

BRIEF
NOTES
ON
THE BOOK OF THE
REVELATION

BASED ON NOTES TAKEN
BY KATH McMURRAY
ON TALKS GIVEN BY RAY EWART IN 1986

REVIEWED IN 2014

FOREWORD

Kath McMurray was a valued, active member of Belgrave South Baptist Church in Melbourne, Victoria, Australia for many years. In 1984, while I was serving a period as interim pastor she attended every session of a series of addresses I gave on the book of The Revelation. She made notes, in her own inimitable style, adding little thoughts of her own.

When I discovered how complete the notes were I asked her permission to have them published. She kindly consented and they were first published in 1986.

In 2014, Kath agreed to have them included on my Webpage, slightly amended, as currently presented.

Ray Ewart

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PRELIMINARY NOTES

SYSTEMS OF INTERPRETATION

1. Preterist

Regards The Revelation as descriptive of historic conditions and events in John's own time. All symbolism. Is in no way predictive of the future.

2. Historicist

Is regarded as providing symbolic pictures of the development of the Church and its enemies between the end of the 1st century (96AD) and the end of the ages.

3. Futurist

Assigns all of The Revelation following the 3rd chapter to the end of Church age. It is really a preview and literal description of the final Tribulation prior to Christ's return.

4. Idealist or Spiritual

Assumes the visions are in no sense literal. They represent the general conflict of 'good and evil', equally applicable to all ages of the Church.

MEANINGS OF WORDS USED BY THEOLOGIANS

Eschatology – Traditionally defined as the doctrine of 'last things'. The teaching from Scripture concerning the final consummation of all things (death, resurrection, judgement and eternity).

The Tribulation – A seven year period of "Tribulation" when a more intense persecution than ever before of God's people, by anti-Christian forces, will take place, but particularly the latter 3½ years of that period (referred to as "The Great Tribulation") when persecution of the Jews will be worse than ever before (**Matthew 24.21-22 and Revelation 12.13-14**).

The Rapture – the coming of the Lord for His Church. The event that occurs when Christ returns for those who are His (Christians). (**1 Thessalonians 4.17**).

MILLENNIALISM – Belief in a future, literal, peaceful 1000 year reign of Christ on the earth.

Three main schools of thought take their name from their approach to the concept of a period of peace on earth:

1. Post-Millennialism

(i.e. Christ returns after the Millennium). Postmillennialists believe the world will get better and better. The Millennium will be an extended period of peace after which Christ will return for the final judgement, followed by the eternal Kingdom.

2. Pre-Millennialism

(i.e. Christ will return before the Millennium). Premillennialists believe that Christ will return after certain prophecies are fulfilled. The righteous dead are then resurrected and Christ reigns from Jerusalem for 1000 years. Satan's final battle then comes, followed by the judgement of the wicked, then the eternal Kingdom (**Matthew 24.3-6, Matthew 24.15-33, Revelation 20.1-5, Revelation 20.7-10, Revelation 20.12-21, 1 Thessalonians 4.17, Matthew 25.32 and Revelation 20.6**).

3. A-Millennialism

Different forms of this school deny (to differing degrees), the prospect of a literal Millennium. They believe that Christ's Millennial Kingdom is taking place now within the believers on earth, simultaneous with His reign in Heaven. He comes for everyone at the same time for judgement. Then we enter eternity. (**Jude 14-15**).

TRIBULATIONISM

Among those who believe in a literal period of intense tribulation there are three schools of thought:

1. Pre-Tribulationism

The rapture of the Church takes place before the 'Great Tribulation' (**Luke 21.34-36**). The people of God on earth during the Tribulation are the restored Jewish nation.

2. Mid-Tribulationism

The rapture takes place at some mid-point through the seven year period of Tribulation.

3. Post-Tribulationism

The Church continues on earth to the end of the Tribulation. The rapture occurs as the Lord returns in glory.

DISPENSATIONLISM

This is a system of interpreting the Scriptures by assuming that God acts differently towards mankind during various time periods. For example, **John 1.17** says, "For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ". DISPENSATIONAL TEACHING interprets this as meaning that there was a "DISPENSATION" when "THE LAW" governed God's dealings with mankind, but now we are in the "DISPENSATION" of "GRACE" and God relates to mankind in grace. This is why a DISPENSATIONALIST would conclude that the "gospel of grace" is just for this current "DISPENSATION". They have a different gospel for different "DISPENSATIONS".

The system of interpretation divides all time into "Dispensations". Dr Schofield, a noted dispensationalist, names seven dispensations (Innocence/Conscience/Civil Government/Promise/Law/Kingdom/Grace) and says (on page five of the Schofield Reference Bible) that each is "a period of time during which man is tested in respect of obedience to some specific revelation of the will of God". Later dispensationalists have named more than seven.

OVERVIEWS OF THE BOOK OF THE REVELATION

The message of the book could be summarised several ways. Here are four possible ways:

1. WITH REFERENCE TO CHAPTER 1 VERSE 19

This verse gives us a threefold division, namely:

- (i) "The Things Which You Have Seen".
This would be the contents of **Chapter 1**.
- (ii) "The Things Which Are".
This would be the contents of **Chapters 2 and 3**, being the condition, at that time, of the seven churches to which the prophecy was to be sent (**Chapter 1.17**).
- (iii) "The Things Which Will Take Place After This".
This would be the contents of **Chapters 4 to 22** (as indicated in **Chapter 4.1**).

2. WITH REFERENCE TO JESUS AS THE LAMB

This book can also be divided into seven sections.

1. The work of the Lamb (in the churches) – **Chapters 1 to 3**.
2. The worth of the Lamb (in Heaven) – **Chapters 4 and 5**.
3. The wrath of the Lamb (on evildoers) – **Chapters 6 to 19**.
4. The war of the Lamb (against Satan) – **Chapters 6 to 19**.
5. The world rule of the Lamb (the Millennium) – **Chapter 20**.
6. The writings of the Lamb (at the judgement) – **Chapter 20**.

7. The wealth of the Lamb (in the new Heaven and earth) – **Chapters 21 and 22.**

Viewing Jesus Christ as “The Lamb of God” connects with Scriptures such as **John 1.29** or **1 Peter 1.18-19**).

3. WITH REFERENCE TO THE CENTRALITY OF JESUS CHRIST

Although of strange imagery it has an orderly structure. It can be divided into six main sections.

1. Christ communicating - **Chapter 1.1-8.**
2. Christ and the churches - **Chapter 1.9 to Chapter 3.22.**
3. Christ and the cosmos - **Chapter 4.1 to Chapter 16.19.**
4. Christ in conquest - **Chapter 17.11 to Chapter 21.8.**
5. Christ in the city of God - **Chapter 21.9 to Chapter 22.5.**
6. Christ challenging - **Chapter 22.6-21.**

4. WITH REFERENCE TO THE CHAPTERS

The following short comments point to the subject matter on a chapter by chapter basis.

CHAPTER 1 – THE LORD’S COMMISSION TO JOHN

- (**vv1-11**) What you see, write in a book and send it to seven churches in Asia.
- (**vv12-16**) THE VISION OF CHRIST.
- (**v12**) He is seen in the midst of the churches (see also **Chapter 2.1**).

CHAPTER 2 – THE MESSAGES TO FOUR CHURCHES

1. Ephesus (**vv1-7**).
2. Smyrna (**vv8-11**).
3. Pergamos (**vv12-17**).
4. Thyatira (**vv18-29**).

CHAPTER 3 – THE MESSAGES TO A FURTHER THREE CHURCHES

5. Sardis (**vv1-6**).
6. Philadelphia (**vv7-13**).
7. Laodicea (**vv14-22**).

CHAPTER 4 – THE THRONE OF GOD IN HEAVEN

John is invited into Heaven to witness the scene there.

CHAPTER 5 – JESUS WORTHY TO OPEN THE SCROLL WITH SEVEN SEALS

The record of determined events is sealed, but Jesus, and only Jesus, is worthy to open the seals that the events should be revealed.

CHAPTER 6 – SIX SEALS OPENED

Four seals are horsemen (indicating the nature of trouble soon to come on earth).

1. The white horse (**vv1-2**).
2. The red horse (**vv3-4**).
3. The black horse (**vv5-6**).
4. The pale horse (**vv7-8**).
5. (**vv9-11**) The 5th seal takes us into the presence of souls of martyrs.
6. (**vv12-17**) The 6th seal is the day of God's wrath (on earth).

CHAPTER 7 – AN INTERLUDE BETWEEN THE 6TH AND 7TH SEALS

- (**vv1-8**) 144,000 of Israel sealed for service (on earth).
- (**vv9-17**) The white robed multitude (in Heaven).

CHAPTER 8 – THE 7TH SEAL IS OPENED REVEALING SEVEN ANGELS EACH HAVING A TRUMPET

Four trumpets sound (affecting vegetation, salt and fresh water and the heavens).

1. Hail and fire (**v7**)
2. A mountain in the sea (**vv8-9**).
3. A falling star (**vv10-11**).
4. Sun, moon and stars. Darkness (**v12**).

CHAPTER 9 – WOE, WOE, WOE (REFER TO CHAPTER 8.13 FOR THE CONNECTION)

Two more trumpets sound.

- Trumpet 5 (**vv1-12**) The 1st woe – locusts with horrific powers to plague mankind.
- Trumpet 6 (**vv13-19**) The 2nd woe – Angels loosed from the Euphrates with further power to plague humanity.

CHAPTER 10 – AN INTERLUDE BETWEEN 6TH AND 7TH TRUMPET

- (**v3**) Seven thunders whose message is not to be recorded.
- (**vv8-10**) The little book, sweet to the taste yet bitter in the stomach, but accompanied by a message to John.

CHAPTER 11 – TWO WITNESSES

The interlude continues, during which John is given information concerning things that will occur in Jerusalem during the Great Tribulation.

- The Temple is measured (**vv1-2**).
- The ministry of the two witnesses (**vv3-14**).

- 7th trumpet (**vv15-19**) The kingdoms of earth become “the Kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ”.

CHAPTER 12 – ISRAEL, AND THE INCARNATION (BECOMING FLESH) OF CHRIST

- The woman is Israel, the dragon is Satan and the child is Christ.
- Satan’s war with Christ is seen as the reason for his war with Israel and with those who “have the testimony of Jesus Christ”.

CHAPTER 13 – THE ANTI-CHRIST AND THE FALSE PROPHET

1. The Anti-Christ is empowered by Satan (**vv1-10**).
2. The False Prophet causes the world to worship the Anti-Christ (**vv11-18**).

In this chapter we are taken to the days of the last form of the fourth empire described in **Daniel Chapter 7**.

CHAPTER 14 – THE LAMB ON EARTH AND THE HARVEST

In this chapter we have a series of visions concerning end time happenings, namely:

1. The Lamb and 144,000 on Mount Zion on earth (**vv1-5**).
2. Proclamation of the Gospel (**vv6-7**) urging reverential fear of God.
3. The fall of Babylon (**v8**).
4. Doom for the Beast worshippers contrasted with the blessings for the saints (**vv9-13**).
5. The harvest (vintage) judgement (**vv14-20**).

CHAPTER 15 – THE VIALS (BOWLS) OF GOD’S WRATH

- An interlude of worship proclaiming the justice and truth of God’s ways (**vv1-4**). In Heaven.
- The seven vials taken from the heavenly temple and given to seven Angels, full of the wrath of God, and containing the seven last plagues (**vv5-8**).

CHAPTER 16 – THE VIALS POURED OUT (SEVEN VIALS)

The seven last plagues are revealed:

1. Plague of sores (**v2**).
2. Sea turned to blood (**v3**).
3. Fresh water turned to blood (**vv4-7**).
4. Sun scorches men (**vv8-9**).
5. The kingdom of the Anti-Christ smitten with darkness (**vv10-11**).
6. The Euphrates River dries up (**vv12-16**).
 - * The evil trinity Satan, the Anti-Christ and the False Prophet go to battle with the Kings of the Earth. Armageddon (**vv13-16**).
7. Plague of hail, accompanied by judgements (**vv17-21**).

CHAPTER 17 – THE SCARLET WOMAN AND THE BEAST

- The judgement of the Scarlet Woman.

CHAPTER 18 – REACTION TO THE JUDGEMENT OF BABYLON

1. Come out of her my people (**v4**).
2. The kings of the earth lament (**v9**).
3. The merchants mourn (**v11**).
4. Saints rejoice (**v20**).

CHAPTER 19 – CHRIST WITH HIS SAINTS COMES TO DO BATTLE AT ARMAGEDDON

- Heavenly “Alleluia” chorus (**vv1-10**).
- From Heaven Christ and His Saints come to do battle (**vv11-16**).
- The Anti-Christ and False Prophet are taken and cast into hell and their army is defeated (**vv17-21**).

CHAPTER 20 – THE MILLENNIAL REIGN FOLLOWED BY THE JUDGEMENT

- Satan chained in the bottomless pit (**vv1-3**).
- Christ’s millennial reign (**vv4-6**).
- Satan loosed and, after a short battle, cast into Hell (**vv7-10**).
- Judgement Day (**vv11-15**).

CHAPTER 21 – THE NEW HEAVEN AND NEW EARTH

- New Heaven and new earth, no more death, sorrow, pain etc (**21.1-8**).
- The Holy Jerusalem descending out of Heaven from God (**21.9-10**).
- The description of Holy Jerusalem (**21.11-27**). No Temple, no sun, no sin. God’s glory and the Lamb are the light (**21.22-27**).

CHAPTER 22 – THE RIVER OF LIFE AND CONCLUDING THOUGHTS, WARNINGS AND EXHORTATIONS

- Even so Lord Jesus come (**v20**).

These simple overviews can be of assistance to anyone wishing to grasp the overall message of the book.

AN EXAMINATION OF THE BOOK

Notes:

1. This commences the main body of the Study Notes.
2. References to verses within the chapter being considered are marked by number and references to other parts of the Revelation are marked by chapter and verse.

CHAPTER 1

A. THE INTRODUCTION

Verses 1-3 brings before us:

1. God's teaching
2. God's timing

1. GOD'S TEACHING (v1)

"which God gave". He is the only one who can reveal the unknown.

- (**Daniel 2.26-30**) There is a God in Heaven that revealeth secrets.
- (**Luke 2.25-26**) Only God could reveal this to Simeon (the baby Jesus).
- (**Matthew 16.13-17**) Only God could reveal Christ to the heart (Peter – "Thou art the Christ").

(a) THE SUBJECT OF HIS TEACHING

- (**v1**) "Things which must shortly come to pass". The central theme of the book. But Christ is central to God's plan for the future, so it becomes, at the same time, a revelation of many things concerning Jesus Christ.
- (**v19**) The King James Version shows three divisions of things in the book (refer to page 6, overview 1).

(b) THE SYSTEM OF HIS TEACHING

- (**v1**) God the Father gave it to God the Son, Who gave it to His angel who gave it to John.
- (**v11**) John committed it to writing and sent it to others.
- (**v3**) And so, we read it.
- Teaching is generally by "the Word of God" (**v2**), as witnessed by **2 Timothy 4.2**, but in this book much is "signified" (**v1**) (i.e. given by signs and visions) so John is told to record he "sees" (**v11** – and refer to **verses 12, 17, 19 and 20**, and many other places throughout the book). What John "saw" needs to be interpreted.

(c) THE PURPOSE OF GOD'S TEACHING

- (**v1**) It is for 'His servants' (bond slaves).
- (**v3**) That we might read, listen and obey. Cross reference (**Deuteronomy 29.29**). If we do, it will be a blessing to us.

