls of God's Consummate Wrath on the Kingdom and Citizens of This Sinful World 15:1-17:18
- i) This sign summarizes or points to the greater complexity of God's sovereignty and justice as well as His ability and success in using all the players in human history, spiritual and mortal, to accomplish His will while holding them responsible for their opposition to Him.
- (3) The First Sign: The Woman in the Pains of Childbirth (Rev. 12:1-2)
- (a) The Overall Plan of Human History (Rev. 12:1-2)
- i) A "great" sign
 - a) *semeion mega* - great, greatest, highest, loudest sign
 - b) Superlative adjective

- 1) Used 81 times in Revelation alone
 - 2) Often translated as “loud” (as in “loud voice”)
 - 3) Also translated as “great” in reference to size or volume
 - 4) Sometimes intended as superlative of relation: biggest, bestest, coolest, most awesome compare to others, of primary importance, worthy of special attention
- ii) The woman
- a) Appearance
 - 1) Clothed with the sun
 - 2) With the moon under her feet
 - 3) Crowned by 12 stars
 - b) Condition
 - 1) Pregnant
 - 2) Crying out in birth pains
 - 3) In agony of birth
 - c) Identity / Purpose
 - 1) Israel bringing forth the Messiah? Redemption
 - 2) The church bringing forth the Kingdom? Reconciliation
 - 3) God bringing forth His finalized mission? Restoration (the whole earth filled with the knowledge of His glory)
 - 4) All of the above
- (b) How do these verses help us understand the historical and current situation?
- i) Philosophical ponderings
 - a) God’s plan for creation includes the agony of physical process giving way to spiritual outcome
 - b) Pregnancy and delivery are images of promise, potential beyond pain
 - c) Birth speaks of continuity rather than end or finality
 - ii) Practical considerations
 - a) The experiences of the called and redeemed people of God in all ages conforms to the plan of God to finally fill the earth with the knowledge of His glory
 - b) Whether joy or sorrow in the moment, the moment fits this plan for the woman (promised) to bring forth the offspring that will end the reign of the dragon on earth!
- (4) The Second Sign: The Great Dragon (12:3-14:20)
- (a) The Reality of Opposition in Real Time to God’s Ultimate Plan
 - (b) Content of the sign
 - i) “Great” by comparison

- a) the sign is not called “great” but the dragon is called great
- b) This sign is a part of a larger picture, but is, in itself, significant
- c) Questions
 - 1) Can it be that we are to understand the dragon as an awesome opponent, but not as wondrous as the woman giving birth?
 - 2) Are we being shown a comparison between spiritual superlatives that illustrates what John poses in his first letter: “Greater is he that is in you than he that is in the world”?
- ii) Relation to the woman of the first sign
 - a) Appearance of the dragon
 - 1) Red
 - 2) Seven heads, ten horns
 - 3) Seven crowns
 - b) Power of the dragon:
 - 1) tail swept 1/3 of stars from heaven and cast them to earth
 - 2) “Stars” - metaphorical of angels
 - c) Purpose of the dragon
 - 1) Devour the woman’s offspring
 - 2) Destroy any hope
 - Of personal loss of realm/power
 - Of human redemption from bondage
 - d) Strategy and Outcome
 - 1) Dragon prepared
 - 2) Woman delivers
 - a male child
 - one who is to rule
 - > All the nations
 - > With a rod of iron
 - 3) Child caught up to God and to his throne (God’s or the child’s?)
 - How does any human get to God, let alone God’s throne?
 - Righteousness in faithfulness
 - Death/Resurrection
 - 4) Woman flees
 - To the wilderness
 - To a God-prepared place
 - Where she will be nourished

- For 1260 days

Times, Time, and Half a Time; Forty-two months, 1260 Days

1. Times, Time, and Half a Time:

Daniel 7:24-25 (ESV) ²⁴ As for the ten horns, out of this kingdom ten kings shall arise, and another shall arise after them; he shall be different from the former ones, and shall put down three kings. ²⁵ He shall speak words against the Most High, and shall wear out the saints of the Most High, and shall think to change the times and the law; and they shall be given into his hand for a time, times, and half a time.

Daniel 12:7 (ESV) ⁷ And I heard the man clothed in linen, who was above the waters of the stream; he raised his right hand and his left hand toward heaven and swore by him who lives forever that it would be for a time, times, and half a time, and that when the shattering of the power of the holy people comes to an end all these things would be finished.

Revelation 12:14 (ESV) ¹⁴ But the woman was given the two wings of the great eagle so that she might fly from the serpent into the wilderness, to the place where she is to be nourished for a time, and times, and half a time.

2. Forty-two months

Revelation 11:2 (ESV) ² but do not measure the court outside the temple; leave that out, for it is given over to the nations, and they will trample the holy city for forty-two months.

Revelation 13:5 (ESV) ⁵ And the beast was given a mouth uttering haughty and blasphemous words, and it was allowed to exercise authority for forty-two months.

3. 1260 Days

Revelation 11:3 (ESV) ³ And I will grant authority to my two witnesses, and they will prophesy for 1,260 days, clothed in sackcloth.”

Revelation 12:6 (ESV) ⁶ and the woman fled into the wilderness, where she has a place prepared by God, in which she is to be nourished for 1,260 days.

4. Questions

- a. Do these three descriptors refer to the same time period or to different periods within the course of human history?
- b. What is the nature of the events included in the time period referred to? Is there any overlap?
- c. Should these time references be understood as literal or symbolic?
- d. Are there periods of recorded history that match the time frame described both in duration and content? Yes.
- e. List?
- f. If yes, then what is the significance of those events in relation to the prophecies of Revelation?

- g. Propose an explanation for the time reference that considers the prophesied content of the time period, the message and purpose of Revelation, the existence of previous periods that match the criteria, and the current experience of the Church in the world.

- (c) Context of the second sign (Rev 12:8-14:20)
 - i) The Spiritual Context for the Current, Historical Situation (Rev. 12:8-17)
 - a) The broad explanation of human history from God's perspective irrespective of specific details.
 - 1) especially the history of God's people
 - 2) and then especially the trace of salvation history
 - b) Heavenly history: war in heaven
 - 1) Angels fought
 - 2) Dragon lost
 - c) Earth history: conflict on earth
 - 1) Dragon sought
 - 2) Dragon fought
 - ii) The Spiritual Nature of the Current, Historical Situation (Rev. 13:1-18)
 - a) The events of ch 13-14 parallel concurrently the events of chapter 12
 - 1) Answers the question: How does the dragon wage war against the offspring of the woman once he cannot defeat or destroy the woman or her son? What the dragon is described as doing in ch. 12 he actually carries out in ch 13 through his servants
 - 2) The beasts
 - reflect the same nature as the dragon, each representing political strategy and religious strategy to destroy the followers of the true King
 - came from the same source as the dragon suggesting they will have the same characteristics as the dragon
 - Source suggests they have authority in and over physical, NON-SPIRITUAL creation
 - Take note of Job 1:12; 2:6 - Satan, regardless of his power and authority, always has limits set by God
 - b) The first beast
 - 1) Rises from the sea - call for endurance (Rev. 13:1-10)
 - From the same source as the dragon
 - Suggest same character as dragon
 - Ancient Asia Minor

- > from sea = foreign, from land = native/local
- > In John's time, Rome was the foreign invader from the sea
- **Revelation 17:1 (ESV)** ¹ *Then one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls came and said to me, "Come, I will show you the judgment of the great prostitute who is seated on many waters,*
- **Revelation 17:15 (ESV)** ¹⁵ *And the angel said to me, "The waters that you saw, where the prostitute is seated, are peoples and multitudes and nations and languages.*
- "The beast may also be seen as having its earthly origin from the mass of unregenerate humanity."
- 2) Composite of beasts in Dan 7 (and of the dragon)
 - **Daniel 7:2-3 (ESV)** ² *Daniel declared, "I saw in my vision by night, and behold, the four winds of heaven were stirring up the great sea. ³ And four great beasts came up out of the sea, different from one another.*
 - **Daniel 7:7 (ESV)** ⁷ *After this I saw in the night visions, and behold, a fourth beast, terrifying and dreadful and exceedingly strong. It had great iron teeth; it devoured and broke in pieces and stamped what was left with its feet. It was different from all the beasts that were before it, and it had ten horns.*
 - **Daniel 7:20 (ESV)** ²⁰ *and about the ten horns that were on its head, and the other horn that came up and before which three of them fell, the horn that had eyes and a mouth that spoke great things, and that seemed greater than its companions.*
 - **Daniel 7:24 (ESV)** ²⁴ *As for the ten horns, out of this kingdom ten kings shall arise, and another shall arise after them; he shall be different from the former ones, and shall put down three kings.*
 - "Without exception the imagery of the sea monster is used throughout the O.T. to represent evil kingdom who persecute God's people.
 - "In the O.T. the sea beast represents not merely the oppressing nations but the system of spiritual evil standing behind the nations and manifesting itself in successive world empires."
 - The dragon in Revelation 12 was seen as the ultimate force behind the earthly kingdoms of the world. This beast is the dragon's minion.
- 3) Appearance
 - Ten horns and seven heads
 - > Indicative of the completeness of oppressive power and its worldwide

effect

- > Dragon has ultimate rule manifested through the beasts
- Ten crowns on its horns (cf. 5:6 the crowns on the head of the Lamb)
 - > Ten crowns confirm that the reference is to an earthly king or kings
 - > “Because of the figurative force of the numbers ‘seven’ and ‘ten’ the heads and horns are not to be identified only with a specific series of rulers of either the first century or later. (In 17:3-12 the heads are identified as “kings”)
 - > Crown also symbolizes the beast’s false claims to sovereign, universal authority in opposition to the true King.
- Blasphemous names on its heads
 - > Should be understood as false claims
 - > Should be understood as false identity (in opposition to Christ’s names)
 - > The epitome of blasphemy is to attribute deity to someone who is not God
- Looks like a leopard with bear feet and lion mouth
 - > Suggests the composite of Daniel’s vision
 - > This beast can be any or all of the others combined, or have feature of all, intensely manifested in one
 - > Suggests the extreme fierceness of the beast as well as the transtemporal nature of the “bestly” system
 - > “The dragon and the beast include world empires of the past and present and potentially of the future.
- “The description of the beast from the sea as like the dragon of 12:3 confirms that he has the same transhistorical nature as the dragon. Therefore, [the numbers] refer not only to the severity of the oppressive power and its worldwide effect but also to the complete cadre of antichristian power and the all-encompassing span of time during which these powers hold sway.” (P. 686)
- One head seems to have a mortal wound but its mortal wound was healed
 - > Word for wound is η πληγη (from which we get plague) and is everywhere else in Revelation used as a punishment inflicted by God.
 - > **Genesis 3:15 (ESV) ¹⁵ I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel.”**
 - > Appears to be a reference to the death and resurrection of Jesus on the cross, which we know is the defining point of all human history and the deciding point for the final resolution of all human and spiritual history.

> **Revelation 13:13 (ESV) . . . *make an image for the beast that was wounded by the sword and yet lived.***

> **Isaiah 27:1 (ESV) *In that day the LORD with His hard and great and strong sword will punish Leviathan the fleeing serpent, Leviathan the twisting serpent, and he will slay the dragon that is in the sea.***

> All suggests that the defeat pointed to here by the seemingly mortal wound is more likely the victory over the devil at the cross than some punishment of an evil historical figure (past or future).

> *“Therefore, whenever believers withstand persecution, deception, and compromise, the devil and his agents are seen as continuing to be defeated . . .” despite their continuing to act in the world against the people of God until the ordained end of all things.*

The wound “appeared” to be fatal and it was, but the devil’s continued activity through his agents makes it appear to John as though he has overcome the mortal blow death him at Christ’s death and resurrection.

Despite defeat, the devil and his forces continue to exist and continue to wage war against those who obey the commands of God and hold to the testimony of Jesus until the final judgment.

> Note the comparison between the beast and the Christ. Christ’s resurrection was real despite death. The devil’s death is real despite continuance.

> Much about this beast appears to be a parody of Christ’s life and victory

1. Both have swords
2. Both have followers who have their names written on their foreheads
3. Both have horns
4. Both are slain
5. Both rise to new life and are given new authority
6. Both have authority over ‘every tribe, tongue, people, and nation
7. Both receive universal worship

“The beast is set up as the supreme enemy of Christ and His people, falsely presenting himself to those who dwell upon the earth as Christ. The only figure that fits the description of the beast is the devil himself, as he repeatedly works through his chosen agents throughout history. Therefore, whenever any major opponent of God reaches his demise, it appears as if the beast has been defeated, yet he will rise again in some other form, until the end of history.

Such revivals make it appear as if Christ's defeat of the devil was not very decisive. But such revivals [of evil kingdoms/systems] are under the ultimate hand of God, who 'gives the authority.'"

"The significance of the parallels is that the chief opponent of Christ cannot be limited to one historical person or epoch. That is, just as Christ's rule spans the whole church age, so the evil activities of his ultimate counterpart, the devil and his servants, spans the same time." (Beale, p. 691)

- 4) Mission
 - Empowered, enthroned, and authorized by the dragon
 - > No authority other than what is given (cannot concoct or manufacture)
 - > No authority over the saints
 - Earth marvels at the seemingly recovered head
 - Leads people to worship the dragon
 - Utters blasphemies against God, His name, and His dwelling
 - Makes war on the saints
 - Authority over the people who dwell on the earth (unbelievers, non-elect)
- 5) Duration
 - Forty-two months
 - Is this an actual time reference or does it indicate a definite but not identified, limited range of time?
- 6) Explanation
 - A system that attracts the attention, awe, and worship of non-believers to that which opposes and seeks to replace God and violently opposes the church and the people of God.
 - Counterfeit of **Exodus 4**
 - > Satan's primary strategy is deception, in this case, deceiving the people who dwell upon the earth into believing that He is God and His system is the Kingdom
 - > Think of how many people were deceived into believing the POST-WAR United States was the Kingdom
- 7) Call for endurance and faith of the saints
 - The same call to attention in v. 9 as in letters in 2 & 3: If anyone has an ear, let him hear
 - > If anyone is disposed to faithfulness, let him pay attention
 - > If anyone is disposed by faith to obedience, let him act

- The saints will suffer under this system
 - > If anyone is to be taken captive: imprisoned
 - > If anyone is to be slain: capital punishment
 - > Not necessarily everyone, but some
- Saints must develop and maintain faith in the Victor despite the course of the battle.
 - > **Here is a call for the endurance and faith of the saints.**
 - > Instructions for endurance and faithfulness:
 - Get a vision of the resurrected Christ Ch. 1
 - Return to most significant love 2:1-7
 - Be faithful unto death. 2:8-11
 - Repent of unsound doctrine 2:12-17
 - Hold fast what you have until Jesus comes. 2:18-29
 - Wake up and strengthen what remains. 3:1-6
 - Hold fast to what you have so that no one may seize your crown. 3:7-13
 - Be zealous and repent. 3:14-21
 - Worship before the One who sits upon the throne 4:1-11
 - Sing a new song of worship to the worthy Lamb 5:1-14
 - Consider your life context as the victory of the Lamb 6:1-17
 - Rejoice in the seal of God and the eternal promise of God 7:1-17
 - Ponder with awe the justice of God upon the world 8:1-9:21
 - Proclaim with courage the message of God 10:1-11
 - Give glory to the God of heaven (regardless of circumstance) 11:1-19
 - Understand the course of history from God's perspective 12:1-13:18
 - > Know the Victor in relationship through the Spirit
 - > Know the Victor through personal experience of faithfulness (faith + obedience = faithfulness)
- c) The second beast rises from the land - call for wisdom (Rev. 13:11-18)
 - 1) The description of the beast (and implications) 13:11
 - A beast, not a man
 - > Interesting that many interpreters see these beasts as representative of a single human male rather than larger human systems.
 - > Their common assumption seems to be that the "beast" designation refers to their character (that of the dragon) rather than their person.
 - > That may be a function of symbolism. I think if we were to see primarily a

single man God might have revealed this character as a single man.

> We would have known better what to look for: a man with a beastly character.

> Because John sees a beast, I think the symbol is intended to portray something larger or different than a single man, while at the same time not ruling out seeing the character of the beast in a single historical character.

- Rises out of the earth

> The sea beast parodies Christ in relation to the Father (beast in relation to the dragon.

> Perhaps the earth beast is a parody of the Church in relation to Christ.

> It is meant to portray something intrinsically human (as man comes from the dust of the earth) but with a specific function to serve and draw worship to the sea beast, just as the Church is an intrinsically human institution with a specific function to serve and draw worship to Christ.

- Two horns, like a lamb

> Two horns likely represents authority, as the beast and dragon have, but severely limited to only the authority necessary to accomplish its deception: authority to look like something it is not.

> Like a lamb is certainly a disguise since it speaks with the voice of the dragon. Gentle, noble, loveable but deadly all the same. **Matthew 7:15 (ESV)**

¹⁵ ***“Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep’s clothing but inwardly are ravenous wolves.”***

- Spoke like a dragon

> Out of the heart the mouth speaks. This beast may look like a lamb on the outside but it has the heart of the dragon on the inside!

> having the appearance of godliness but not only lacking its power, having the power of the evil one

> Speaking will be a primary role of this beast. It is the one who communicates and whose seductive voice deceives on behalf of the first beast. The Church is specifically sent into the world by Jesus to “make disciples . . . baptizing them . . . and teaching them . . .” (Mat 28: 19-20) This beast is sent into the world by the dragon to make disciples by gaining commitments through instruction/command.

2) The function of the beast (and implications) 13:12

- Exercises all the authority of the first beast on its behalf

- > Authority over “every tribe and people and language and nation”
 - > Authority is global, exceeding sociological and geopolitical boundaries
 - > False religions can maintain cultural pretenses and still lead populations to worship a false state
- Makes earth inhabitants worship the first beast
 - > Actively causes the condition of worship to happen; this is not mere influence. This is the understood result of successful application of authority.
 - > Again, this does not require a “single” global religion but can be the final redirection of all religions to worshipping the beast who incarnates the dragon.
- 3) The methods of the beast (and implications) 13:13ff
 - It performs signs and wonders (including fire from heaven)
 - It deceives those who dwell on the earth into idolatry
 - > Specifically, into making an image of the beast
 - > But, couldn’t an image today be digital instead of sculptural, and philosophical or institutional instead of personal or individual?
 - Is allowed to give breath to the image of the beast
 - > Television?
 - > Computer broadcast (CGI)?
 - Causes opponents to be slain
 - Causes all to be marked
 - > Ultimate parody since all those who belong to Christ are sealed with His seal and that seal, according to Paul, is the Holy Spirit.
 - > So, God seals with the seal of God, the beast seals with the mark of a man
- 4) The number of the beast (and implications) 13:18
 - Applies a mark of the beast, as opposed to the seal of the Lamb (14:1)
 - > Mark regulates cultural participation
 - > Mark may denote the incompleteness of dragon’s efforts
 - 3 6s rather than one single number?
 - Sinful self-satisfaction **2 Timothy 3:1-5 (ESV)** ¹ *But understand this, that in the last days there will come times of difficulty.* ² *For people will be lovers of self, lovers of money, proud, arrogant, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy,* ³ *heartless, unappeasable, slanderous, without self-control, brutal, not loving good,* ⁴ *treacherous, reckless, swollen with conceit, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God,* ⁵ *having the appearance of godliness, but denying its power. Avoid such people.*

- Lawless self-justification **2 Peter 3:17 (ESV)** ¹⁷ *You therefore, beloved, knowing this beforehand, take care that you are not carried away with the error of lawless people and lose your own stability.*
 - Spiritual self-deception **Jude 1:8 (ESV)** ⁸ *Yet in like manner these people also, relying on their dreams, defile the flesh, reject authority, and blaspheme the glorious ones.*
 - Worldly self-exaltation **Jude 1:16-19 (ESV)** ¹⁶ *These are grumblers, malcontents, following their own sinful desires; they are loud-mouthed boasters, showing favoritism to gain advantage.* ¹⁷ *But you must remember, beloved, the predictions of the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ.* ¹⁸ *They said to you, "In the last time there will be scoffers, following their own ungodly passions."* ¹⁹ *It is these who cause divisions, worldly people, devoid of the Spirit.*
 - Moral self-determination **Isaiah 5:20 (ESV)** ²⁰ *Woe to those who call evil good and good evil, who put darkness for light and light for darkness, who put bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter!*
- d) The message of the two beasts:
- 1) the dragon is at work in the world and in the church
 - to deceive the world,
 - destroy the church,
 - defame the King,
 - and detour the kingdom.
 - 2) Summary
 - Ch. 13 answers the question: "How does the dragon wage war against the saints in the time between the resurrection and return of King Jesus?"
 - There are three aspects of the satanic strategy
 - > Works through socio-political and religious systems (sometimes led by particularly wicked individuals) that derive their authority from the dragon himself
 - > Attacks both from outside and within the church
 - > Acts with the aforementioned goals to deceive and destroy (never to accommodate, placate, or negotiate: any activity that looks like this is an act of deception with the goal of destruction).
 - 3) Expected Response
 - Calls for endurance and wisdom. This is the same formula as in the opening

letters of chs 2 & 3 (only reversed): endurance (obedience) + wisdom (faith) = faithfulness.

- Understand: A believer lives under two shadows
 - > The shadow of the cross of Jesus Christ which has eternal implications
 - > The shadow of the dragon which has primarily temporal implications
 - > Remember, therefore:

“Greater is He that is in you than He that is in the world.”

“... be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might. Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil.” (Eph. 6:10-11)

4) Don't

- Don't be deceived!
- Don't give in!
- Don't give up!

iii) The Conclusions of the Second Sign (Rev. 14:1-20)

a) The primary function of the second sign: comparison

1) Chapters 12-14 encompass one sign John sees in heaven

- Within the first sign, God reveals the nature of human history in relation to salvation and the church
- Within the second sign we get three lessons
 - > The dragon, Satan, opposes God even to opposing God's redemptive plan and redeemed people
 - > The dragon uses human social and religious institutions as the framework of his war against the saints; his principle weapon is deception
 - > The dragon's best efforts are incomplete and ultimately ineffective compared to the will and plan of God in Jesus Christ

2) These chapters set up an essential comparison between the ineffective (though deadly) strategies of the dragon and the effective fulfilment of the promises and power of God in and through Jesus Christ to those who remain faithful to Him

3) The key to understanding the second sign, for me, was the comparison between the two distinct numbers used in the chapters: 666 and 144000

- Why use such unique, definable, concrete numbers, especially if the 144000 do represent the totality of the redeemed and faithful people of God who are earlier described as “a great multitude that no one could number”?
- If 666 is a sequence of 6's that represents the inefficiency and incompleteness of

the dragon's war strategy, and the sequence itself represents the magnitude of the failure of repeated efforts to attain the perfect 7, then it could be understood to be a kind of multiplication formula: no matter how often, how much, or how intensely the dragon's war rages, it cannot measure up; it will fail.

- Then, the 144000 represent not so much a specific numbered group as a result of God's effective strategy in the world.
 - > Think of Jesus's response to the question, "How often should I forgive my brother?" (**Matthew 18:21**) Jesus responded with a multiplication formula to represent not a specific number of times to forgive but the magnitude of a gracious forgiving attitude: multiplied grace!
 - > So, if 12 is the number of completeness (12 months in a year, 12 tribes in a nation, 12 apostles, etc), then $12 \times 12 =$ the multiplied effectiveness of God's redemption, and $12 \times 12 \times 1000 =$ infinite demonstration of saving grace and becomes a mathematical formulation of the same description of the redeemed in chapter 7: "a great multitude that no one could number."
- The numbers themselves are simply forms that express a larger principle (thus they are symbols) related to the comparable effect of each side's success (or lack thereof.)

b) The King and courtiers stand on Zion - [call for awe!] (Rev. 14:1-5)

1) Questions

- Is this description intended to be understood as literal or figurative?
- If this is figurative/symbolic language, what does the figure denote?

2) Potential Answers

- Like much of the language in this book, this is figurative language:
 - > concrete images meant to point to abstract realities
 - > The 144,000 represent the redeemed (see above)
- God in Christ wins!
 - > The redeemed do not disappear but appear in heaven in company with the King
 - > The redeemed have been sealed by God and identify with him
 - > The redeemed are from among the vast sea of humanity
 - > The redeemed sing a heavenly song of praise unique to them
 - > The redeemed focus even the most driving forces of their nature on serving Christ
 - > The redeemed serve Christ in all aspects of their lives

- > The redeemed are the beginning of the renewed creation
 - > The redeemed enjoy sanctified, holy natures that issues in holy conduct.
- c) Four Heavenly Messages - call for endurance (Rev. 14:6-13)
 - 1) The comparison between ch 13 and ch 14
 - The strategy of the beasts and the dragon is deception
 - The strategy of God is open revelation and proclamation of the truth
 - 2) This section may also serve as a preparatory overview of what will be described more completely in the next few chapters, especially as they refer to the disposition of Babylon
 - 3) Four Messengers, Four Messages, One Result
 - The Gospel angel - "Fear God" (Rev. 14:6-7)
 - > Angel: the messengers of God
 - > Flying directly overhead: clearly visible to the greatest number of people
 - > Proclaiming an eternal gospel - the mind and heart of God revealed
 - > To those who dwell on earth: global, personal message
 - > Fear God and worship him:
 - * the message of divine creation intent
 - * Call to return to God's purpose for all humans
 - * Answers the question: what does God want from me
 - The GREAT NEWS angel - "Fallen is Babylon" (Rev. 14:8)
 - > Babylon is the symbolized name given to the ungodly power that reigns in the last time
 - > Babylon first appears in Revelation in 14:8 but is seen as the central image in chs. 16, 17, 18, 19 (where, in 17:1-19:10 the fall of Babylon is described in a series of 7 visions [indicating, perhaps, the utter and complete destruction of this world system, so that there is no remnant left to infect the kingdom that is coming.])
 - > Throughout OT history, Babylon (the historic city and the empire) was always depicted by the prophets as the ungodly power *par excellence*.
 - > Babylon is often referred, by implications, as a context of transactions, business, economics, money (thus the mark of the beast influences the ability to buy and sell, to participate in the marketplace). True community does not treat others as merely the objects of social transactions, thus the true and coming Kingdom is inherently and intrinsically different than the kingdom (the social structure and system) of this world.