(d) THE POWER OF GOD'S TEACHING

- (**22.18-19**) It is from the highest source possible. If I speculate on anything I must say so. We dare not tamper with it.
- It can bring blessing (if we obey). Cross reference (**Deuteronomy 28.1-14**).
- (**Galatians 1.6-12**) Direct revelation has power to make you bold for God (also private study and prayer – **Acts 4.29-31**).

2. GOD'S TIMING

- (**v1**) "Things which must shortly come to pass" (approximately 2000 years ago).
- (**v3**) 'The time is at hand' (approximately 2000 years ago). To God a thousand years is like one day.
- (**2 Peter 3.1-10**) Cross reference (**Psalms 90.1-4**). Time is brief in God's view. (He is eternal – **Psalms 90.2**). (It is not long since He made the sun and everything else – in His view).
- (**James 4.13-17**) Our life as a vapour.

B. THE SALUTATION (OR GREETING) (VS 4-8)

- John greets the people to whom he is writing. This is a common practice in writing letters, e.g. (**2 John 1.1-3**) Elect lady and children. (**3 John 1-2**) Gaius. (**1 Peter 1.1-2**) Many people.
- It is written to "seven churches" in Asia. Note:
 1. John's reference to them.
 2. His request for them.
 3. His rejoicing with them.

1. HIS REFERENCE TO THEM (THE SEVEN CHURCHES)

- (**v4**) 'The Seven Churches'. Seven actual churches, but probably representing the whole-complete Church (these being examples) as it is for all of God's servants (**v1**).
- (**2.7**) For all who hear. Cross reference (**22.10** – 'not sealed'). Compare (**Daniel 12.8-9**) closed).
- (**22.16-17**) For the 'whosoever will'.
- (**1 Corinthians 1.2**) The writings in Scriptures are just as much for our church and us. **Revelation** has just as much to say to us as the churches of John's time (Why then do some ministers neglect it?).

2. HIS REQUEST FOR THEM (THE SEVEN CHURCHES)

- (**v4**) "Grace" - to be in favour with or approved by God, even though it is not deserved.
- "Peace" - The peace given by God when His children are in harmony with Him. We ought to greet each other with requests like these. It would be good.
- Church of England as one of their responses. The minister says to the congregation, "Peace be to you", and their response is "and to you also". Why would it be good? We would recognise the Lord's presence.

3. HIS REJOICING WITH THEM (THE SEVEN CHURCHES)

We have much to rejoice about. He mentions:

- (v5) The proof of Christ's love – "He has washed us from our sins in His own blood".
- (v6) The privilege of Christ's followers – "Priests" or intercessors. We can approach God. (**Hebrews 4.14-16**).
- (**Ephesians 2.18**) By his blood both Jew and Gentile have access to God.
- (v7) The prospect of Christ's return – it will be public (not a secret return). A major subject as we go along in the book.

One thing that comes over very clearly in this section is – a description of God as Trinity. According to **verses 4 and 5** "Grace" and "peace" are from:

- THE FATHER – "Him Who is and Who was and Who is to come" or the great "I am" (**Exodus 3.13-15**). (The One Who, in the absolute sense, exists eternally) (v8).
- THE SPIRIT – "seven Spirits" or seven-fold Spirit, as set out in **Isaiah 11.1-2**:
 - The Spirit of the Lord
 - The Spirit of Wisdom
 - The Spirit of Understanding
 - The Spirit of Counsel
 - The Spirit of Might
 - The Spirit of Knowledge
 - The Spirit of the Fear of the Lord
- THE SON – "Jesus Christ" as testified by The Father in **Matthew 3.17**, "This is My beloved Son".

This COMPOSITE UNITY is indicated in the first verse of Scripture where the word "God" is ELOHIM (a PLURAL noun for a SINGULAR God) and in **Genesis 1.26**, "Then GOD said, "Let Us make man in OUR image". It is also reflected in Christ's statement, "He who has seen Me has seen The Father" (**John 14.9**). Jesus revealed the entire Godhead (**Colossians 2.9**).

THE TRINITY IS AN INTERESTING SUBJECT

- (**Genesis 1.1-3**) said God created.
- (**Genesis 1.26-27**) said, "Let Us". "Our likeness". Not your nose, my eyes etc – but a deeper likeness, for man has three parts (body, soul and spirit).
- (**John 1.1-5**) Word was God. Also **John 1.14-18**.
- (**John 1.9-10**) Light, world was made by Him.
- (**Ephesians 3.9-11**) Created all things by Jesus.
- (**Matthew 28.19**) Go ye – "in the NAME" (singular) "of the FATHER, and of the SON and of the HOLY SPIRIT (three PERSONS).
- Each aspect of the Triune God has a different purpose.
- The invisible Father (from whom all revelation proceeds).
- The Son – who mediates, shows, and objectively incarnates (in body by form brings that revelation in a historical fashion).

- The Holy Spirit – who is divinely outpoured and subjectively or under God’s power applies (administers) that revelation to man (**2 Corinthians 13.14**).
- (**John 5.19-20 and 30-31**) Jesus cannot do anything of Himself (i.e. the will of the Son is the same as the will of the Father).
- (**John 16.13-15**) God discloses Himself through His Son.
- (**John 10.30**) I and my Father are one.
- (**John 14.19-21**) I am in my Father. How much more we need to rely on Jesus and the Holy Spirit if we are to do anything worthwhile (**John 15.5**).
- (**1.5**) From the Son. “The faithful witness”.
- (**John 8.14**) “He speaks the truth” about the Father, the Spirit and Himself (**John 16.13-15**).
- (**1.5**) The first begotten of the dead.
- (**Acts 13.30-34**) God raised Him from the dead.
- (**1 Corinthians 15.19-23**) Christ the first fruits (**v28** God will be all in all).
- (**Romans 6.9-10**) Others like Lazarus have been raised but died again.
- (**v18**) But not Christ (was dead, but lives evermore).
- (**v5**) Prince of Kings of the earth (**17.14**).
- (**11.15**) It will be obvious on that day. The kingdoms of the earth (world) are become the kingdoms of our Lord and His Christ.

GOD’S NAMES

God has many names, for example:

- El – God singular (Hebrew).
- El Elyon – God most high (**Genesis 14.18-22**).
- El Olam – The everlasting God (**Genesis 21.33**).
- El Shaddai – God almighty (**Genesis 17.1**).
- Adonai – Lord, master (**Joshua 5.14**) and many more.

THE FIRST VISION (VS 9-20)

CHRIST IN THE MIDST OF THE CHURCHES (VS 12-13)

The vision is related to the seven churches and **chapters 2 and 3** give a seven-fold breakdown of the vision. John makes mention of his own tribulation, preparation and consternation. He can relate to many like him who have been persecuted for their faith.

HIS TRIBULATION

- (**v9**) Companion in tribulation. He was in prison. Tribulation is a common experience of believers. Cross reference (**2 Timothy 3.12**) All that live godly in Jesus Christ shall suffer persecution.
- (**10.11**) John was restricted, for a time, on Patmos.
- (**2.9-11**) They suffered at Smyra.
- (**2.12-13**) Those also at Pergamos.

HIS PREPARATION

- (**v10**) To receive the message he had to be “in the Spirit”. When we open the Bible to read or in our prayer time we should prepare ourselves. Make ourselves aware of

God's presence. Being "in the Spirit" - on "the Lord's Day" should be for us, as well as John. If we are we will hear the Lord's voice (**v10**) and have a vision of Christ (spiritually) (**vv11-16**).

HIS CONSTERNATION

- (**v17**) This would be our reaction too! We feel we would love to see a vision of God and expect we would feel great. But look at these reactions:
 - (**Isaiah 6.1-5**) Woe is me – Isaiah.
 - (**Daniel 10.5-10**) No strength in me – Daniel.
 - (**Ezekiel 1.1-28**) I fell on my face – Ezekiel.
 - (**Acts 9.1-9**) Fell to earth. Trembled and astonished – Saul.

But John received from Christ:

- Encouragement (**v17**) "Fear not". Cross reference (**Luke 12.22-32**) "Little flock".
- Employment (**v19**) It is good to have work (even in prison). He was still able to witness (John Bunyon wrote "Pilgrims Progress" whilst in prison).
- Enlightenment (**v20**). Stars = Angels. Candlesticks = churches.

Notice a few things from the description of the risen Christ:

- (**v13**) People wore a girdle denoting a person's status or profession according to the material.
 - Rough leather = Peasants or Bedouins. Cross reference (**Matthew 3.4**).
 - Soft leather = Middle class.
 - Silk = Upper class.
 - Christ's is gold = Divinity.

Their clothes were loose and baggy forming a pouch above the belt in which they would carry some of their possessions. To be girded means to be ready for action. References:

- (**Luke 17.7-8**) "Gird thyself and serve me".
- (**Acts 12.1-8**) Angel to Peter. "Gird thyself – follow me".
- (**1 Kings 18.46**) Elijah girded his loins – ran before Ahab.
- (**2 Kings 4.29**) Gehazi "Gird up thy loins .. and go thy way".
- Hence the exhortation – (**Ephesians 6.14**) Loins girt with truth.
- (**Luke 12.35-37 and 40**) Let your loins be girded = be ready. The Lord will gird Himself and serve those who watch and are ready.
- Christ is viewed here as ready for divine work and this work was upon His heart = "girt about the paps" (**v13**). Cross reference (**Hebrews 2.17-18**) Became man, prepared to die to reconcile man to God.
- (**Hebrews 4.15-16**) Tempted as we, yet without sin.
- (**v14**) "Hair like a sage" - representing wisdom.
- (**v15**) What a beautiful voice – yet it can sound like a trumpet (**v10**).
- (**vs 16-20**) In His hand seven stars (Angels/Ministers = Messengers). Cross reference (**Malachi 2.7**). The priest is God's messenger. The Greek word Angel = "Messenger", here used as a representative. Cross reference (**Hebrews 1.13-14**) Angels = God's messengers or representatives. His messengers (whether the heavenly angel spirits or earthly messengers) are in His control. Note: same word used in (**2 Corinthians 12.7**) Messenger of Satan.

- **(v16)** "Out of His mouth". He is able to judge with His words. Cross reference **(Genesis 1.3)**. "Let there be light and there was light". Cross reference **(Hebrews 4.12-13)**. Sharper than a two-edged sword and discerns of thoughts and intents of the heart. God's word can cut a man free or administer judgement.
- This glorious Christ oversees the Church fellowship **(2.1)** and can say, "I know thy works", good and bad **(2.2)**.

NOTES ON CHURCH HISTORY

1st Century

- The Church grew in numbers. Helped by a universal Greek language, Roman unity, Roman law and Roman roads for easy travel. So the Gospel spread **(Acts 2.41)** 3000 added **(Acts 2.47)** more – but their "love grew cold" as they quarrelled among themselves. Heresy and divisions arose.

2nd – 4th Century

Persecution and tribulation came to believers:

1. Starting with Nero in 68AD.
2. Domitian. 81-96AD. Was more cruel. Jews refused to pay taxes. Christians associated, therefore they died too.
3. Trajan. 98-117AD. Asked three times "are you a Christian?" If yes, then death.
4. Hadrian. 117-138AD. In 134-135AD he put down insurrection of Jews. Half a million died.
5. Antonius Pius. 138-161AD. Justin Martyr attributed persecution to work of demons.
6. Marcus Aurelius. 161-180AD. Justin Martyr martyred in Rome 165AD.
7. Lucius Septimus Servetus. 199-211AD. Went to Britain in 208. Died at York.
8. Emperor Decius. 250-251AD. All to sacrifice at Roman altars or die.
9. Diocletian. 303AD. Destroyed churches, officers and Scriptures. Christians put to death.
10. Marcus Maximianus. 286-305AD and 306-308AD. Eusebius said, "So many Christians jailed, no room for prisoners". Many died by the sword and wild beasts, were exiled, or lost property.

Then came Constantine. 306-337AD. In 313AD he brought freedom of worship, when he accepted Christian beliefs.

4th – 12th Century

Bishops began to disagree, each church having its own Bishop and hierarchy within the church. The churches began to draw closer to the Roman State, which brought many problems from 313-590AD. Christianity was recognised as the official religion of the Roman State and many ritualistic pagan practices entered the churches. The Nicene Church became imperial and was dominated by the Roman Emperor. As the Roman Empire spread, so Christianity spread. As the Roman Empire declined the churches remained – genuine, mixed and false.

Popes arose out of Bishops and divided into East and West. Rome was the West. 590-604AD Gregory the Great considered 1st Pope. Constantinople in the East fostered the Eastern Orthodox Church.

12th - 15th Century

Many professing Christians were disillusioned and became hermits, lived in caves. Some ate grass. Extremists built walls around themselves, sat up poles, and became dirty and lousy. Instead of "Go ye into all the world", they separated themselves, thinking it to be true dedication. Eventually became organised into today's Monks and Friars etc.

15th - 19th Century

Martin Luther, a priest of the Carthusian Friars, at Erhurt 1507AD, broke away in 1520AD. Could not accept Pope's decisions without question (Scripture being the final authority). A rebel in his church. Zwingley was first reformer in Switzerland. He formed an army of Protestants and fought with Catholic Cantons in 1531AD. Zwingley and 27 Pastors killed.

19th - 21st Century

Christendom, as we now have it, with its divisions and denominations, has emerged because some have followed ecclesiastical traditions, while others have followed charismatic leaders but, in the mix, and spread through many of its divisions the true Church Militant has survived. Many denominations hold true, to different degrees, to the purity of the Scriptures but many false cults exist.

CHAPTERS 2 AND 3

THE MESSAGES TO THE CHURCHES

There can be no doubt that the PRIMARY purpose of these messages was to address the individual churches to whom the total prophecy was being sent. Each letter is specifically for the benefit of the church named in the letter. There can, of course, be SECONDARY applications of the letters. They could be used to convey:

1. A PERSONAL MESSAGE in that you may find circumstances in your personal life where the warnings or advice are appropriate for you to heed.
2. A PROPHETICAL MESSAGE in that some commentators have identified similarities between Church history, the condition of the seven churches and the sequential order of the letters.

The following brief notes illustrate the similarities:

CHURCH	CENTURY AD	COMMENT
a. Ephesus	1 st	After Pentecost the Church went well for some years, but love grew cold (2.4).
b. Smyrna	2 nd - 4 th	Tribulation followed. 'Ten days'. Ten different outbreaks can be identified from Nero (64AD) to Emperor Maximin (312AD) (2.10).
c. Pergamos	4 th - 8 th	Church and State began to mingle. Evil was now inside the Church (2.14-18).

d. Thiatira	8 th – 12 th	The State eventually took over. The Scarlet Woman (Jezebel) reigned. (2.20).
e. Sardis	12 th – 15 th	The Church lost its sense of mission. (Endless tales of Monks, Nuns and Friars). (3.1).
f. Philadephia	15 th – 19 th	The reformation came. "A door was opened"). Note: Martin Luther 1483/1546AD. (3.7-8).
g. Laodicea	19 th – 21 st	Materialism followed (3.17 and 3.15).

This is, of course, a suggested analysis after the event, but that may not render invalid. It may not have taught earlier Believers what would come, but it may confirm to us that the end is drawing near. God is working out His purposes.

3. A PASTORAL MESSAGE in that the circumstances within a local church may make it appropriate for a leader in that church to draw the attention of the members to the warnings or advice in one or other of the letters.

Imagine that each of these letters was written to your church:

- What might you learn?
- What might your reaction be?