- The Glory to God angel - There is justice (Rev. 14:9-12)
 - > Warning of justice
 - If anyone worships the beast and its image
 - If anyone receives a mark on his forehead or on his hand
 - If = should anyone reject God's gospel call to their creation purpose
 - If = should anyone actively accept deceit of the dragon over God's truth
 - Then
 - He will also drink the wine of God's wrath
 - He will be tormented with fire and sulfur
 - In the presence of the holy angels
 - In the presence of the Lamb
 - The smoke of their torment goes up forever
 - They have no rest
 - > There are no gray areas. This is a black and white issue. One suffers the future of one's master!
 - > An invitation/call to enduring faithfulness of the saints
 - Faith "in Jesus" vs faith "of Jesus"
 - The saints at any time and in all times must recognize the ongoing destructive strategies of the dragon and remain steadfast and faithful regardless of what he does in their cultural context
- The voice of the Spirit - "Blessings" (Rev. 14:13)
 - > Voice from heaven = God's voice
 - The voice once tells John NOT to write but also instructs John WHAT to write (10:4, 8; 14:13)
 - > Content: "Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on."
 - QUESTION: What is the time reference? When does "now" start? (Beale)
 - 1) "Could imply a certain group of suffering believers (martyrs under the "Great Tribulation" [Rev 6:10]) who will begin receiving the blessing in distinction from other saints who have died previously but will not be so blessed."
 - 2) "Could merely express that it is at the moment of death when blessed rest begins for the believer."
 - 3) "Could include reference to the 'now' of Christ's redemptive work (see Heb. 11), which is the basis for all Christians' rest.
 - 4) "Could refer prophetically to the consummation, when all saints

begin to experience complete rest because of their perseverance, in contrast to the final judgment of unbelievers, who enter into restlessness.

QUESTION: What makes death blessed now and not before?

Depends on answers to first question

But, it seems to me, the demarcation point is the resurrection of Jesus Christ and his ascension to throne, for which all previous saints waited and longed, but all subsequent saints, anticipated.

> Voice of the Spirit

Affirms the first voice

Answers the second question

That they may rest from their labors (What labors)

Faithfulness to the life and teachings of Jesus even when living under oppression and persecution

Lifetime participation in living faith (faith w/o works is dead)

For their deeds follow them (What deeds? Follows where? So what?)

4) This passage may function as a broad summary of the intent of chs 12-13

- How does the church, besides being the target of the dragon's wrath, fit into the larger historical plan of God?

> They proclaim the gospel and call fellow humans, by word and by life, back to God's creative intent for all human beings.

> They demonstrate, through faith in Christ and faithfulness to Christ, the fall of Babylon, the inability of the world system to permanently displace the kingdom of God in the mind, hearts, and experience of creation

> They serve, in their ultimate salvation, as the foil to the outcome unbelievers can expect of their rejection of grace and enslavement to the dragon.

- Ultimately, even death serves the church as the occasion to rest from the labors of the battlefield.

d) The End of the Current Situation (Rev. 14:14-20)

1) The prevailing question in this vision is: Are these two descriptions of the same event (the final judgment of the world), or two descriptions of two different events (the gathering of the saints to the King and the harvest of the people of the earth to wrath)?

2) The two parts of the vision show striking similarities and equally striking differences.

> Similarities

- Both involve a sickle harvest
- Both involve a harvester and an instructor
- Both involve angels that come from the temple
- Both involve angels that declare instruction with a loud voice
- Both involve swinging the sickle across the whole earth so that the whole earth is harvested

> Differences

- The outcome for the first harvest is unknown. The outcome of the second harvest is judgment under wrath
- The type of harvest in the first is unknown. The second is identified as “grapes.”
- The first harvester is “one like a son of man” seated on a cloud. The second is an angel come out of the temple in heaven
- The first instructing angel comes out of the temple. The second comes from the altar.
- The second component mentions the city, and the volume of blood that flows from the winepress.

3) Potential Conclusions

- > This vision provides the beginning of the logical response to the messages of the three angels just before, and in fact, to everything since the beginning of ch. 12 (at least.)
 - The war with the dragon will NOT drag on forever.
 - Just as in the fullness of time God sent forth His Son (Gal 4:4), so in the fullness of time God will judge the world that rejects His Son and the gospel of His Son.
 - The consequences of the dragon’s war against the saints are realized in this vision
- > It seems likely that there are two harvests
 - The first harvest is the one Jesus mentions when he instructs His disciples to pray that the Father will send forth laborers into the fields that are “ripe unto harvest.” So the first harvest is the gospel age harvest that draws people into faith and into the kingdom for out of the world.
 - Or, the first harvest is the return of Christ and the rapture of the church (which I believe happen concurrently.)
 - The second harvest is the final gathering of all the people of the earth who

do not respond with faith to the gospel. These are those identified by the third angel as those who suffer the fate of the one they worship. This will be later described as the “Great White Throne Judgment.”

- 4) This vision, coming before the final heavenly sign, may not only fulfill the function of drawing the other sign visions to a close, but of foreshadowing events that will be more fully described later.
- (5) The Third Sign: Seven Angels with Seven Last Plagues (Rev. 15:1-17:18)
 - (a) The consummation of God’s plan for redemption, reconciliation, and ultimate restoration of His kingdom encompassing all of creation
 - (b) The symbol of the sign itself: ultimate expression of divine sovereignty (Rev. 15:1-4)
 - i) Three signs in heaven (Chs. 12-16)
 - a) God’s salvation plan revealed in historical symbol - Two signs (chs 12 - 14)
 - 1) Pregnant woman clothed with the cosmos - the salvation plan of God
 - 2) Dragon’s effort to thwart God’s salvation plan - the enemy’s war against God’s plan
 - b) Third sign - God has the last word in salvation history (ch. 15)
 - c) With these three signs we see the spiritual reality behind the entire course of salvation history as it enfolds in human history: Sovereign God acts in all events to accomplish His will
 - ii) The entire history of creation points to the sovereignty and glory of God who sits on the throne and rules over all! (15:2-4)
 - a) v. 3b God’s deeds, including creation, salvation, the church, grace, everything are great and amazing works from the hand of the Lord God the Almighty
 - b) v. 3c His ways, moving the socio-political course of human history to accomplish His will, are just and true.
 - c) v. 4a The required result in human lives in relation to the work of God in creation is fear (reverence, submission, love) and glory to His name
 - 1) **Habakkuk 2:14 (ESV) ¹⁴ For the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the LORD as the waters cover the sea.**
 - 2) This is God’s working strategy for human history and the mission of the church in the world
 - d) v. 4b God’s character is revealed in His work: God is holy!
 - e) v. 4c God’s expectation is revealed: all nations will come and worship you.
 - 1) These signs set the context and outcome of His divine work
 - 2) Worship and glory to God are the expectation of every act of revelation God makes
 - iii) **The Question for Them:** How does this view of the sovereignty of God over all creation and all history, and His ultimate triumph over all His enemies, fuel faithfulness among the persecuted?

- iv) **The Question for Us:** If we see in these signs the plan and heart and will and power of God to reveal and fill the earth with the experiential knowledge of His glory, do we seek that glory, love that glory, exalt that glory, live that glory, so that God's glory is revealed in and through us so that even our personal situations and experiences serve the mission to fill the earth with the knowledge of His glory?

a) **James 1:22 (ESV) ²² *But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves.***

- 1) First, we must be true *hearer* of the word.
- 2) Second, we must be faithful *doers* of the word
- 3) Both of which require that we be filled with the Spirit of God and fully surrendered to the work of the Spirit in and through us.

b) **James 1:27 (ESV) ²⁷ *Religion that is pure and undefiled before God, the Father, is this: to visit orphans and widows in their affliction, and to keep oneself unstained from the world.***

- 1) Luther's Prayer that the Redeemed Please God

Lord, we have prayed for your work. For we have not part in it. Work so we may receive your grace and blessing. For only through your work do you reveal yourself and make us blessed. It is accomplished in your redemption from the misery of sin and eternal death, which Satan has brought to all of us through Adam. We who are justified do follow this work of yours with our work of holiness and obedience in your word. This is acceptable and pleasing to you, though it comes from your grace and proceeds from your work. Our Lord and God, be gracious to us so that we who are reconciled to you through the death of your Son may please you. Amen.

- 2) God is most glorified in us in the world (thereby advancing His mission in us to fill the earth with the knowledge of His glory) when His Spirit enacts His will in and through us, conforming us to His likeness and working through us the "greater works than these" which Jesus Himself foretold.

- ***Visit the widows and orphans in their afflictions*** engages us in compassion and self-sacrificial love that are intrinsically characteristic of God as expressed fully in Jesus Christ
- ***Keep oneself unstained from the world*** engages us in the intentional pursuit of personal holiness which is the inner working of the Holy Spirit in every believer and cannot be accomplished by any but Him.

(c) The sign introduced (15:1-4)

i) v. 1 The angels

a) Seven angels with seven plagues

- 1) Great and amazing sign. Why?

- Exact phrase occurs only here in the ESV

- The use of the phrase is similar to the word usage in the Psalms an effort to adequately express the character and quality of what is being revealed about God
 - The Grk word translated here as “amazing” in the ESV occurs 4 other times in Revelation as the response of the people who dwell upon the earth to the beast
- The word is used twice in chapter 17 (6, 7) once by John and once by an angel who tells him not to be amazed (“to marvel”) precisely because the object of such amazement does not deserve it!

2) Reasons

- Angels
 - > **Hebrews 1:7 (ESV)** ⁷ *Of the angels he says, “He makes his angels winds, and his ministers a flame of fire.”*
 - > **Hebrews 1:14 (ESV)** ¹⁴ *Are they not all ministering spirits sent out to serve for the sake of those who are to inherit salvation?*
 - > **Hebrews 2:2 (ESV)** ² *For since the message declared by angels proved to be reliable, and every transgression or disobedience received a just retribution,*
 - > These seven angels are not seven independent contractors. They are the will and work of God manifesting His just and righteous wrath on corrupt creation
- Since “great and amazing” describe the sign in v. 1 and the works/deeds of God in v. 3 should they not be understood as of the same source and of the same character expressing the same will for the same reasons?

3) **QUESTION:**

- How might this vision of seven angels mold the way you think about and pray for lost people?
- How might this vision of angels mold the way you think about and repent of sin?

b) “Last” plagues - the wrath of God is “finished.”

1) Jesus announced the “finish” of His earthly life and ministry

- Jesus’s cry marks the end of his effort and the completion of his mission but not the end of the ministry or ramifications of God’s purpose in Him in the world.
- **Colossians 1:24** *Now I rejoice in my sufferings for your sake, and in my flesh I am filling up what is lacking in Christ’s afflictions for the sake of His body, that is, the church . . .*

- 2) God announces the “finish” of His mission to finally fill the earth with the knowledge of His glory
 - 3) **Revelation 16:17 (ESV)** ¹⁷ *The seventh angel poured out his bowl into the air, and a loud voice came out of the temple, from the throne, saying, “It is done!”*
 - The process of redemption is ended in time
 - The causes/goals of redemption have been satisfactorily achieved
 - The numbers of the redeemed have been reached (cf. 6:11)
- ii) vv. 2-3 The audience
- a) The audience
 - 1) The sea - glass mingled with fire
 - “In Revelation, fire and sea are always images respectively of judgment and evil and never connote the saint’s trials or baptism.” Beale, pg. 789
 - “John now sees the chaotic powers of the sea as calmed by the divine sovereignty.” Beale, 789
 - “The sea has become the place where the Lamb has judged the beast.”
 - 2) The victorious
 - overcame the beast
 - stood beside the sea
 - harps of God in hand
 - songs of Moses and the Lamb on their lips
 - b) The song
 - 1) “Just as Israel praised God by the sea after her delivered them from Pharaoh, so the church praises God for defeating the beast on their behalf.” Beale, 792
 - 2) The actual contents of the song itself come not from Exodus 15 (where the song of Moses is recorded) but from passages throughout the OT extolling God’s character
 - 3) “The wording here suggests that the singing saints know that true worship is due only to the Lamb and God in contrast to the “beast” and “his image,” which is why God and the Lamb defeated the beast.” Beale, 796
 - 4) “The main point of vv 2-4 is the adoration of God and the Lamb’s incomparable act of redemption and judgment.” Beale, 799
- (d) The Sign Expanded (15:5-8)
- i) The sanctuary of the tabernacle of witness in heaven
 - ii) Out of the sanctuary came the seven angels
 - a) with the seven plagues
 - b) Dressed in pure, bright linen

- c) With golden sashes about their chests
 - iii) One of the four living creatures gave the seven angels seven bowls full of the wrath of God
 - a) Angels have the plagues
 - b) Now they have the means of effecting them
 - iv) God lives forever and ever (this is not merely praise; it is an important statement of reality)
 - v) The sanctuary is filled with smoke
 - a) From the glory of God (see Isaiah 6) and from His power
 - b) And no one could enter the sanctuary until the seven plagues of the seven angels was finished
 - 1) Once the final outpouring of divine justice begins,
 - 2) there will be no opportunity to seek mercy
- (e) The Sign Realized - Seven Bowls of God's Wrath (Rev. 16:1-21)
 - i) The Loud Voice
 - a) Phrase is used 20 times in Revelation
 - 1) Seems to signify authority
 - 2) Seems to signify clarity
 - 3) Seems to signify extent (of reach of voice speaking)
 - b) Users
 - 1) Jesus 1:10
 - 2) Angels 5:2,12; 7:2; 10:3; 14:7, 9, 15, 18; 19:17
 - 3) Eagle/messenger 8:13
 - 4) Martyrs 6:10
 - 5) Heavenly multitude 7:10; 19:1
 - 6) Unidentified
 - Heavenly voice 11:12; 12:10; 14:2
 - Temple voice 16:1, 17
 - Throne voice 21:3
 - c) Temple voice in 16:1
 - 1) commands angels to administer the wrath of God
 - 2) Who but God Himself can command angels to administer His wrath?
 - Who but God sits enthroned in the heavenly temple?
 - Who but God knows the time and season for His will?
 - Who but God commands the hosts of heaven?
 - Who but God knows the integrity and extent of His wrath?
 - ii) The Bowls of Wrath
 - a) (The word is really "cup" and aligns with the OT figure of the "cup of God's wrath")

b) The Wrath of God

1) In the Old Testament

- **Exodus 32:8–10** They have turned aside quickly out of the way that I commanded them. They have made for themselves a golden calf and have worshiped it and sacrificed to it and said, ‘These are your gods, O Israel, who brought you up out of the land of Egypt!’ ” [9](#) And the LORD said to Moses, “I have seen this people, and behold, it is a stiff-necked people. [10](#) Now therefore let me alone, that my wrath may burn hot against them and I may consume them, in order that I may make a great nation of you.”
- **Exodus 34:6** The LORD passed before him and proclaimed, “The LORD, the LORD, a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness,
- **Psalms 89:46** How long, O LORD? Will you hide yourself forever? How long will your wrath burn like fire?

2) In the gospels

- **John 3:36** Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life; whoever does not obey the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God remains on him.

3) In Paul

- **Romans 1:18–23** For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth. [19](#) For what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them. [20](#) For his invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made. So they are without excuse. [21](#) For although they knew God, they did not honor him as God or give thanks to him, but they became futile in their thinking, and their foolish hearts were darkened. [22](#) Claiming to be wise, they became fools, [23](#) and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images resembling mortal man and birds and animals and creeping things.
- **Romans 2:5–8** But because of your hard and impenitent heart you are storing up wrath for yourself on the day of wrath when God’s righteous judgment will be revealed. [6](#) He will render to each one according to his works: [7](#) to those who by patience in well-doing seek for glory and honor and immortality, he will give eternal life; [8](#) but for those who are self-seeking and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, there will be wrath and fury.

- **Romans 5:8–10** but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. [9](#) Since, therefore, we have now been justified by his blood, much more shall we be saved by him from the wrath of God. [10](#) For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, now that we are reconciled, shall we be saved by his life.
 - Romans 9:22–23 What if God, desiring to show his wrath and to make known his power, has endured with much patience vessels of wrath prepared for destruction, [23](#) in order to make known the riches of his glory for vessels of mercy, which he has prepared beforehand for glory—
 - **Ephesians 2:2–3** in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience— [3](#) among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind.
 - **Ephesians 5:5–6** For you may be sure of this, that everyone who is sexually immoral or impure, or who is covetous (that is, an idolater), has no inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God. [6](#) Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of these things the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience.
 - **1 Thessalonians 1:10** and to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, Jesus who delivers us from the wrath to come.
 - **1 Thessalonians 5:9** For God has not destined us for wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ,
- 4) In Revelation
- **Revelation 6:16–17** calling to the mountains and rocks, “Fall on us and hide us from the face of him who is seated on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb, [17](#) for the great day of their wrath has come, and who can stand?”
 - Revelation 14:10 he also will drink the wine of God’s wrath, poured full strength into the cup of his anger, and he will be tormented with fire and sulfur in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb.
 - **Revelation 16:19** The great city was split into three parts, and the cities of the nations fell, and God remembered Babylon the great, to make her drain the cup of the wine of the fury of his wrath.
 - **Revelation 19:15** From his mouth comes a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations, and he will rule them with a rod of iron. He will tread the

winepress of the fury of the wrath of God the Almighty.

- Exported from [Logos Bible Software](#), 11:38 AM November 29, 2017.

5) Observations about the wrath of God in the above verses

- This is not all the Bible reveals about God's wrath
- God's wrath always burns against sin.
- God's wrath is directed toward sin among angels, the world, individuals, and even among His own people, the people of His choosing.
- God's wrath is not tempered by patience (as though, if he waits long enough his wrath will disappear), but the outpouring of his wrath is reserved by his patience until the full measure of sin is complete.
- God's wrath is not merely theoretical; it is experiential
- The wrath of God and eternal life are intentionally antithetical. You cannot continue under the former and receive the latter. Faith in Christ is the deciding factor, and the entire NT revelation of sanctification subsequent to conversion demands increasing personal and practical resistance to the personal and practiced sin that deserves wrath.
- God's wrath relates to human unrighteousness
- Christ death on the cross satisfies the wrath of God on behalf of the elect, but not on behalf of those who retain their sin and guilt through unbelief and unrighteousness. (Thus the doctrine of limited atonement.)
- God's wrath, as a matter of destiny, is not destined for true believers.

6) "Five Truths About the Wrath of God" Joseph Scheumann (desiringgod.com)

The doctrine of the wrath of God has fallen on hard times. In today's world, any concept of God's wrath upsets our modern sentiments. It's too disconcerting, too intolerant.

We live in a day where we have set ourselves as the judge and God's character is on trial. "How can hell be just?" "Why would God command the Israelites to destroy the Canaanites?" "Why does God always seem so angry?"

The fact that so many people struggle with these questions, and many more like them, means that more than ever right thinking is needed about the doctrine of God's wrath. It is needed for motivation for Christian living, fuel for proper worship, and as a toolbox to confront objections to Christianity.

Here are five biblical truths about the wrath of God:

1. God's wrath is just.

It has become common for many to argue that the God of the Old Testament is a moral monster that is by no means worthy of worship. However, biblical authors have no such problem. In fact, God's wrath is said to be in perfect accord with God's justice. Paul writes, "But because of your hard and impenitent heart you are storing up wrath for yourself on the day of wrath when God's righteous judgment will be revealed" (Romans 2:5). God's wrath, then, is in proportion to human sinfulness.

Similarly, Proverbs 24:12 says, "If you say, 'Behold, we did not know this,' does not he who weighs the heart perceive it? Does not he who keeps watch over your soul know it, and will he not repay man according to his work?"

J.I. Packer summarizes: "God's wrath in the Bible is never the capricious, self-indulgent, irritable, morally ignoble thing that human anger so often is. It is, instead, a right and necessary reaction to objective moral evil" (*Knowing God*, 151).

2. God's wrath is to be feared.

God's wrath is to be feared because all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God (Romans 3:23).

God's wrath is to be feared because we are justly condemned sinners apart from Christ (Romans 5:1).

God's wrath is to be feared because he is powerful enough to do what he promises (Jeremiah 32:17).

God's wrath is to be feared because God promises eternal punishment apart from Christ (Matthew 25:46).

3. God's wrath is consistent in the Old and New Testaments.

It is common to think of the Old Testament God as mean, harsh, and wrath-filled, and the God of the New Testament as kind, patient, and loving. Neither of these portraits are representative of Scripture's teaching on the wrath of God.

We find immensely fearful descriptions of the wrath of God in both the Old and the New Testament. Here are just a few examples:

Behold the storm of the Lord! Wrath has gone forth, a whirling tempest; it will burst upon the head of the wicked. ([Jeremiah 30:23](#))

The Lord is a jealous and avenging God; the Lord is avenging and wrathful; the Lord takes vengeance on his adversaries and keeps wrath for his enemies. ([Nahum 1:2](#))

For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth. ([Romans 1:18](#))

From his mouth comes a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations, and he will rule them with a rod of iron. He will tread the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God the Almighty. ([Revelation 19:15](#))

4. God's wrath is his love in action against sin.

This is counter-intuitive, but hear me out.

God is love, and God does all things for his glory (1 John 4:8; Romans 11:36). He loves his glory above all (and that is a good thing!). Therefore, God rules the world in such a way that brings himself maximum glory. This means that God must act justly and judge sin (i.e. respond with wrath), otherwise God would not be God. God's love for his glory motivates his wrath against sin.

Admittedly, God's love for his own glory is a most sobering reality for many and not good news for sinners. It is after all, "a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God" (Hebrews 10:31).

5. God's wrath is satisfied in Christ.

Here we have the ultimate good news: "Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners" (1 Timothy 1:15). Because of Christ, God can rightly call sinners justified (Romans 3:26). God has done what we could not do, and he has done what we didn't deserve. Charles Wesley rightly exulted in this good news:

And can it be that I should gain
An interest in the Saviour's blood?
Died he for me, who caused his pain!
For me, who him to death pursued?
Amazing love! How can it be
That thou, my God, shouldst die for me?

- c) Some general observations about the "bowls of God's wrath" and chapter 16
 - 1) It is important to recognize the "2nd Exodus" theme that permeates this section of the book
 - God's deliverance of Israel from slavery in Egypt was a step toward gathering a people to Himself who would be His beloved subjects and He their beloved King
 - Revelation is to the Church what the Exodus story is/was to Israel: the story of God's work to rescue a people, His people, from enslavement in the world and establish them as a kingdom under His own loving sovereignty for His glory and their joy.
 - It should not surprise us, then to see in the judgments upon the kingdom of the beast and the dragon, similarities to the judgment on Pharaoh and the dragon as outlined in Exodus but extended to global proportions.
 - What God accomplished in delivering Israel from Egypt foreshadows what

He will accomplish in delivering the Church and the physical world from the kingdom of the beast.

- 2) It is helpful to recognize that the seven trumpet judgments and the seven bowl judgments (please remember how we are defining the word “judgment” and realize I am using it in BOTH meanings here) have such significant similarities that they should probably be understood as representing the same judgment event rather than a separate sequence of events. (This is an interpretive choice that not all commentators follow but does account for the similarities better than suggesting God judges a third of the world then comes back later and finishes the job.)
- 3) It is significant to recognize that in each of these seven acts of judgments God follows His own principle of judicial equity.
 - **Leviticus 24:17-22 (ESV)** *“Whoever takes a human life shall surely be put to death. Whoever takes an animal’s life shall make it good, life for life. If anyone injures his neighbor, as he has done it shall be done to him, fracture for fracture, eye for eye, tooth for tooth; whatever injury he has given a person shall be given to him. Whoever kills an animal shall make it good, and whoever kills a person shall be put to death. You shall have the same rule for the sojourner and for the native, for I am the LORD your God.”*
 - v. 2 Upon those who take the mark of the beast in their bodies, evil sores will inflict their bodies
 - v. 3-4 Human bloodshed and the economic exploitation of physical resources are answered by water turned to blood
 - > (of which the Nile turned to blood at the Exodus was just punishment for the murder of Hebrew baby boys thrown into the Nile by Pharaoh)
 - > and seas/rivers without life (without the ability to sustain exploitation any longer.)
 - > The rivers and seas are the waters of life to those who dwell on the earth. Those waters become the waters of death for those who refuse the true Water of Life, who is Jesus the Christ, Jesus the King!
 - v. 8 Unrelenting sin is met with unrelenting heat (perhaps a foreshadowing of hell?), which the righteous and just do not experience (see 7:16ff)
 - v. 10 Those reject the True Light that came into the world (John 1:9), those who love darkness rather than light (John 3:19), get what they desire most: darkness. And with it, anguish. What could have been an anguish of soul at

the darkness within and led to repentance becomes an anguish of body at the darkness without and leads to blasphemy!

- v. 12-16 This wicked generation demands a sign (Mt 12:39, Mt 16:4, Mk 8:12, Lk 11:29-30) but, since they rejected the sign of Jonah (Christ's resurrection from the tomb and death) that would have led them to faith in the Prince of Peace, demonic signs from the mouths of evil will lead them to war and death.
- v. 17 Those who stoned the prophets in false judgment are stoned by the true Judge who sent the prophets (both OT and NT prophets).
 - > This is the divine vengeance granted in justice to the martyrs under the altar of 6:9-11.
 - > God who once spoke to sinners in mercy through His Son now speaks, in justice and righteousness through acts of judgment and holy wrath on behalf of His departed Son and those killed on account of faith in Him,

4) It is essential to recognize that God's just and righteous wrath, rather than producing repentance in obdurate sinners, finds vindication in the blasphemous responses of the "sons of disobedience" destined for wrath.

- We need to see God's sovereign mercy toward the elect in announcing these things in advance both for their obedience and their encouragement
- We also need to see the mercy of God toward all men in providing an equal announcement of gospel so that those who will believe do believe
- We also need to appreciate God's sovereign expression of the depth of His glory by acting in full accordance with His being in both love and justice and according to the revelation He gives.
- It is sad that there are those who will suffer judgment, but our sadness at the result of their sin should not lessen our humble appreciation for grace or dampen our resolve to reach all we can with the gospel knowing that though some will perish, not all will perish. Some will believe if we give to them the revelation that God has given Jesus to give to His servants to give to the world.

Before we go further in our study, this might be a good time to ask ourselves some important questions:

1. What have we discovered about God and about Christ in this book that has impacted or influenced our overall understanding of God and His plan for the world, for the church, and for each of us?

- There is only one God and He does not give His glory to another.
 - There is only one choice mankind must make that will direct their eternal future.
 - There is only one King and one kingdom that will outlast this world and all others are counterfeit.
2. How has the Revelation changed your perception of your role in faith and in the world?
- How has the Revelation changed your perception of your role in faith?
 - How has the Revelation changed your perception of your role in the world?
3. What message would you consider essential to the non-believing world in light of the Revelation?
- Repent, for the kingdom of God is at hand, and the only key to the kingdom available to you is repentance and faith in Jesus Christ.
- *****
- iii) Pour out on the earth the seven vials of the wrath of God
 - a) Pouring out
 - 1) “Just as the pouring out of the sacrificial blood represented the cleansing of the tabernacle from defilement of sin, so the pouring out of the bowls cleanses the earth from the defilement of sin though judgment.”
 - 2) “The same heavenly altar which would have kindled the sweet incense of prayer bringing down blessing upon earth, by man’s sin kindles the fiery descending curse.” –Jamieson, R., Fausset, A. R., & Brown, D. (1997). Commentary Critical and Explanatory on the Whole Bible (Vol. 2, p. 588). Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc.
 - 3) Judgment
 - The earth itself is not being judged; it is being cleansed
 - > The earth is the Lord’s and the fullness thereof
 - > The earth has not disobeyed and failed God; only humans have done that.
 - > The earth does not deserve judgment but it requires cleansing!
 - The people who dwell upon the earth are being judged; they are not being cleansed (see vv. 9, 11, 21)
 - > The earth is th Lord’s . . . the world and all them that dwell therein
 - > It is the dwellers who are subject to judgment for they have intentionally, willfully rejected God and corrupted the earth, bringing judgment upon themselves and the need for cleansing upon the earth.
 - b) The seven bowls
 - 1) The first bowl of God’s wrath -

- unbearable sores (Rev. 16:2)
 - corrupt spirit expressing in corrupt skin
 - > they bore the mark of the beast in their skin
 - > now they bear the mark of God's judgment in their skin
 - Opposite of Jesus (the perfect human)
 - > He came full of grace and truth and was wounded and disfigured by them
 - > They come full of harm and pain and he wounds and disfigures them
 - The inside becomes visible on the outside
 - > **What would your body look like if the outside began to look like the inside?**
- 2) The second bowl of God's wrath-
- like the blood of a corpse - mankind is dead in their trespasses and sins, the world in which they live is like a tomb, therefore, their world now reflects their existence, a realm of the dead
 - death of the sea (Rev. 16:3)
 - death of all algae affects O2 production, CO2 waste recycle, and air quality
- 3) The third bowl of God's wrath -
- What they have spilled they must now drink; what they have done they must now pay for" eye for eye, tooth for tooth; judicial equity
 - drinking water poisoned (Rev. 16:4-7)
 - "What they deserve"
 - Voice from the altar, where the martyrs are, agrees
- 4) The fourth bowl of God's wrath- scorching sun (Rev. 16:8-9)
- The people were scorched by the heat
 - The people of the old kingdom cursed God
 - > They cursed the One they now knew had power over the plagues
 - > They do not curse the one they were deceived but who now proves powerless
 - The people of the old kingdom did not repent and give God glory
- 5) The fifth bowl of God's wrath (Rev. 16:10-11)
- Darkness
 - The people of the old kingdom suffered and cursed God
 - The people of the old kingdom did not repent
 - > A people living in great darkness chose darkness even after the light had come.

- > God honors their choice of darkness by giving them darkness.
 - > The god of darkness cannot give them light, but they do not curse the god of darkness, rather the God of light; thus revealing the depth and extent of human depravity.
 - 6) The sixth bowl of God's wrath (Rev. 16:12-16)
 - Euphrates dries up
 - Deceiving demons from the mouth of the beast
 - Preparation for Armageddon
 - 7) The seventh bowl of God's wrath - (Rev. 16:17-21)
 - "It is done!"
 - > What is God's mission for creation? That all the earth should be filled with the experiential knowledge of the glory of the Lord.
 - > What must be included in the revelation of God's glory in the world?
 - All his attributes
 - Including sovereign authority and wisdom
 - Including mercy, love, and compassion
 - Including fairness, justice, righteousness, and holiness
 - > With the final outpouring of the final bowl, everything God intends to reveal of Himself in the world that He has made is completely revealed.
 - > "It is done" marks the completion of God's mission to fill the earth with the knowledge of His glory on His own terms.
 - Great earthquake
 - Jerusalem split in three
 - Cities of the nations fall
 - Babylon destroyed (Fully identified and described in chs 17-18)
 - World flattened
 - 100# hailstones
 - The people of the old kingdom cursed God
- 3. The Fall of False Kings and False Kingdoms as the New King and the New Kingdom is Established (Rev. 17:1-20:15)
 - a. The Fall of False Kings and the False Kingdom Described (Rev. 17:1-18:24)
 - (1) The Beauty and the Beast (Rev. 17:1-18)
 - (a) Introduction to the Fall
 - i) Characters
 - a) One of the seven angels who had the seven bowls

- b) John
- c) Great Prostitute
- d) Kings of all the earth
- e) Dwellers on earth
- f) Spirit
- g) Scarlet Beast
- h) Saints/Martyrs of Jesus
- i) Lamb
- j) Those with him [the Lamb]
- k) God
- ii) Conditions
 - a) One of the seven angels who had the seven bowls
 - 1) Approaches John with a proposition to “see” 17:1
 - 2) Carries John away in the Spirit to a wilderness 17:3
 - 3) Questions John about his response to the vision 17:7
 - 4) Explains the vision to John 17:8-14
 - 5) Explains God’s plan to John 17:15-18
 - b) John
 - 1) Sees the vision
 - 2) Marvels at the vision
 - 3) Records the vision
 - c) Great Prostitute
 - 1) Seated on many waters
 - 2) kings of the earth commit sexual immorality with her
 - 3) dwellers on earth have become drunk with the wine of her sexual immorality
 - 4) Sitting on a scarlet beast
 - 5) Arrayed in purple and scarlet
 - 6) Adorned with gold and jewels and pearls
 - 7) Holing in her hand a golden cup
 - full of abominations
 - full of the impurities of her sexual immorality
 - 8) On her forehead (cf. Placement of mark of beast)
 - “name of mystery”
 - “Babylon the great”
 - Mother of prostitutes and earths abominations

- 9) Drunk with the blood (cf. 6:9-10)
 - of the saints
 - of the martyrs of Jesus
- 10) Hated by the kings and people
 - Made desolate and naked
 - Devour her flesh
 - Burn her with fire
- 11) The great city that has dominion over the kings of the earth
- d) Many waters
 - 1) Bear up the prostitute
 - 2) Composed of people, multitudes, nations, languages
- e) Kings of all the earth
 - 1) commit adultery with the prostitute
 - 2) signified by seven heads of beast (and as seven mountains)
 - five have fallen
 - one is
 - the other has not yet come
 - > Is coming
 - > Must remain only a little while
 - 3) signified by ten horns
 - 4) beast also acts as an eight king
 - 5) ten future kings
 - not yet received royal power
 - to receive power as kings for one hour
 - receive power together with the beast
 - Of one mind; hand their power and authority over to the beast
 - Make war on the Lamb
 - Conquered by the Lamb
 - They and the beast will hate the prostitute; make her desolate and naked, devour her flesh, burn her with fire
 - Acted upon by God to accomplish God's purpose
- f) Dwellers on the earth
 - 1) Drunk with the wine of the prostitute's sexual immorality
 - 2) Names have not been written in the Lamb's book of life from the foundation of the world

- 3) Marvel to see the beast, because it was, is not, and is to come
 - g) Scarlet beast
 - 1) Full of blasphemous names
 - 2) Seven heads and ten horns
 - 3) Carries the prostitute
 - 4) Was, is not, and is about to
 - Rise from the bottomless pit
 - Go to destruction
 - 5) An eight king with the seven other kings signified by the seven heads
 - 6) It goes to destruction
 - 7) Receives power and authority from the kings of the earth
 - 8) Makes war on the Lamb
 - 9) Is conquered by the Lamb
 - 10) Hates the prostitute: makes her desolate and naked, devour her flesh, burns her with fire
 - 11) Acts until the words of God are fulfilled.
 - h) Saints/martyrs
 - 1) Killed by the prostitute
 - 2) Return with King Jesus
 - 3) Called, chosen, faithful
 - i) The Lamb
 - 1) Comes
 - 2) Conquers
 - 3) Lord of lords, King of kings
 - j) God
 - 1) Puts it into the hearts of the kings and beast to destroy the woman
 - 2) Puts it into the hearts of the kings and beast to accomplish his purpose by being of one mind and having their power over to the beast
- iii) Consequences
 - a) Prostitute
 - 1) Judged
 - 2) Hated & made desolate, naked
 - 3) Devoured
 - 4) Burned
 - 5) See 18:1-19:5

- b) Dwellers on earth whose names are not written in the Lamb's book of life: see 20:15
 - c) Kings of the earth:
 - 1) See 18:9-10
 - 2) see 19:20-21
 - d) Beast:
 - 1) see 19:19-20
 - e) The Lamb
 - 1) Conquers
 - 2) Claims the throne
 - f) God: makes all things new, just as He revealed and promised
- (2) The Fall of Beautiful Babylon (Rev. 18:1-24)
- (a) Possible OT background
 - i) Fall of Tyre Ezekiel 26-28
 - ii) Fall of Babylon Isaiah 13-14, 21; Jeremiah 50-51
 - iii) Leon Morris -
 - a) "John has caught the spirit of the prophetic doom songs."
 - b) The idea is
 - 1) that these prophecies celebrate the sovereignty and justice and righteousness of God in regards to His enemies in spite of the current circumstances of God's people
 - 2) These are songs of hope and justice as well as warnings
 - c) Morris sees in chapter 18 this same current of divine justice for the world and ultimate hope for God's people
 - d) "Final judgment means the overthrow of all that opposes itself to God."
 - 1) **What responses does the certainty of judgment raise in your mind and heart?**
 - 2) Responses:
 - (b) Announced by an angel (Rev. 18:1-3)
 - i) About the angel
 - a) coming down from heaven
 - 1) John's perspective appears now to be from earth, though this does not have to be the case
 - 2) heaven is the only source of true justice now and thus judgment comes from there
 - b) having great authority
 - 1) Others, usually evil, are given authority in the Revelation.
 - 2) This angel comes with inherent authority

- 3) The authority can be by virtue of nature, position, or purpose or be an attribute of all three
- 4) This is the authority to speak and act for God, and therefore is of the nature of God's authority to enact justice within creation.
- c) earth made bright with his glory
 - 1) This angel comes with inherent glory.
 - 2) This is the glory of utter solidarity with the Person and purpose of God
- d) called out in a "mighty" voice
 - 1) interestingly, as Morris points out, this adjective is usually (in Revelation) applied to angels but not to voices, though the voice from the throne is described as the voice of mighty thunders.
 - 2) "Mighty" angels often speak with "great" (megale) voices.
- ii) Fallen, fallen!
 - a) What have we said about divine repetition in Scripture?
 - 1) Emphasis
 - 2) Importance
 - 3) Certainty
 - b) Every reader of this letter, no matter in what time period they read it, must read in it the certainty of Babylon's destruction regardless of their current experience of her
 - 1) The certainty is established in the double use of "fallen" here
 - 2) The certainty is doubly established in the double use of the doublet in the book! See Rev. 14:8.
- iii) Babylon
 - a) Identity
 - 1) In Revelation

Revelation 14:8 (ESV) ⁸ Another angel, a second, followed, saying, "Fallen, fallen is Babylon the great, she who made all nations drink the wine of the passion of her sexual immorality."

Revelation 16:19 (ESV) ¹⁹ The great city was split into three parts, and the cities of the nations fell, and God remembered Babylon the great, to make her drain the cup of the wine of the fury of his wrath.

Revelation 17:5 (ESV) ⁵ And on her forehead was written a name of mystery: "Babylon the great, mother of prostitutes and of earth's abominations."

Revelation 18:2 (ESV) ² And he called out with a mighty voice, "Fallen, fallen is Babylon the great! She has become a dwelling place for demons, a haunt for every unclean spirit, a haunt for every unclean bird, a haunt for every unclean and detestable beast.

Revelation 18:10 (ESV) ¹⁰ They will stand far off, in fear of her torment, and say, “Alas! Alas! You great city, you mighty city, Babylon! For in a single hour your judgment has come.”

Revelation 18:21 (ESV) ²¹ Then a mighty angel took up a stone like a great millstone and threw it into the sea, saying, “So will Babylon the great city be thrown down with violence, and will be found no more;

- 2) In John’s thinking
 - While Rome might have been the immediate illustration brought to mind to the original readers, Rome continues another 400 years, so it is unlikely John is understanding Babylon to be a specific city-state like Rome, or even a specific empire.
 - The whole world community organized in opposition to God, His self-revelation, and His will
 - Everything in physical creation that exists opposed to God
 - All of corrupt human civilization
 - John is looking ahead to the final destruction of all the evil in the world that opposes God and oppresses God’s people
- b) She has become
 - 1) A dwelling place for demons
 - 2) A haunt for every unclean spirit
 - 3) A haunt for every unclean bird (scavengers = death)
 - 4) A haunt for every unclean and detestable beast
 - No clean animals for sacrifice
 - No one making sacrifices
- c) Present and future condition
 - 1) What she is in spiritual
 - The world, once declared “very good” by God and filled with His creative glory has become filled with just the opposite
 - Where once cleanness and glory dwelt, it is now a place filled with demons and amenable to their residence
 - Where once life prevailed now there is death (seen in the abundance of unclean birds, mostly scavengers who feed on dead things.)
 - So bad is it that there is neither inclination nor opportunity for God-honoring sacrifice
 - 2) She will become, under God’s judgment, in the natural

- Utterly ruined, destroyed
- Totally destitute, having nothing further to entice anyone ever again
- iv) How does Babylon come to this?
 - a) All nations have drunk the wine of the passion of her sexual immorality
 - 1) This amounts to the people of the earth consuming the passions and values of the world and rejecting God
 - 2) Everything about Babylon suggests out of control greed and consumption.
 - 3) We are reminded of James' admonition regarding prayer: sometimes we do not receive the answer to our prayer because our motive for prayer is to "consume it upon our own lusts." (James 1:13-14; 4:3-4[notice the label *adulterous people*])
 - b) The kings of the earth have committed immorality with her
 - 1) Where they should have been faithful to the One from Whom their authority comes, they turned their allegiance and sought their power from the world
 - 2) Easy to see when you watch leaders "currying favor" with one another and voter blocs in order to maintain their position (which is usually their source of power, prestige, and thus of wealth)
 - c) The merchants of the earth have grown rich from the power of her luxurious living
 - 1) Jesus said, "You cannot serve God and money."
 - 2) These have chosen to serve money (riches, wealth), rather than rely on God for their living and upkeep.
- (c) Affirmed by a voice from heaven (Rev. 18:4-8)
 - i) A different voice speaks
 - a) Suggests an additional vision or some change from the first vision of the chapter
 - b) With a different speaker comes a different perspective
 - 1) This voice speaks to the readers who may be living and experiencing Babylon's influence prior to her destruction
 - 2) This is not, in my opinion, a last minute effort just before Babylon is destroyed
 - 3) The language is that of anticipation not reflection
 - "Pay her back;" "Repay her double;" "mix her;" give her"
 - All of these anticipate something to come rather than recount something already delivered
 - c) A warning seems implicit:
 - 1) "This is what happens when you do not heed the words of this book, so take action!" (cf. 1:3)
 - 2) This entire book is written so that those who received it first would be encouraged

- to take appropriate action.
- ii) Call to separation from her (Rev 18:4)
- a) Come out from her
- 1) Aorist Active Imperative 2 Plural - The imperative (a command) represents a current condition that must change on authority of the speaker
 - 2) The audience lives in direct contact with the influence of Babylon and lives in danger of being terminally influenced by her sin
 - 3) The command requires the hearer recognize the risk of their current status and take action to implement change
- b) Reasons
- 1) Lest you take part in her sins - participate in practice or values
 - Sin is an attitude of the heart before it become an action of the body
 - **Matthew 15:16-20 (ESV) ¹⁶ And he said, "Are you also still without understanding? ¹⁷ Do you not see that whatever goes into the mouth passes into the stomach and is expelled? ¹⁸ But what comes out of the mouth proceeds from the heart, and this defiles a person. ¹⁹ For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false witness, slander. ²⁰ These are what defile a person. But to eat with unwashed hands does not defile anyone."**
 - The danger is always that attitudes will be influenced in such a way that lifestyle follows the same sinful, God-rejecting path.
 - **Leviticus 5:2-3 (KJV) ² Or if a soul touch any unclean thing, whether it be a carcase of an unclean beast, or a carcase of unclean cattle, or the carcase of unclean creeping things, and if it be hidden from him; he also shall be unclean, and guilty. ³ Or if he touch the uncleanness of man, whatsoever uncleanness it be that a man shall be defiled withal, and it be hid from him; when he knoweth of it, then he shall be guilty.**
 - If you engage with that declared unclean, you become unclean.
 - Holiness does not transfer through contact; corruption transfers through contact.
 - 2) Lest you share in her plagues - experience divine justice
 - Guilt, regardless of intent, requires redress
 - Unforgiven, unatoned guilt is subject to judgment
 - There seems to be an echo of Egypt and the Exodus in this call to separation

- Not only has the Passover Lamb (Jesus) been slain and the blood applied, there is a need to actually LEAVE Egypt!
- If one does not leave Egypt, one suffers the fate of Egypt

c) Other biblical calls to separation

- 1) **1 John 2:15-17 (ESV)** ¹⁵ *Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him.* ¹⁶ *For all that is in the world—the desires of the flesh and the desires of the eyes and pride of life—is not from the Father but is from the world.* ¹⁷ *And the world is passing away along with its desires, but whoever does the will of God abides forever.*
 - The danger, according to Rev 18, is that those who love the world will both lose the love of their life, but may lose their lives (eternal) as well.
- 2) **2 Corinthians 6:17 (ESV)** ¹⁷ *Therefore go out from their midst, and be separate from them, says the Lord, and touch no unclean thing; then I will welcome you,*
- 3) **Isaiah 52:11 (ESV)** ¹¹ *Depart, depart, go out from there; touch no unclean thing; go out from the midst of her; purify yourselves, you who bear the vessels of the LORD.*
 - They are there applied to the Jews in Babylon, and are a solemn call which God makes on them to leave the place of their exile, to come out from among the idolaters of that city, and return to their own land.
Babylon, in the Scriptures, is the emblem of whatever is proud, arrogant, wicked, and opposed to God; and Paul, therefore, applies the words here with great beauty and force to illustrate the duty of Christians in separating themselves from a vain, idolatrous, and wicked world. Barnes' Notes on the New Testament.
 - In Isaiah, "touch no unclean thing;" that is, they were to be pure, and to have no connexion with idolatry in any of its forms. So Christians were to avoid all unholy contact with a vain and polluted world. The sense is, "Have no close connexion with an idolater, or an unholy person. Be pure; and feel that you belong to a community that is under its own laws, and that is to be distinguished in moral purity from all the rest of the world." Barnes' Notes on the New Testament.

d) **How does the church/the Christian separate from the world?**

- 1) Reorient your position -
 - Physical Position
 - > **2 Corinthians 6:17 (ESV)** ¹⁷ *Therefore go out from their midst, and*

be separate from them, says the Lord, and touch no unclean thing; then I will welcome you,

- Relational/Confessional Position

- > **2 Thessalonians 3:6 (ESV)** ⁶ Now we command you, brothers, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you keep away from any brother who is walking in idleness and not in accord with the tradition that you received from us.
- > **1 Corinthians 5:11 (ESV)** ¹¹ But now I am writing to you not to associate with anyone who bears the name of brother if he is guilty of sexual immorality or greed, or is an idolater, reviler, drunkard, or swindler—not even to eat with such a one.

Theological Position

- > One remembers the recurring words of Jesus in the opening letters: “Repent or . . .”
- > The call to “come out” surely includes the admonition to repent and make right, bring back into alignment with Christ, anything that has moved out of place

Potential Conclusions

- > There could be a “rapture” reference here
 - > There are certainly some places Christians ought not to be
 - Eve should not have been hanging around the forbidden tree
 - Lot should not have been living in Sodom
 - Jacob should not have moved to Egypt
 - David should not have been on the rooftop
- 2) Reorient your practice - **Romans 12:1 (ESV)** ¹ *I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship.*
 - 3) Reorient your principles - **Romans 12:2** ² *Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.*
 - 4) Reorient your affections - **1 John 2:15 (ESV)** ¹⁵ *Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him.*

- iii) Extent of Babylon’s sin (Rev 18:5)
 - a) Her sins are heaped high as heaven

- 1) Scripture Parallels
 - **Jeremiah 51:9 (ESV)** ⁹ *We would have healed Babylon, but she was not healed. Forsake her, and let us go each to his own country, for her judgment has reached up to heaven and has been lifted up even to the skies.*
 - **Genesis 4:10 (ESV)** ¹⁰ *And the LORD said, “What have you done? The voice of your brother’s blood is crying to me from the ground.*
 - **Genesis 18:20-21 (ESV)** ²⁰ *Then the LORD said, “Because the outcry against Sodom and Gomorrah is great and their sin is very grave, ²¹ I will go down to see whether they have done altogether according to the outcry that has come to me. And if not, I will know.”*
- 2) In the OT being “lifted up” is idiomatic for “an extreme degree of corporate sin.”
- b) God has remembered her iniquities
 - 1) The figure here is that Babylon has so multiplied her sin that God must multiply His judgments against her in order to maintain his justice.
 - 2) QUESTION: Do you think Babylon knows the danger she is in?
 - Do people in the world know what lies ahead of them?
 - Do people know their sins are building up and stink to high heaven?
 - > I think Babylon knows, given that Jezebel in ch. 2 has “been given time to repent” by God
 - > But do the ordinary people, not the kings and merchants and those who benefit from her excesses, but the nations?
 - > **Repentance seems to be a word deleted from the culture and from the gospel. If so, many are unprepared for what is coming.**
- iv) Call for Punishment in Proportion to the Crime (Rev. 18:6-7)
 - a) Question: Who is now speaking?
 - 1) John does not tell us or give any indication that the speaker has changed, however, the one addressed has changed from the people of God to Babylon’s Judge.
 - 2) It is possible
 - That God remains the speaker and this is a reflection of His sentence uponf Babylon
 - That the saints under the altar are speaking and this is another request for vindication and justice
 - That someone from the earth, even the beast and the kings, can be speaking out their hatred for the harlot

- b) Double?
- 1) This is an application of the “golden rule,” doing unto Babyon as she has done to others
 - 2) The calling is
 - for Babylon to receive the full and maximum recompense for her sin
 - for Babylon to “get what she deserves”
 - It is a dreadful thing for anyone to get what they deserve from the hand of a righteous and holy God. Even the Son of God could not bear it but died under the weight of God’s wrath.
 - 3) What John writes that someone says
 - Pay her back as she herself has paid back others
 - Repay her double for her deeds
 - Mix a double portion for her in the cup she mixed
 - As she glorified herself . . . so give her like measure of torment and mourning
 - 4) What Babylon says in her heart (at the core of her existence)
 - I sit as a queen; I am no widow; I shall never see mourning
 - > Queen - self-proclaimed authority
 - > No widow - falsely secure in a relationship with the king (dragon or beast)
 - > See no mourning - endurance of present condition (which is answered by judgment descending in a day/hour)
 - Arrogance and ignorance; these are the attitudes of pre-judged Lucifer
- c) Isn’t “double” a violation of the judicial equity principle?
- 1) In this case, no, because the call is for appropriate punishment that fully responds to the depth of her depravity and sinfulness.
 - 2) It is a call of divinely administered fairness
- v) Final sentencing (Rev 18:8)
- a) For this reason
- 1) Her ungodly deeds
 - 2) Her self-glorying
 - 3) Her excesses
 - 4) Her arrogance
 - 5) Her ignorance
 - 6) Cf. **Revelation 3:17 (ESV)** ¹⁷ *For you say, I am rich, I have prospered, and I*

need nothing, not realizing that you are wretched, pitiable, poor, blind, and naked.

- b) Her plagues
 - 1) Death
 - 2) Mourning
 - 3) Famine
 - 4) She will be burned with fire
- c) will come in a single day (see 17:16)
 - 1) Some MSS “single hour”
 - 2) With sudden, unexpected finality
- d) For mighty is the Lord God who has judged her. (See 17:17)
 - 1) “Mighty” is emphatic
 - 2) “Judges” - this is not arbitrary, but the right response of God to one who rejected His law and legal claim to unique sovereignty
- (d) Mourned by the world (Rev. 18:9-20)
 - i) The kings of the earth
 - a) who committed sexual immorality with her
 - b) who lived in luxury with her
 - c) wail and weep when they see her destruction
 - d) stand far off
 - 1) (not an image of intimacy here!)
 - 2) An attempt to avoid detection or inclusion?
 - 3) Certainly an expression of fear and dread
 - Interesting contrast with the disciples of Jesus who stood far off in fear at his crucifixion.
 - Fear seems basic to the human experience until it is replaced with faith in the provision of grace who is Jesus, then fear is replaced with love
 - These kings have no love only lust, no faith only fear,
 - e) terrified on account of her torment
 - 1) **Revelation 2:22-23 (ESV) ²² Behold, I will throw her onto a sickbed, and those who commit adultery with her I will throw into great tribulation, unless they repent of her works, ²³ and I will strike her children dead. And all the churches will know that I am he who searches mind and heart, and I will give to each of you according to your works.**
 - 2) **Revelation 18:4 (ESV) ⁴ Then I heard another voice from heaven saying, “Come**

out of her, my people, lest you take part in her sins, lest you share in her plagues;

- 3) This would certainly be an occasion for terror: the realization that on account of one's lust for Babylon one will share in her torment [and that her torment is now undeniably real!]
- ii) The merchants of the earth
 - a) Weep and mourn
 - b) Who gained wealth from her
 - c) Will stand far off
 - d) Terrified on account of her torment
 - e) Weeping and mourning
- iii) Shipmasters and seafaring men
- (e) Condemned by heaven (Rev. 18:21-24)
 - i) Babylon described as "great" but not great enough
 - ii) What will be forever lost to Babylon
 - a) Joy - musicians/music
 - b) Creativity/Accomplishment/Development - craft/craftsmen
 - c) Provision - mills
 - d) Guidance/Direction - light
 - e) Commitment/Procreation - marriage
 - iii) Charges Repeated
 - a) Your merchants ("great ones") glorified themselves rather than God
 - b) Deceived the nations through "sorcery" (posing as a personal power source)
 - c) Murder - including the prophets and saints and Jesus Himself
- b. The End of the False Kingdom (Rev. 19:1-20:15)
 - (1) This is what we have been waiting for
 - (a) the culmination of endurance, the hope of the ages, the desire of faith and the faithful; the yearning of all creation
 - (b) **Romans 8:18-21 (ESV)** ¹⁸ *For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us.* ¹⁹ *For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the sons of God.* ²⁰ *For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of him who subjected it, in hope* ²¹ *that the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to corruption and obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God.*
 - (2) First Praise for Final Glory (Rev. 19:1-6)
 - (a) Observations

- i) 19:1-5 (and probably to v. 10) complete the account of the fall of Babylon in chapter 18
 - a) “The main point of ch. 18 was that the saints were to rejoice over God’s judgment of Babylon because that judgment demonstrated the integrity of the Christian’s faith and God’s judgment.” Beale p. 926
 - b) Compare the joy of 19:1-6 with the grief of 18:9-24
 - 1) Four “Hallelujah’s” vs. four laments
 - 2) Glory is given to God by saints vs fear and grief directed to Babylon
 - 3) The world gives no glory to God as it laments the loss of Babylon’s glory
 - 4) Salvation belongs to God vs mourners standing afar off, afraid, because Babylon cannot save them from the same destruction
 - 5) God is true and just vs Babylon deceived and enslaved
 - 6) Those who dwell on the earth lose all they gained and all they hoped for vs the saints in heaven who gain all they hoped for and more than they lost
- ii) 19:1-5 pick up the theme of reward for the saints and the destruction of their enemies announced by the seventh trumpet in 11:15-19
 - a) Continuity of revelation
 - 1) Anticipation arrives at fulfilment
 - 2) Reflects the actual course of the life of faith
 - b) Encouragement to “fellow bondservants” - God finishes what he starts and does what he says
- (b) After this: a new vision or a new movement within the same vision (“these things” = ch 18)
 - i) The chorus
 - a) I heard - rather than “saw”
 - b) A loud voice of a great multitude in heaven
 - 1) Hallelujah!
 - The only use of this transliteration in the English Bible
 - Everywhere else this Hebrew word, turned Greek word, is used, it is translated as “Praise God!”
 - 2) Salvation and glory and power belong to God (not Babylon)
 - His judgements are “just and “true”
 - The saints have historically been persecuted for maintaining the truth of God’s word in the world
 - The cry of the saints on earth and in heaven (6:10) has been for God to vindicate His Truth to the world by punishing those who deny Him
 - 3) He has judged Babylon