Chapter 2.1 – As each church is mentioned John is to write to the angel (or messenger) of the church.

a. EPHEBUS

(**2.1-7**) Attacked by Arabs, Turks and Mongols. It is now desolate. Ephesus was capital of the Roman province of Asia. It was twice visited by Paul. He ministered there for more than two years and wrote an epistle to the Church. The temple of Diana was there.

- (**2.1**) The message is from Christ. (**2.7**) And from the Spirit. Christ and the Spirit always agree (All seven letters show this).
- (**2.2**) "I know thy works". Christ knows all about us (repeated in all seven letters).
- (**2.2-3**) Give a wonderful picture of the Church – working. Being patient, not tolerating hypocrites (They have a false appearance of goodness. Not sincere).
- (**2.4**) "Nevertheless" - it is not enough. They had grown cold in their love for the Lord. (Could things be worse?). Cross reference (**1 Corinthians 13.1-3**) Without love all else is useless. Cross reference (**John 21.15-17**) It is the supreme qualification for service. "Simon son of Jonas lovest thou me more than these?"
- (**2.5**) "Remember from whence thou art fallen". Cross reference (**Luke 15.17-19**) A memory can be a blessed thing. Also, "Repent and do the first works". This means returning. (**Luke 15.18-19**) Lack of love requires repentance. The Lord

will go to the extent of removing such a church (a fallen candlestick is dangerous – it must be removed).

- **(2.6)** There are things that must be “hated”. Cross reference (**Job 1.1-6 and 8**) “None like my servant Job – hates evil”. It can be God-like to hate. Cross reference (**Proverbs 6.16-19**) Hate the evil in the persons, rather than the persons themselves.
- **(2.7)** God rewards the overcomer – if we overcome we will enjoy what Adam was denied because of sin. Cross reference (**Genesis 3.22-24**).

b. SMYRNA

(2.8-10) A flourishing port in John’s day, and still is, in modern Turkey. Its persecutions were real. Its Bishop Polycarp was burned to death in AD169. Now modern Izmir.

- **(2.8)** If we must face tribulation it is good to remember that our Lord existed before all troublemakers and will be there when they’ve gone. “The First and Last”. He has removed the fear of death. Cross reference (**1.18**). (**Hebrews 2.14-15**) “Destroyed the devil”, who has power over death. (**1 Corinthians 15.26 and 51-58**) “The last enemy is death – death is swallowed up in victory”. Death is an “enemy”, marked for destruction.
- **(2.9)** “Say they are Jews and are not”. False brethren are dangerous. Cross reference (**2 Corinthians 11.12-15 and 24–28**) “False prophets transforming themselves into apostles”. “Satan – into an angel of light”. The Jews gave Paul 40 stripes save on (five times). In Damascus a garrison wanted to apprehend him (**2 Corinthians 11.32**).
- **(2.9)** They speak blasphemy (defame God). Cross reference (**2 Peter 2.1-2**). (**Jude 4**) “False prophets and teachers among us and many will follow them” (e.g. Jim Jones-Guiana). In one sense we are New Testament Jews – cross reference **Romans 2.28-29** – but not in any “replacement” sense. Israel, as a nation, is distinct and separate, and, as a nation they have a future as detailed in the prophetic Scriptures. (**Philippians 3.3**) We are the circumcision “which worship God in the Spirit”. (**Galatians 3.7-14**) Blessings of Abraham come on Gentiles. Promise of the Spirit through faith.
- **(2.9)** All else are the “Synagogue of Satan”. Cross reference (**John 8.39-44**).
- **(2.10)** Suffering is not new to the people of God (Churches in Russia, Uganda, Spain and France earlier, England in different periods and generally under Rome for so long). “Fear not”, we have to learn not to fear. Cross reference (**John 16.33**) “Be of good cheer, I have overcome the world”. (**John 15.20**) “They persecuted me, they will persecute you”. Cross reference (**Matthew 10.24-39**) “Fear not them which kill the body”, but fear him who can kill the soul. Cross reference (**Luke 12.4**) Man is limited in what he can do. Cannot kill the soul. Cross reference (**James 1.12**) Death is temporary, life is eternal. (**Psalms 56.3-11**) “In God, my trust, not afraid”. The Psalmist learned not to fear. (**Habakkuk 3.16-19**) “Trembled, quivered, yet I will rejoice”. The Lord is my strength. Habakkuk learned to not fear. (**Acts 4.29-31**) Threatened, prayed. The place was shaken. They spoke boldly. The disciples learned to not fear. Paul and John after being threatened. (**Acts 20.22-24**) Not knowing what shall happen, “neither count I my life dear to me”. Paul learned not to fear. So must we!

The Lord permits many things to come our way, but He has a purpose.

- Joseph in prison – to save his brothers (**Genesis 42.3 and 6-8 and Genesis 45.4-5**).
- Stephen killed – to speak to Paul (**Acts 7.58, Acts 8.3, Acts 9.1-4 and 6**).
- Paul in prison – to speak to the Jailer (**Acts 16.27-28 and 33**).
- **(2.11)** We have no ultimate fears because death for a Christian is not the end but the beginning of life everlasting in a new sphere.

c. PERGAMOS

(2.12-17) Attacked by Arabs (original in ruins).

- **(2.12)** "Sword"- compare **1.16** "out of His mouth" also **Hebrews 4.12** and **Ephesians 6.17**. This important city was the capital of Asia until 6BC when that honour was transferred to Ephesus. It was famous for:
 - a. A shrine to Aesculapius (God of Medicine).
 - b. A temple to Athena (Goddess of Athens. The Temple = Parthenon).
 - c. An immense altar to Zeus (Greek's chief god called Zeusm – "in the saviour").
 - d. A temple to Augustus Caesar (as a god). Worshipped.
 - e. A library – second only to the one at Alexandria.
- **(2.13)** "Where Satan's seat is".
- a, b and c – are false gods.
- d – a man worshipped.
- e – learning and entertainment.

The small town of Pergama exists in this location, but the original city is in ruins.

- **(2.13)** "Where thou dwellest". The Lord knows the district we live in. Its problems etc. Satan gave this place special attention.
- **(2.14)** "Thou has there them that"..... We are held responsible for the members of our church. What they believe, and do, and teach. (**1 Corinthians 5** and **1 Timothy 5.20**) Paul takes churches to task about their members. (**Titus 1.5-13**) Titus ordains elders' etc. The main weight of correction lies with the elders. Remember the angel received the message first (**1.1-4**) and passed it on.
- **(2.15)** Note the emphasis on 'doctrine'. Balaam and Nicolaitans. Cross reference (**1 Timothy 4.1-7 and 15-16**) "Some shall depart from truth". "Heed doctrine". Cross reference (**Acts 2.42**) "Continued ... doctrine – prayer".
- **(2.6)** "The deeds of Nicolaitans.
- **(2.15)** "The doctrine of Nicolaitans. Things grow and become established if not checked. (In **2.6** it is the "DEEDS" of the Nicolaitans. In **2.15** it is the "DOCTRINE" of the Nicolaitans. If deeds are not stopped they become doctrines.
- Iraneus wrote about the Nicolaitans in 175AD and a sect of that name was known in the 3rd century. Believed to be followers of a man named Nicolaus who taught the body was sinful and separate from the spirit. Only the spirit mattered so do what you like with the body. Freedom of flesh by lust. God hates it.
- Two-edged sword – God's Word can cut a man free or administer Judgement (and it can cut both the speaker and the hearer). (**Hebrews 4.12** and **Ephesians 6.17**).
- Satan's Seat – **(2.13)** Could refer to each of a, b, c or do (above).

- Learning – Greek’s were very literature, poetry and philosophy conscious and they tried to combine their culture with the Jewish culture. Introducing many pagan cults.
- Doctrine (**2.15**) – Balaam (a false prophet) was a soothsayer. One who had the power to curse or bless. Balak, King of Moab, wanted Balaam to curse Israel. He couldn’t do it. Balaam later took Israel, who were under God’s blessing, and led them into sin, to strip them of their blessing. He led them to temptation and corruption and ultimate downfall. Satan used, and still uses people today, to do the same thing.
- Compromise – It would have been easy to ignore the temples, shrines etc but not the worship of Caesar Augustus. It might seem to be not too bad to just burn a little incense at his temple that would mean I could live to preach the Gospel. How easily it creeps in.
- (**2.16**) “or else”. If we do not deal with things God will! “I will fight against them”. The Lord is very selective when He moves in judgement. Cross reference (**7.13**) sealed 144,000 and **9.1-4**). Cross reference (**Joshua 5.13-15**) “Nay”. God is not committed to one side or another but to truth and justice. Joshua learned a great lesson before he went into battle against Jericho.
- (**2.17**) The Lord has many “hidden” things for us, His people.
- Manna – was the holy food of Israel in the wilderness. A pot of it was placed in the Holy Place hidden from view of the congregation. Christ Himself is the manna hidden from the world but revealed to the believer. Cross reference (**John 6.30-35**).
- White stone – acquittal (Urim and Thummum – white for yes, black for no). (**Exodus 28.30**). White meant acquittal in Greek courts. Given to the victor in Greek games (Olympic Games).
- New name – cross reference (**John 16.2-3**) “The world does not know God, nor do they know true believers or the name they bear”. Cross reference (**3.12**) God has some wonderful ‘secrets’ for His children. Cross reference (**1 Corinthians 2.6-10**) “Eye hath not seen, or ear heard”. (**Job 28.7-8 and 27-28**) “There is a path no fowl knoweth” or seen. (**Daniel 2.28**) “A God in heaven that revealeth secrets”.
- Vultures can see prey at great distances but they can’t see the miner underground. Even the king of the beasts does not follow that path underground.

d. THYATIRA

(**2.18-29**) Its name is now AK Hissar and Christians still live there. The inhabitants were famous for their bronze armour and skill in purple dying. Lydia came from Thyatira (**Acts 16.14**).

Bronze armour was part of their industry. A coin of Thyatira shows Hapaestus the divine smith hammering a helmet on an anvil. The word chalcolibanos stamped on it = fine brass. It is found nowhere else and could be the equivalent of our trade names.

- (**2.18**) “Eyes like unto a flame of fire”. The penetrating vision of Christ sees everything (**2.23**). The Lord looked upon Peter and Peter remembered (**Luke 22.60-62**).
- (**2.19**) Increasing works (but that is not everything). They are mentioned (and commended) but they do not cover the faults of **v20**.

- **(2.20)** "Thou sufferest". (Amplified Version = "you tolerate"). We often tolerate (and literally suffer) things which we ought not to, for one reason or another. (**1 Kings 16.29-33**). (**2 Peter 2.4-9**) Lot did. Cross reference (**Genesis 13.1-13**) For ease, for possessions. (**Luke 17.23-32**) For his wife's sake (**v32**). Saw the whole plain of Jordan. Pitched his tent near Sodom.
- **(2.20)** "My servants". God's true children can be led astray.
- **(2.20)** "Fornication". It can be spiritual fornication. Cross reference (Good News Bible - **Exodus 34.12-16**, **Ezekiel 23.37-39** and **James 4.4**). Happens spiritually today but in this case it is probably literal.
- **(2.21)** "I gave her space". How gracious the Lord is, even to His people's enemies. Cross reference (**2 Peter 3.9**) Not willing. (**Jonah 3.4**) "Yet 40 days" to repent.
- **(2.22)** "A bed". For a fornicator – increased opportunity. Cross reference (Good News Bible – **Romans 1.24-26**). The Lord often gives a person over to wallow in their sin before judgement.
- **(2.23)** "Kill her children" = followers. The Lord judges thoroughly (Good News Bible – **1 Samuel 15.2-3**, **Genesis 5.5-8** and **Malachi 4.1-2**).
- **(2.23)** "All the churches shall know". God does not do things secretly. (**Luke 8.16-18**) Nor hide a candle under a bushel. (**1 Corinthians 3.11-15**) Mans works tried by fire. Nor should we hide things. (Good News Bible – **1 Corinthians 5.11-13**) Put away from among you. (Good News Bible – **1 Timothy 5.19-21**) "Rebuke before all".
- **(2.24)** "Unto the rest". There is often a mixture of types of people in a church and God's message to each is different.
- **(2.25)** "Don't surrender what you have". The cost would be high (**3.11**). Lose crown.
- **(2.26)** "Keepeth my work". Obedience is the first and foremost important thing. (**Matthew 7.21-23**).
- **(2.26-27)** "Power over the nations". The nations will continue after the Lord returns. (**Daniel 7.11-14**) Millennial reign.
- **(2.28)** "The Morning Star". Our priceless possession is our Lord Jesus Christ. (**2.16**).

e. SARDIS

(3.1-6) It still exists but almost in name only. Sert-Kalessi, a small village. For centuries BC it was an important city and was the scene of many battles, as successive empires came and went. It is described as a "miserable hamlet". The walls of a Christian church are still standing beside a pagan temple. The temple was built in the 4th century BC and the church before the 4th century AD.

- **(3.1)** This message is from the one who holds his servants (stars) "in His hand". Compare (**1.16 and 20**). That is the place of perfect safety. Cross reference (**John 10.27-30**) "No man can pluck them out". (This is good to know if eternal security is being discussed (**3.5**).
- **(3.1)** If all you have is a 'name' you are in poor condition (dead).
- **(3.2)** We are held responsible for our condition. We must "be watchful". (**Ephesians 6.10-18**). We are in a battle. We must wear the armour. We must "strengthen" (**Acts 20.28-30**). Feed the church (**Hebrews 5.12-14**) We need food (from teachers). (**1 Peter 2.1-3**) We need to desire to know what Scripture

says. (**2 Timothy 2.14-16**) “rightly dividing” word of truth. (Read Amplified Version – “not found a thing ... perfect”. Nothing completed or fulfilled.

- (**3.3**) “Remember”. They were to think back to the very beginning of their faith and take note of the teaching received over the years.
- (**2 Peter 1.12-15**) “Putting you in remembrance”. Peter liked to remind the people of God about things (going right back **vv1-11**). “Tabernacle” (body). Temple of the Holy Spirit. (See also **2 Peter 3.1-2**).
- (**3.4**) In many places there are just “a few” who are faithful. Noah survived with seven others. (**Genesis 6.10 and 7.7**). Lot with only two (**Genesis 19.15-26**).
- (**3.5**) God has many “Books”. (**20.12**) The books record our deeds and other interesting details about us. Cross reference (**Psalms 56.8**). Tears. (**Psalms 139.16**) (**Malachi 3.16**) A book of remembrance. (**5.1-2**) A book recording future events. One book gets special mention – “The Book of Life”.
- (**13.8**) Not all names are there. “Worship him” – the Anti-Christ (666).
- (**17.8**) “Not written from foundation of the world”. Some never were – never will be!). The importance of having our name there cannot be over emphasized.
- (**20.15**) If your name is not there, cast into lake of fire.
- (**21.1 and 27**) New heaven and earth occupied by those whose names are in the Book of Life.
- (**Luke 10.17-20**) Devil’s subject to them – but rejoice if your name is there. Cross reference (**Daniel 12.1**) Israelites, God’s people. (**Philippians 4.3**) Fellow labourers. (**Hebrews 12.22-24**) General Assembly of Church.
- (**3.5**) The promise is “I will not blot out” the name of the “overcomer”. This is reassuring (just like **John 6.37**) and this may be the simple meaning. It is interesting to note that if you did not offer a pinch of incense to Caesar as god, once a year, your name was blotted out of the city register. This would have happened to Christians! But it could raise a question: Can your name be blotted out of the Book of Life? Some Scriptures may shed light on this possibility: (**Exodus 32.7-14 and 31-35**) Moses. Golden calf. (**Psalms 69.21-28**) Let them be blotted out. (**22.18-19**) Add to or take away.