- 4) He has avenged on her the blood of his servants
 - cf. **Revelation 18:24 (ESV)** ²⁴ *And in her was found the blood of prophets and of saints, and of all who have been slain on earth.*"
 - what she took from them (and what she stole from god: glory) has been taken from her in like measure (justice)
- c) Second witness!
 - 1) Hallelujah!
 - 2) The smoke from her rises eternal
 - **Isaiah 34:9-10 (ESV)** ⁹ *And the streams of Edom shall be turned into pitch, and her soil into sulfur; her land shall become burning pitch. ¹⁰ Night and day it shall not be quenched; its smoke shall go up forever. From generation to generation it shall lie waste; none shall pass through it forever and ever.*
 - The picture is of complete and utter judgment in keeping with the magnificence of the divine glory denied by those who hate Him
 - **Revelation 14:11 (ESV)** ¹¹ *And the smoke of their torment goes up forever and ever, and they have no rest, day or night, these worshipers of the beast and its image, and whoever receives the mark of its name."*
 - Those whose trust has been in Babylon share Babylon's fate (cf. 18:10, 15)
 - As infinite as is the offense to God's holiness and sovereignty, so is the punishment of Babylon and those who put their trust in her
- ii) The ensemble: Twenty four elders and four living creatures
 - a) Fell down and worshiped - always their first response to the activity of God
 - b) Amen! Hallelujah! - affirm the sentiment and basis for the multitude's praise
- iii) The solo
 - a) Identity
 - 1) Could be Jesus (cf John 20:17)
 - 2) Could be angel
 - 3) Could be intentionally imprecise - to give the idea of heavenly solidarity with the victory and worthiness of God to be praised for having demonstrated his justice in the destruction of Babylon
 - b) Message
 - 1) Praise God for the judgment of Babylon;
 - for the assumption of His reign
 - for the demonstration of His sovereignty

- for His faithfulness to His promises
 - 2) Praise God, all His servants (the entire body of Christian believers)
 - You who fear Him (as opposed to those who fear the torment of Babylon)
 - Both small and great (inclusive but opposed to kings and merchants)
- iv) The Repeated Ketrain (19:6)
 - a) With enlarged enthusiasm
 - 1) Roar of “many waters” (cf. 17:1, 15) = peoples, multitudes, nations, and languages
 - 2) “Mighty peals of thunders” - from the throne throughout Revelation
 - 3) Residents of earth and heaven (redeemed and angels) in exuberant praise
 - b) Wild praise because God has begun to reign at the judgment of Babylon
 - c) “He has shown himself to be the all-powerful divine king by this great act of deposing the system that arrogated this office to itself.” Beale p. 931
 - d) Development of 11:15
 - 1) **Revelation 11:15 (ESV) ¹⁵ Then the seventh angel blew his trumpet, and there were loud voices in heaven, saying, “The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ, and he shall reign forever and ever.”**
 - 2) **Don’t let this truth get lost in the course of events: Jesus WILL reign!**
- (3) The Marriage Supper of the King (who finally has a kingdom)(Rev. 19:7-10)
 - (a) Occasion for joy and exultation
 - i) Rejoice and be exult (be exceedingly glad)
 - a) **Matthew 5:12 (ESV) ¹² Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.**
 - b) The marriage of the Lamb and His Bride are what we have been waiting for, the reward of promise
 - 1) The reward is not a possession but an intimate, unobstructed unity with Christ in Christ
 - 2) The two shall become one on earth was a shadow of this final reality to which we look and for which we live and strive in faith against the world.
 - The reward comes on the heels of a lifetime of rejection and persecution by the world
 - The reward comes as a vindication for faith in light of rejection and accusation lobbied against the faithful by an unbelieving world
 - ii) Give Him the glory
 - a) Because He has judged and destroyed the opposition
 - 1) **Revelation 19:1-3 (ESV) ¹ After this I heard what seemed to be the loud voice of**

a great multitude in heaven, crying out, “Hallelujah! Salvation and glory and power belong to our God,² for his judgments are true and just; for he has judged the great prostitute who corrupted the earth with her immorality, and has avenged on her the blood of his servants.”³ Once more they cried out, “Hallelujah! The smoke from her goes up forever and ever.”

- 2) **Revelation 19:6 (ESV)** *⁶ Then I heard what seemed to be the voice of a great multitude, like the roar of many waters and like the sound of mighty peals of thunder, crying out, “Hallelujah! For the Lord our God the Almighty reigns.*

b) Because He has successfully prepared His bride

- 1) **Ephesians 5:25-33 (ESV)** *²⁵ Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, ²⁶ that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, ²⁷ so that he might present the church to himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish ²⁹ For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ does the church, ³⁰ because we are members of his body . . . ³² This mystery is profound, and I am saying that it refers to Christ and the church.*
- 2) **Revelation 21:2 (ESV)** *² And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.*

(b) Because

i) The marriage of the Lamb has come

a) The Lamb is the Bridegroom

- 1) **Matthew 9:14–17 (ESV)** *14 Then the disciples of John came to him, saying, “Why do we and the Pharisees fast, but your disciples do not fast?” 15 And Jesus said to them, “Can the wedding guests mourn as long as the bridegroom is with them? The days will come when the bridegroom is taken away from them, and then they will fast. 16 No one puts a piece of unshrunk cloth on an old garment, for the patch tears away from the garment, and a worse tear is made. 17 Neither is new wine put into old wineskins. If it is, the skins burst and the wine is spilled and the skins are destroyed. But new wine is put into fresh wineskins, and so both are preserved.”*
- 2) **Mark 2:19–20 (ESV)** *19 And Jesus said to them, “Can the wedding guests fast while the bridegroom is with them? As long as they have the bridegroom with them, they cannot fast. 20 The days will come when the bridegroom is taken away from them, and then they will fast in that day.*

- 3) **John 3:27-30 (ESV) 27 John answered, “A person cannot receive anything unless it is given him from heaven. 28 You yourselves bear the witness, that I said, ‘I am not the Christ, but I have been sent before him.’ 29 The one who has the bride is the bridegroom. The friend of the bridegroom, who stands and hears him, rejoices greatly at the bridegroom’s voice. Therefore this joy of mine is now complete. 30 He must increase, but I must decrease.”**
- ii) The Bride
- a) Observations
- 1) The Bride should be seen in stark contrast to the harlot!
 - 2) It is important that we **NOT** see the Bride as an entity other than ourselves
 - What Christ makes His bride He is making us as part of His Bride
 - If the Bride is the spiritual counterpart to the Whore, then each church and each Christian ought to be the living counterpart/contrast to the world.
 - So, if we are going to talk about what the Bride ultimately accomplishes, we need to be talking about what we are currently accomplishing in preparation for the coming Bridegroom!
- b) Has made herself ready
- 1) The Bride made herself ready for the King; the harlot attempted to displace the King
 - There is no expression here of self-saving works
 - The preparedness of the Bride does not make her a Bride, it simply makes her ready for her wedding.
 - 2) The idea of preparedness:
 - **Matthew 25:1–13 (ESV) 1 “Then the kingdom of heaven will be like ten virgins who took their lamps and went to meet the bridegroom. 2 Five of them were foolish, and five were wise. 3 For when the foolish took their lamps, they took no oil with them, 4 but the wise took flasks of oil with their lamps. 5 As the bridegroom was delayed, they all became drowsy and slept. 6 But at midnight there was a cry, ‘Here is the bridegroom! Come out to meet him.’ 7 Then all those virgins rose and trimmed their lamps. 8 And the foolish said to the wise, ‘Give us some of your oil, for our lamps are going out.’ 9 But the wise answered, saying, ‘Since there will not be enough for us and for you, go rather to the dealers and buy for yourselves.’ 10 And while they were going to buy, the bridegroom came, and those who were ready went in with him to the marriage feast,**

and the door was shut. 11 Afterward the other virgins came also, saying, 'Lord, lord, open to us.' 12 But he answered, 'Truly, I say to you, I do not know you.' 13 Watch therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour.

- **2 Corinthians 11:2 (ESV) ² For I feel a divine jealousy for you, since I betrothed you to one husband, to present you as a pure virgin to Christ.**

c) Granted her to clothe herself

1) Granted:

- Implies that the grantor has authority, rights, control over the gift
- Implies that the grantee is not necessarily entitled to the gift (maintains the integrity of the gift as grace)
- Implies that the extension of the gift is an act of grace (or compassion or mercy or love)
- Does not necessarily imply an exchange of ownership (could simply be a sharing of benefit)
- NOTE: The grammatical construction seems to point here that what is granted to the Bride is not the “Fine linen” but the right to dress herself in the fine linens. The fine linens are what she provides for herself in preparation for the groom. The value is in the groom’s acceptance of these linens as appropriate wedding clothes.

2) What has God granted the church?

- Life through faith in Christ.
 - > **John 5:26 For as the Father has life in himself, so he has granted the Son also to have life in himself.**
- Access to Christ through the will of the Father
 - > **John 6:65 And he said, “This is why I told you that no one can come to me unless it is granted him by the Father.”**
- A future as the people of God
 - > **Acts 7:17 “But as the time of the promise drew near, which God had granted to Abraham, the people increased and multiplied in Egypt**
- Effective repentance and access to grace
 - > **Acts 11:18 When they heard these things they fell silent. And they glorified God, saying, “Then to the Gentiles also God has granted repentance that leads to life.”**

- Answered prayer and divine blessing
 - > **2 Corinthians 1:11** *You also must help us by prayer, so that many will give thanks on our behalf for the blessing granted us through the prayers of many.*
- Meaningful suffering
 - > **Philippians 1:29** *For it has been granted to you that for the sake of Christ you should not only believe in him but also suffer for his sake,*
- All things that pertain to life and godliness
 - > **2 Peter 1:3** *His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of him who called us to his own glory and excellence,*
- To partake of the divine nature, escape from the corruption inherent in the world
 - > **2 Peter 1:4** *by which he has granted to us his precious and very great promises, so that through them you may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped from the corruption that is in the world because of sinful desire.*
- The opportunity to dress for her wedding
 - > **Revelation 19:8** . . . *it was granted her to clothe herself with fine linen, bright and pure”— for the fine linen is the righteous deeds of the saints.*

3) How does the church clothe herself?

- Two apparent questions:
 - > How does the Bride prepare (“clothe”) herself?
 - > How does Christ prepare His Bride?
- How does Christ Prepare the Bride for the Wedding
 - > Through the course of salvation
Romans 8:30 (ESV) ³⁰ *And those whom he predestined he also called, and those whom he called he also justified, and those whom he justified he also glorified.*
 - > Through the course of sanctification
2 Corinthians 4:17 (ESV) ¹⁷ *For this light momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison,*

- > Through the course of judgment
(Purified at the Judgment Seat of Christ)
- Not every deed we consider “good” is. All will be evaluated by Christ according to the criteria of God’s holiness and Christ’s faithfulness
 - Each one of us will also willingly surrender our concepts of our own good works to the wisdom and justice of the One who is called Faithful and True, the ultimate incarnation of “good works.”
 - **Romans 2:6-8 (ESV)** ⁶ *He will render to each one according to his works: ⁷ to those who by patience in well-doing seek for glory and honor and immortality, he will give eternal life; ⁸ but for those who are self-seeking and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, there will be wrath and fury.*
 - **Romans 14:10 (ESV)** ¹⁰ *Why do you pass judgment on your brother? Or you, why do you despise your brother? For we will all stand before the judgment seat of God;*
 - **1 Corinthians 3:11-16 (ESV)** ¹¹ *For no one can lay a foundation other than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. ¹² Now if anyone builds on the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw— ¹³ each one’s work will become manifest, for the Day will disclose it, because it will be revealed by fire, and the fire will test what sort of work each one has done. ¹⁴ If the work that anyone has built on the foundation survives, he will receive a reward. ¹⁵ If anyone’s work is burned up, he will suffer loss, though he himself will be saved, but only as through fire. ¹⁶ Do you not know that you are God’s temple and that God’s Spirit dwells in you?*
 - **2 Corinthians 5:10 (ESV)** ¹⁰ *For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may receive what is due for what he has done in the body, whether good or evil.*

(Final Judgment [See Matthew 25:31-46])

- How does the Bride Prepare (“clothe”) herself?
 - > With faithful responses to the corrections of chs 2-3
 - > With acceptable worship
 - > With “righteous deeds”
- With Acceptable Worship (Dan Block, “For the Glory of God,” p. 80.)
The New Testament offers clear instruction on this point [gaining an invitation to the wedding].
 - ◆ Therefore let us examine ourselves to ensure that we do not presume upon a favorable response and participate in worship unworthily (1 Cor 11:28-29).
 - ◆ Let us hear and submit to God’s Word, for in it we learn God’s definition of acceptable worship and the boundaries of human behavior (2 Tim 3:16-17).
 - ◆ Let us cleanse out the old leaven (1 Cor 5:7), confessing our sins and receiving God’s assurance of forgiveness (1 John 1:9).
 - ◆ Let us recognize that by His Holy Spirit, God dwells within our bodies as redeemed persons, and let us keep these temples pure by fleeing sin of every kind (1 Cor 6:18-20).
 - ◆ Let us recognize that as the covenant community of believers, we are the temple of God, and let us avoid all contamination from going after other gods and compromising ourselves with what is unclean (2 Cor 6:14-18).
 - ◆ Let us recognize that unless our lives are offered as sacrifices to God (Rom 12:1-2), any cultic worship we offer will not be acceptable to him.
 - ◆ Let us pray that through his Word and by his Holy Spirit, the Lord will fill us with reverence and awe, so that when we come before him, we might express our submission and homage in ways that please him.
 - ◆ Finally, let us receive his blessing with joy, knowing that our worship, driven by the Holy Spirit and focused on Jesus Christ the Son, is pleasing to God the Father.

Acceptable worship

Romans 12:1-2 (ESV) ¹ I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and

acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. ² Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.

Psalm 51:16-17 (ESV) ¹⁶ *For you will not delight in sacrifice, or I would give it; you will not be pleased with a burnt offering.* ¹⁷ *The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise.*

Psalm 24:3-4 (ESV) ³ *Who shall ascend the hill of the LORD? And who shall stand in his holy place? ⁴ He who has clean hands and a pure heart, who does not lift up his soul to what is false and does not swear deceitfully.*

Clean Hands (see Psalm 15:1-5)

Pure Heart (see Matthew 5-7)

No compromised affections (Love the Lord your God with all . . .)

Fidelity to one's word (Yea be yea, etc.)

- With Good Works
 - > **Revelation 19:8 . . . it was granted her to clothe herself with fine linen, bright and pure” – for the fine linen is the righteous deeds of the saints.**
 - > **Ephesians 2:10 (ESV)** ¹⁰ *For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.*
- What makes works “good” or deeds “righteous”?
 - > Bear the character of Christ
 - > Mirror the glory of God
 - > Empowered by the Holy Spirit
 - > Enacted by faith
 - > Expressions of devoted obedience
 - > Forward thinking (eternal) present action (now)
 - > Fulfill God's purpose (immediate and ultimate) to fill the earth with the knowledge of His glory
 - > Done with Christ as the author and the object
- What constitutes “good works”/”righteous deeds”?
 - > Love in action

Daniel Block, "For the Glory of God," p. 69: "The Scriptures refuse to divorce people from their actions or their hearts from their deeds. Verbal confession do not prove genuine piety, nor are they the main evidence of what is in the heart. Rather, actions that seek the honor of God and the well-being of others are proof of a transformed heart."

Matthew 13:41-43 (ESV) "When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit on his glorious throne. ⁴² Before him will be gathered all the nations, and he will separate people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. ⁴³ And he will place the sheep on his right, but the goats on the left. ⁴⁴ Then the King will say to those on his right, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. ⁴⁵ For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, ⁴⁶ I was naked and you clothed me, I was sick and you visited me, I was in prison and you came to me.' ⁴⁷ Then the righteous will answer him, saying, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you drink? ⁴⁸ And when did we see you a stranger and welcome you, or naked and clothe you? ⁴⁹ And when did we see you sick or in prison and visit you?' ⁵⁰ And the King will answer them, 'Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brothers, you did it to me.'

⁴¹ "Then he will say to those on his left, 'Depart from me, you cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels. ⁴² For I was hungry and you gave me no food, I was thirsty and you gave me no drink, ⁴³ I was a stranger and you did not welcome me, naked and you did not clothe me, sick and in prison and you did not visit me.' ⁴⁴ Then they also will answer, saying, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison, and did not minister to you?' ⁴⁵ Then he will answer them, saying, 'Truly, I say to you, as you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to me.' ⁴⁶ And these will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into

eternal life.”

>

The Father's will

Matthew 7:15-23 (ESV) ¹⁵ *“Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing but inwardly are ravenous wolves. ¹⁶ You will recognize them by their fruits. Are grapes gathered from thornbushes, or figs from thistles? ¹⁷ So, every healthy tree bears good fruit, but the diseased tree bears bad fruit. ¹⁸ A healthy tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor can a diseased tree bear good fruit. ¹⁹ Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. ²⁰ Thus you will recognize them by their fruits.”* *“Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven.”* *“On that day many will say to me, ‘Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and cast out demons in your name, and do many mighty works in your name?’ ²³ And then will I declare to them, ‘I never knew you; depart from me, you workers of lawlessness.’”*

>

Integrity

Isaiah 33:14-16 (ESV) ¹⁴ *The sinners in Zion are afraid; trembling has seized the godless: “Who among us can dwell with the consuming fire? Who among us can dwell with everlasting burnings?” ¹⁵ He who walks righteously and speaks uprightly, who despises the gain of oppressions, who shakes his hands, lest they hold a bribe, who stops his ears from hearing of bloodshed and shuts his eyes from looking on evil, ¹⁶ he will dwell on the heights; his place of defense will be the fortresses of rocks; his bread will be given him; his water will be sure.*

Isaiah 1:16-17 (ESV) ¹⁶ *Wash yourselves; make yourselves clean; remove the evil of your deeds from before my eyes; cease to do evil, ¹⁷ learn to do good; seek justice, correct oppression; bring justice to the fatherless, plead the widow's cause.*

>

Simple Faith Enacted in Love

Micah 6:6-8 (ESV) ⁶ *“With what shall I come before the LORD, and bow myself before God on high? Shall I come before him with burnt offerings, with calves a year old? ⁷ Will the LORD be*

pleased with thousands of rams, with ten thousands of rivers of oil? Shall I give my treasures for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?" He has told you, *Adam*, what is good, and what does **the LORD** require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?

Block, p 72: "To express devotion to YHWH in the context of holy places, times, and rituals is useless and meaningless of people are not wholly devoted to God outside these contexts."

> Obedience (and Faithfulness)

Jeremiah 7:21-23 (ESV) ²¹ Thus says the **LORD** of hosts, the God of Israel: "Add your burnt offerings to your sacrifices, and eat the flesh." "For in the day that I brought them out of the land of Egypt, I did not speak to your fathers or command them concerning burnt offerings and sacrifices. ²³ But this command I gave them: 'Obey my voice, and I will be your God, and you shall be my people. And walk in all the way that I command you, that it may be well with you.'

Block, p. 73: "The key to divine favor was neither the sacrifices people brought nor the fervor with which they performed their cultic service but fidelity to YHWH, demonstrated in righteous living."

> Peace and Holiness

Hebrews 12:14 (ESV) ¹⁴ Strive for peace with everyone, and for the holiness without which no one will see the Lord.

Block, p. 77: "Hebrews 12:14 provides the most direct declaration of the preconditions to acceptable worship in the New Testament . . . In view of the access to God that the ministry of Christ has made available, we must stimulate one another to love and good deeds and encourage each other as we gather (vv. 19-25). This is pursuing peace. At the same time, we must refuse willful sin, for if, having learned of the truth, we persist in sin, we will surely experience the judgment of God (vv. 26-31). This is pursuing holiness."

- d) With fine linen, pure and white - the righteous deeds of the saints
 - 1) Without exception receiving white clothes elsewhere in the Apocalypse precisely conveys the idea of purity resulting from a test of persevering faith (see on 3:5–6)

Beale, G. K. (1999). The book of Revelation: a commentary on the Greek text (pp. 935–936). Grand Rapids, MI; Carlisle, Cumbria: W.B. Eerdmans; Paternoster Press.

- 2) The white robes, then, might represent two inextricably related realities: (1) human faithfulness and good works (as a necessary evidence of right standing with God) and (2) vindication or acquittal accomplished by God's judgments against the enemy on behalf of his people. may be best left ambiguous: "righteous deeds of the saints," including both "righteous acts performed by the saints" (subjective genitive) and "righteous acts for the saints" (objective genitive) performed by God. Beale, G. K. (1999). The book of Revelation: a commentary on the Greek text (p. 936). Grand Rapids, MI; Carlisle, Cumbria: W.B. Eerdmans; Paternoster Press.
- 3) the church's righteous faith and deeds during its earthly bondage were given a guilty verdict by the world but now its members' lives of faithful witness are vindicated by God through judgment and deliverance at the time of their final union with him. Therefore, the white linen represents not only the saints' pure and righteous condition before God but also their vindicated standing before God and the world. Beale, G. K. (1999). The book of Revelation: a commentary on the Greek text (p. 940). Grand Rapids, MI; Carlisle, Cumbria: W.B. Eerdmans; Paternoster Press.

e) Conclusions:

- 1) The wedding garment is composed of both
 - The good works of the saints that remain after the judgment seat of Christ
 - The work of Christ on her behalf that vindicates her faithfulness to him throughout the days of her exile in Babylon
- 2) Strauss, p. 320 **At the marriage supper of the Lamb, "each one of us will be wearing the wedding garment of our own making."**

(c) "He said" (Revelation 19:9-10)

- i) "He" appears to be the angel of 18:21
- ii) Blessed are those invited
 - a) 4th of 7 beatitudes in revelation
 - 1) **Revelation 1:3 (ESV) ³ Blessed is the one who reads aloud the words of this prophecy, and blessed are those who hear, and who keep what is written in it, for the time is near.**
 - 2) **Revelation 14:13 (ESV) ¹³ And I heard a voice from heaven saying, "Write this: Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on." "Blessed indeed," says**

- the Spirit, “that they may rest from their labors, for their deeds follow them!”*
- 3) **Revelation 16:15 (ESV)** ¹⁵ *“Behold, I am coming like a thief! Blessed is the one who stays awake, keeping his garments on, that he may not go about naked and be seen exposed!”*
 - 4) **Revelation 19:9 (ESV)** ⁹ *And the angel said to me, “Write this: Blessed are those who are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb.” And he said to me, “These are the true words of God.”*
 - 5) **Revelation 20:6 (ESV)** ⁶ *Blessed and holy is the one who shares in the first resurrection! Over such the second death has no power, but they will be priests of God and of Christ, and they will reign with him for a thousand years.*
 - 6) **Revelation 22:7 (ESV)** ⁷ *“And behold, I am coming soon. Blessed is the one who keeps the words of the prophecy of this book.”*
 - 7) **Revelation 22:14 (ESV)** ¹⁴ *Blessed are those who wash their robes, so that they may have the right to the tree of life and that they may enter the city by the gates.*
- b) **Invitations**
- 1) Are extended at the discretion of the host; not entitlements
 - 2) Some invitations have inherent priority over other activities
 - 3) Walk-ins are not welcome, unless invited
 - 4) Criteria for appropriateness also established by host
- c) **Scripture References**
- 1) **Matthew 8:11 (ESV)** *11 I tell you, many will come from east and west and recline at table with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven,*
 - 2) **Luke 13:28–29 (ESV)** *28 In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth, when you see Abraham and Isaac and Jacob and all the prophets in the kingdom of God but you yourselves cast out. 29 And people will come from east and west, and from north and south, and recline at table in the kingdom of God.*
 - 3) **Matthew 22:1–14 (ESV)** *1 And again Jesus spoke to them in parables, saying, 2 “The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who gave a wedding feast for his son, 3 and sent his servants to call those who were invited to the wedding feast, but they would not come. 4 Again he sent other servants, saying, ‘Tell those who are invited, “See, I have prepared my dinner, my oxen and my fat calves have been slaughtered, and everything is ready. Come to the wedding feast.” ’ 5 But they paid no attention and went off, one to his farm, another to his business, 6 while the rest seized his servants, treated them shamefully, and killed them. 7 The king was angry, and he sent his troops and destroyed those*

murderers and burned their city. 8 Then he said to his servants, 'The wedding feast is ready, but those invited were not worthy. 9 Go therefore to the main roads and invite to the wedding feast as many as you find.' 10 And those servants went out into the roads and gathered all whom they found, both bad and good. So the wedding hall was filled with guests. 11 "But when the king came in to look at the guests, he saw there a man who had no wedding garment. 12 And he said to him, 'Friend, how did you get in here without a wedding garment?' And he was speechless. 13 Then the king said to the attendants, 'Bind him hand and foot and cast him into the outer darkness. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.' 14 For many are called, but few are chosen."

- 4) **Luke 14:15–24 (ESV)** *15 When one of those who reclined at table with him heard these things, he said to him, "Blessed is everyone who will eat bread in the kingdom of God!" 16 But he said to him, "A man once gave a great banquet and invited many. 17 And at the time for the banquet he sent his servant to say to those who had been invited, 'Come, for everything is now ready.' 18 But they all alike began to make excuses. The first said to him, 'I have bought a field, and I must go out and see it. Please have me excused.' 19 And another said, 'I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I go to examine them. Please have me excused.' 20 And another said, 'I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come.' 21 So the servant came and reported these things to his master. Then the master of the house became angry and said to his servant, 'Go out quickly to the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in the poor and crippled and blind and lame.' 22 And the servant said, 'Sir, what you commanded has been done, and still there is room.' 23 And the master said to the servant, 'Go out to the highways and hedges and compel people to come in, that my house may be filled. 24 For I tell you, none of those men who were invited shall taste my banquet.' "*

- 5) **Luke 22:28-30 (ESV)** ²⁸ *"You are those who have stayed with me in my trials, ²⁹ and I assign to you, as my Father assigned to me, a kingdom, ³⁰ that you may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom and sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel.*

d) Who is invited?