This raises other questions:

1. Why is a name blotted out?

- Cross reference (**Jeremiah 17.13**). (**1 John 2.17-19**) (**3.1**) In Sardis it was hypocrisy. They had a “name” but were “dead”. (**Matthew 24.44-51**) Some masquerade as “servants”. Also (**Deuteronomy 29.18-20**). (**Matthew 25.1-13**) Ten virgins with lamps. Many are close counterfeits. All the names of the tribes of Israel were written on the onyx stones on the High Priest’s shoulders. (**Exodus 28.9-12**) Also on the precious stones of the breast plate (**Exodus 39.8-14**). But all Israel were not saved. (**Romans 9.6**) Many were hypocrites. (**Hebrews 3.12 and 4.2**).
- Sin in the face of God’s grace and revelation causes names to be blotted out (**Exodus 32.33**). (**Hebrews 10.26-31** and **Matthew 12.30-32**). These indicate hypocrisy.
- Rejection of God’s truth does the same. (**22.19**). (**2 Peter 2.1** and **Hebrews 6.4-9**).
- They all indicate hypocrisy. Religion without reality (**Matthew 7.21-23**).

2. Why write the name in the first place if it is going to be blotted out?

- (John 6.53-71) There were many false “disciples” (Jews) spoken to.
- (John 6.64) They did not “believe”. (60.61) But they are called disciples. They had a name but were dead.
- (John 6.66) They eventually forsook Christ. The most striking case was Judas (John 6.70-71) yet he was “chosen” (John 6.71). (John 17.12) He was “given” by the Father, but “lost”. “That Scripture might be fulfilled”. (Acts 1.15-26 and Psalm 69.25-28). It is a warning to be sober and make us examine ourselves. (2 Corinthians 13.5-6).
- (Exodus 28.1-3) Nadab and Abihu consecrated as priests. Also (Exodus 29.4-9) but they were destroyed for their disobedience (Leviticus 10.1-2). (Why have such priests?). God’s justice.
- (2 Timothy 2.15-19) The Lord knows his own. Paul did not know for sure about the salvation of some of his followers. (Why have such disciples?).
- (Romans 11.33-34) Note what Paul says as he ponders what happened to the “elect” nation (Romans 11.21-23) Could it be? Could we be “blotted out of the Book of Life?”
- (3.5) We must ensure that we can, by the Grace of God, be described as one that “overcometh” and so take comfort from this promise.

f. PHILADELPIA

(3.7-13) This city still exists and is called Allah Shehn (meaning City of God). The walls of the city enclosed seven hills and these walls still stand.

- (3.7) In introducing Himself as the writer, the Lord makes reference to:
 1. **WHAT HE IS** – “holy” and “true”.
 2. **WHAT HE HAS** – “the key of David”.
 3. **WHAT HE DOES** – “openeth” and “shutteth”. And we completely depend on these things.

1. WHAT HE IS

- (John 6.35) Bread
- (John 8.12) Light
- (John 10.11) Shepherd
- (John 11.25) Life
- (John 14.6) Way
- (John 15.1) Vine

2. WHAT HE HAS

- “The key of David”. There is, of course, no limit to what he has.
- (Matthew 28.18) All power.
- (John 16.15) “All the things that the Father has”.
- “Keys” denote authority (1.18, 9.1, Matthew 16.18-19 and Luke 11.52).
- In Isaiah 22.20-22 we see a “type” of Christ (in Hezekiah’s day).

3. WHAT HE DOES

- “Openeth” and “shutteth”. And what He does no one can resist or reverse (Acts 5.34-35 and 38-42).

We can learn three lessons from this:

1. **WHAT HE IS** – He wants us to be.
 2. **WHAT HE HAS** – He wants us to have.
 3. **WHAT HE DOES** – He wants us to benefit from.
- **(3.7)** – “Holy” (**1 Peter 1.13-16**).
 - **(3.12)** “My new name” and the name of His God and His city.
 - **(3.8)** – “Open door”. Opportunities. (**Acts 3.11-12**) Power to walk and healing. (**Acts 4.4**) Opportunities to preach the Gospel. 5000 added.
 - **(3.8)** He commends them when He says, “thou hast kept my word”. “True” (**Isaiah 63.8**) A mark of God’s children. The opposite mark of Satan’s followers. (**John 8.44**) “Father of lies”. (**21.27**) Maketh a lie (**Proverbs 6.16**). (**James 2.5-7**) We have His name upon us.
 - **(3.9)** Defeated enemies. (**1 Samuel 17.44-47**) Goliath. I come in the name of the Lord. (**Romans 12.17-21**) Overcome by good. (**1 John 4.3-4**) Overcome false prophets.
 - **(3.10)** “Patience” (**James 5.7-12**) (Amplified Version - **Hebrews 12.1**) He is patient. (**2 Peter 3.8-9**). (**John 14.2-7**) A place prepared. (**John 15.11**) His joy. (**John 17.22**) His glory. (**John 17.26**) His love.
 - **(3.10)** “Deliverance”. (**2 Corinthians 1.9-10**) From death, through Christ.

ADDITIONAL NOTES:

- **(3.8)** “A little strength”. We should not trust in our own strength. Cross reference (Good News Bible – **Zechariah 4.6-8**). Israelites had returned home from exile to rebuild the temple at Jerusalem. The Lord made it quite plain that Zerubbabel had laid the foundation stone and he would finish it, but it would be in God’s strength.
- (**2 Corinthians 1.8-9**) Paul and Timothy in despair, but the answer was within themselves, “Trust” in God – His strength.
- (**2 Corinthians 12.7-10**) Paul had to learn that the Lord allows things to happen to us so that He can use us. If we are capable of managing in our own power we tend to forget the Lord and find ourselves in difficulties. (Our faithfulness is more important than our strength).
- **(3.10)** It is likely that this refers to the great tribulation. The word “Ek” translated “from” here. The hour of temptation is a special time to come (not now). Ek is also translated (Good News Bible – **Matthew 20.2**) “for”. (Good News Bible – **Matthew 20.21** and **Matthew 25.33-34**) “On”. (**John 12.42**) “among”. (**18.19**) “by reason of”. (**Romans 12.18**) “in”. (**1 Corinthians 13.9-12**) “in”. “IN” would be appropriate here.
- **(3.10)** There is suddenness about the Lord’s return. (**Matthew 24.42-44**) and it is important that we are diligent. We ought to pay attention to what we hear. Cross reference (**James 1.22-24**) “not hearers only”. Contend for what we believe (**Jude 3**) Contend = strive. Live at full stretch (**1 Corinthians 9.24-27**). Also (**Philippians 3.13-14**) (**2 Timothy 4.7-8**).

g. LAODICEA

(3.14-22) There are several interesting facts about this city (now desolate and only inhabited by wolves and foxes). Black cloth was manufactured there from a breed of sheep in the area (**v18** God wanted them to have “white raiment”). It had a medical school where doctors produced a powder for healing eye inflammation (**v18** God wanted them to buy His “eye salve”). An earthquake destroyed it in AD65 (**v16** God said He would “spew them out of His mouth”). They rebuilt the city out of their own resources without the customary aid from Rome (**v17** “Rich, increased with goods – need nothing”. Our own strength).

- **(3.14)** “The Amen”. Christ is the fulfilment of all God has promised. Cross reference (**2 Corinthians 1.20**) Our completeness in Him – not ourselves. (**Colossians 2.9-10**) “The Faithful and true witness”. What he says to us and about us is true. “Beginning” = “Author” of God’s creation. (**John 1.1 and 14**) (**Hebrews 1.8-12**).
- **(3.15)** Neither “hot” nor “cold”. Similar to the church at Sardis (**3.1**) Thou has a name, livest but dead. Hypocrisy and apathy. You never really know how to work with such a person. He says he will do something then doesn’t. It would be easier if he said no (**Matthew 21.28-32**).
- **(3.16)** How serious this is for a church!
- **(3.17)** What kind of opinion do we have of ourselves? Can we compare it with God’s opinion? How terrible not to know your own condition. (**Judges 16.18-21**). The word of God is like a mirror. (**James 1.22-27**). The word of God does help us to judge our spiritual condition (**1 John 2.4-5 and 9-11**).
- **(3.18)** God wants us to be truly rich. (**2 Corinthians 8.9**) For our sakes became poor so we might be rich. (**Hebrews 11.24-26**) Moses chose to suffer for the rich reward. The true riches are not earthly but Heavenly (**Matthew 6.19-21**) God wants us to be clothed in righteousness (**Isaiah 61.10-11**) (**Zechariah 3.3-4**) Not in our own black garments. God wants us to see things which are eternal (**2 Corinthians 4.17-18**).
- **(3.19)** This is a wonderful picture of close fellowship and this promise is one that should keep us alert and listening or He may pass us by.
- **(3.21)** “Amazing Grace”. (**Hebrews 4.16**) It is God’s throne from where God’s grace is given. We can, through Christ, come humbly, yet boldly, to speak with God our Father. As His children without fear. In reality in the future – what an amazing prospect.
- **(3.22)** We certainly ought to listen.

There is a lot to learn in **Chapter 3** about Christ. He says:

- a. “I know” – **v15**
- b. “I would” – **v15**
- c. “I will” – **v16**
- d. “I counsel” – **v18**
- e. “I love” – **v19**
- f. “I rebuke” – **v19**
- g. “I stand” – **v20**
- h. “I will come in” – **v20**

- i. "I will grant" – **v21**
- j. "I will overcome" – **v21**
- k. "I sat down" – **v21**

- **V15** – I know your works. What you do. I know you are neither hot nor cold.
- **V15** – I would or wish you were hot or cold.
- **V16** – I will spit you out. Spew. Utterly reject you. Show loathing
- **V18** – I counsel or advise. You think you are rich but buy from righteousness, a life of purity. To be rich. Children of God – heirs of the Kingdom. Clothed with righteousness. Spiritual sight.
- **V19** – I love. The Lord is saying I am chastising you and disciplining you because I love you. Rebuke. Justice and mercy all part of His love.
- **V20** – I stand. Patiently waiting. In this instance salvation is being offered, but when Christians are chastised the Lord is waiting for us to ask forgiveness and renew our fellowship.
- **V20** – I will come in. There isn't anyone the Lord will not forgive if he/she repents.
- **V21** – I will grant. (**2 Timothy 2.12**) To him that overcomes.
- **V21** – I overcame. (**Hebrews 4.15**) Tempted as we are!
- **V21** – I sat down (**Mark 16.19**).

CHAPTERS 4 AND 5

THE SECOND VISION

- Whereas the first vision was Christ In The Midst Of The Churches (**1.12-13**), the second vision is Christ In The Midst Of The Throne (**5.6**).
- The first vision was on earth (**1.9**).
- The second vision was in Heaven (**4.1-2**).

Chapters 4 and 5 can be divided as follows:

1. The invitation (**4.1**) "Come up hither".
2. The introduction (**4.2-11**) "The heavenly scene".
3. The investigation (**5.1-5**) "Who is worthy?"
4. The identification (**5.6-14**) "A Lamb, as though it had been slain".

1. THE INVITATION – "Come up hither" (4.1)

- An invitation into the courts of Heaven – a great privilege.
- "A door was opened in Heaven". Amplified Version says, "The door was standing open". John had not been able to see it. Cross reference (**Acts 7.52-60**) Stephen saw Heaven opened.
- (**2 Kings 6.15-17**) Elisha saw a mountain full of chariots and horses "Come down". Some, like John, are privileged to see things from time to time.
- (**Genesis 5.18-24**) Enoch "was not for God took him" (to Heaven).
- (Amplified Version – **Hebrews 11.5**) But unlike John he didn't return.
- (**2 Corinthians 12.1-5**) Paul had a similar experience, a privilege that affected him so much that he could not speak clearly about it.

- From the end of **Chapter 3** the word church is not mentioned again on earth until **22.16**. This indicates little, however, as there are five New Testament epistles, in which the word "church" does not occur – but they are clearly intended for the church.

2. THE INTRODUCTION – (to the scene in Heaven) (4.2-11)

- The "seven Spirits of God" (**v3**) = The seven-fold Spirit of God (refer to page 13 – "THE SPIRIT").
- The "four and twenty elders" (**v4**) possibly represent the Church (being the Old Testament saints largely represented by the twelve tribes of Israel and the New Testament saints represented by the twelve apostles. No explanation is given (and indeed there is no need for us to know who they are or who they represent) so it is best to not be dogmatic.
- The "four beasts" (**v6**). Some think Cherubic (**Ezekiel 10.9-20**). Some say because they have six wings they are Seraphim (**Isaiah 6.2-5**). Others, four major aspects of Christ. Matthew – Christ the lion of Judah (implies strength). Mark – the ox or calf and servant (patience). Luke – His humanity (intelligence of man). John – the eagle (swiftness). There is no explanation given, therefore again it is best not to make judgements or be dogmatic about it.
- John, however, recorded what he saw and we can benefit from it. We should eagerly drink in all we can learn about Heaven. We never know when we shall be surrounded by these glories. One by one the children of God, since John's time, have received this invitation. Our turn will come (**2 Corinthians 5.1-10**).
- For John the particular invitation and purpose was to be shown "things, which must come hereafter" and the whole scene unfolds before him.
- "Throne" occurs 12 times in this chapter.
- John describes **God's Unchallenged Authority (v2)**. **God's Unparalleled Splendour (vv3-7)** and **His creatures Unceasing Worship (vv8-11)**.
- These things combined, no doubt, to fill John with awe.
- **(4.2) Unchallenged Authority**. The "one who sits on the throne" catches his attention first. Not the strange creatures etc. but "His glory" (**v5**) He is unchallenged and unchallengeable.
- To challenge is to suffer defeat. Cross reference (**Isaiah 14.12-15**) Lucifer "I will be like the most high". "Yet, thou shalt be brought down to the sides of the pit". Lucifer = Satan. (**2 Corinthians 11.1-15**) Satan himself, "an angel of light".
- **(4.8)** He is "Lord God Almighty".
- **(4.9)** He is "eternal". No beginning, no end.
- **(4.11)** He "created all things". "For His pleasure". Good News Version – By your "will".
- **(4.10)** All "cast their crowns" before Him. His unchallenged authority and holiness and might is known in Heaven. It should be known and recognised on earth.
- (**Isaiah 40.18-31**) To whom will you liken God? Have you not known – heard? (**v21**).
- (**20.11**) It will be known at the judgement. Through Christ (**Acts 17.31** and **John 5.22-23**).
- (**Isaiah 64.1-2**) If God visited now it would be known. "The nations would tremble".
- (**Isaiah 66.1-2** and **Isaiah 57.15**) "The earth is my footstool". I dwell also with the humble.
- (**John 14.23**) "Will make our abode with Him".

- Having seen His glory as pictured by John in Heaven, isn't it marvellous that this God, our God, dwells with us?
- **(4.3-7) Unparalleled Splendour.** Such glorious beauty is almost beyond description. How can we take in the brightness, the colour, the power and yet the serenity of it all.
- **(1 Timothy 6.12-16)** says, "God dwells in unapproachable light". (**Exodus 34.29-35**) When Moses came down from God's presence on Mt Sinai his face shone so much the Israelites were afraid to look upon him. Exposure to the glory of God brings fear to mortal man.
- **(Luke 2.8-9)** Shepherds.
- **(Hebrews 12.21)** Moses said, "So terrible was the sight, I exceedingly quake and fear".
- **(4.8) Unceasing Worship.** "They rest not day or night". From the first sight in **v2** to the last sound in **v11** of this introduction, God is central amid all the glory and magnificence.

3. THE INVESTIGATION – "Who is worthy?" **(5.1-3)**

- **(5.2)** Angelic strength did not qualify. Yet an angel killed 185,000 of Sennacherib's army (**2 Kings 19.35**).
- **(5.3)** No man anywhere was worthy (not Noah, Moses, Job, Abraham, David, Daniel or any other).
- **(5.4)** "John wept". Can you imagine what life would be like if there had never been Christ?
- **(5.5)** "Weep not". Here is the message to John. Jesus "has prevailed".
- Jesus Christ was joy to the woman of Samaria (**John 4.25-29**) Isn't this the Christ?
- Jesus Christ was joy to the impotent man. (**John 5.1-9**) Pool of Bethesda. Took up his bed and walked.
- Jesus Christ was joy to the blind man. (**John 9.1-7 and 24-25**) I was blind, now see. Worshipped Him.
- Jesus Christ was joy to Martha and Mary. (**John 11.20**) Raising of Lazarus.
- Jesus Christ was joy to Mary Magdalene. (**John 20.11-16**) At the sepulchre, thought he was the gardener.
- Jesus Christ was joy to the disciples. (**John 20.19-20**) In upper room doors locked.
- Jesus Christ was joy to Peter. (**John 21.1-7**) Peter "I go fishing" saw Jesus on shore.
- Is He our joy? Do we love Him, as we ought?

4. THE IDENTIFICATION – The "Lamb" in the "midst" **(5.6-14)**

- **(5.6)** "A Lamb". (**John 1.29**) "Behold Lamb of God", "as it had been slain". (**1 Peter 1.18-20**) "Not redeemed with corruptible things but by the precious blood of Christ as a Lamb slain". Without a doubt Jesus Christ. He is identified by His work on Calvary.
- **(5.9)** His sacrifice of Himself is the stated reason for His worthiness. (Even though He is worthy of Himself, being God). Cross reference (**John 1.1-14** and **Philippians 2.5-7**). It is the reason also for His exaltation (**Philippians 2.8-11**).
- In **verses 6-14** we certainly have identification.
- Christ is **(v6)** Perfect in power ("horns") and perfect in vision ("eyes"). Seven being the number which represents the whole. Perfection.
- Christ is **(v7)** Divine in authority.
- Christ is **(v8)** Worthy of worship.
- Christ is **(v9)** Worthy of praise.

- Christ is (**vv12-13**) Possessor of every grace.
- We also have Adoration.
 - (**v9**) This song has no comparison – it is new.
 - (**vv9-10**) Consider what he has done for so many.
 - (**vv11-13**) Every creature joins in.
- But we have Anticipation.
 - (**v7**) He now has possession of the book. He is about to open the seals. This He proceeds to do in **6.1** revealing the future.

CHAPTER 6

THE BREAKING OF THE SEALS

This chapter confirms the teaching found in **Matthew 24**. Both chapters (**Revelation 6** and **Matthew 24**) deal with critical future events in relation to the return of Jesus Christ.

- (**4.1**) “things which must be hereafter”.
- (**1.1-7**) “Shortly come to pass”. “He cometh”.
- (**Matthew 24.1-3**) “What are the signs of your coming”. Happenings leading up to His return.

The 1st Seal (vv1-2**) War (Compare Matthew 24.6)**

- In **verses 1, 3, 5 and 7** “Come and see” is better translated “Come” as Good News Bible - These are things which “must be”.
- (**4.1**) “Must come”.
- (**Matthew 24.6**) This is a picture of controlled conquest. The rider is not Christ of **19.11-13** (who will come after the Tribulation bringing peace).
- The crown here is “Stephanos” = crown of triumph, not the diadem of **19.12** (the crown of regal majesty). This rider is a Divinely appointed agent, to bring judgement on the earth. His one aim is to conquer. And he does!
- This was the general pattern of wars in the early centuries AD. A war, a result. (**Matthew 24.2**) “not a stone standing”. The Romans won decisively in AD70. Jerusalem fell. This has been the same with many Empires right through the British Empire and many other wars.

The 2nd Seal (6.3-4**) More war (Compare Matthew 24.7-8)**

- There is now an element of chaos. The rider is not aiming at decisive victory but simply to take “peace from earth”. The end is not yet (**Matthew 24.6**).
- When these notes were first put together in 1986 there were 42 wars in progress. Who won in Vietnam or Iraq or Afghanistan. No real victories, no real peace.

The 3rd Seal (vv5-6**) Famine (Compare Matthew 24.7)**

- Compare (**Ezekiel 4.16-17**) “Eat bread by weight”.
- (**vv5-6**) “Balances” to measure food. At a conference on famine some time ago a delegate said, “We have lost the battle against famine in India. We shall have to let

them die". Add to that many parts of Africa and other third world areas. We have seen what famine can do!

- **(v6)** "A measure". A man's need for one day. "A penny". A man's wage for one day. What will a family man do in these conditions?
- "Hurt not". A voice from the midst. "Oil and wine". You avoid "hurting" things that are precious or scarce.

The 4th Seal (vv7-8) Death (Compare Matthew 24.22) Days shortened

- **(v8)** Quarter of the earth's population killed (the result of Seal 1 – False peace, Seal 2 – war, Seal 3 – Famine, Seal 4 – Death. A combination of many troubles).
- "And hell followed with him". Many unsaved people will die.
- "Beasts". Many wild beasts are in Zoos and National Parks in many locations. Picture the result if a natural disaster set them free.
- During World War 2 one of the first decisions of the Northern Ireland Parliament (when Germany started bombing raids) was to shoot all the dangerous animals in the Belfast Zoo (in case they escaped and killed people).

The 5th Seal (vv9-11) Martyrdom (Compare Matthew 24.9-10)

- **(v9)** "Souls" (their bodies were dead) Cross reference (**2 Corinthians 5.1-8**).
- Time is measured. Christians will be killed. Many have been through the ages. Cross reference (**Matthew 23.29-39** and **Hebrews 11.32-40**). Jews also.
- It will happen again.
- It is interesting to hear the questions of the martyrs and God's great love and patience as seen against this background (**2 Peter 3.4-9**).

The 6th Seal (vv12-17) Confusion and Fear (Compare Matthew 24.4 and 23-30)

- The powers of nature are now the agents of God's judgement. But that confusion need not cause the people of God to be confused. The confusion of **verses 15-17** would have a parallel in the scene of Noah's day referred to in **Matthew 24.37-39**. And, Lot's day (**Luke 17.28-30**). Cross reference (**Genesis 19**).
- "Confusion" is already with us in many forms. Art. Music. Education. The same things overflow into the attitudes that attack family life i.e. order in churches, women's role (Women's Liberation), acceptance of homosexuality etc. (How far these things have moved since the notes were first made!).
- Fear is also with us in many forms i.e. build nuclear shelters, increasingly use drugs, visit psychiatrist, practice yoga etc.
- We have energy crises, food crises and political crises.
- Our Lord Himself told His disciples, within the hearing of others, some of the signs of the end times. (**Luke 21.25-27**) But there is a glorious ending.

Confusion and Fear (**vv12-16**) Cross reference with the following:

- a. (**Matthew 24.4**) Don't be deceived.
- b. (**Matthew 24.6**) Don't be troubled.
- c. (**Matthew 24.23**) Don't believe every report.
- d. (**Matthew 24.24**) Don't believe the deceivers.

- e. (**Matthew 24.37-39**) Those of Noah's day were deceived.
 - f. (**Matthew 24.39-40**) Non-believers taken away. Believers taken up (**v31**).
 - g. (**Luke 21.28**) Look up, redemption is near.
 - h. (**Luke 21.34**) Self-indulgence, drunkenness, cares distract.
 - i. (**Luke 21.36**) Watch and pray.
- (**v12**) "Sun became black". "Moon as blood". Similar things happened at Christ's crucifixion so why not at His return? Cross reference (**Matthew 27.45-54 – verse 45 – six hour to ninth hour i.e. noon to 3.00pm**).
 - (**Joel 2.21-32**) Gives us a full picture. Compare with **Acts 2.16-21**. "The last days" are a period embracing the time from the Holy Spirit was given at Pentecost until the end of the present age (before the "Day of the Lord" which will bring in the "Millennium Kingdom") on earth.
 - (**v13**) Stars of heaven fall to ground.
 - (**v14**) Heavens departed as a scroll rolled together. Mountains and Islands move.
 - (**v15**) Everyone hiding.
 - (**v16**) Realisation of the day of God's wrath.
 - What mighty blessings are mentioned in that reading of Joel? Those living at that time who know the Lord, will rejoice to see him.

CHAPTER 7

THE PROTECTION OF GOD'S SERVANTS

The confusion on earth connected with the 6th seal stands in contrast with the calm in Heaven as the 7th seal is broken. Compare (**6.12-27** and **8.1**).

In between is **chapter 7** (a chapter in Parenthesis), as though John has been diverted from the vision of the six seals taking place on earth to what is happening in Heaven. It shows us that things are under control, in and from Heaven, regardless of the confusion on earth.

There is a divine principle – God protects His own people. (**7.3** and **9.4**. Also **Matthew 24.21-22**).

This protection is for the tribulation period, but God has often offered special protection to His people, for example:

- (**Exodus 8.20-23**) Israel had no flies.
- (**Exodus 9.1-6**) Cattle of Israel not affected.
- (**Exodus 9.22-26**) Israel not affected by the hail.
- (**Exodus 10.21-23**) Darkness and Israel not affected.
- (**Exodus 11.4-7**) First-born die and Israel not affected.
- (**Ezekiel 9.1-7**) Saved those deeply concerned about the detestable or abominable things that were happening. Many churches today are really apathetic, couldn't care less. Maybe some feel powerless to do anything about the state of things.
- (**Daniel 3**) Those who would not worship Nebuchadnezzar in the fiery furnace. Saved. Jesus with them. In **verses 26-27** we read that Nebuchadnezzar saw four in the fiery furnace, the fourth like the Son of God.
- (**Daniel 6.19-23**) Daniel survived the lions den. King Darius was exceedingly glad.

- (**Psalm 91**) Speaks strongly about this. "He that dwelleth in the secret place of the most high shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty".

Note the differences between the two companies of people brought before us in **Chapter 7**:-

- The FIRST in **verses 1 – 8** (marked ×)
- The SECOND in **verses 9 – 17** (marked ✓)
 - × (**v4**) 144,000 Jews.
 - ✓ (**v9**) - Those of all nations. Believers.
 - × (**v4**) Counted.
 - ✓ (**v9**) Innumerable.
 - × (**v3**) About to face trouble.
 - ✓ (**v16**) Trouble has passed.
 - × (**v2**) On earth (during the time of tribulation).
 - ✓ (**v15**) In Heaven (during eternity).

One group is seen first before the Great Tribulation the other just after it! But this is not the only time of tribulation.

- (**v14**) The "Great" Tribulation preceding the Second Advent.
- (**Acts 14.22**) There are many tribulations before the "great" tribulation. Cross reference (**2 Timothy 3.12**).

A clear lesson is that even if we face danger on earth our eternal destiny is not in doubt. (**Romans 8.28-31**) All things work together for good. (**Psalm 73.24**) Guide me with thy counsel. Receive me into glory.

While two companies of people are spoken of here the second group may well include the first group, because:

- a. They are all servants (**v3 and v15**). God wants us to serve. (**1 Thessalonians 1.5-10**) to work with Him (**1 Corinthians 3.9**) and for Him. (**Philippians 1.1**) Servants of Jesus Christ to all the saints. (**Colossians 3.23-24**) Work as to the Lord and serve the Lord Christ.
- b. They are all saved. (**14.1-5**) Makes it clear for 144,000 and (**7.9-17**) for the multitude.
- c. They are all sealed. (**9.1-5**) Shows all except ungodly were sealed. All God's saints are (**Ephesians 1.7-14, v13** and **Ephesians 4.29-30**) Sealed by Holy Spirit. (**Romans 8.8-9**) If we do not have the Spirit, none of His! (**7.4**) The 144,000 get special mention however, **14.1-5** points out no one else has their experience and consequently no one else can sing their song! This will be seen in more detail when we reach **Chapter 14**.

The tribulation has special significance for the children of Israel:

- (**Jeremiah 30.7**) "Time of Jacob's trouble".
- (**Matthew 24.15-16**) "Those in Judea flee".
- (**Zechariah 14.1-2**) Gather all nations against Jerusalem to battle.
- (**12.13**) "The woman" (Israel) we will see later.

It is not surprising then that Israelites should receive special protection. Their special sealing does not guarantee that they escape death.

- (12.13) The Dragon (Satan) persecutes Israel.
- (13.7) Beast makes war with the saints and overcomes them.
- (15.2-3) These two verses show who really has the victory.
- (11.1-8) Makes it clear that two even more special servants die.
- (6.9-11, 14.12-13 and 20.4) Give a clear message that many will die during the Great Tribulation.

It is interesting to compare the company of martyrs in 6.9-11 with the multitude of believers described in 7.9-17.

- (6.9-11) are "under the altar" (v9).
 - (7.9-17) are "before the throne" (v9).

 - (6.9-11) are questioning (v10).
 - (7.9-17) are rejoicing (v10).

 - (6.9-11) are given "white robes". **
 - (7.9.17) already have their "white robes". **
- ** Speaking of their imputed righteousness in Christ (19.5).

Without doubt both are part of the body of Christ, the Church (**Ephesians 1.22-25**), destined to be "gathered together in one" (**Ephesians 1.10**) even though they lived on earth at different times.

CHAPTER 8

THE SEVENTH SEAL (THE FIRST FOUR TRUMPETS)

Seventh seal opened and there is silence in Heaven for half an hour (v1).

The "silence" in Heaven indicates the CALMNESS there, as opposed to the confusion on earth. It also signals DELAY before the onslaught of end time events and underscores the EXPECTANCY surrounding what is about to happen. This ceremonious start to the unfolding of the 7th seal emphasizes the fact that the events that are about to occur are far from being accidental. They are the measured and just actions of an all-knowing God.

Opening of the seal reveals seven angels, each with a trumpet. As each sounds their trumpet a plague is released on the earth.

The 6th seal began with confusion and fear. The 7th seal begins with silence showing God in control. As the trumpets sound prayers of saints will be going up (v4) and the angels will be watching. Their intervention can be connected with the prayers. Cross reference (6.10) "How long"?

- (v5) Censer cast upon the earth from Heaven. The wrath of God who is in complete control. Comes deliberately from Heaven.
- (v7) 1st trumpet. Vegetation affected. Food affected.
- (vv8-9) 2nd trumpet. Sea and life in sea die. Salt water. Commerce affected.

- (**vv10-11**) 3rd trumpet. Rivers etc. Wormwood (poison). Fresh water. Drinking water affected.
- (**v12**) 4th trumpet. Heavens affected. Industry affected.

“One third” is mentioned in connection with each of plagues. God leaves twice the amount He affects by judgement, but the effects will be devastating.

The next three trumpets will be terrible and affect many people (**v13**).

1. Woe – 5th trumpet
2. Woe – 6th trumpet
3. Woe – 7th trumpet

CHAPTER 9

THE SEVENTH SEAL (THE 5TH AND 6TH TRUMPETS)

The 5th trumpet (the first woe) sounds and satanic forces are released.

- (**9.1**) Satan falls from Heaven. Cross reference (**Luke 10.18**). “Star” = Satan. The angel given key to open bottomless pit.