- 1) Some say, since the church is the Bride, OT saints are the guests
- 2) Some say guests are subsequent persons born after the establishment of the kingdom to those who come through the tribulation
- 3) Some say this is an occasion of double symbolism:

- All the people of all time who have kept the faith are guests at the feast
- **Hebrews 11:39-40 (ESV)** ³⁹ *And all these, though commended through their faith, did not receive what was promised,* ⁴⁰ *since God had provided something better for us, that apart from us they should not be made perfect.*
- 4) I think v. 9 precedes v. 8. The marriage of the Lamb has come, and who will be there, those previously invited who accept the invitation to faith.
- 5) Regardless of “who” gets the invitation, in the end, the only ones invited are the ones who actually show up!
- iii) These are the true words of God
- iv) You must not do that! (John fell down before the speaker’s feet in worship)
 - a) I am a fellow servant
 - 1) With you
 - 2) And your brothers
 - 3) Who hold to the testimony of Jesus
 - b) Worship God.
- (d) For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy
- (4) The New King Takes His Kingdom (Rev. 19:11-20:10)
 - (a) The Rider with His Army (Rev. 19:11-21)
 - i) The White Horse
 - ii) The Rider
 - a) Named
 - 1) Faithful and True
 - > Statement of personal character
 - > According to the Bible, deception is perpetrated not only by humans, but also by other figures and powers in the world; the devil—the “father” of lies (see John 8:44)—and various powers of evil deceive and mislead humans (e.g., 2 Cor 4:4; Gal 4:3, 9; Col 2:8).
 - > God’s truthfulness and inability to lie stand in contrast to the seemingly endless acts of deceit in the Bible. He is the “true God” whose word is fully trustworthy (Jer 10:10); heaven and earth will pass away before his word fails (see Matt 24:35).
 - > The ultimate revelation of God and his truth is Jesus Christ, who is the “image of the invisible God” (Col 1:15) and in whose mouth there was no deceit (1 Pet 2:22; compare Isa 53:9 LXX). He alone can truthfully claim to

be “the way, the truth, and the life” (John 14:6). Bianchi, F. (2014).

Deception. D. Mangum, D. R. Brown, R. Klippenstein, & R. Hurst (Eds.),
Lexham Theological Wordbook. Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press.

- 2) Unknown - Mysterious (in the sense that he retains the integrity of His own identity)
 - 3) The Word of God - Revealed, public, knowable name
 - 4) King of kings, Lord of Lords - final, regal, ultimate relative to creation
- b) Described
- 1) In righteousness he judges and makes war
 - **Genesis 18:25 (ESV)** *²⁵ Far be it from you to do such a thing, to put the righteous to death with the wicked, so that the righteous fare as the wicked! Far be that from you! Shall not the Judge of all the earth do what is just?”*
 - Judges and Makes War
 - Judgment of Bride
 - At Calvary on the cross
 - At the judgment seat of Christ
 - The world that has judged him as unworthy of faith and obedience he now judges according to the righteous standard of God’s justice and holiness
 - Makes war on enemies, not Bride
 - cf. 17:4 They will make war on the Lamb, and the Lamb will conquer them for he is King of kings and Lord of lords
 - War on the Unrepentant - **Revelation 2:16** *Therefore repent. If not, I will come to you soon and war against them with the sword of my mouth.*
 - War against the dragon -
 - **Revelation 12:7** *Now war arose in heaven, Michael and his angels fighting against the dragon. And the dragon and his angels fought back,*
 - **Revelation 12:17** *Then the dragon became furious with the woman and went off to make war on the rest of her offspring, on those who keep the commandments of God and hold to the testimony of Jesus. And he stood on the sand of the sea.*

■ **Revelation 13:7** *Also it was allowed to make war on the saints and to conquer them. And authority was given it over every tribe and people and language and nation,*

- War against the kings of the earth

■ **Revelation 17:14** *They will make war on the Lamb, and the Lamb will conquer them, for he is Lord of lords and King of kings, and those with him are called and chosen and faithful.”*

■ **Revelation 19:19** *And I saw the beast and the kings of the earth with their armies gathered to make war against him who was sitting on the horse and against his army.*

2) Eyes like a flame of fire (cf. 1:14)

- Just as the flaming eyes of Christ envisioned in chapter 1 suggest the ability of Christ to see and know the strengths and weaknesses of the churches (which are detailed accurately in chs 2 & 3), Christ sees clearly the sin and wickedness of the world and the appropriate punishment sin and wickedness require.
- The overriding theme of ch 19 is judgment against the oppressors of God’s people, both social institutions and personal populations, which Christ can see clearly in spite of the deceiving activity of the dragon and the beasts, to which the majority of those who dwell upon the earth succumb.
- Furthermore, eyes like a flame of fire suggest not only the sin is clear to Him, but that He sees clearly the oppression of His people and the who, what, and why of their oppressors.

3) Many diadems

- Other in Revelation wearing diadems
 - (cf. 1:12-13 where he holds authority over the lampstands;
 - cf. 12:3, the dragon with seven heads and seven diadems and
 - 13:1 the beast with ten horns and ten diadems)
- The numbers are always finite and minimal relative to the “many” diadems with which Christ is crowned.
 - They have limited, assigned authority
 - He has unlimited, authentic authority

4) Clothed with a robe dipped in blood

- Clear allusion to God judging the nations in Isa 63:1-3

- **Isaiah 63:1-3 (ESV) ¹ *Who is this who comes from Edom, in crimsoned garments from Bozrah, he who is splendid in his apparel, marching in the greatness of his strength? “It is I, speaking in righteousness, mighty to save.” ² Why is your apparel red, and your garments like his who treads in the winepress? ³ “I have trodden the winepress alone, and from the peoples no one was with me; I trod them in my anger and trampled them in my wrath; their lifeblood spattered on my garments, and stained all my apparel.***
- The stained garments symbolize God’s attribute of justice, which he will exercise in the coming judgment. (Beale, p. 957)
 - Conclusion 1: Christ is God fulfilling this prophecy
 - Conclusion 2: The salvation of God’s people includes the expression of God’s wrath against the nations that, in sin, deny Him and oppress His people.
 - Conclusion 3: This judgment belongs to God alone as God alone can justly and righteously take the lives of those deserving judgment.
- Comparisons within Revelation
 - cf. 1:13 long robe with gold sash
 - cf. 5:6 a Lamb standing, as though it had been slain
 - cf. 7:13-14 The vast multitude whose white robes have been washed in the blood of the Lamb
 - cf. 17:4 Babylon arrayed in purple and scarlet (fake royalty and manufactured sacrifice [nobility])
 - cf. 19:2 ***he has judged the great prostitute who corrupted the earth with her immorality and has avenged on her the blood of his servants***
- Considerations
 - The blood probably signifies the blood of Christ’s enemies
 - suggesting the complete and final quality of His judgment of them
 - (as spattered upon the robe from His action in the winepress)
 - Interesting parallel in the blessing of Jacob upon his son, Judah, from whom Christ is descended (in regards to his

human ancestry):

■ **Genesis 49:8-12 (ESV)** ⁸ *“Judah, your brothers shall praise you; your hand shall be on the neck of your enemies; your father’s sons shall bow down before you. ⁹ Judah is a lion’s cub; from the prey, my son, you have gone up. He stooped down; he crouched as a lion and as a lioness; who dares rouse him? ¹⁰ The scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor the ruler’s staff from between his feet, until tribute comes to him; and to him shall be the obedience of the peoples. ¹¹ Binding his foal to the vine and his donkey’s colt to the choice vine, he has washed his garments in wine and his vesture in the blood of grapes. ¹² His eyes are darker than wine, and his teeth whiter than milk.*

- But the blood could signify Christ’s own blood shed
 - by which, in full and complete obedience to God, He reveals Himself the worthy eternal King
 - (in which case the blood would represent not Christ’s judgment of His enemies but God’s judgment of sin as the expectation of the moment)
 - See
 - The Babe wrapped in swaddling cloths and laid in a manger
 - The Savior stripped and naked and nailed to the cross
 - The Sacrifice wrapped in the shrouds of death and sealed in a tomb
 - The risen King, triumphant Judge, dressed to kill and riding the white horse of victory and vindication
- Or, the blood could be the blood of the martyrs
 - who are in this moment receiving the fulfilment of their prayer request from under the heavenly altar
 - (since they are His body and when His body bleeds His robes are stained)
- One final idea, in John 19:2 the Roman soldiers task with flogging Jesus place a crown of thorns on His head and dress Him in a purple

robe (Mark calls the color “scarlet”).

- Jesus is returned to Pilate thus clothed
- Pilate presents Jesus to the people so clothed as “the man” dressed as a King, and they reject and crucify Him
- Here, God dresses the King in the robes of a man (since the saints are dressed in white robes washed in the blood of the Lamb and He is the best of them) and rejects unto death those who rejected Him.

- Whose blood is on your robe? The blood of the King that washes white as snow and subjects you to eternal glory or the blood of your own sin, scarlet and blatant and subject to eternal judgment?

5) Followed by the armies of heaven, robed in fine linen, white and pure, and riding white horses

- Who are these armies?
 - Angels? (2 Kings 6:15-18)
 - Saints?
- **Revelation 17:14 (ESV) ¹⁴ They will make war on the Lamb, and the Lamb will conquer them, for he is Lord of lords and King of kings, and those with him are called and chosen and faithful.”**
 - While “the armies of heaven” could be angelic (12:7), it is more likely, given they are dressed as those included in the Bride, that these are believers accompanying the Christ wherever He goes (14:4).
 - Rev 17:14 suggests these are the elect who have been faithful
 - to the call of God
 - and to persevere in the faith
 - They hear Christ’s call to the churches to live in repentance and faithfulness
 - They wholeheartedly obey so that they are not caught up in the deceit of the beasts nor of Babylon
 - The fact that they are riding white horses, as does the King, suggests they are like the King in some relational way and entitled by virtue of that relation to present themselves as He does.
 - Since Christ is both fully God and fully human
 - And since Christ represents all humanity in God-related

heavenly things

- It seems appropriate that they are following their Representative, having been made like Him through faith and faithfulness and the indwelling Holy Spirit, to continue to do as He does and for the reason He does it, in realizing their victory not only over their own sin but sinfulness in the realm of creation.

6) Sharp sword in his mouth to strike down the nations

- The Revelation of the Mind of God for the Rebellious Nations
 - Intent - “from His mouth”
 - The mouth is the typical mechanism among human beings for communicating the mind and the will
 - The mouth is the typical vehicle for self-revelation
 - That the sword comes from the mouth of Christ indicates not only words of justice but words of self-revelation that call for honor and worship, and where those fail, judgment!
 - Since Jesus is the word of God incarnate, that the sword comes from His mouth further advances that He and that which proceeds from Him are one.
 - Ability - “a sharp sword with which to”
 - A sword is a means to an end
 - Motivated by the heart the will is enabled by ability and means
 - Strategy - “to strike down”
 - Render subordinate through applied just authority
 - Bring to an end through greater power and (in God’s case) divine right
 - Target -
 - “the nations” -
 - all those who continue to dwell upon the earth having ignored the warnings of the three angels in ch. 14
- “From His mouth” Comparisons within Revelation
 - What comes from the mouth of those in Revelation who are mentioned having something symbolically significant coming “from their mouth”?

○ Jesus

- **Revelation 1:16** *In his right hand he held seven stars, from his mouth came a sharp two-edged sword, and his face was like the sun shining in full strength.*
- **Revelation 2:16** *Therefore repent. If not, I will come to you soon and war against them with the sword of my mouth.*
- **Revelation 3:16** *So, because you are lukewarm, and neither hot nor cold, I will spit you out of my mouth.*
- **Revelation 19:15** *From his mouth comes a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations, and he will rule them with a rod of iron. He will tread the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God the Almighty.*
- **Revelation 19:21** *And the rest were slain by the sword that came from the mouth of him who was sitting on the horse, and all the birds were gorged with their flesh.*

○ Witnesses

- **Revelation 11:5** *And if anyone would harm them, fire pours from their mouth and consumes their foes. If anyone would harm them, this is how he is doomed to be killed.*

○ Dragon & Beasts

- **Revelation 12:15** *The serpent poured water like a river out of his mouth after the woman, to sweep her away with a flood*
- **Revelation 12:16** *But the earth came to the help of the woman, and the earth opened its mouth and swallowed the river that the dragon had poured from his mouth.*
- **Revelation 13:2** *And the beast that I saw was like a leopard; its feet were like a bear's, and its mouth was like a lion's mouth. And to it the dragon gave his power and his throne and great authority.*
- **Revelation 13:5** *And the beast was given a mouth uttering haughty and blasphemous words, and it was allowed to exercise authority for forty-two months.*

- **Revelation 15:6** *It opened its mouth to utter blasphemies against God, blaspheming his name and his dwelling, that is, those who dwell in heaven.*
- **Revelation 16:13** *And I saw, coming out of the mouth of the dragon and out of the mouth of the beast and out of the mouth of the false prophet, three unclean spirits like frogs.*
- A Sharp Sword
 - **1 Samuel 17:47 (ESV)** ⁴⁷ *and that all this assembly may know that the LORD saves not with sword and spear. For the battle is the LORD's, and he will give you into our hand."*
 - How Does God Use a Sword?
 - To protect from intrusion - **Genesis 3:24 (ESV)** ²⁴ *He drove out the man, and at the east of the garden of Eden he placed the cherubim and a flaming sword that turned every way to guard the way to the tree of life.*
 - To punish the wicked -
 - **Exodus 32:34 (ESV)** ²⁴ *and my wrath will burn, and I will kill you with the sword, and your wives shall become widows and your children fatherless.*
 - **Deuteronomy 32:41-42 (ESV)** ⁴¹ *if I sharpen my flashing sword and my hand takes hold on judgment, I will take vengeance on my adversaries and will repay those who hate me. ⁴² I will make my arrows drunk with blood, and my sword shall devour flesh— with the blood of the slain and the captives, from the long-haired heads of the enemy.'*
 - **Isaiah 66:16 (ESV)** ¹⁶ *For by fire will the LORD enter into judgment, and by his sword, with all flesh; and those slain by the LORD shall be many.*
 - To persuade the arrogant - **Numbers 22:31 (ESV)** ³¹ *Then the LORD opened the eyes of Balaam, and he saw the angel of the LORD standing in the way, with his drawn sword in his hand. And he bowed down and fell on his face.*

- To preserve His people - **Deuteronomy 33:29 (ESV)** ²⁹ *Happy are you, O Israel! Who is like you, a people saved by the LORD, the shield of your help, and the sword of your triumph! Your enemies shall come fawning to you, and you shall tread upon their backs.*”
- To provoke faith and faithfulness - **Joshua 5:13 (ESV)** ¹³ *When Joshua was by Jericho, he lifted up his eyes and looked, and behold, a man was standing before him with his drawn sword in his hand. And Joshua went to him and said to him, “Are you for us, or for our adversaries?”*
- To promulgate repentance - **Psalms 7:12 (ESV)** ¹² *If a man does not repent, God will whet his sword; he has bent and readied his bow;*
- To pursue justice - **Isaiah 27:1 (ESV)** ¹ *In that day the LORD with his hard and great and strong sword will punish Leviathan the fleeing serpent, Leviathan the twisting serpent, and he will slay the dragon that is in the sea.*
- To promote righteousness - **Jeremiah 12:12 (ESV)** ¹² *Upon all the bare heights in the desert destroyers have come, for the sword of the LORD devours from one end of the land to the other; no flesh has peace.*
 - **Ezekiel 21:9 (ESV)** ⁹ *“Son of man, prophesy and say, Thus says the Lord, say: “A sword, a sword is sharpened and also polished,*
 - **Ezekiel 21:11-12 (ESV)** ¹¹ *So the sword is given to be polished, that it may be grasped in the hand. It is sharpened and polished to be given into the hand of the slayer. ¹² Cry out and wail, son of man, for it is against my people. It is against all the princes of Israel. They are delivered over to the sword with my people. Strike therefore upon your thigh.*
 - **Ezekiel 30:25 (ESV)** ²⁵ *I will strengthen the arms of the king of Babylon, but the arms of Pharaoh shall fall. Then they shall know that I am the LORD, when I put my sword*

into the hand of the king of Babylon and he stretches it out against the land of Egypt.

- To particularize disciples - **Matthew 10:34 (ESV)** ³⁴ *“Do not think that I have come to bring peace to the earth. I have not come to bring peace, but a sword.*
 - To procure spiritual victory for faithful people - **Ephesians 6:17 (ESV)** ¹⁷ *and take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.*
 - To probe the real issues of the heart - **Hebrews 4:12 (ESV)** ¹² *For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart.*
 - To proclaim the character of the King - **Revelation 1:16 (ESV)** ¹⁶ *In his right hand he held seven stars, from his mouth came a sharp two-edged sword, and his face was like the sun shining in full strength.*
 - To purify the church - **Revelation 2:16 (ESV)** ¹⁶ *Therefore repent. If not, I will come to you soon and war against them with the sword of my mouth.*
 - To perpetuate the unobstructed Kingdom of God -
 - **Revelation 19:15 (ESV)** ¹⁵ *From his mouth comes a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations, and he will rule them with a rod of iron. He will tread the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God the Almighty.*
 - **Revelation 19:21 (ESV)** ²¹ *And the rest were slain by the sword that came from the mouth of him who was sitting on the horse, and all the birds were gorged with their flesh.*
- The Sword of the Lord
- The sword is clearly a picture of authority and capacity to judge the sinful, wayward nations of the earth that have followed the beasts and the dragon
 - The sword may be an actual physical sword capable of destroying all the enemies of God assembled against him (king of Babylon against Jerusalem) or,

- The sword may be a symbol of something even more powerful
 - The righteous glory of God against which are all judge and deserving death
 - The powerful word of God whereby God proclaims His glory and their sentence of death
 - The sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God
 - *everything God does in the realm of creation He does through the Holy Spirit (the Spirit is the member of the Trinity at work in the world)
- The sword in the mouth of Jesus
 - The sword in Rev 19:15 may be the sword of the Spirit and indicate the power of God to physically accomplish the full intent of God delivered and done through His word
 - “God said” and “it was so” - God brings what He speaks into existence, so if he speaks judgment upon those who dwell upon the earth, through His Spirit He brings it into existence within the realm of creation
 - So every promise of God (intent) are “yes” and “amen” in Christ (the word, and therefore the intent realized)
- The sword of the Lord in the mouths of His people
 - as is true of what comes out of the mouths of others, is not separate from His nature, which we already know is righteous, faithful, true, and powerful,
 - so, if the sword that wins the final victory is truth that comes from the True heart,
 - what should be the character of our words?
- Considerations for Us
 - Of Jesus
 - **Deuteronomy 18:18** *I will raise up for them a prophet like you from among their brothers. And I will put my words in his mouth, and he shall speak to them all that I command him.*
 - **Luke 4:22** *And all spoke well of him and marveled at the gracious words that were coming from his mouth. And*

they said, “Is not this Joseph’s son?”

- Of the church/Christian
 - **Job 23:12** *I have not departed from the commandment of his lips; I have treasured the words of his mouth more than my portion of food.*
 - **Psalm 19:14** *Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in your sight, O LORD, my rock and my redeemer.*
 - **Ecclesiastes 5:2** *Be not rash with your mouth, nor let your heart be hasty to utter a word before God, for God is in heaven and you are on earth. Therefore let your words be few.*
- 7) He will rule the nations with a rod of iron
 - “He will shepherd the nations with a staff of iron”
 - The word *poimenai* (Grk. “shepherd”) is used here just as it is in the LXX of Psalm 2:9
 - To care for as a shepherd for the flock
 - The word may also mean destroy as in the actions of a shepherd against the threats to the sheep
 - Likely both John and the LXX translators saw “shepherd” as the best word to encompass the compassion the shepherd/king has for the flock and the justice the shepherd/king will have for the enemies of the flock.
 - What Psalm 23 is to the people of God Revelation 19:15 is to the enemies of God.
 - Psalm 23 = How God shepherds/rules His people
 - Rev 19 = How God shepherds/rules His opponents
 - The rod of iron (“staff” cf. Psalm 23:4)
 - “Rod of iron is God’s word of accusation which will condemn the ungodly and consign them to perdition.”
 - The nations will see it as a rod of iron judgment
 - The “sheep” will see it is a staff of unswerving wisdom and mercy
 - When does Christ rule/shepherd the nations with this iron rod?
 - If ch. 20 is the chronological successor to ch. 19, then the ruling of

- the nations occurs during the millenium.
 - But if the “rest” are all destroyed by the word of His mouth at the end of ch. 19, who is left to be ruled in ch. 20?
 - The rule of Christ over the faithless nations does not need to extend beyond the moment of judgment in ch 19 to be complete.
 - Parallelism in 15a/15b
 - The two images, of sword and rod, express the same thought: Christ who is the ruler and shepherd of His people will be the Victor and Judge of the world that remains unrepentant and unforgiven.
 - It is likely then, that when the sword flies so does the rod.
 - 8) He will tread the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God the Almighty
- c) The Big Picture
 - 1) NOTE: All the descriptions in this passage symbolize attributes that Christ will exercise in judging the wicked.
 - 2) NOTE: “These attributes are not mentioned to focus on Christ’s possession of them before the judgment (that would be assumed) but to emphasize that it is through the judgment that they are exercised and demonstrated” Beale, G. K. (1999). The book of Revelation: a commentary on the Greek text (p. 959). Grand Rapids, MI; Carlisle, Cumbria: W.B. Eerdmans; Paternoster Press.
 - 3) The primary question for this passage is not, “Do I understand the symbolism?”
 - The primary question is, “Does this picture of Jesus delight your soul the way a Bride would be delighted in the fine looks of her Bridegroom?”
 - Does the reality of the person of Jesus Christ, King of kings and Lord of lords move you to marvel at God’s love for you and His plan for you, not only in this life, but in eternity to come?
 - Does this vision of the excellency of Jesus move you to greater faithfulness, greater worship, greater service of the great King?
 - 4) If you can ponder this revelation and walk away with but a yawn, something is wrong with the condition of your heart!
- (b) The Final Battle (Rev. 19:17-21)
 - i) Announced by an angel
 - a) Description
 - 1) Standing in the sun
 - 2) Calls with a loud voice
 - 3) To the birds “that fly directly overhead”

- 4) Come, gather to eat the flesh
- b) Significance
 - 1) This is no mortal conflict
 - 2) Heaven itself calls creation to the culmination of human rebellion and the final resolution of evil's conflict with God
 - 3) Nature is not called on to fulfill some extraordinary role but to do what it was created to do: scavengers to scavenge, sun to shine, birds to fly, etc
- ii) The beast and kings of the earth with their armies gather to make war "against him who was sitting on the horse" and against his army
 - a) Not called to conflict by the angel they come anyway because war, rebellion, and violence are their nature
 - b) There is a sense here that everything is doing that which is its nature
 - 1) It is the nature of angels to proclaim the will of God
 - 2) It is the nature of human institutions and armies to resist the will and purpose of GOD
 - 3) It is the nature of Christ to gain victory over his enemies and establish His eternal kingdom.
- iii) Beast and false prophet
 - a) Captured
 - 1) If these represent social institutions and systems, how can they be captured and cast?
 - 2) Every system of human government, every human institution has its leader (Hitler and the Third Reich, for example).
 - 3) When the leader falls, the institution falls (or vice versa).
 - b) Thrown alive into the lake of fire that burns with sulfur
 - 1) No court hearing (no saving effort from the dragon)
 - Powerless to save Babylon
 - Powerless to save representatives
 - 2) Immediate and final judgment at the hands of the rightful king
- iv) Rest are slain by the sword that came from the mouth of him who was sitting on the horse
- v) All birds were gorged on their flesh
- (c) The End of the Old King and the Old Kingdom (Rev. 20:1-15)
 - i) Notes from Beale
 - a) The precise thematic and temporal relationship of ch. 20 to ch. 19 is hotly debated. The following exegesis will argue that 20:1-6 refers to the course of the church age and

temporally precedes the final judgment, which has been narrated in chs. 17–19, and that 20:7–15 recapitulates the description of final judgment in 19:11–21.

- b) There are three predominant views of the millennium, though within each perspective there are wide variations of interpretation that cannot be cataloged here.
 - 1) Some believe that the millennium will occur after the second coming of Christ. This view is traditionally known as premillennialism.
 - 2) Postmillennialism has held that the millennium occurs toward the end of the church age and that Christ's climactic coming will occur at the close of the millennium.
 - 3) Others believe that the millennium started at Christ's resurrection and will be concluded at his final coming. This view has been called amillennialism, though it is better to call it, more simply, "inaugurated millennialism" since "amillennial" is vaguer.
 - 4) Postmillennialism and amillennialism have approached the passage more consistently according to a symbolic interpretation.
- c) Since 19:19–21 brings to a conclusion the plotline commenced but dropped after 16:16, then the Messiah's wrath in 19:19–21 coincides with the seventh plague of divine wrath in 16:17–21.
 - 1) On this basis, Christ's wrath in 19:19–21 ought to occur within the time scope of the seven bowl plagues, which 15:1 says "brings to conclusion the wrath of God"; 19:19–21 overlaps at least with the sixth and seventh bowl woes.
 - 2) If so, then the event of fiery destruction in 20:9 should also be included within the temporal framework of "the seven last plagues" in 15:1.
 - 3) There can be no divine wrath directed against the nations after the seventh plague, which coincides with Christ's second coming in judgment.
 - 4) Therefore, 20:8–9 cannot be another instance of divine wrath exercised against the nations after the events of the sixth and seventh bowl plagues and the synchronous events of 19:19–21, since the seven bowl plagues are said to "bring to conclusion the wrath of God" against the ungodly nations.

ii) Questions Needing Answers

- a) When does Jesus return relative to 20:1–6?
- b) Does 20:1–6 fulfill Ezekiel 38–39 and if so, how?
- c) How do we account for the threefold nature of Revelation: vision, historical, and symbol?
- d) What is the temporal relationship between the latter half of ch 19 and ch 20?
- e) What is the point of imprisoning Satan at the end of the age and then releasing him?

- f) How many battles are described in Revelation? 3? 2? 1?
- iii) The End of the Old King (Rev 20:1-10)
- a) The Old King Captured for a time (Rev. 20:1-6)
- 1) There is always a challenge in Revelation to allow Revelation to speak its won message in its own words without interference from outside sources.
 - We have learned to practice “scripture interprets scripture, and well we should, BUT, we ought first to let each scripture speak for itself and THEN hold that message up for clarification with the rest of scripture.
 - Revelation ought to be the first place we look for answers to questions raised by Revelation.
 - 2) The passage notes three events John saw
 - Satan bound (implying the effects in Christian experience of this event)
 - Thrones established (implying the effects in Christian experience of this event)
 - Martyrs resurrected and reigning (implying the effects in Christian experience of this event)
 - 3) What we know from the text
 - Verses 1-3
 - “Then I saw” - introduces a new vision that does not necessarily indicate a sequential development
 - What John sees in 20:1-10 is a vision and retains the characteristics of a vision
 - It is visionary - John actually sees what he describes and describes what he sees
 - It is referential - application to historically identifiable people or objects (e.g., early church saw Rome and Roman emperors in the imagery of Revelation)
 - It is symbolic - each component of the vision represents something grander and greater than the vision component itself; the substance is more than the symbol
 - An angel is always an authorized messenger communicating in the vision the mind, heart, and will of Him Who sits upon the throne
 - Jesus is the only person in Revelation who has keys that are not “given” to him
 - Cf Mark 3:27 (ESV) ²⁷ *But no one can enter a strong man’s*

house and plunder his goods, unless he first binds the strong man. Then indeed he may plunder his house.

- Binding 20:2 = chained
- Binding in Matthew 16:19, 18:18 means expelling from or receiving into the congregation
 - The outcome of applied, godly discipline, for the purpose of building Christ's unassailable Church, will be honored by God in heaven and earth
 - The binding here is in the context of the growth and development of the spiritual integrity of the church, not spiritual warfare of the individual Christian.
- The binding of the adversary, Satan, in ch 20 is the privilege and right of King Jesus alone. It is not the privilege or right of the Church or any individual redeemed Christian
 - Genesis 3:15 refers to Jesus alone; it does not apply to the church
 - The church (and by extension, individual Christians), once enslaved by birth and by choice to the evil one, has done nothing to save itself much less resist the evil one on its own power.
 - The church does not replace Christ figuratively or actually in the victory images of Revelation. The victory always belongs to Him and the church celebrates Christ Victorious!
 - Therefore, while the church may resist the evil one, and the church, with limited, granted authority, may cast out the satanic, the authority and power to bind Satan (the strong man) and plunder his house belongs to Christ alone.
 - The Christian has the power to resist Satan but not to bind him.
- Satan
 - Is bound by one more powerful than him
 - Remains bound and therefore limited in his ability to directly enact his will
 - Remains bound for a specific duration. He does not cease to exist nor does the influence of his prideful rebellion dissipate. He is not

under final judgment. His freedom and authority are curtailed for a time determined not by himself but by Someone else. (Thus the need for the beast and false prophet?)

- Cannot deliver himself or escape under his own power
- Primary role/power (deceit) is neutralized for the duration of the imprisonment.
- Release is necessary and lasts only a “little while.”

- Verses 4-6

● John sees thrones and authorized reps judging.

- We do not know the location of these thrones nor the identity of these judges except

- They are those to whom the authority to judge was committed.

■ There are others (martyrs) whom John sees who also reign with Christ for a thousand years

■ If “judging” and “reigning” are the same thing, then perhaps these two classes are actually the same people.

■ However, the two words are not the same and do not necessarily share the same functional responsibilities

*A king who reigns may also judge, but a judge rarely “reigns” as part of normal function

■ If the phrase “authority to judge” is, as Morris suggests, “justice was given for them,” then the picture may be that the fact of authorized judges sitting on thrones fulfilling their responsibility is the answer to the call for justice from the martyrs in 6:10.

- We do know that Jesus and other NT writers spoke of those who will “judge” in the coming Kingdom

■ **Matthew 19:28 (ESV)** ²⁸ *Jesus said to them, “Truly, I say to you, in the new world, when the Son of Man will sit on his glorious throne, you who have followed me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.*

■ **Matthew 20:23 (ESV)** ²³ *He said to them, “You will drink my cup, but to sit at my right hand and at my left is not mine to grant, but it is for those for whom it has been*

prepared by my Father.”

■ **Luke 22:28-30 (ESV)** ²⁸ “*You are those who have stayed with me in my trials,* ²⁹ *and I assign to you, as my Father assigned to me, a kingdom,* ³⁰ *that you may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom and sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel.*

■ **1 Corinthians 6:2-3 (ESV)** ² *Or do you not know that the saints will judge the world? And if the world is to be judged by you, are you incompetent to try trivial cases?* ³ *Do you not know that we are to judge angels? How much more, then, matters pertaining to this life!*

- In Revelation, the plural “thrones” is used only of the 24 elders [2xs] and here.)

■ **Revelation 4:4 (ESV)** ⁴ *Around the throne were twenty-four thrones, and seated on the thrones were twenty-four elders, clothed in white garments, with golden crowns on their heads.* (See also 11:16)

- We do not know who or what they are judging.
 - We do know that the fact of their presence is intended to support the gospel message
 - We do know that the fact of their presence is intended to encourage the church
 - We do know that the fact of their presence is intended to foster faithfulness in the church and in Christians

● Martyrs come to life and reign with Christ for a thousand years.

- John sees the souls (as he did in 6:9) but not the bodies, suggesting that this is a heavenly rather than post-final earthly reign.
 - Souls - *tas psuchas* (τὰς ψυχὰς) - exact same phrase in both 6:9 and 20:4
 - This *psucha* is not the same word as Paul uses of the glorified, resurrection body.

■ **1 Corinthians 15:44 (ESV)** *It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. If there is a natural body, there is also a spiritual body.*

■ “spiritual body” = σωμα πνευματικόν

- The martyrs are still in their “soul” state and not yet in their “spiritual body” state suggesting, at the very least, that this is not a picture of the final disposition of the saints.
 - AND, only the martyrs for Jesus are included here.
 - These are they who had been killed
 - For the testimony of Jesus
 - For the word of God
 - “They will be priests of God and of Christ, and THEY will reign with him for a thousand years.
 - The only people connected with reigning with Christ for this “millennium” are martyrs in the “soul” state and not in the resurrected, raptured church in the “spiritual body” state.
- Additional Defining Characteristics
 - These are they who had not worshiped the beast or its image
 - These are they who had not received the mark of the beast in any form
 - These are they who came to life and reigned with Christ 1000 years
- What sets them apart?
 - They are killed (beheaded)
 - Specifically killed for their faith relationship with Jesus
 - Specifically killed for refusing a delusional relationship with the dragon
 - Additional Characteristics
 - They come to life
 - Reign with Christ
 - For a long time
 - *(1000 years = more than lifetimes, abundant, uninterrupted)
 - *We do not know when this thousand years occurs (before, during, or after the vision).
- Significant parallels between 20:1-6 and 12:7-11 suggest the passages describe the same events and mutually interpret each other. (See Beale, p. 992)
 - They both describe a heavenly scene (12:7/20:1)

- They both describe an angelic battle against Satan and his host (12:7-8/20:2)
 - They both describe Satan cast down to earth/abyss (12:9/20:3)
 - They both describe the angel's evil opponent called "the great dragon, the ancient serpent, the one called the devil and Satan, deceiving the whole inhabited earth." (12:9/20:2.3,7-8)
 - They both describe a limited time for the activity of Satan (12:12b/20:3)
 - They both describe Satan's fall resulting in the kingdom of Christ (12:10-11/20:4)
 - They both describe the saint's kingship, based not only on the fall of Satan and Christ's victory but also on the saint's faithfulness even to death in holding to their testimony (12:11/20:4)
- The first resurrection
- This is resurrection is the resurrection of the blessed.
 - The question is: resurrection of martyrs only (God's further response to martyrs of 6:10) or resurrection of all saints?
 - *Revelation 20:6 (ESV) *Blessed and holy is the one who shares in the first resurrection! Over such the second death has no power, but they will be priests of God and of Christ, and they will reign with him for a thousand years.***
 - *Since those who participate in the first resurrection are those who reign with Christ a thousand years
 - *And since in the paragraph at hand, only those killed for their faith in Christ reign with Christ at this time,
 - *It would appear that the "first resurrection" is the resurrection of the martyred death to participate in the inaugurated reign of Christ, which is not someday but now
 - The only precedent in the chapter are the martyrs (which would be a significant concern for the persecuted Christians to whom the letter comes)

■ That makes all of 44:1-6 another historical overview of a kind with ch. 17 of church history relative to martyrs for the encouragement of Christians who remain alive and challenged to be faithful

* This is the result of Christ's resurrection

+ There is a resurrection of the martyrs

+ There is a resurrection of the faithful

+ There is a resurrection of the damned

- The first resurrection and the 2nd death

■ The first resurrection depends on faith in Jesus

■ The 2nd death applies to those with no faith in Jesus

* These remain dead in their trespasses and sins (Eph 2)

* These are not listed in the book of life

+ Have not been born again (John 3:5)

+ Have not experienced new creation in Christ (2 Cor 5:17)

+ Have not been known by Jesus (Mat 7:21-23)

+ Have not loved like Jesus (Mat 25:31-46)

■ The second death has no power over those who participate in the first resurrection. This means there is:

* No subsequent death of the body

* No subsequent separation of the spirit from God (which is the essence of the second death.)

- This all suggests that while John saw an actual 1000 year period in this vision, the real vision carries not a literal but a symbolic point in regards to history: the application of the message of the vision is to those living in time regarding events outside time.

- But, there is most certainly a resurrection for all those who die in Christ!

■ **Romans 6:5 (ESV)** *For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we shall certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his*

■ **Philippians 3:10-11 (ESV)** ¹⁰ *that I may know him and the power of his resurrection, and may share his sufferings, becoming like him in his death,* ¹¹ *that by any*

means possible I may attain the resurrection from the dead.

*1 Thessalonians 4:13-18

*1 Corinthians 15:1-58 (52)

- An apparent resurrection of the damned is described in 20:11-15 (though John never mentions a “second” resurrection.)

4) We do not know with certainty whether the millennium is the church age between the resurrection and return of Jesus or whether it is a future specific period of time or whether this is symbolic of a span of time that is long but has limits set by God.

5) If this is a symbolic vision, then what is its purpose here in the Revelation?

- How does this vision reveal something of the person, purpose, or nature of King Jesus?
- How does this vision support faith and faithfulness among God’s people?

b) The Old King released, rebels (Rev. 20:7-8)

1) Review of approach

- Questions we are asking:
 - Is this a detailed outline of the sequence of events that surround the final establishment of God’s eternal kingdom in Christ? **No**
 - Is this a revelation unable to stand on its own requiring integration with all other prophetic revelation in order to be adequately interpreted, understood, and applied? **No**
 - **Is this revelation God’s explanation of the experience of the church in the course of salvation history? YES**
 - Is this a revelation of the intent and understanding of God’s sovereign activity on behalf of His glory through the church in the time period from the resurrection of Jesus to His return? (cf. Rev 4:1 “Come up here and I will show you what must happen . . .”)
 - If so, then
 - What are we to understand about the visions?
 - How are they to be interpreted?
 - How is the church to respond? **Faithfulness**
- *While we know that Faithfulness = Faith + Obedience
- *What constitutes faith?

*What constitutes obedience?

- About the “Millennium” in particular
 - Is this a literal time period and when in history does it occur?
 - (This is currently the most popular interpretive strategy.)
 - Seems to distract from the more immediately significant message for the church as she experiences life on the world.
 - **KEY QUESTION:** If this is not a literal time period, then what point does the millennium vision serve in explaining the experience of the church in salvation history?
 - What is the message of the vision in the functional context of the book?
 - What does this vision tell us about Jesus the Coming King?
 - What does this vision tell us about the church’s experience in the period of time between the resurrection of Christ and His final return?
 - The answer to this question will have application to every church and every Christian throughout the days of our sojourn while we await His return
 - Which means, at least, that every generation will find activities in their experience that relate to descriptions of events within these divine visions.
 - Which is why every generation seems to have reason to expect theirs is the final generation.

2) The Old King Released

- Moves from a concern in the previous paragraph for Christian martyrs to concern regarding the remaining church and peoples of the world
- When the thousand years of imprisonment have ended
 - Satan will be released from his prison
 - Released, not escaped!
 - There remains an authoritative plan that is not in control of the dragon but of God
 - Satan will come out to deceive the nations that are at the four corners of the earth, Gog and Magog
 - Deceives the nations
 - God calls but Satan deceives

- God cause His will but Satan must convince of his will
 - Note the personal intervention now.
 - Note deceit by a system (as in beast and false prophet) but by Satan personally
 - Compare Job
 - * Job personally attacked by Satan
 - * Church generally opposed by satanic forces
 - * Is there an indication here that a time will come when Satan directly personally interferences with the nations as he did in the days of Job?
 - Satan will gather them for battle
 - not content with merely deceiving (false belief) he will lead humans into rebellion/faithlessness (false action)
- c) The Battle of Gog and Magog (Rev. 20:9a)
 - 1) The inclusions for this battle are “a great multitude that no one could number, from every nation, and from all tribes, peoples and language.” (Cf. 7:9); specifically,
 - They come from “the nations that are at the four corners of the earth”
 - Their number is “like the sand of the sea.”
 - A reference both to the uncountable number
 - Overwhelming odds in favor of the army over the saints
 - Describes the feeling, perhaps, of persecuted Christians, but not the full reality
 - And, perhaps, to the promise God made to Abraham about the number of his (and thus God’s) covenant descendants
 - John presents Satan’s strategy of deception as a “look alike” or “bait and switch” deception
 - How often are the undisciplined among the church prey to this strategy (when the enemy comes looking like an angel of light)?
 - What can we do?
 - “I’m teaching you. Who are you teaching?”
 - The command to discipling has never been rescinded!
 - This looks like, again, another of the dragon’s efforts to present himself as equal or superior to God by having an oppositional following equal to or greater than that of the true King

2) The army

- Marches up over the broad plain of the earth
 - Speaks of the vastness of the army
 - And the emptiness of the earth (no obstacles/opposition)
- Surround
 - the camp of the saints
 - Figurative language for the whole church. Jewish and Gentile, throughout the whole earth
 - Implications
 - The army has the whole earth
 - The saints have a camp and a city
 - The comparison speaks to the reality of the church's experience in the world: even when we think we are the majority, we are, in fact, the minority.
 - Note that the saints are still on earth and still facing the wrath of the dragon (and the beast who has been given authority to overcome them).
 - There seems to be no concern for a linear, sequential puzzle here.
 - This explains the general experience of the church in every emanation of the church age, just as the seven letters at the beginning of the book as easily represent and describe the experience of the church at any given moment of its existence.
 - In this world, while the world endures and until the saints are removed to heaven, they will face the opposition of the enemy, and, at some point, they will face the fiercest opposition ever!
 - and the beloved city
 - The place in which God causes His name to dwell
 - cf. **Revelation 3:12 (ESV)** *The one who conquers, I will make him a pillar in the temple of my God. Never shall he go out of it, and I will write on him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, the new Jerusalem, which comes down from my God out of heaven, and my*

own new name.

- Another reference to the whole people of God among whom He dwells (foreshadows the next two chapters)

d) The Old King Captured and Judged (Rev. 20:9b-10)

- Fire came down from heaven and consumed the army
 - **Psalm 11:4-6 (ESV) ⁴ *The LORD is in his holy temple; the LORD's throne is in heaven; his eyes see, his eyelids test the children of man. ⁵ The LORD tests the righteous, but his soul hates the wicked and the one who loves violence. ⁶ Let him rain coals on the wicked; fire and sulfur and a scorching wind shall be the portion of their cup.***
 - The wages of sin is always death
 - The dragon is unable to prevent the destruction of his army, those he has deceived into following him
 - There is no preserving grace when God passes judgment, therefore, seek grace before judgment comes (as it surely will).
- The devil
 - was thrown into the lake of fire and sulfur where the beast and false prophet were
 - will be tormented day and night forever.
- What is missing?
 - A court trial
 - A pronouncement of guilt
- This is a pure expression of sovereign authority by the only One who can judge justly!

iv) Another vision: The Subjects of the Old Kingdom Judged (Rev. 20:11-15)

a) A great white throne and him who was seated on it. (Rev. 20:11)

- 1) From his presence earth and sky fled away (creation);
- 2) no place was found for them.
 - The one upon the throne is all in all!
 - The old has passed away; behold I make all things new
 - Remember that the old creation was cursed and has been awaiting the full and final redemption of the children of God
 - There is no place in the presence of God for that which is cursed
 - As there is no place for earth and sky, so there will be no place for the unredeemed element of humanity in the

presence of the One who sits on the throne.

- Earth and sky will be recreated (rather than merely renewed, i.e., finding another place for them)
- Humanity has already had the option of renewal and declined
- They are not recreated, they are rejected, and retired to the place reserved for the devil and his angels (who cannot either be redeemed and who also will not be “recreated.”) [Mat. 25:41]

b) Book of deeds, book of life (Rev. 20:12-13)

1) I saw the dead

- great and small
- standing before the throne

2) Books were opened

- Remember back to one of the early dilemmas John faced in the heavenly visions: who is worthy to open the scroll
 - One can assume Who is worthy to open the books
 - One can also assume that some measure of evaluating worthiness is also present in this vision
 - Who is worthy to stand before the King as He judges the people of the world?
 - What worthiness counts?
 - Worthiness in our own eyes?
 - Worthiness in the eyes of the Lamb and Him Who sits upon the throne?
- A misconception? The books represent records kept in heaven, and, since they are used to judge the peoples of the earth, must represent the life deeds of each individual to have lived in the history of the world. (Thus vs. 12b)
- All are judged
 - by what was written in the books
 - Law and Gospels?
 - OT & NT?
 - If they are judged by what was written in the books, then the books must contain the legal code, the criteria by which deeds are judged

- according to what they had done
 - What they had done is compared with what is written in the books (the source of what they should have done)
 - They are judged according to how their deeds measure against the content of the books.
 - 3) The book of Life is opened
 - The books might well be the revealed will of God (law and gospel)
 - The book of life (since the wages of sin is death) would be the book of those who entrust themselves to the grace of God in Christ Jesus as determined by God in eternity past.
 - c) Sentencing (Rev. 20:14-15)
 - 1) Death, Hades - Lake of fire (Rev. 20:14)
 - Assuming that life lived fully in the presence of God's glory was the intent of God in creation, these two represent antithetical realities God does away with
 - The lake of fire is the place of final, ultimate separation from the goodness and glory of God.
 - The lake of fire is the fulfilment of the demands of those who knowingly and intentionally remove themselves from the will and work of God throughout their lives/existence
 - 2) Anyone whose name not in book of life - lake of fire (Rev. 20:15)
 - Final punishment - the justice of God fully manifest in creation
 - Final reward - the life of sin fully manifest in the experience of creation
4. The New Kingdom Comes (Theocracy Established and Christ is King in a New Kingdom) (Rev. 21:1-22:5)
- a. General Observations
 - (1) Final vision
 - (a) Completes sequence of the book
 - i) Chs 1-3 The Call to Faithfulness
 - ii) Chs 4-20 The Context for Faithfulness
 - iii) Chs 21-22 The Culmination of Faithfulness
 - (b) From the Vision of the King in Ch 1 to the Vision of the Kingdom in Ch 22-22
 - (2) Contrast of the ungodly Babylon and New Jerusalem
 - (a) Prostitute/Bride
 - (b) Ungodly/holy
 - (c) Destroyed/Established

- (d) Gaudy/Beautiful
 - i) Babylon
 - a) **Revelation 17:4-6 (ESV)** ⁴ *The woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet, and adorned with gold and jewels and pearls, holding in her hand a golden cup full of abominations and the impurities of her sexual immorality.* ⁵ *And on her forehead was written a name of mystery: “Babylon the great, mother of prostitutes and of earth’s abominations.”* ⁶ *And I saw the woman, drunk with the blood of the saints, the blood of the martyrs of Jesus. When I saw her, I marveled greatly.*
 - ii) New Jerusalem
 - a) **Revelation 21:1-3 (ESV)** *Having the glory of God, its radiance like a most rare jewel, like a jasper, clear as crystal.*
 - b) **Revelation 21:18-21 (ESV)** ¹⁸ *The wall was built of jasper, while the city was pure gold, like clear glass.* ¹⁹ *The foundations of the wall of the city were adorned with every kind of jewel. The first was jasper, the second sapphire, the third agate, the fourth emerald,* ²⁰ *the fifth onyx, the sixth carnelian, the seventh chrysolite, the eighth beryl, the ninth topaz, the tenth chrysoprase, the eleventh jacinth, the twelfth amethyst.* ²¹ *And the twelve gates were twelve pearls, each of the gates made of a single pearl, and the street of the city was pure gold, like transparent glass.*
 - (e) Carried by a blasphemous beast/coming down out of heaven from God
 - (f) Filled with sexual immorality/Empty of sexual immorality (and the host of sins that dwell in Babylon)
 - (g) Inhabitants make war against the Lamb/Inhabitants dwell secure under the Kingship of the Lamb
 - (h) The contrasts serve to redirect Christian focus from the context of the world in which they live and struggle to the reality of the “how much more” of God’s glory that awaits them, and that even now they can experience this condition as truly authentic even though “through a glass darkly.”
 - i) **John 14:1-4 (ESV)** ¹ *“Let not your hearts be troubled. Believe in God; believe also in me.* ² *In my Father’s house are many rooms. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you?* ³ *And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, that where I am you may be also.* ⁴ *And you know the way to where I am going.”*
 - ii) **Job 42:2 (ESV)** ² *“I know that you can do all things, and that no purpose of yours can be thwarted.*
- (3) Purpose of the vision: Persevere in faithfulness so that you may gain the prize and participate in the consummated glory of the church
 - (a) **Philippians 3:14 (ESV)** *I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.*
 - (b) **Matthew 10:17-22 (ESV)** ¹⁷ *Beware of men, for they will deliver you over to courts and flog you in*

their synagogues,¹⁸ and you will be dragged before governors and kings for my sake, to bear witness before them and the Gentiles.¹⁹ When they deliver you over, do not be anxious how you are to speak or what you are to say, for what you are to say will be given to you in that hour.²⁰ For it is not you who speak, but the Spirit of your Father speaking through you.²¹ Brother will deliver brother over to death, and the father his child, and children will rise against parents and have them put to death,²² and you will be hated by all for my name's sake. But the one who endures to the end will be saved.

- (c) Think about the ways human beings (redeemed human things, that is) respond in a spiritual sense to adversity, tribulation, and affliction. The best response is the one that expands our appreciation of ultimate spiritual realities!

b. The New Kingdom (New Heaven and New Earth and New Jerusalem, New Everything!) (Rev. 21:1-8)

(1) Background Scripture:

- (a) What facts do these scriptures suggest about the new heavens and new earth of Rv 21:1?
 - i) Revelation (Immediate Context)
 - a) **Revelation 20:11 (ESV)** *Then I saw a great white throne and him who was seated on it. From his presence earth and sky fled away, and no place was found for them.*
 - b) **Revelation 21:1 (ESV)** *Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more.*
 - ii) Isaiah
 - a) **Isaiah 51:6 (ESV)** *Lift up your eyes to the heavens, and look at the earth beneath; for the heavens vanish like smoke, the earth will wear out like a garment, and they who dwell in it will die in like manner; but my salvation will be forever, and my righteousness will never be dismayed.*
 - b) **Isaiah 65:17 (ESV)** *“For behold, I create new heavens and a new earth, and the former things shall not be remembered or come into mind.*
 - c) **Isaiah 66:22 (ESV)** *“For as the new heavens and the new earth that I make shall remain before me, says the LORD, so shall your offspring and your name remain.*
 - iii) Peter
 - a) **2 Peter 3:7 (ESV)** *But by the same word the heavens and earth that now exist are stored up for fire, being kept until the day of judgment and destruction of the ungodly.*
 - b) **2 Peter 3:10-13 (ESV)** ¹⁰ *But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, and then the heavens will pass away with a roar, and the heavenly bodies will be burned up and dissolved, and the earth and the works that are done on it will be exposed.* ¹¹ *Since all these things are thus to be dissolved, what sort of people ought you to be in lives of holiness and godliness,* ¹² *waiting for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be set on fire and dissolved, and the heavenly bodies*

will melt as they burn! ¹³ *But according to his promise we are waiting for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells.*

- iv) Jesus
 - a) **Matthew 5:18 (ESV)** *For truly, I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not an iota, not a dot, will pass from the Law until all is accomplished.*
 - b) **Matthew 24:35 (ESV)** *Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away.*
- (b) There is an anticipation that everything in this world that does not fit God's personal character and original creation purpose for the world will be purged.
 - i) The "former things" will pass away
 - a) External context in which the people of God live out their lives of faith and faithfulness, a broken and corrupt world, will pass away into non-existence
 - b) But also the internal content with which the people of God understand their context, in other words, the internal values and attitudes and perspectives that enable us to live with the challenges of a fallen and corrupt world will also be made new.
 - 1) **Matthew 6:19-21 (ESV)** ¹⁹ *"Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal, ²⁰ but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. ²¹ For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.*
 - 2) Insight Questions
 - What kind of "treasures" can be laid up in heaven?
 - Why can the physical treasures of earth not be saved up for heaven?
 - Heaven is spiritual not physical
 - The values of heaven are not in the physical but in God Himself
 - ii) **What does this suggest about the descriptions of the New Jerusalem in Rev. 21?**
 - (2) What kind of "new"?
 - (a) New heaven and new earth
 - i) *Kainos* vs *neos* -
 - a) The word used here for "new" denotes qualitative newness rather than newness in time; refers to a change in quality or essence rather than something new that has previously never been in existence.
 - b) The idea here
 - 1) is the idea of new through resurrection/restoration therefore still identifiable with the old but essentially not the old.

- 2) The destruction of the old is not excluded any more than the destruction of the old body is excluded from the resurrection promise.
 - 3) cf. 1 Corinthians 15:35-38
 - c) This is not a new creation *ex nihilo* but a complete and permanent transformation
 - ii) The idea here is to “connote a radically changed cosmos, involving not merely ethical renovation but transformation of the fundamental cosmic structure (including physical elements.)” Beale, p. 1040
 - (b) No sea
 - i) “Sea” (per Beale, pg. 1042)
 - a) The sea as the origin of cosmic evil (4:6; 12:18; 13:1; 15:2)
 - b) The sea as the global totality of unbelieving, rebellious nations who cause tribulation for God’s people (12:18; 13:1)
 - c) The sea as the place of the dead (20:13)
 - d) The sea as the primary location of the world’s idolatrous trade activity (18:10-19)
 - e) The sea as a literal body of water, sometimes mentioned with “the earth” to denote the whole of the old creation.
 - ii) cf. 21:1 and 21:4 -
 - a) Based on the use of the phrase “former things have passed away”
 - b) Based on the use of the word “sea” to denote the masses of the old world responsible for the tribulations and persecutions and executions of believers
 - c) Based on the promise that tears will be wiped from the eyes and death will be no more, sorrow and death both being the experience of believers at the hands of the world,
 - d) It would seem that the “sea,” though it likely encompasses all the uses in Revelation, specifically refers to the totality of unbelievers through whom the dragon’s fury has been wrought on the people of God.
 - (c) “Behold, I am making all things new!” (21:5)
 - i) God, who created the old order, establishes Himself as the direct source of the new order
 - ii) Heaven, earth, Jerusalem, the Temple, Eden, people - these are all part of the “new” introduced chs. 21-22. They will be identifiable but essentially different than what came before
- (3) New Jerusalem
- (a) Identification Questions
 - i) Is this Jerusalem a geopolitical entity (an actual, physical city with a defined location)?
 - ii) Is this Jerusalem a sociopolitical entity (a gathering of people with intermixed histories and generalized function)?
 - iii) Is the new Jerusalem a symbol of the people of God and their relationship to Him and to His

ultimate promises to them?