“Bottomless Pit” references:

- (**v1**) Abusos (Greek for Abyss). The pit of the abyss. Revised Version – A place of restriction.
- (**v2**) Smoke and fire (furnace). A place of fire.
- (**v11**) A Ruler or King over the lost dead, in Hebrew “Abaddon”. Greek “Apollyon” from “Apollumi” meaning destroyer. An angel.
- (**1.18**) The Lord has the right to open or shut. He holds the keys. He is in control.
- (**17.8**) The last empire arises from the pit.
- (**20.1-3**) Satan to be chained there for 1000 years.
- Cross references (**Luke 8.26-36**, in particular **v31**) The deep = bottomless pit. (**Matthew 8.29**) Place where demons go. They did not want to go before their time!

More information on Hell, Sheol and Hades.

Hell

Greek word – Gehenna. The final place of all the doomed, after judgement day. New Testament word. Hebrew word – Taphet = place of burning. (**Isaiah 30.33** and **Jeremiah 7.31-32**). Old Testament word. The place of eternal suffering. Cut off from God and everything good.

Sheol/Hades

Hebrew Old Testament word “Sheol” and Greek New Testament word, “Hades”, are the same place. Preceding Christ’s ascension it was the place of all departed spirits, the blessed and lost. (**Luke 16.19-31** and **Matthew 27.50-53**) The blest were taken out by Christ to be with Him, at His ascension. (**Ephesians 4.4-10**) The lost or doomed souls, of all generations, to remain there until judgement day, then transferred to Hell (Gehenna). (**20.13-15**).

Abyss

The bottomless pit is a shaft leading to the "Abyss of Sheol". Abussos = bottomless (from a = intensive, busso = depth). A great depth. In the case of **9.1-2**, the Revised Version has the pit of the abyss.

Tartarus

Greek word = pit of darkness. Most likely it is the place where fallen angels await judgement day. (**2 Peter 2.4**) It only occurs once in Scripture but some associate it with "the lowest hell". (**Psalms 36.13**).

It would be easy and logical to conclude that there is a SHAFT (a shaft is a "pit" with no floor, or bottom, as it leads into a larger compartment), whose entrance God has kept secret, leading to the hollow centre of the earth. There the spirits of the unjust dead are currently located and kept separately and where the fallen angels are kept until the final judgement. Christ went there (**Matthew 12.38-40**) and led from it the spirits of the justified (**Ephesians 4.8-10**). Now the justified do not go there (**Philippians 1.21-24** and **2 Corinthians 5.1**). Before Calvary all spirits went there (**Luke 16.19-26**). Samuel was raised from there (**1 Samuel 28.8** and **13-15**) and Korah and his followers went there directly (**Numbers 16.26-35**).

- (**Acts 2.23-28**) David wrote prophetically about Christ in Hell. Cross reference (**Psalms 16.8-11**).
- (**Matthew 12.38-40**) Story of Jonah is true, otherwise Jesus would not have referred to it. "Son of man" three days and three nights in the heart of the earth. Jesus fulfilled this prophecy.
- (**Philippians 1.21-24**) In Old Testament times before the ascension all dead were going down. In New Testament saints (Christians) go up.
- (**2 Corinthians 5.1**) Going up in the heavens.
- (**Luke 16.19-31**) Old Testament state of affairs in Hades (Sheol). Separation between the saved and the lost.
- (**1 Samuel 28.8** and **13-15**) Samuel in a place of comfort and contentment. Old Testament situation. Bring up. Disquietened.
- (**Numbers 16.26-35**) A new thing. The earth opened and swallowed them alive and took down. Judgement of these men.

The 5th Trumpet – 1st Woe (vv1-12)

We could speculate as to what they are:

- a. Locusts. (**v4**) They are not to hurt vegetation, only those men without the seal of God (**v5**). Not to kill, only torment. Five months (the natural life span of locusts). God is in control. The locusts could be actual locusts. People attacked by them will wish to die, but won't be able to. Their angel is the King of the bottomless pit. Abaddon or Apollyon = the destroyer.
- b. They could be demons released to live in men. (**16.12-14**) Spirits of devils. Working miracles. See also **v20**. Satan worship is growing. (**12.12**) Satan will be full of wrath. Could be followed by indwelling demons (as in **Matthew 17.14-18**).
- c. They could represent the demon possession of armies in the last days. (**16.12-14**).

Speculation apart, however, there are some things we do know about them:

- (**vv1-3**) They are from Hell itself.
- (**v4**) They know their target.
- (**vv5-6**) They torment desperately.
- (**vv7-8**) They look fearsome.
- (**v9**) They sound fearsome.
- (**v11**) They are organised.

The first woe is passed.

The 6th trumpet – 2nd Woe (vv13-21) (A vast army)

Again we can gather evidence and speculate on the possible meanings:

- (**v14**) A geographical location is given.
- (**v16**) The vast army must be from a densely populated area. It is likely Arab armies will be caught up in this or it could be India and China to come against Israel.

Again, we don't know but some things are clear:-

- (**v14**) God has control and it is all in readiness to do His will.
- (**v15**) The timing has been determined beforehand (**Acts 17.26**).
- (**v15**) The effect is colossal (one third of the world's population killed).
- (**vv20-21**) Mankind is exceedingly evil. They still refuse to repent. Cross reference (**16.12-14**). The Euphrates is to dry up to allow armies to gather for the Battle of Armageddon. Kings and leaders will be devil possessed. (It is worth noting that the word in the original translated "sorceries" is the word we use for drugs). (Pharmakeion).
- (**v16**) 200 million troops. This number could be found from China, India etc.

CHAPTERS 10 AND 11

THE TEMPLE, THE TWO WITNESSES AND THE 7TH TRUMPET

In between the 6th and 7th trumpets we have a parenthesis, just as we had between the 6th and 7th seals.

This portion in parenthesis is from **10.1** to **11.14**. We ended the 5th trumpet 1st woe at **9.12** and although the 6th trumpet has sounded (at **9.13**) it is not pronounced to be the 2nd woe until **11.14**). God reminds us He is doing other things whilst pouring out woes. He is presenting positive witness on earth. Some things are difficult to interpret but other things are clear and easily understood.

Let us notice three things in this portion:

1. Definite Limitation.
2. Definite Participation.
3. Definite Revelation.

1. Definite Limitation

God has set a limit on:

- a. How much information He will give us.
 - (10.4) "7 thunders not to be written".
 - (Acts 1.6-7) "Not for you to know".
 - (Matthew 24.32-36) See these things (v15, v24, v29 and v42) and yet "You don't know".
 - (1 Corinthians 13.12) "Now we know in part".
 - (Deuteronomy 29.29) Secret things limited to God. Not given us to know everything but we know enough to do the will of God.
- b. How much time He will give anyone.
 - (10.6) No more delay.
 - (2 Peter 3.9-10) "Longsuffering towards us". He waits, but not for ever!
 - (22.10-12) "Unjust stay unjust". He will not always seek to convert.
 - (Proverbs 1.22-31) "Ye refused". Tells a fearful tale.
- c. How much testimony He will give unbelievers.
 - (11.3) Only two people witness. For only 1260 days. In this instance.
 - (11.5-6) They had power to continue.
 - (11.7) But eventually they were overcome.
- d. How much satisfaction He will give to His enemies (11.7-11).
 - (11.7) They kill the witnesses.
 - (11.8-10) They rejoice over the death of the witnesses and make the bodies a spectacle.
 - (11.11) But their rejoicing is short-lived.

2. Definite Participation (10.1 to 11.1)

- (10.1) John starts off just watching ("I saw").
- (10.4) Then he starts to act (but is stopped). "About to write".
- (10.8) Then he is told to enter into the scene he has been watching.
- (10.9-11) It is full of meaning for John in that: v10 – He loves the Word of God. "Sweet as honey in his mouth". Verse 11 – He loves to proclaim it: "Prophecy again". But the message comes with a burden – "stomach became bitter". Many have felt this burden. (Habakkuk 1.1-4) "Spoiling and violence before me". John's experience is similar to Ezekiel (Ezekiel 2.1-5). "Rebellious nation, impudent children".
- (11.1) He is told to measure the temple.

3. Definite Revelation (10.11 to 11.13)

Some things are very clear:

- (10.11) John would preach again. Eusebius quoted Hegesippus – John returned to Ephesus AD96).

- **(11.1-2)** In the tribulation period there will be a temple in Jerusalem. **Verse 1** – “Temple of God”. Cross reference (**2 Thessalonians 2.1-5**). **Verse 2** – “The Holy City”. **Verse 8** – Jerusalem, “where our Lord was crucified”. Compare (**v8** with **Isaiah 1.1** and **9-11**).
- **(11.2-3)** Times are clearly defined. “42 months = 3½ years”. Cross reference (**Daniel 9.24-27**) The very year of Christ’s death was given so long ago (in Daniel’s day – over 500 years before it happened).
- **(11.1-3)** Two special witnesses. (**Verses 3-12**) These events are vividly described.
- **(11.13)** There will be an earthquake, “bringing glory to God”.

We are told now the 2nd woe has passed.

The 7th trumpet. The 3rd woe. (11.15-18). It is the ULTIMATE WOE for those who are not ready. THE RETURN OF JESUS CHRIST! – but it is a cause for thanksgiving for those in Heaven (11.17).

Overlaying Information

It is worth pointing out, at this stage, that the book of The Revelation takes us to the return of Jesus Christ more than once. Each time we are taken to that event we are told about things that will occur in the years and months leading up to it. As a consequence we need to lay each set of lead-up events on top of the others, much as a contractor engaged to construct a building needs to place the negatives of the plumbing, electrical and heating and ventilating drawings on top of the architectural drawings to fully understand how all the components for the building come together.

- **(6.12-17)** Seem to bring us to “The return of Christ” (especially **16-17**).
- **(11.15-18)** Does bring us to “The return of Christ”.
- **(19.11-21)** Also brings us to “The return of Christ” (especially **v14**).

In between these passages, different, new, additional things are revealed as happening (i.e. we are taken through the years preceding Christ’s return more than once. There is too much to take in with one description. As well as this some revelations have been in parenthesis. We need to fit it all together and understand that many things are happening at the one time.

In this brief passage (**11.15-18**) we have mention of seven things, which must happen, before we enter eternity.

1. The Reign of God – will be absolute (**11.15**).
2. The Rejoicing in Heaven – will be full (**11.16-17**).
3. The Rage of the Heathen – will be permitted to grow (**11.18**).
4. The Reaction of God – will be felt (**11.18**).
5. The Resurrection of the Dead – will occur (**11.18**).
6. The Rewarding of the Saints – will occur (**11.18**).
7. The Removing of Corrupters – will be completed (**11.18**).

1. The Reign of God – will be absolute (11.15)

- **(11.15)** “And He shall reign for ever and ever”.
- **(1 Timothy 6.12-16)** “In His time will show who is King of Kings”.

- **(Philippians 2.10-11)** "Every tongue confess Jesus Christ is Lord".
- **(1 Corinthians 15.24-28)** "Cometh the end, deliver the Kingdom up to God". **(v25)** There will be the millennial reign, and Satan will be defeated. It will be complete.
- **(Matthew 6.9-13)** "Thy Kingdom come". "Thy will be done on earth", will not have been prayed in vain.

2. The Rejoicing in Heaven – will be full (11.16-17)

- **(11.16-17)** "Elders worship, Alleluia".
- **(19.1-4)** Many people saying, "Alleluia, salvation, glory, honour and power to the Lord our God" **(v1)**. Again, Alleluia **(v3)**.
- **(19.5-7)** Elders and four beasts worship saying, "Amen. Alleluia". **(v4)** "Voice as a great multitude, as many waters, as of mighty thunderings saying, "Alleluia. Lord God omnipotent reigneth". Their joy comes to the full. Can you imagine it?"

3. The Rage of the Heathen – will be permitted to grow (11.18)

- **(11.18)** "And the nations were angry".
- **(Psalm 2)** Will be fulfilled. "Why do the heathen rage?"
- **(19.19-21)** This gives a greater fulfilment. Rage has become war.
- **(20.7-10)** The ultimate fulfilment. "Satan loosed". Gathered to battle, then defeated.

4. The Reaction of God – will be felt (11.18)

- **(11.18)** "Thy wrath is come". Dead to be judged.
- **(16.1-21)** God's reaction seen as never before during the tribulation.
- **(Matthew 24.44-51)** "Weeping and gnashing of teeth".

5. The Resurrection of the Dead – will occur (11.18)

- **(11.18)** "The time of the dead, to be judged".
- **(1 Corinthians 15.19-23)** "Christ the first fruit". "Those that are Christ's at His coming". There is a definite order. Cross reference **(1 Thessalonians 4.13-18)**.
- **(20.4-6)** A first resurrection of **LIFE** (see **Luke 14.12-14**). And, a resurrection of **CONDEMNATION**.

6. The Rewarding of the Saints – will occur (11.18)

- **(11.18)** "Reward prophets, servants, saints". Small and great who have shown reverential fear.
- **(1 Corinthians 3.8-15)** Each rewarded according to their works, as God's labourers.
- **(Matthew 25.19-21)** Parable of talents. "Well done good and faithful servant, enter the joy of your Lord".

7. The Removing of Corrupters – will be completed (11.18)

- **(11.18)** The word "destroy" earth = corrupt earth.

- (1 Timothy 6.5) Same word. "Corrupt minds".
- (Luke 12.33) "Neither moth corrupteth". Same word.
- (19.20 and 20.12) Physical and spiritual corrupters will be destroyed.

Note: (11.19) All this is consistent with God's testament (will) and covenant promises.

CHAPTER 12

THE INCARNATION AND THE WAR IN HEAVEN

To understand **verses 1-6** we need to identify:

- A. THE CHILD
- B. THE WOMAN
- C. THE DRAGON

A. THE CHILD

- (**v5**) Ruler of all nations. Rule with a "rod of iron".
- (**Psalm 2.6-9**) God's son.
- (**19.15-16**) King of Kings and Lord of Lord's.
- (**2.26-27**) God His Father. The saints will rule with Him.
- The child is JESUS CHRIST.

B. THE WOMAN

- (**1-6** and **13-17**) Give an extremely condensed version of the story of the nation of Israel. Their story is told in detail in other Scriptures.
- (**vv1-2**) Clothed with sun, moon underfoot and a crown of 12 stars (the Tribes of Israel).
- (**Romans 9.1-8**) Compare **verses 2** and **5**. Israel as the woman brought forth Christ.
- (**Genesis 12.1-3**) In Abraham.
- (**Genesis 22.15-18**) All families in the earth are blessed.
- (**Zechariah 8.22-23**) Many people and strong nations through God's chosen people (Jews) shall seek the Lord of Hosts in Jerusalem. Cross reference (**Isaiah 2.1-5**) Millennium.
- (**Isaiah 60.14**) The son's of all nations have been against God's chosen people. (Note – **Isaiah 60.11** – compare with cross references **21.25**). New heaven and earth.
- (**12.6**) Tribulation period a special time of trouble for Israel (Jews).
- (**vv13-17**) The dragon persecuted the woman, Israel. Made war with her seed.
- (**Jeremiah 30.1-11**) God in control throughout (**Verse 7** – saved out of it).
- The woman is ISRAEL.

C. THE DRAGON

- (**v3**) Compare with **verse 9**. Serpent of old. Devil. Satan.
- The dragon is SATAN.

Having identified the woman, the child and the dragon we can interpret the meaning of the chapter.