- (b) Facts to Remember
 - i) John is describing what he actually sees and actually sees what he is describing - a new city unlike the old one descends before him and he, obediently and faithfully, describes what he sees in words that reflect his understanding and comprehension.
 - ii) John's language throughout this book, and apocalyptic/prophetic language in general, have both immediate historical and future historical application (they can be temporal and symbolic at the same time!)
- (c) Personal Observations of Rev 21:2-4
 - i) John introduces the new Jerusalem in specific contrast to the old Jerusalem and old Babylon.
 - a) This city is "new" along with the new heavens and the new earth
 - b) It is part and parcel of the new order and should not be confused as a restoration/reincarnation of anything Babylon was
 - ii) The new Jerusalem remains holy
 - a) Holy is both a matter of position and condition
 - 1) Position - set apart for God
 - 2) Condition - of the same character of God
 - b) It is the holy city both for who it belongs to and the condition in which it exists!
 - iii) The new Jerusalem is not the work of human architects or contractors, it comes down out of heaven from God
 - a) Heavenly means having the characteristics of life lived in the presence of the Most High
 - b) From God suggests He is directly responsible for both its existence and its character.
 - iv) The new Jerusalem is prepared
 - a) Not happenstance but intentional, the intentionality being on God's part
 - b) God has prepared this city
 - v) The new Jerusalem is presented as a bride adorned for her husband
 - a) The metaphor certainly carried with it nuances of the preparations and success a woman has preparing for marriage
 - b) There is also the fact of the Bride in 19:7 having made herself ready. The parallel should not be overlooked or dismissed.
 - c) The Bride is not the prostitute.
 - 1) Babylon seduced the world for her benefit
 - 2) The Bride loves the Lamb for His glory
 - vi) The new Jerusalem is announced by God as His eternal dwelling place and stated as being "with man."

- a) The New Jerusalem could be faithful humanity, now finally fully redeemed.
- b) Or it could mean that God is present but separate in some substantial way.
- c) Two things are true
 - 1) The people of the “new heavens and new earth” will be God’s people
 - 2) God will dwell with them as their God
- d) The effect of this relationship
 - 1) He will wipe every tear from their eyes
 - 2) Death shall be no more
 - 3) Neither shall there be any
 - Mourning
 - Crying
 - Pain
- e) All the old/former things have passed away
 - 1) The work is God’s (v. 5)
 - 2) The work is done (v. 6)
 - 3) The work is reward for those who overcome (v.6b-7)
 - ▶ Thirsty drink from spring of water of life without payment (cf. Isa 55:1)
 - ▶ The one who conquers gains God’s promised heritage
 - ▶ The one who conquers gains a familial relationship with God
 - 4) The work carries consequences for the unredeemed (v. 8)
 - Who are they?
 - The cowardly
 - The faithless
 - The detestable
 - Murderers
 - Sexually immoral
 - Sorcerers
 - Idolaters
 - All liars
 - What are the consequences?
 - Their portion will be in the lake that burns with fire and sulfur
 - The second death
- vii) Whatever the New Jerusalem represents, it is not of the old order and it is directly related to the work of God completing the plan of redemptive salvation and filling the earth with the knowledge of His glory.

- (d) Biblical assertions regarding historical Jerusalem that shed light on the character of the New Jerusalem as the ultimate fulfilment of what the former Jerusalem was supposed to represent
- i) Psalms
 - a) Jerusalem as the place where God rules (sits His throne over His people and the nations of the world)
 - 1) Psalm 2:6 “As for me, I have set my King on Zion, my holy hill.”
 - 2) Psalm 9:11 Sing praises to the LORD, who sits enthroned in Zion! Tell among the peoples his deeds!
 - b) Jerusalem as the place from which God saves the peoples of the world
 - 1) Psalm 14:7 Oh, that salvation for Israel would come out of Zion! When the LORD restores the fortunes of his people, let Jacob rejoice, let Israel be glad.
 - c) Jerusalem as the place where God dwells (and thus beautiful because of His presence)
 - 1) Psalm 46:4 There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God, the holy habitation of the Most High.
 - 2) Psalm 48:1–2 1 Great is the LORD and greatly to be praised in the city of our God! His holy mountain, 2 beautiful in elevation, is the joy of all the earth, Mount Zion, in the far north, the city of the great King.
 - 3) Psalm 50:2 Out of Zion, the perfection of beauty, God shines forth.
 - 4) Psalm 74:2 Remember your congregation, which you have purchased of old, which you have redeemed to be the tribe of your heritage! Remember Mount Zion, where you have dwelt.
 - d) Jerusalem as the place beloved and chosen by God Himself
 - 1) Psalm 87:2 the LORD loves the gates of Zion more than all the dwelling places of Jacob.
 - 2) Psalm 99:2 The LORD is great in Zion; he is exalted over all the peoples.
 - 3) Psalm 102:16 For the LORD builds up Zion; he appears in his glory;
 - 4) Psalm 132:13 For the LORD has chosen Zion; he has desired it for his dwelling place:
 - ii) Isaiah: Jerusalem as the site where God interacts with the people of the earth
 - a) Isaiah 2:2–4 2 It shall come to pass in the latter days that the mountain of the house of the LORD shall be established as the highest of the mountains, and shall be lifted up above the hills; and all the nations shall flow to it, 3 and many peoples shall come, and say: “Come, let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob, that he may teach us his ways and that we may walk in his paths.” For out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem. 4 He shall judge between the

- nations, and shall decide disputes for many peoples; and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war anymore.
- b) Isaiah 14:32 What will one answer the messengers of the nation? “The LORD has founded Zion, and in her the afflicted of his people find refuge.”
 - c) Isaiah 18:4-7 4 For thus the LORD said to me: “I will quietly look from my dwelling like clear heat in sunshine, like a cloud of dew in the heat of harvest.” 5 For before the harvest, when the blossom is over, and the flower becomes a ripening grape, he cuts off the shoots with pruning hooks, and the spreading branches he lops off and clears away. 6 They shall all of them be left to the birds of prey of the mountains and to the beasts of the earth. And the birds of prey will summer on them, and all the beasts of the earth will winter on them. 7 At that time tribute will be brought to the LORD of hosts from a people tall and smooth, from a people feared near and far, a nation mighty and conquering, whose land the rivers divide, to Mount Zion, the place of the name of the LORD of hosts.
 - d) Isaiah 28:16 therefore thus says the Lord GOD, “Behold, I am the one who has laid as a foundation in Zion, a stone, a tested stone, a precious cornerstone, of a sure foundation: ‘Whoever believes will not be in haste.’”
 - e) Isaiah 40:19 For a people shall dwell in Zion, in Jerusalem; you shall weep no more. He will surely be gracious to you at the sound of your cry. As soon as he hears it, he answers you.
 - f) Isaiah 46:13 I bring near my righteousness; it is not far off, and my salvation will not delay. I will put salvation in Zion, for Israel my glory.”
 - g) Isaiah 51:3 For the LORD comforts Zion; he comforts all her waste places and makes her wilderness like Eden, her desert like the garden of the LORD; joy and gladness will be found in her, thanksgiving and the voice of song.
 - h) Isaiah 51:11 And the ransomed of the LORD shall return and come to Zion with singing; everlasting joy shall be upon their heads; they shall obtain gladness and joy, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.
 - i) Isaiah 52:1 Awake, awake, put on your strength, O Zion; put on your beautiful garments, O Jerusalem, the holy city; for there shall no more come into you the uncircumcised and the unclean. (cf. Rev 21:2, 9, 26-27)
- iii) Prophets: Jerusalem as the seat of God’s sovereign reign over all the earth
 - a) Joel 3:16 The LORD roars from Zion, and utters his voice from Jerusalem, and the heavens and the earth quake. But the LORD is a refuge to his people, a stronghold to the people of Israel.

- b) Micah 3:12–4:2 12 Therefore because of you Zion shall be plowed as a field; Jerusalem shall become a heap of ruins, and the mountain of the house a wooded height. 4:1 It shall come to pass in the latter days that the mountain of the house of the LORD shall be established as the highest of the mountains, and it shall be lifted up above the hills; and peoples shall flow to it, 2 and many nations shall come, and say: “Come, let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob, that he may teach us his ways and that we may walk in his paths.” For out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem.
 - c) Micah 4:7 and the lame I will make the remnant, and those who were cast off, a strong nation; and the LORD will reign over them in Mount Zion from this time forth and forevermore.
- iv) Hebrews (NT): Jerusalem as a condition of heavenly derivation
 - a) Hebrews 8:1–2 1 Now the point in what we are saying is this: we have such a high priest, one who is seated at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in heaven, 2 a minister in the holy places, in the true tent that the Lord set up, not man.
 - b) Hebrews 11:10 For he was looking forward to the city that has foundations, whose designer and builder is God.
 - c) Hebrews 11:16 But as it is, they desire a better country, that is, a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for he has prepared for them a city.
 - d) Hebrews 12:18–24 18 For you have not come to what may be touched, a blazing fire and darkness and gloom and a tempest 19 and the sound of a trumpet and a voice whose words made the hearers beg that no further messages be spoken to them. 20 For they could not endure the order that was given, “If even a beast touches the mountain, it shall be stoned.” 21 Indeed, so terrifying was the sight that Moses said, “I tremble with fear.” 22 But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to innumerable angels in festal gathering, 23 and to the assembly of the firstborn who are enrolled in heaven, and to God, the judge of all, and to the spirits of the righteous made perfect, 24 and to Jesus, the mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood that speaks a better word than the blood of Abel.
 - e) Hebrews 12:28 Therefore let us be grateful for receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, and thus let us offer to God acceptable worship, with reverence and awe,
- v) Peter: Jerusalem as the center of God’s redemptive outreach
 - a) 1 Peter 2:6 For it stands in Scripture: “Behold, I am laying in Zion a stone, a cornerstone chosen and precious, and whoever believes in him will not be put to shame.”
- vi) Revelation: Jerusalem as the symbol of God’s presence with the faithful

- a) Revelation 3:12 The one who conquers, I will make him a pillar in the temple of my God. Never shall he go out of it, and I will write on him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, the new Jerusalem, which comes down from my God out of heaven, and my own new name.
 - b) Revelation 21:10–11 10 And he carried me away in the Spirit to a great, high mountain, and showed me the holy city Jerusalem coming down out of heaven from God, 11 having the glory of God, its radiance like a most rare jewel, like a jasper, clear as crystal.
 - c) Revelation 22:19 and if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God will take away his share in the tree of life and in the holy city, which are described in this book.
- (e) Tyndale Bible Dictionary:
- i) ***There are five passages elsewhere in the NT that help to fill in the background to Revelation 21.*** In Galatians 4:26 Paul speaks of “Jerusalem above,” the mother city of all who receive salvation by faith, as opposed to the old Jerusalem, where those belong who seek to please God by trying to obey the law (v 25). In Ephesians 5:25–32 he speaks of the bride of Christ, by which he means the church; in John’s vision the “bride” is the “city” (Rv 21:9–10). In Philippians 3:20 we are told that the heavenly city is not simply the future home of believers but also the place of their present “citizenship.” Hebrews 12:22 makes the same point: those who believe have arrived already at the “heavenly Jerusalem.” In other words, this Jerusalem is the home of all God’s believing people, Jew and Gentile, from OT and NT times, and it seems not only to be future but also to exist already, in some sense, in the present.
 - a) **Galatians 4:25-26 (ESV)** ²⁵ Now Hagar is Mount Sinai in Arabia; she corresponds to the present Jerusalem, for she is in slavery with her children. ²⁶ But the Jerusalem above is free, and she is our mother.
 - b) **Ephesians 5:25-32 (ESV)** ²⁵ Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, ²⁶ that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, ²⁷ so that he might present the church to himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish. ²⁸ In the same way husbands should love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. ²⁹ For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ does the church, ³⁰ because we are members of his body. ³¹ “Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.” ³² This mystery is profound, and I am saying that it refers to Christ and the church.
 - c) **Revelation 21:9-10 (ESV)** ⁹ Then came one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls full of the seven last plagues and spoke to me, saying, “Come, I will show you the Bride,

the wife of the Lamb.”¹⁰ And he carried me away in the Spirit to a great, high mountain, and showed me the holy city Jerusalem coming down out of heaven from God,

d) **Philippians 3:20 (ESV)** But our citizenship is in heaven, and from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ,

e) **Hebrews 12:22 (ESV)** But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to innumerable angels in festal gathering,

ii) Meaning of the City

a) Some of those who expect a future Millennium (1,000-year earthly reign of Christ, between his second coming and final defeat of Satan) believe that the new Jerusalem belongs to the Millennium, because of certain indications that they think suit that period better than the eternal state that will follow it (Rv 21:24–26; 22:2). They visualize it as a literal, material city. It will presumably, then, be in the shape of a cube, or perhaps a pyramid, and some even picture it hovering like an immense spaceship above the surface of the earth.

b) Most millenniumers, however, and also many who do not believe in a millennium in the sense just mentioned, think that John is describing the city as it will be in eternity. They, too, may take it literally, or they think that giving the literal details in these chapters—the city's measurements, materials, and so on—is the only way in which John could describe something that is in fact indescribable (though nonetheless real).

c) In line with the message of the entire book of Revelation, many take the new Jerusalem to be the ideal city of God, which belongs not only to the future but also to the present. It exists here and now because it is a spiritual truth, not a material one. It is always “coming down ... out of heaven” precisely because it comes to men “from God” (21:2). The fact remains, of course, that everything John records in the last two chapters of Revelation belongs to a world that will only appear after the first heaven and the first earth have passed away—a world that is (to us, at any rate) still future.

d) Taking into account all these Scriptures, we may come closest to understanding the new Jerusalem if we see it as the community of Christ and his people, which will appear in its perfection only when this age has come to an end. Yet, in another sense, Christians belong to it already, and it gives them both an ideal to strive for in this world and a hope to anticipate in the next.

(f) Lexham Bible Dictionary

i) In Revelation 3:12, Christ promises to make victorious believers permanent pillars in His temple and to write on them the name of God and God's city—the new Jerusalem. Revelation 21:1–22:5 describes this temple-city in all its glory. *Note: According to Rev 21 there is no temple in the New*

Jerusalem, so both the “pillars” and the “temple” must be symbolic not of architectural manifestations but of the relationship between Christ and His people.

- a) Jerusalem, the holy city and the bride of the Lamb in which God dwells, replaces Babylon, the evil city and the great prostitute. Babylon falls under God’s wrath (Bauckham, *Theology*, 126–32).
- b) The new Jerusalem delivers all the promises made to Christian victors in Rev 2–3 (Boxall, *Revelation*, 312). The city is:
 - 1) God’s new-creation home (Rev 21:1–8);
 - 2) God’s worldwide temple (Rev 21:9–27);
 - 3) God’s restored Eden (Rev 22:1–5).
- ii) Revelation 21:1–5 begins and ends by proclaiming the passing away of the old (Rev 21:1b; 4) and coming of the new (Rev 21:1, 5; compare Isa 65:17). Various metaphors throughout this passage point to the fulfillment of biblical covenants:
 - a) The new Jerusalem will be God’s spotless bride rather than an unfaithful wife (Ezek 16; 23; Hos 1–3; Isa 49:18; 61:10).
 - b) Rather than a home to sin (Isa 1:21–3), the new Jerusalem will be where God dwells among His people in renewed covenant relationship (Exod 29:44–45; Lev 26:11–12; Isa 1:26; 52:7–8; Ezek 37:27; Zech 8:8; John 1:14; 11Q19.29.7–10; *Testament of Dan* 5:13; *Jubilees* 1:17, 26–29; note also the renewal of the Davidic covenant in Rev 21:7; compare 2 Sam 7:14).
 - c) The old reign of death and darkness will flee before God’s new creation (Isa 25:8; 51:11; 65:17–24; 1 Enoch 45:4–5; 91:16; 2 Enoch 65:9–10; 4 Ezra 8:51–4; 2 Baruch 44:9; 2 Pet 3:13).
- iii) In Revelation 21:9–27, an angel guides John through the dazzling new Jerusalem (Ezek 40:2–3; Zech 2:1–2; Rev 17:1–3).
 - a) The city is associated with the people of God.
 - 1) John hears of “the bride, the wife of the Lamb,” and sees “the Holy City, Jerusalem” (Rev 21:9–10).
 - 2) The gates are named for the 12 tribes and the foundations for the 12 apostles (1 Cor 3:9–17; Eph 2:19–22; 5:32; 4Q554.1.9–2.11; 11Q19.39.11–13).
 - 3) The new Jerusalem symbolizes God’s people (Rev 21:9–10, 12–14) and the place where He will dwell with them (Rev 21:3, 7–8, 24, 26; Osborne, *Revelation*, 733; Bauckham, *Theology*, 132–43).
 - b) The city needs no temple because it is a temple.
 - 1) Its materials recall Israel’s sanctuary and the high priest’s breastplate (Rev 21:11,

- 18–20; compare 4:3–6; Exod 25:3–7; 28:15–20; 1 Kgs 6:20–22, 30; 7:9–10; 1 Chr 29:2, 8; Isa 54:11–12; Tobit 13:16).
- 2) Its people are priests (Rev 22:3b–4; compare Exod 28:36–38; Isa 61:6).
 - 3) Its dimensions expand the temple’s most holy place into a world-encompassing city (Rev 21:16; 1 Kgs 6:20).
 - 4) Its luminous materials reflect God’s resplendent glory, and all impurity is excluded (Rev 21:22–27; compare Isa 60:18–21; *Sibylline Oracles* 5:420–33; 1 Enoch 45:5–6; 108:12–15).
- c) The city fulfills the mission of Israel and the Church as a light to the nations (Isa 49:6; Matt 5:14). The nations walk by its light and bring their glory through its open gates as an offering of worship (Rev 21:24–26; compare 15:4; Isa 2:1–5; 60:1–14; Jer 3:17; Zech 14:16–18; Tobit 13:11; 14:6–7; *Sibylline Oracles* 3:772–3).
- iv) In Revelation 22:1–5, the new Jerusalem is portrayed as a restored Eden.
- a) Eden was the source of a river that watered the earth and the tree of life (Gen 2:8–14); the water of life flows from God’s throne, and the tree of life heals the nations (Ezek 47:1–12; Joel 3:18; Zech 14:8; Psalms 46:4; Rev 2:7; 1 Enoch 25:1–26:3).
 - b) People, created to serve as priests in the garden (Gen 2:15) and kings in the earth (Gen 1:26–28), now fulfill their human vocation, worshipping and reigning forever before God’s throne.
 - c) Eden’s curse is reversed.
- v) Biblical Theological Synthesis
- a) Genesis 2 portrays Eden as a garden-temple, where God walked with His people. Adam’s role was both priestly—to maintain and keep the garden-sanctuary—and royal—to rule and subdue the earth. God intended the Edenic temple to expand and fill the earth (Beale, Temple, 81–167; Jubilees 8:19).
 - 1) At the fall, humans were driven out of God’s sanctuary and banished from the tree of life (Gen 3:23; compare 3 Enoch 5:1–14).
 - 2) Heaven and earth separated.
 - b) In the Old Testament tabernacle and temple, God lived among His people, who were called to be a kingdom of priests and a holy nation (Exod 15:17; 19:6; Lev 26:12), but sin led to Israel’s exile. In Jesus, God lived among His people (John 1:14; Matt 1:23). He was the perfect priest and king that Adam and Israel had failed to be. The Church is now the holy community in which God lives by His Spirit (1 Cor 3:9–17; Eph 2:21–22). It is a kingdom of priests who serve and worship God and mediate His presence to the world (1 Pet 2:9; Rev 5:10).

- c) In the end, the new Jerusalem will reunite heaven and earth and achieve Eden's intent:
 - 1) It is the worldwide sanctuary that Israel's temple pointed toward and Jesus' incarnation inaugurated.
 - 2) The new Jerusalem will be God's holy home, where "his servants will serve him. They will see his face ... and they will reign for ever and ever" (Rev 21:16, 22; 22:3–5 NIV; compare Exod 33:20; 34:29; Num 6:25; Pss 31:16; 67:1; 80:1–19; 4 Ezra 7:98).
 - vi) Taylor, M. H. (2016). [New Jerusalem](#). In J. D. Barry, D. Bomar, D. R. Brown, R. Klippenstein, D. Mangum, C. Sinclair Wolcott, ... W. Widder (Eds.), *The Lexham Bible Dictionary*. Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press.
- c. The New Jerusalem in Detail (Rev. 21:9-27)
 - (1) Beale
 - (a) notes (following Lohmeyer) that the remainder of the vision, from 21:9-22:5, can be divided "in the following thematic manner:
 - i) Initial view and appearance of the city (21:9-14)
 - ii) The measurements of the city (21:15-17)
 - iii) The material of the city (21:18-21)
 - iv) The internal features of the city (21:18-21)
 - v) The symbols of the presence of God in the city (22:1-5)"
 - (b) "21:9-22:5 is a recapitulation of the immediately preceding section of 21:1-8 that amplifies the picture there of God's consummate communion with his people and their consummate safety in the new creation." (Pg. 1062)
 - i) That God is real is the certainty of faith
 - ii) That God is present is the experience of faith
 - iii) That we will spend eternity with God in security and glory such as this world cannot know is the hope and goal of faith
 - iv) This makes the vision of the city and its message of the eternal dwelling of God in person with His people the summary statement of all Christian faith and experience
 - (2) The New Jerusalem in Detail
 - (a) John's Invitation to View the Bride, The Holy City (21:9-10)
 - i) The speaker
 - a) **Revelation 17:1 (ESV) *Then one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls came and said to me, "Come, I will show you the judgment of the great prostitute who is seated on many waters,***
 - b) The almost verbatim repetition of the invitation from the same (at least category of) angel

suggest there is an intention that the two visions be compared and that their ultimate purpose is in the comparison.

- c) Here “the world as it really is” vs “the church as it really is”
- ii) The invitation
 - a) John hears an invitation to see one thing but is shown another, suggesting that what he hears he is seeing identifies what he finally sees; it provides an interpretive clue.
 - b) John is invited to see “the Bride, the wife of the Lamb,” but is shown “the holy city Jerusalem coming down out of heaven from God.”
 - 1) Clearly the Lamb is not marrying an architectural feat of cosmic proportions.
 - 2) Marriage is not between people and objects but is an intimate relationship between persons!
 - 3) *The holy city Jerusalem coming down out of heaven from God points to God in intimate communion with his consummated redeemed people (the people of God as the dwelling place of God here!).*
- (b) The Initial Appearance of the City (21:11-14)
 - i) Coming down out of heaven from God (21:10-11; cf. 21:2)
 - a) Having the glory of God
 - 1) Possessing the sum of all God’s perfections, His personal Presence, within her
 - 2) But also possessing as character the glorious nature of God; the image of God fully restored, since, at heart, the image of God is the glory of God radiant in creation
 - b) It’s radiance like a more rare jewel, like jasper, clear as crystal
 - 1) It is not radiating in its own beauty but with the Light that is Christ
 - 2) Finally will we be done with the struggle against taking as our own the glory that belongs to God. His glory will shine and be the essence with which we shine in the universe.
 - 3) Some versions call the jewel “precious,” others call it “most rare.” What ideas are these descriptors communicating?
 - ii) It had a great, high wall with gates and foundations (21:12-14)
 - a) Questions:
 - 1) Why does the eternal city need a wall, let alone a “great, high wall?”
 - 2) Walls
 - Keep people in
 - Keep enemies out
 - But walls do something else:
 - Walls define the limits and in the inclusions

- Walls identify strength or weakness
 - Walls communicate concern or indifference
 - Walls express wealth or poverty
- 3) With these other “symbolic” functions in mind, why might the vision of the New Jerusalem include a “great, high wall?”
- b) Twelve gates and foundations
 - 1) Gates
 - At each gate an angel (Remember another gate guarded by an angel in the history of the world? That angel kept humans away. What do these angels do?)
 - On each gate the names of the twelve tribes of Israel were inscribed
 - Three gates on each side of the city
 - 2) Twelve foundations
 - Twelve names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb
 - QUESTION: Whose name is the 12th?
- c) Notice that the names of the tribes of Israel are on the gates not the foundation.
 - 1) That seems to be reversed since the tribes came first chronologically
 - 2) However, according to Beale (pg. 1070), “The reversal figuratively highlights the fact that fulfilment of Israel’s promises has finally come in Christ, who, together with the apostolic witness to his fulfilling work, forms the foundation of the new temple, the church, which is the new Israel.
 - 3) **Ephesians 2:19-22 (ESV) ¹⁹ So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, ²⁰ built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone, ²¹ in whom the whole structure, being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord. ²² In him you also are being built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit.**
 - Note that the foundation for the church rests on the apostles and prophets and includes Christ as the cornerstone.
 - Note also that the church is being built to together into a holy temple and a dwelling place for God, not only in this world but for eternity!
 - We see the full realization of these verses in Rev 21!
- (c) The Measurements of the City (21:15-17)
 - i) Notes:
 - a) The measurements, in one aspect, suggest the comparison between the immensity of

Babylon (that great city) and the infinite nature of the kingdom (equal to a greater area than the entire known Hellenistic world of the time.)

- 1) The city is foursquare: L, W, H all of equal measure
- 2) The wall measures 144 cubits
- b) Beale suggests that the size of the city compared with the size of the temple in Ez 40-48 symbolizes the inclusion of Gentiles as part of the true temple and Jerusalem.
- c) I am of the opinion that the actual measurements themselves, though they may be symbolic multiples of 12 are less the point than the fact of measuring and the comparative size of the measured city (new city vs old Babylon).
- ii) Question:
 - a) Why measure a city if that city represents the people of God in intimate communion with God?
 - i) What substance does the measuring and measurements point to?
 - 2) What is significant about either the act of measuring or the measurements themselves?
 - 3) Or, unless there is an actual city, why measure it?
 - b) What measuring symbolizes
 - 1) The city is complete
 - 2) The city is adequate
 - 3) The city is identifiable
 - 4) The city is more than Babylon ever was (in every detail)
- (d) The Material of the City (21:18-21)
 - i) Keep in mind that the “former things have passed away,” including the earth-bound desires and values that once impressed and imprisoned human affections.
 - ii) The material of the wall
 - a) Jasper,
 - iii) The material of the foundations
 - a) Adorned with every kind of jewel
 - 1) Adorned or “made beautiful by”
 - 2) Each foundation a single jewel
 - b) Semi-precious stones listed, one per foundation
 - 1) 12 stones on the breastplate of the high priest represented the whole people of God carried into the presence of the Most High
 - 2) 12 stones here represent not only the idea of the whole people in the presence of God but the whole people of God infused with the glory of God as a result of being

- physically in the presence of God
- iv) The material of the gates: pearls
 - v) The material of the city
 - a) Pure gold
 - b) Clear as glass
 - (e) The Internal Features of the City (21:18-21)
 - i) What is “Not” in the city
 - a) No temple
 - b) No sun or moon
 - c) No shutting of gates
 - d) No night
 - e) Three groups excluded:
 - 1) Nothing unclean
 - From Beale: 27 Those who do not submit to God will not be allowed to enter through the open gates but will be excluded forever from God’s healing and life-giving presence (see further the conclusions on 21:8; likewise 22:14–15).
 - This is the same group described in 21:8 (note the repeated mention of those involved in “abominations” and “lying”).
 - “Unclean” is added to stress that these people have defiled themselves through the abomination of idolatry and unfaithfulness to God; the connection with the notion of idolatry is apparent from 17:4–5, where “abomination” and “unclean things” refer to idolatry.
 - Included among these are people who may never have had association with the church, but the focus is on those who made profession of faith but contradicted it by their sinful lifestyle, which was the telltale sign that they were false believers and “liars” (see on 21:8).
 - Just as the physically unclean could not enter the temple of the OT, the spiritually unclean will not be allowed to enter the eternal temple.
 - Beale, G. K. (1999). *The book of Revelation: a commentary on the Greek text*. Grand Rapids, MI; Carlisle, Cumbria: W.B. Eerdmans; Paternoster Press.
 - 2) Nor anyone who does what is detestable

- The Greek word strongly denotes what is “abhorrent” so the question is, what is abhorrent to God?
 - The broadest answer, of course, is sin, but in the context of this verse, and this chapter, and this book, with its intent to call and edify the church to faithfulness in the face of spiritual opposition, one could, rightly I think, garner that here the word means “faithless,” such a recanting one’s faith in order to save one’s life under persecution.
 - However, one could also look for lists of sins throughout Scripture, and for narratives of sinful behavior judged by God, and know that these expressions of the sinful nature are also included here.
- 3) Nor anyone who does what is false
- **Ephesians 4:25** *Therefore, having put away falsehood (cf. 4:22), let each one of you speak the truth with his neighbor, for we are members one of another.*
 - The ongoing condition of the redeemed is a perpetual putting off the old self as often as its vestiges are revealed to us by the Holy Spirit through the word.
 - Those who obstruct or deny the sanctifying work of the Spirit by presenting themselves as humble disciples engaged in holiness but are not, are those who do what is false.
 - Thus, the lifelong work of sanctification, is the ongoing work of the Spirit preparing the soul for its eternal dwelling with God.
 - Surrender to His work! Trust me, it will be good for you!
- ii) What “Is” in the city
- a) The Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb
- 1) There is no need of a separate place for God to dwell in this city that is the people of God for he dwells in them
 - 2) His dwelling in and among them makes Him the occasion and context of their worship
 - 3) They don’t need a place to worship for they have Him in the place they are
- b) The glory of God and the Lamb is the Light of the city
- 1) Christ is the glory of God
 - **John 1:4-5** *In Him was life, and the life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.*
 - **Acts 7:55** *But he, full of the Holy Spirit, gazed into heaven and saw the*

glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God.