The chapter opens with the incarnation of Jesus Christ (**Galatians 4.4-5**). In the chapter we see:

1. Christ's Enemy
2. Christ's Humanity
3. Christ's Destiny
4. Christ's Safety

1. Christ's Enemy

- a. (**Genesis 3.15**) Before His birth. The serpent Satan.
- b. (**Mark 1.13**) His time on earth. Tempted of Satan.
 - (**Matthew 16.21-23**) His time on earth. Through Peter – tempted of Satan.
 - (**Luke 22.3-4**) His time on earth. Through Judas – tempted of Satan. And through others. Direct attacks.
- c. (**Matthew 13.24-30 and 36-42**) Satan was Christ's enemy to the end.
 - (**Acts 5.3**) Satan used Christ's disciples, to attack the Church.
 - (**2 Corinthians 2.10-11**) Satan troubles believers.
 - (**1 Peter 5.8-9**) Satan seeks those he may devour.
 - (**20.7-9**) Satan attacks Christ and His people.

Christ came to destroy the enemy. Satan.

- (**Hebrews 2.14-15**) Through death He might destroy – the devil.
- (**1 John 3.8**) That He might destroy the works of the devil.

2. Christ's Humanity

- (**vv1-17**) Brings before us the incarnation. His enemy. Satan. A man-child, who is God. Showing Christ's humanity.
- (**John 1.1-14**) The word made flesh.
- (**1 Timothy 3.16**) God manifest in flesh, etc.
- (**Matthew 4.1-2**) Hungry and tempted in wilderness.
- (**John 4.6**) Weary sat at Jacob's well.
- (**John 11.32-35**) He knew sorrow and wept.

We can not doubt the humanity of the man-child.

3. Christ's Destiny

- (**v5**) His destiny is to rule.
- (**Hebrews 2.14-18**) He is also a wonderful High Priest.
- (**Isaiah 9.6-7**) Son given – government His – with justice.
- (**Matthew 2.1-2**) Born King of the Jews.
- (**Philippians 2.511**) Every knee shall bow.

4. Christ's Safety

- (**v5**) Caught up to God.
- (**John 14.30**) People speculate what might have happened if Christ had not done His Father's will, or had failed to purchase redemption or had been defeated by Satan. It is foolish reasoning. Satan made no headway with Jesus Christ.

- (Acts 2.23-24) Death could not hold Him. The outcome was sure. “The foreknowledge of God”.
- (John 1.29) John the Baptist beholds – “taketh away sin of the world”.
- (Ephesians 1.3-4) He hath chosen us in Him. Sure to accomplish.
- (Titus 1.1-2) Eternal life promised before world began. These things were planned as if they were already accomplished. He could not fail. He would not fail. He will NEVER fail.

Now let us look at the teachings in the chapter concerning, Israel as a Nation, the Activities in Heaven, and Satan’s knowledge.

A. Israel as a Nation

- (vv1-5) Shows one of the main purposes of Israel, was to provide the physical lineage of Jesus Christ.
- (Genesis 12.1-3) Abraham, “in thee shall all families of earth be blessed”.
- (Matthew 27.36-37) Jesus King of the Jews.
- (Romans 9.1-5) Of Israel Christ came. He was a Jew.
- (Matthew 1.1) The generations of Jesus Christ.

The future and welfare of Israel is dependent on her treatment of Christ.

- (Matthew 27.24-25) His blood (Christ’s) be on us and our children. (Unbelieving Jews).
- (Acts 13.44-46) Jews spoke against Paul’s teaching so he turned to the Gentiles.
- (Acts 28.17-29) Jews ears don’t hear, eyes don’t see. Gentiles will hear.
- (Zechariah 12.10) I will pour upon the house of David the spirit of grace – look upon me whom they pierced.
- (vv13-17) Just as God will never forsake Israel. Satan will never forgive her or give her peace.
- (Jeremiah 30.11 and 46.27-28) Never forsake Israel.

B. The Activities in Heaven

- (vv4-9 and 12) Satan causes trouble in Heaven. He is cast out to earth and his angels with him. Rejoicing in Heaven.
- (Job 1.6 and 2.7) Satan in Heaven went from the Lord’s presence and smote Job with boils. Satan also causes trouble on earth. But only as God allows.

It is interesting to note from verse 7 that there can be war in Heaven. Michael gets more than one mention in Scripture.

- (Daniel 10.10-14 and 21) Michael came to help Daniel.
- (Daniel 12.1) At that time Michael shall stand up – time of trouble.
- (Jeremiah 30.7) Jacob’s time of trouble (Israel/Jews) saved out of it.
- (Jude v9) Michael, Archangel contending with the devil (re Moses’ body). Michael is obviously a very able leader with a powerful following to win such a victory as in verses 7-9.
- (v10) One of Satan’s principal activities is as accuser of the “Brethren”.

C. Satan’s Knowledge

- (v4) He knew the importance of the man-child (Jesus Christ).
- (v10) He knows what to accuse us of.

- (**v12**) He knows something about God's timing. Satan's amazing knowledge is shared by his followers (demons).
- (**Luke 4.40-41**) The demons know Christ.
- (**James 2.19**) The demons have an immovable faith. "The demons also believe".
- (**1 Timothy 4.1**) Note the demons can teach so convincingly that they can lead people astray.

Before we leave **Chapter 12**, let us consider a very interesting POSSIBILITY concerning **verse 6** i.e. THE PLACE WHERE ISRAELITES WILL SHELTER DURING THE GREAT TRIBULATION.

The ancient city of PETRA is in modern Jordan (Jordan covers Edom, Moab and Ammon and Petra was a chief city in EDOM). It is a favourite destination for tourists.

PETRA has no road leading to it. Access is by horse, donkey or mule. Its entrance is by a long narrow canyon in the rock (6000 feet long and so narrow that a man on a donkey can barely get through). The buildings are hewn out of the rock and could accommodate one and a quarter million people. Food and bibles have been stored there in containers. The city is almost impregnable. It's a "wilderness" and could be a haven for the three and a half years of the Great Tribulation.

In light of all of this, consider the following scriptures:

- (**Daniel 11.41**) Edom will escape the rule of the "Beast".
- (**Jeremiah 30.7**) Israel will be "delivered".
- (**Isaiah 26.20**) Israel will have a place to hide.
- (**Isaiah 63.1-4**) The Lord, at His Second Coming, will come to Israel by way of Edom.
- (**Psalms 60.9-12**) Israel will go to Edom for protection.
- (**Isaiah 42.11**) The Amplified Version says, "let the inhabitants of the ROCK sing". (Sela is the Hebrew name for Petra).

Other interesting Scriptures in the connection are:

- (**Micah 2.12**)
- (**Obadiah 1.3**)
- (**Jeremiah 49.16**)

CHAPTER 13

THE BEAST AND THE FALSE PROPHET

The "Beast, mentioned 15 times (and another beast also is mentioned). The other beast is "the false prophet" (**19.20**).

Seven things are told us about the Beast. Note:

1. The Reference to the Beast
2. The Rise of the Beast
3. The Resemblance of the Beast
4. The Resources of the Beast
5. The Reception of the Beast

6. The Rule of the Beast
7. The Recognition of the Beast

1. The Reference to the Beast

The Beast in **verse 1** is the Empire, but in **verse 16** it is a man (the Head of the Empire). The many waters or sea are people and nations and tongues. Cross reference (**17.1** and **15**).

People don't think of Empires and Emperors as beasts, but God does!

Read **Daniel 7**. Note **verses 17** and **23**. These beasts are "Kings" or "Kingdoms". The reference here to a beast is to a wild beast, a venomous beast (Therion – not the same word as in **4.6** or **Hebrews 13.11**, which is Zoon – (living creatures or animals). Other references similar to **verses 1** and **2** are (**Mark 1.13**) wild beasts, (**Acts 10.12**) wild beasts and (**Acts 28.3-4**) a venomous beast.

This is how the Lord views the Empire. **Daniel 7** refers to Empires praised by historians but God viewed them as wild beasts.

2. The Rise of the Beast

- (**v1**) He comes out of the sea.
- (**17.1** and **15**) As we saw in these verses, the sea is multitudes of people.
- (**Daniel 7.1-3**) is a similar picture.
- (**Isaiah 57.20-21**) is an interesting Scripture with regard to the sea. "The wicked are like the troubled sea".

3. The Resemblance of the Beast

(**v2**) This beast resembles the devil in **12.3** and **12.9**. To fully appreciate the description we need to look at the following Scriptures.

- (**Daniel 7.4**) The Lion = Babylon. (**Psalms 22.1, 7-8** and **13-18**) Cruelty of the Lion.
- (**Daniel 7.5**) The Bear = Medes and Persians. (**Isaiah 13.17-18**). Extremely cruel. All devouring.
- (**Daniel 7.6**) The Leopard = Greece. Swift conquest by Alexander.
- (**Daniel 7.6**) The 4th beast = Rome and what flows from it. No known beast adequately conveys the nature of this world power. It is indescribable. (Combines all). The Empire that **Chapter 13** is speaking about is a late form of what started as the Roman Empire (**Daniel 7.19-22**). That was the last beast, which continues until the Lord comes, and it bears marks of the three other major world Empires. As far as the Emperor is concerned, the individual who is the Beast is the leader (**Daniel 7.8**).
- Compare (**Daniel 7.21**) with (**v7**) – made war with the saints.
- Compare (**Daniel 7.25**) with (**v5**) – blasphemes against God. Rome did rise out of troubled nations (**Daniel 7.2**). It did rule the world in its day (**Daniel 7.23**). As early as 451BC it had a decem virate (it was ruled by 10 men – **Daniel 7.24**). In 12BC Augustus became Pontifex Maximus – that is a title of the present Pope (the head of the principal college of priests in ancient Rome – Chief priest).
- (**v3**) Wounded to death but healed (unexpectedly still alive) and all the world wondered. In 2BC, Augustus became Pater Patrum, or Father of Fathers. Another of the titles of the present Pope. Rome appears to be dead, but pagan Rome gave way to Papal Rome. It still lives. It is ready to be revived, to the amazement of the world,

for the fulfilment of these things. As pagan Rome gave way to Papal so Papal Rome will be succeeded by the last form of the 4th world empire. It will be headed by the Beast.

- **(v4)** They worshipped the beast and people worship papal Rome.

4. The Resources of the Beast

- **(2 Thessalonians 2.9-10)** is an interesting Scripture. The work of Satan, lying etc.
- **(v2)** The beast is backed by Satan and all his power and resources.
- **(v4)** It is without compare as regards its capability for war. It is held in awe and esteem by all the world.
- **(v5)** We see it is directed by a capable leader and orator.
- **(vv11-15)** The beast who is the Emperor is assisted by another leader with supernatural powers and unswerving loyalty.
- **(vv16-17)** It has economic and commercial muscle.

These things indicate the power of the Empire and its Emperor.

5. The Reception of the Beast

- **(v8)** The beast is received with open arms.
- **(v3)** He is wondered at.
- **(v4)** He is praised.
- **(v8)** He is worshipped.
- **(John 5.43)** Another interesting Scripture. "If another come you will receive him". From a natural standpoint it's easy to understand why he is accepted.
- **(v4)** He brings peace. "Who can make war against him".
- **(Daniel 8.25)** By prosperity he will destroy many (peace and prosperity).
- **(1 Thessalonians 5.1-3)** When they say peace, suddenly destruction comes.
- **(v7)** Being accepted by all he produces unity. "Power over all nations". So he promotes peace and unity at a time when both are absent.

6. The Rule of the Beast

- **(v7)** Its rule is worldwide in its extent. Only the saints oppose it.
- **(12.11)** Their victory is through Christ.
- **(vv15-17)** It is ruthless in the way it rules.

7. The Recognition of the Beast

How can we recognise the Empire and the Man?

a. The Empire

It will not be difficult to recognise a world wide Empire.

- **(Daniel 7.23)** "The 4th Kingdom shall be diverse from all Kingdoms".
- **(v7)** "Power over all nations".
- **(17.12)** We see there will be 10 leaders initially, probably 10 leaders of 10 regions or countries or confederacies. Cross reference **(v1)**.
- **(Daniel 7.24)** The numbers will be reduced to eight. Cross reference **(Daniel 7.8)**.
- **(16.4)** "They worshipped the dragon". A time of devil worship. It will increase.
- **(v2)** It will have elements of the Babylonian, Medo-Persian and Greek Empires. This indicates a broad confederacy.

- (**v5**) It will come for the period of unmatched tribulation and will be recognised as other signs of the times are fulfilled. As regards pre-recognition, probably the greatest clue will be a revived form of what started as the Roman Empire (**Daniel 7.19-22**).

b. The Man

- (**2 Thessalonians 2.1-5**) Says that he will be revealed.
- (**v18**) Says the wise will recognise him.
- (**2 Thessalonians 2.6**) Says he will be revealed in his time.
- (**2 Thessalonians 2.8-10**) We will recognise him by his power. It is Satanic.
- (**Daniel 7.19-20**) We will recognise him by his position. Dominant.
- (**Daniel 8.23-25**) We will recognise him by his policies. Crafty. Ruthless (**Daniel 7.25**).
- (**vv11-17**) We will recognise him by his amazing companion and supporter. False prophet.
- (**Daniel 9.26-27**) We will recognise him by his dealings with the Jews.
- He will be recognised by his NAME (**vv17-18**). The numerical number of his name in Hebrew will be 666.

When he comes we will be able to recognise him, but we may not be able to foretell his appearing. He may rise to power initially unrecognised for who he is.

Probably the greatest clue is **Daniel 8**, where the coming of Antiochus Epiphanes is prophesied (a 'type' of the beast). He was ruler of the Seleucidan dynasty (175-164BC). He was exceedingly evil, intolerant and cruel and he particularly moved against the Jews. He pulled down the walls of the Temple, forbade circumcision, destroyed sacred books and erected a statue of Jupiter in the Holy Place of the Temple.

- (**Daniel 8.10**) speaks of more than this forerunner of the beast did.
- (**Daniel 8.17**) dates the happenings "at the time of the end".
- (**Daniel 8.19-23**) supports an end time fulfilment.
- (**Daniel 8.25**) refers to war with Christ.

The Beast has several names in Scripture:

- That man of sin – **2 Thessalonians 2.3**.
- The son of perdition – **2 Thessalonians 2.3**.
- That wicked (one) – **2 Thessalonians 2.8**.
- Anti-christ – **1 John 1.18**.
- That horn that had eyes **Daniel 7.20**.

Some commentators say he will be from Syria, some that he will be a Jew and some say he will be an Arab. **Daniel 9.26**, which refers to him as "the prince that shall come" infers that he will be of Roman/European decent (being the prince of "the people" who destroyed Jerusalem in AD70. However, whatever his descent he will be easily recognised by his actions (in relation to the Jews – **Daniel 9.27**, the people of God in general – **Daniel 7.21**, and unbelievers – **2 Thessalonians 2.9-10**) and **vv16-17**) with the aid of the false prophet) and his position as head of the last phase of the 4th world empire.

The wise will confirm his identity by the number of his name (**v18**) – probably as linked to the numerical value of Hebrew letters.

CHAPTER 14

CHRIST ON MOUNT ZION

Several subjects have been placed together in this chapter. The most difficult one is the 144,000. First we will look at other subjects raised and see how they shed light on the setting and timing of what is happening. This will help us to understand something more about the 144,000.

- a. (**vv6-7**) The end is approaching for the preaching of the gospel. (Judgement is coming).
- b. (**v8**) The fall of Babylon has occurred. Compare (**17.1-5** and **19.1-7**).
- c. (**vv9-13**) Shows the result of people's acceptance of, and opposition to, the beast (**vv9-11** and **12-13**).
- d. (**vv14-20**) The harvest. Compare (**Matthew 13.24-30** and **36-43**).

(a, b, c and d are all set at the end of Tribulation and the beginning of Millennium).