- **2 Corinthians 4:4** *In their case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelievers, to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.*
- **2 Corinthians 4:6** *For God, who said, "Let light shine out of darkness," has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.*
- **Philippians 4:19** *And my God will supply every need of yours according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus.*
- **Colossians 3:4** *When Christ who is your life appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.*
- **2 Thessalonians 2:14** *To this he called you through our gospel, so that you may obtain the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.*
- **Titus 2:13** *waiting for our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ,*
- **Hebrews 1:3** *He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature, and he upholds the universe by the word of his power.*
- **James 2:1** *My brothers, show no partiality as you hold the faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory.*
- **1 Peter 4:14** *If you are insulted for the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you.*

- 2) "Darkness" in a theological sense, is the absence of the active purpose and presence of God, so, where God is actively, purposefully present, there is Light!
- 3) That the city has no need of "created" Light means that God is actively, purposefully present in His people infinitely and indefinitely.

c) The nations and the kings of the earth

- 1) Remember the promise that the redeemed people of God will "rule" with him throughout eternity
- 2) These kings and nations, comprising the entirety of the redeemed and rescued people of God, bring their willing and humble submission to the throne of God continuously.
- 3) Speaks of perfected relationship between God and human beings, and thus between human beings

d) Fearlessness, security, confidence, peace

- 1) This comes from the figure of perpetually open gates and endless day.

- 2) Everything will be right, and there will be no cause for fear, for even death will not look in the city!
- e) Those whose names are written in the Lamb's book of life will be there.
 - 1) **Romans 8:29-30** *For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers. And those whom he predestined he also called, and those whom he called he also justified and those whom he justified he also glorified.*
 - 2) These are those whose names are written in the Lamb's book of life.
- d. The New Life in the New Kingdom
 - (1) The final vision - "then the angel showed me"
 - (a) River of the water of life
 - i) Bright as crystal
 - a) Relevant Scriptures
 - 1) **Ezekiel 1:22-28 (ESV)** ²² *Over the heads of the living creatures there was the likeness of an expanse, shining like awe-inspiring crystal, spread out above their heads. ²³ And under the expanse their wings were stretched out straight, one toward another. And each creature had two wings covering its body. ²⁴ And when they went, I heard the sound of their wings like the sound of many waters, like the sound of the Almighty, a sound of tumult like the sound of an army. When they stood still, they let down their wings. ²⁵ And there came a voice from above the expanse over their heads. When they stood still, they let down their wings. ²⁶ And above the expanse over their heads there was the likeness of a throne, in appearance like sapphire; and seated above the likeness of a throne was a likeness with a human appearance. ²⁷ And upward from what had the appearance of his waist I saw as it were gleaming metal, like the appearance of fire enclosed all around. And downward from what had the appearance of his waist I saw as it were the appearance of fire, and there was brightness around him. ²⁸ Like the appearance of the bow that is in the cloud on the day of rain, so was the appearance of the brightness all around. Such was the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the LORD. And when I saw it, I fell on my face, and I heard the voice of one speaking.*
 - 2) **Revelation 21:10-11 (ESV)** ¹⁰ *And he carried me away in the Spirit to a great, high mountain, and showed me the holy city Jerusalem coming down out of heaven from God, ¹¹ having the glory of God, its radiance like a most rare jewel, like a jasper, clear as crystal.*

- 3) **Revelation 22:1 (ESV) *Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, bright as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb***
- b) Understanding that God's glory is the essence of all that He is, the sum total of all His perfections, and not merely a characteristic He possesses is essential to understanding the picture here.
 - 1) God's glory, the essence of Who He is flows from Him
 - 2) God in all His glory chooses to share Himself rather than exist self-contained!
- ii) Flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb: a picture of glory shared, unrestrained, accessible
- iii) Through the middle of the street of the city
 - a) There is but one street in the city
 - 1) **Isaiah 35:8-10 (ESV) ⁸ *And a highway shall be there, and it shall be called the Way of Holiness; the unclean shall not pass over it. It shall belong to those who walk on the way; even if they are fools, they shall not go astray. ⁹ No lion shall be there, nor shall any ravenous beast come up on it; they shall not be found there, but the redeemed shall walk there. ¹⁰ And the ransomed of the LORD shall return and come to Zion with singing; everlasting joy shall be upon their heads; they shall obtain gladness and joy, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.***
 - b) One way to the throne of God and of the Lamb
 - 1) **John 14:6 (ESV) *Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.***
 - ii) Jesus remains, even in eternity, the one way the people of God access God's glorious person.
 - At no time and under no condition does anyone or anything replace Christ as our avenue of access.
 - Even in heaven and the eternal kingdom, there will NEVER be an occasion to claim, "We don't need Jesus anymore."
 - c) Along the one way, which all must travel to appear before the throne, grows the tree of life
 - d) And the heart of the way is the glory of God
- (b) The tree of life
 - i) The tree of life, seen in a vision of the new Jerusalem, is a picture of God's grace globally applied from history to history. It is a picture of grace applied in the old world fully manifested in the new world.
 - ii) Background Scriptures
 - a) OT

- 1) Genesis
 - **Genesis 2:8-9 (ESV)** ⁸ And the LORD God planted a garden in Eden, in the east, and there he put the man whom he had formed. ⁹ And out of the ground the LORD God made to spring up every tree that is pleasant to the sight and good for food. The tree of life was in the midst of the garden, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.
 - **Genesis 3:22 (ESV)** Then the LORD God said, “Behold, the man has become like one of us in knowing good and evil. Now, lest he reach out his hand and take also of the tree of life and eat, and live forever—”
- 2) Proverbs (where the “tree” is used metaphorically)
 - **Proverbs 3:18 (ESV)** She is a tree of life to those who lay hold of her; those who hold her fast are called blessed.
 - **Proverbs 11:30 (ESV)** The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life, and whoever captures souls is wise.
 - **Proverbs 13:12 (ESV)** Hope deferred makes the heart sick, but a desire fulfilled is a tree of life.
 - **Proverbs 15:14 (ESV)** The heart of him who has understanding seeks knowledge, but the mouths of fools feed on folly.
- b) NT (Revelation: only NT references)
 - 1) **Revelation 2:7 (ESV)** He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To the one who conquers I will grant to eat of the tree of life, which is in the paradise of God.’
 - 2) **Revelation 22:2 (ESV)** through the middle of the street of the city; also, on either side of the river, the tree of life with its twelve kinds of fruit, yielding its fruit each month. The leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.
 - 3) **Revelation 22:14 (ESV)** Blessed are those who wash their robes, so that they may have the right to the tree of life and that they may enter the city by the gates.
 - 4) **Revelation 22:19 (ESV)** and if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God will take away his share in the tree of life and in the holy city, which are described in this book.
- iii) General Observations
 - a) The presence of the tree of life reminds us that this Kingdom/Paradise is a restored Eden specifically and specially prepared by God for those who will live in eternal fellowship with Him.
 - 1) This occurrence, this “place” is neither random nor the result of any natural process

- 2) It is important to realize that the ultimate end of human existence is entirely designed and ordered by God and not by man.
 - 3) This world (creation) belongs to God and those who dwell in it belong to God and are there as a testament to and a tribute to His glory!
 - 4) Even life in the eternal city is a gift of God's glorious grace and is not a payment to those who have earned it through faith. They live because God has provided for their living!
- b) The tree also reminds us that the way to the previous tree was closed on account of sin but the way to eternal life has been restored through the sinless life and death of Jesus Christ.
- 1) We have access to eternal life once again, but only on account of Jesus.
 - 2) The debt we owe to God and to Christ is beyond measure.
 - 3) Every future hope we grasp and rely on is found in Christ and Christ alone!
 - 4) Thus the early worship scenes in Revelation are not only backwards looking for earth bound acts leading to redemption but forward looking for eternal joy which we have in Christ alone!
 - 5) "Those who have washed their robes in the blood of Christ (cf. Rv 7:14) and have sought forgiveness of their sin through the redemptive work of Christ, receive the right to the tree of life (22:14), but the disobedient will have no access to it." Elwell, W. A., & Comfort, P. W. (2001). In Tyndale Bible dictionary (p. 1274). Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers.
- c) The tree of life reminds us that death came into the world through man and through sin and that what God has always offered to us is life!
- i) Life through the covenant promises
 - 2) Life through the word
 - 3) Life through relationship
 - 4) Life through faith in His Son (who took death upon himself in order that we might obtain life through faith in Him)
- iv) On either side of the river
- a) Wherever God's glory touches creation, life thrives there.
 - b) The question whether the tree straddles the river or if there are trees on either side of the river is a grammatical not a logical problem, for the message is rooted in the relationship between the presence of the river and the presence of the tree in the city where God in all His glory dwells
 - c) If the phrase "tree of life" is collective, then the imagery is that not only will the future residents of the city have life, they will have it "more abundantly." There will be not just

- one tree of life but many trees of life all of the same species and function: life!
- v) New fruit each month (twelve different fruit)
- a) **QUESTION:** Will the tree's fruit continue to heal throughout eternity, or is this a one time healing the effects of which last throughout eternity?
- b) **Contributing details:**
- 1) **Revelation 21:4 (ESV)** *He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away.*
 - If, in the eternal kingdom, all tears have been wiped away and there is no more pain, what is left to be healed?
 - If there is not sorrow since there is not more death, then what is left to be healed perpetually?
 - 2) **Revelation 21:23 (ESV)** *And the city has no need of sun or moon to shine on it, for the glory of God gives it light, and its lamp is the Lamb.*
 - **Genesis 1:14-15 (ESV)** ¹⁴ *And God said, "Let there be lights in the expanse of the heavens to separate the day from the night. And let them be for signs and for seasons, and for days and years,"* ¹⁵ *and let them be lights in the expanse of the heavens to give light upon the earth." And it was so.*
 - If there are no sun or moon then it stands to reason there is no time to mark or measure
 - If there is no time to mark or measure then months which are measured and marked periods of time do not exist in the eternal city
 - Therefore, it is more likely that John is using a familiar imagery to describe an unfamiliar condition in the kingdom
 - 12 months of fruitfulness, taken in parallel with the use of twelves elsewhere in the book, suggests a complete healing
 - Beale (pg. 1108) "The best conclusion is that the healing effect of the fruit is figurative [symbolic] for the [completed] redemption accomplished by Christ, which will be consummated at his final parousia."
 - This idea that the leaves of the tree represent the completed work of Christ fits with the established purpose of the entire book (Rev 1:1) to reveal to God's servants the person and work of Jesus Christ on a personal, global/historical, and eternal future effect scale.

- vi) Leaves for the healing of the nations
 - a) What evidence does a tree produce that it is alive? Leaves.
 - b) Where does life for the tree of life come from? The river
 - c) Where does the river of the water of life come from? The throne
 - d) The big picture is that God Himself, in all His glory, is the source of life and eternal life for all those who believe: leaves are the evidence of life and the effect of grace!
 - 1) Thus, among the nations, all who believe find eternal life (healing from the effects of sin [death]) in the tree that lives and gives eternal life, which according to Rev 5:9 is Jesus Christ Himself
 - 2) NOTE: We sometimes sabotage good interpretation when we dissect details in a passage before we consider the big picture revealed in the passage.
 - By trying to figure out the leaves before we figure out the whole scene being described for us leads us to a misunderstanding of the meaning.
 - Look for the big picture first, then consider how the details convey the message of the big picture.
 - e) “In the eternal state, everything will be blessed, and the tree of life represents that blessedness. There will be perfect sinlessness, perfect government, perfect service to God, perfect communion, and perfect glory. It is impossible for us to imagine being totally separated from sin and living in a glorified state before God.” from - <https://www.gotquestions.org/new-jerusalem-healing.html>
- (2) The final condition (Five evidences for “healed” nations) (Rev 22:3-5)
 - (a) (1st Evidence of “healed” nations) No longer anything accursed
 - i) **Revelation 21:4 (ESV) *He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away.***
 - a) Physical things have passed away (the old earth and old heavens)
 - b) Prevailing spiritual conditions have also passed away
 - 1) **QUESTION:** What was accursed in the old world?
 - 2) Human race generally on account of Adam & Eve’s sin
 - Curse on Adam: the ground is cursed
 - Curse on Eve: the woman is cursed
 - Curse on serpent: the Adversary is cursed
 - 3) Covenant breakers in particular on account of personal sin
 - **Matthew 25:41 (ESV) *“Then he will say to those on his left, ‘Depart from me, you cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his***

angels.

● **Galatians 3:10 (ESV)** *For all who rely on works of the law are under a curse, for it is written, "Cursed be everyone who does not abide by all things written in the Book of the Law, and do them."*

4) Jesus specifically on account of global sin

● **Galatians 3:13 (ESV)** *Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us, for it is written, "Cursed is everyone who is hanged on a tree"*

c) All that exists in the new Jerusalem is free from curse

ii) Source Reports

a) Erdman's Bible Dictionary

1) CURSE. †The invocation of harm or injury upon a person (or people), either immediately or contingent upon particular circumstances; a malediction or imprecation.

2) To suffer a curse meant to be "cut off" isolated from the matrix of daily life and abandoned to the powers of decomposition and death. Accordingly, the curse was a severe form of punishment and an effective deterrent to antisocial behavior.

3) The curse played an important role in the communal and religious life of ancient Israel, functioning as an effective means of guaranteeing the terms of a covenant or other agreement. Various curses, frequently depicted in highly graphic terms, were appended to the list of covenant stipulations, invoking divine wrath upon the party who might disregard those terms (e.g., Lev. 26:14–33; Deut. 27:15–26; 28:15–68; Josh. 24:20; cf. Judg. 9:15; 1 Cor. 16:22).

4) In the New Testament, Jesus himself endured the curse through his passion and death (cf. Gal. 3:10, 13), yet in his great ministry of love commanded his followers to "bless those who curse you" (Luke 6:28; Rom. 12:14).

b) Tyndale Bible Dictionary

1) Among the Hebrews a curse, valid only within a covenant framework overseen by God, was spoken for the sake of justice. In the OT the curse was an integral part of a covenant relationship—between God and the community, between God and an individual, or among members of the community. To break the terms of a covenant was to merit the covenant curse or curses. A curse could be retracted by pronouncing a blessing (Ex 12:32; Jgs 17:1–2; 2 Sm 21:1–3).

2) Protection of a contract or treaty by invoking a curse on the violator was common in OT times. Sometimes a covenant was sealed by cutting up an animal and having

the covenanting individuals walk between the severed pieces; the slain animal symbolized the curse to befall the violator. God agreed to submit to such a curse on himself if he broke the covenant he made with the patriarch Abraham (Gn 15:7–21). Later, God accused the leaders and people of Israel of breaking their covenant with him and warned them of the consequences to follow (Jer 34:18–19).

An essential part of the covenant God made with Israel at Mt Sinai was the promise of blessings for keeping the covenant and curses for breaking it (Dt 11:26–28; 27:15–26; 28:15–68; 30:19; cf. Lv 26:3–39). Israel suffered those curses in the time of the prophets Jeremiah and Ezekiel; the covenant breakers, including the king, were threatened with a curse (Jer 11:3; Ez 17:11–21).

- 3) A special kind of curse was the ban or anathema. Strictly speaking, it was a vow to devote persons, animals, or objects under such a curse to God. All persons or animals under the ban were sacrificed or destroyed (Lv 27:28–29). The ban was commonly used in Israel's wars against its pagan neighbors. Sometimes everything was declared anathema (Jos 6:17–19), but normally only persons and heathen images were destroyed (Dt 2:34; 3:6; 7:2, 25–26—not even the melted gold of images was to be kept). To violate the ban by preserving any part of the cursed things was to come under the ban oneself. After the exile, the Jews did not practice the anathema (or ban) by putting people to death; people who violated a curse were excommunicated and put out of the congregation of Israel (Ezr 10:8). That meant that the person was no longer part of God's people and was considered “dead.”
- 4) Jewish synagogues practiced excommunication, or anathema, in the NT period (Lk 6:22; Jn 9:22; 12:42; 16:2). Later, Christians excommunicated persons by declaring them outside of the redeemed community (Mt 18:17) or “delivered to Satan” (1 Cor 5:5; 1 Tm 1:20). Both practices stemmed from the OT ban. Unlike that curse, however, the excommunication could be removed as soon as the person repented. Since the anathema branded a person as “rejected” or “cursed by God,” Saul of Tarsus, before his conversion, tried to compel Christians to renounce Christ by calling him accursed (cf. Acts 26:11). The NT promises that a time will come when “there shall no longer be any curse” (Rv 22:3, NASB).

iii) Accursed

- a) *Herem* - typically used of the ban of complete destruction placed on people because of sin
- b) **Zechariah 14:11 (ESV) *And it shall be inhabited, for there shall never again be a decree of utter destruction. Jerusalem shall dwell in security.***
- c) Beale

- 1) In the OT, *herem* is typically used of the ban or complete destruction placed on people because of sin (e.g., the Canaanites in the Hexateuch). There will yet be a final onslaught of the nations against Jerusalem to purify it from a segment of impure inhabitants (Zech. 14:2ff.). The point of Zech. 14:11 is that, after the final attack, a future time will come when purified Jerusalem will never again be threatened from the curse of destruction for her sin: “they will live in it, and there will be no more curse, for Jerusalem will dwell in security” (14:11).
- 2) John may also allude here to Isa. 34:1–2, where it is said that God has put the nations “under the ban” so that they will be judged. If this allusion is in mind, then Rev. 22:3 pictures the time when the converted from among the nations, who have become citizens of the new Jerusalem, will experience complete removal of the curse that was pronounced on them in the OT for their sinful disobedience.
- 3) Those inhabiting the new Jerusalem will be immune from the destructive curse that God sends on humanity for its sin, in fulfillment of Zechariah 14:11.
 - Those kept outside the city suffer the curse, part of which is eternal separation from the benefits of God’s presence (see 21:8; cf. 21:27; 22:15).
 - The others are able to dwell in the city because they have been delivered and definitively “healed” from the final curse because the Lamb suffered that punishment on their behalf (see on 21:27b; 22:2b).
 - The curse of physical and spiritual death set on the human race by Adam in the first garden is permanently removed by the Lamb in the last garden at the time of the new creation. In primeval time humanity was expelled from the garden sanctuary, and its entrance was thereafter closed to sinful humanity.
 - At the end time the redeemed will be ushered into that sanctuary again on the coattails of the Lamb’s work.
- 4) Even all the various physical sufferings and sorrows associated with the fallen condition of humanity, to which even the redeemed were susceptible, will be entirely removed and will no longer pose a threat in the new order.
 - This means not only that the saints will be free from the danger of separation from God but also that they will be secure from the entire range of persecutions and afflictions threatening them in the former world.
 - Therefore, the removal of the curse includes elimination of both physical and spiritual evils.

(b) (2nd Evidence of “healed” nations) The throne of God and of the Lamb will be in it (the city)

- i) The curse remains where God is not
 - ii) Where God is, the curse is not
 - (c) (3rd Evidence of “healed” nations) His servants will worship Him
 - i) His servants - priests unto God
 - ii) Will worship Him
 - iii) They will see His face - as Jesus does, as Moses did
 - iv) His name will be on their foreheads - as dedicated to God and belonging solely to him
 - (d) (4th Evidence of “healed” nations) Night will be no more
 - i) No need of light of lamp or sun
 - ii) The Lord God will be their light
 - (e) (5th Evidence of “healed” nations) They will reign forever and ever.
 - i) The restoration of the right and function to reign is the final restoration of dominion in the new Eden that was lost in the old Eden
 - ii) What Jesus was for humanity in his life and death, he now restores to humanity forever
 - iii) Never be another “tree of the knowledge of good and evil” test
 - iv) The image of God is restored permanently among the image-bearers.

II. The Return of the King

(Rev. 22:6-21)

A. General Observations from Beale: The Relationship Between the Introduction and the Epilogue

1. This segment is the formal conclusion to the whole book and is especially linked with the introduction in 1:1–3 in that
 - a. both identify the book as a communication from God (using the language of Dan. 2:28–29, 45),
 - b. both highlight John as a “witness” to the revelation that he has received, and
 - c. both emphasize that the revelation is a “prophecy” communicated to “hearers.”
 - d. But
 - (1) the introduction pronounces a blessing on all who obey the revelation,
 - (2) whereas the conclusion now issues an emphatic curse on all who disobey the revelation. Beale, G. K. (p. 1122).
2. The epilogue now shows clearly that the purpose of the book is to induce holy obedience among God’s people so that they may receive the reward of salvation.
3. There is no explicit flow of thought in 22:6–21 but merely a series of repeated exhortations based on prior portions of the Apocalypse, each of which is concluded with an interjection concerning Christ’s coming (though 22:17 may not refer to Christ’s coming). Beale, G. K. (p. 1123).
4. The repeated exhortations to holiness are the main point of the epilogue, since they are supported by the exclamations about Christ’s coming.

B. Final Speakers Sequence

1. The Angel

2. Jesus
3. John

C. The Message of the Angel

1. These words are trustworthy and true.
2. The Lord, the God of the spirits of the prophets has sent his angel to show his servants what must soon take place.
3. You must not do that! I am a fellow servant with you and your brothers the prophets and with those who keep the words of this book.
4. Worship God!
5. Do not seal up the words of the prophecy of this book, for the time is near.
6. Let the evil doer still do evil, and the filthy still be filthy, and the righteous still do right, and the holy still be holy!

D. The Message of Jesus

1. And behold, I am coming soon.
2. Blessed is the one who keeps the words of the prophecy of this book.
3. Behold, I am coming soon, bringing my recompense with me, to repay everyone for what he has done.
4. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end.
5. I, Jesus, have sent my angel to testify to you about these things for the churches.
6. I am the root and the descendant of David, the bright morning star.
7. Surely, I am coming soon.

E. The Message of John

1. **Revelation 22:8 (ESV)** *I, John, am the one who heard and saw these things. And when I heard and saw them, I fell down to worship at the feet of the angel who showed them to me,*
2. **Revelation 22:14-15 (ESV)** ¹⁴ *Blessed are those who wash their robes, so that they may have the right to the tree of life and that they may enter the city by the gates.* ¹⁵ *Outside are the dogs and sorcerers and the sexually immoral and murderers and idolaters, and everyone who loves and practices falsehood.*
3. **Revelation 22:17-19 (ESV)** ¹⁷ *The Spirit and the Bride say, "Come." And let the one who hears say, "Come." And let the one who is thirsty come; let the one who desires take the water of life without price.* ¹⁸ *I warn everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: if anyone adds to them, God will add to him the plagues described in this book,* ¹⁹ *and if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God will take away his share in the tree of life and in the holy city, which are described in this book.*
4. Amen! Come, Lord Jesus!
5. The grace of the Lord Jesus be with all. Amen.

Comparison Between the Dragon (Rev. 12) and the Beasts (Rev. 13)

Dragon

| | |
|---------------------------------|-------|
| Appears in heaven | 12:3 |
| 7 heads/ ten horns/seven crowns | 12:4 |
| War in heaven against God | 12:7 |
| Cast to earth | 12:9 |
| Power for direct impact | 12:4 |
| Sets the agenda for his realm | 12:17 |
| Single spiritual entity | 12:9 |

Beasts

| | |
|--|--------------------------------|
| Arise from “earth” | Different cosmological sources |
| Heads and horns and crowns | Essential similarities |
| War on earth against saints | Common function: war |
| Cast into hell | |
| Derived power for impact | |
| Advance agenda of dragon | |
| Identifiable character, but not necessarily entity | |

Comparison Between the Two Beasts of Revelation 13

Sea Beast

| |
|---|
| Rises from the sea |
| 1 Beast |
| 10 horns/7 heads |
| 10 crowns w/blasphemous names |
| Given dragon’s authority |
| Healed mortal head wound |
| Worshiped by people |
| Given proud, blasphemous speech |
| Defies God |
| Allowed to make war on saints |
| Authority over the whole world |
| Authority over those not in the Lamb’s book of Life |
| Calls for endurance and faith |

Earth Beast

| | |
|---|---|
| Rises from the earth | Both from physical creation/realm of human existence (cf.12:12) |
| 1 Beast | Single identity |
| 2 horns | Single identity, multiple expressions |
| Lamb/dragon | Comparison of spiritual rank and purpose |
| Exercises beast’s authority | Latter serves the former, both serve dragon |
| Divinizes wounded beast | SPIN DR! |
| Seduces people to worship | |
| Given miraculous power | |
| Deceives man | |
| Causes non-worshippers death | |
| Authority over the whole world | |
| Authority over those who bear the mark of the beast | |
| Calls for wisdom and understanding | |

The beasts are servants of the dragon but may be social systems intrinsic to human experience rather than specific individuals. Certainly individuals will provide leadership within the systems and be slaves themselves to the dragon, but I think Christians ought to be looking for systems rather than specific individuals. System will be identifiable, but may have multiple leaders (heads/crowns), multiple authority expressions (horns) but still have only one purpose: to serve and advance the war agenda of the dragon. The first beast is likely socio-political (false kingdom), the other, religious.