The setting, to me, connects with **Psalm 2** (see **v6**). Jesus Christ is seen with the same group as is mentioned in **7.1-8**. In **Chapter 7** they are seen before their mission of evangelism during the Tribulation. In **Chapter 14** they are seen victorious, during the Millennium, their mission having been completed.

This interpretation, to me, fits the facts given about them:

- (**v1**) They have God's name on their foreheads. Compare (**22.3-4**).
- (**v3**) They have their own song. As did the Israelites (**Exodus 15**). As did Deborah and Barak (**Judges 5**).
- (**v4**) They were all men. Often God has chosen men exclusively for particular jobs. Like the 12 (**Matthew 10.1-23**) or the 70 (**Luke 10.1**) or the Levites (**Numbers 4**).
- (**v4**) They were virgins. For the sake of their ministry (**Matthew 19.9-12**). No doubt, knowing the time and the urgency of their ministry they were prepared to accept this.
- (**v4**) They had a special place and special reward. As others also have (**Matthew 19.27-30**).
- (**v5**) They are without guile. Like Nathaniel (**John 1.43-51**). I believe we can take the passage literally.
- (**v6**) The gospel is "everlasting". There is only one gospel and it can never change. Christ ALONE can save (**Acts 4.12**). The gospel was preached to Abraham before the law was given (**Galatians 3.8**), to the Israelites after the law was given (**Hebrews 4.1-2**), and will be the same until the Lord returns (**Acts 3.18-21**). Allow no other (**Galatians 1.8**). This is the gospel the 144,000 would have preached.

CHAPTERS 15 AND 16

THE SEVEN LAST PLAGUES

We can study this in these chapters under three headings. The Reality of God's Wrath, the Righteousness of God's Wrath and the Reaction to God's Wrath.

1. The Reality of God's Wrath

- (15.1) God's wrath will be filled up or completely expressed. It is climaxed in these seven last plagues (and people know they are from God – v9).
- (Job 36.18) God's wrath is a very real thing.
- (16.1) Angels are used to deliver the plagues.
- (16.2) Disease is used.
- (16.14) Devils, or rather demons are used.
- (16.3, 4, 8 and 18) Nature and its forces are used.
- (Hebrews 10.30-31) God's wrath is real and a thing to be feared and avoided. (Job 36.18).

2. The Righteousness of God's Wrath

- (16.1) It proceeds from the Temple (a Holy place).
- (15.4 and 16.5) It is righteous wrath. It proceeds from a Holy God.
- (15.8) God's wrath is so righteous that it causes activities in the Temple to stop. (There are two parallels in Scripture – Exodus 40.33-35 and 1 Kings 8.1-11).
- (15.3-4) We see the redeemed praise God for what He is doing.
- (16.5-7) We see the angel's praise God for what He is doing.
- (16.6) Tells us those receiving God's wrath deserve it. It is righteous.

3. The Reaction to God's Wrath

- (16.9-11 and 21) There is blasphemy but no repentance.
- (Jude 14-16) Consistent with Enoch's prophecy.
- (16.12-14 and 16) God does not lose control of Himself as he pours out His wrath. He is calmly accomplishing His purposes and guiding world events.
- (15.2-4) We see those who have come through the Tribulation period praising God. (Song of Moses, a Jewish flavour).
- (15.2) From this we can see it is possible to be victorious over the beast, but like opposing Satan, it is not easy. Cross reference (12.11). Three things are necessary – the blood of the Lamb, their testimony and their willingness to die.
- (15.5) The Tabernacle on earth was modelled on the Temple in Heaven (Exodus 25.40) "after the pattern shown on the mount". (Hebrews 8.5) example of heavenly things. (Hebrews 9.19-24) a pattern of heavenly things.
- (16.21) A "talent" is a very heavy weight varying between 116lb 11ozs and 131lb 6ozs (but against this verse Amplified Version says "between 50 and 60lbs" still exceedingly heavy for a single hailstone).

CHAPTERS 17 AND 18

THE JUDGEMENT OF THE GREAT WHORE AND THE FALL OF BABYLON

To ascertain the messages in these chapters we need to answer a few questions, for example:

- (i) Who or what is the beast of **17.3**?
- (ii) Who or what is the whore of **17.1**?
- (iii) What is Mystery, Babylon of **17.5**?
- (iv) What is the Babylon of **18.2**?

Taking them in order:

- (i) The beast of **17.3** bears striking resemblance to the beast in **13.1**. I see no reason to doubt that they are one and the same. If so, the beast is the last form of Daniel's 4th Empire. **17.11-12** confirm this conclusion.
- (ii) The whore of **17.1** is the woman of **17.3** and is the "Mystery Babylon" (the Mother of Harlots and Abominations of the Earth) of **17.5**. One of the strongest clues to her identity is **17.18**. She is a city. She is the city that was reigning over the earth when John wrote the book. This points to Rome.
- (iii) We have linked **17.1** with **17.5** so Mystery, Babylon is Rome. (Useful reading on this subject is "The two Babylons" by Alexandra Hislop).
- (iv) The Babylon of **18.2** resembles the Mystery Babylon of **17.5** (compare **17.2** with **18.3** and **17.16** with **18.8** and **17.4** with **18.16** etc). This also points to Rome.

Rome has had two major incarnations – Pagan and Papal. Could it have a third? Could the scenario of these chapters be that:

- The last form of Daniel's 4th Empire comes (**17.10-14**).
- It is saddled by Papal Rome. Rome draws the false religions together into one blasphemous whole and is adopted as the religion of the last Empire (**17.1-6**).
- Part way through the Tribulation the Beast of **17.13** (the "man of sin" of **2 Thessalonians 2.3-11**) orders the destruction of the whore (**17.16-17**) because he himself wishes to be declared God (**2 Thessalonians 2.4**) and to be worshipped (**13.8**). This is certainly a possibility.

Having said all of this there are those who strongly believe that the ancient city of Babylon will rise again (despite what is written in **Isaiah 13** and **Jeremiah 51**) to be the fulfilment of those chapters. The recent rise of Islam and the current efforts to establish a Caliphate in Iraq/Syria by ISIS/ISIL increases the possibility of this happening – but that ignores the possible decline of Islamic influence by the soon to be fulfilled events of **Ezekiel 38** and **39**.

In truth, there is much we do not know. Much has still to be learnt by observation (**Matthew 24.33**).

We will test these things by working our way through the chapters using three headings for **chapter 17** and three for **chapter 18**, as follows:

Chapter 17

- a. The Description of the Whore
- b. The Dominion of the Whore
- c. The Destruction of the Whore

Chapter 18

- a. Disillusioned
- b. Distressed
- c. Delighted

Chapter 17

a. The Description of the Whore

- **(vv1-2)** The woman is a system (not an individual). Papal Rome has exercised influence over nations and their leaders for centuries. The “fornication” is spiritual (idol worship). (**Exodus 20.4-6** and **34.12-17**).
- **(v3)** It is feasible that Roman Catholicism and any apostate religion that join with them could “saddle” the last phase of the 4th Empire as its adopted official religion.
- **(v4)** Notice the clothing. Purple, scarlet and gold are colours in the Roman church. They are wealthy (The Golden Cup). Pope Leo XII in 1825 had a medal struck. His image was on one side, and the Roman Church was represented by a woman on the other side, holding a cup inscribed “The whole world is her seat”. The Roman Church has millions of followers.
- **(v5)** Beginning in Babylon (mother of all false religions) crystallising in Roman Catholicism (“the Two Babylons” by Hislop) “Mystery” upon her forehead. Rome has many secrets (past and present).
- **(v9)** “Seven hills”. Rome has seven hills.
- **(v18)** The woman is that great city. Rome was the ruling city at the time of John’s vision. City of seven hills known as Septi Collis. Cross reference **(16.19)**.
- **(v6)** “Drunk with blood of saints”. Millions of believers killed. Encyclopaedia Britannica and Fox’s book of Martyrs bear testimony to Papal Rome’s record.
- Some of God’s people will join Rome. Hence, the cry – **(18.4)** “Come out of her my people”.

b. The Dominion of the Whore

- **(v2)** Kings have joined with Rome in both its Pagan and Papal phases.
- **(vv8-13)** And, they will in the future **(18.9)**.
- **(v18)** Her dominion is widespread.
- **(17.3)** Sitting on a beast.

She will saddle the last world Empire (led by the Anti-Christ). (Kruchev wrote to Castro of Cuba saying, “To destroy religion accept it, then infiltrate it, then indoctrinate it, then destroy it”). The 2nd beast of **chapter 13** (the false prophet) will cause everyone to worship the 1st beast **(13.12)**. The 1st beast of **chapter 13** is “the man of sin” – the head of the Empire **(13.18)**.

c. The Destruction of the Whore

- (**vv16-17**) The nations that destroy the whore (the religious system) will be doing God's will. The beast she thought she was controlling will kill her. **Chapter 18** describes her destruction.
- (**vv6-7**) John "wondered with great admiration" and this leads the angel to ask why! Roman Catholicism mixes good and evil, thus deceiving many people. There would be people within its fold who are true believers (ignoring or rejecting its idols and man worship and its wrong doctrines).
- (**v8**) Rome was an Empire in the past. Now to all appearances it is gone, but a form of it will return.

Conclusions

Working through **chapter 17** seems to confirm that the "whore" of **v1**, the "woman" of **v3** and the "Mystery, Babylon the Great" are identified with Rome. Since the Empire destroys the whore (**v16**) it seems evident that the "whore" is Papal Rome. This is confirmed by the harlotry of the whore being linked to "blasphemy" indicating that the "abominations" and "fornications" are in the area of religion.

The last world empire will initially adopt an apostate ecumenical religion, headed by Papal Rome, but will later abandon and destroy it to worship the "man of sin" exclusively.

Daniel 7 sets out the four world empires that would reign from Daniel's day until the return of Jesus Christ. The last form of the 4th Empire is the "beast" of **v3**.

The 4th Empire of **Daniel 7** started as the Roman Empire. To us it "was, and is not" (**v8**). It existed in John's day but it ceased to exist, being followed by The Holy Roman Empire. However, it will reappear so that **v8** goes on to say of it that it "was, and is not, and yet is" and it will be there to "make war with the Lamb" (**v14**) (read verses **10-14** and compare them with **18.19** in context of **19.11-21**).

Verses 10-12 speak of successive Empires and the description fits the following:

- FIRST: **EGYPT**.
- SECOND: **ASSYRIA**.
- THIRD: **BABYLON**.
- FOURTH: **MEDO-PERSIA**.
- FIFTH: **GREECE**.
- SIXTH: **ROME** (now apparently gone, but living in shadows as Papal Rome).
- SEVENTH: **A REVIVED FORM** (with 10 "kings").
- EIGHTH: **THE LAST FORM** (led by "the Beast").

Chapter 18

The destruction of Papal Rome (and those affiliated with her) will, most likely, involve the destruction of secular Rome. According to **v8** the destruction will be sudden and devastating.

Reaction to this destruction will be varied. Some will be disillusioned, some will be distressed and some will be delighted.

a. Dillusioned

Some people are easily deceived. Thinking that the Roman Catholic Church has reformed they will join it, but the cry will come:

- (**vv4-5**) "Come out of her my people". Christian people will become part of this religious system, through agencies like "the World Council of Churches". It will seem logical the Pope would be head and that everyone should conform to his belief system. Roman Catholicism expands to take in other beliefs, but it does not reform or return to the simple truths from which it departed.

b. Distressed

- (**v3**) The Roman Catholic Church is fabulously rich, if suddenly it is destroyed it will bring havoc. Many merchants and traders will be distressed. There will be loss of incomes.
- (**vv2, 8, 11, 14, 17, 19** and **21-23**) (and **17.16**) Her destruction is complete and for some reason those who observe it "stand afar off". The scene of destruction is unapproachable (**18.9-10, 15, 17** and **18**). These things would be consistent with the use of nuclear weapons.
- (**v7**) It will be totally unexpected as far as the religious system is concerned. She thought she was there forever.

c. Delighted

- (**v5**) There is good reason for the destruction. It is not just the sexual abuse of children (as has been exposed in recent years) but the spiritual misleading of countless souls.
- (**v13**) She traded in the "souls of men".
- (**v24**) "The blood of prophets, and of saints" and of many others are found in her (remember such things as the Spanish Inquisition).
- (**v20**) Genuine rejoicing in Heaven and on earth, is appropriate when iniquity is judged. (Note: the "Alleluias" in Heaven – **19.1-4**).

Conclusions

Again, working through **chapter 18** seems to confirm that "Babylon the great" of **v2** is the same as "Mystery, Babylon the Great" of **17.5**. If its destruction also involves the destruction of secular Rome the reaction of the "merchants" (**v3**), "shipmasters" (**v17**) and "sailors" (**v17**) is understandable.

CHAPTER 19

THE RETURN OF JESUS CHRIST

We can take seven points from this chapter concerning the 2nd coming of Jesus Christ.

1. The Alleluias
2. The Anticipation
3. The Activity
4. The Armies
5. The Almighty
6. The Announcement
7. The Aftermath

Preliminary Comments

- The names of Jesus Christ in **vv11, 13** and **16** indicate His character and His position (compare **Philippians 2.9**).
- Alleluia (**vv1, 3** and **5-6**) expresses praise to God.
- (**v2**) All of God's judgements are "true and righteous".
- (**v9**) The "marriage supper of the Lamb" is announced, but is yet future (compare **21.2**) when the "Church" is complete.
- (**vv17-21**) The "supper of the great God" is the result of the "war" or battle between the Lord and His army and the Beast and his army.

1. The Alleluias (at His Coming)

- (**vv1, 3-4** and **6-7**) "Alleluia"- There is praise and rejoicing in heaven, as there will be on earth, for His coming is a comfort and an inspiration – an end of sorrows. He had said to his disciples, "I go to prepare a place for you" and "I will come again to receive you unto Myself; that where I am, there you may be also" (**John 14.1-3**).
- (**Philippians 3.20-21**) As citizens of Heaven our bodies will change. Cross reference (**1 John 3.2** and **1 Corinthians 15.49-58**) We will be like Him!
- (**1 Thessalonians 4.13-18**) "Sorrow not". Note this time will mark the end of sorrow.
- (**v1**) Praise because He is worthy. Cross reference (**5.11-12**).
- (**v2**) Praise because of His righteousness in judgement. Cross reference (**15.3**).
- (**v6**) Praise because He is all-powerful = omnipotent. Almighty.
- (**v3**) Praise to be repeated.
- (**v5**) Praise to be encouraged (**v7**).

On that day, Alleluias will be so meaningful.

2. The Anticipation (of His Coming)

- (**v7**) Anticipation of the marriage. The Church being the bride. Cross reference (**Ephesians 5.25-33**) and (**21.2-9**).
- (**v9**) Anticipation of being called to the assembling of the Church.
- (**Romans 8.14-18**) Anticipation of sharing in His glory.
- (**Romans 8.21**) Anticipation of being free from the bondage of sin.

- (**Romans 8.22**) Whole creation has suffered from bondage of sin right from the beginning.
- (**Romans 8.23**) Anticipation of enjoying the full fruits of redemption.
- (**Romans 8.29**) Anticipation of being made like Christ Himself. What a day!

3. The Activity (at His Coming)

- (**Acts 3.20-21**) The second Coming must be fulfilled as the holy prophets said. Cross reference (**Acts 1.11**).
- (**vv1-21**) The chapter is buzzing with activity but so many other Scriptures spell out so much more detail.
- (**Hebrews 12.25-29**) God spoke. Mount Sinai shook. Cross reference (**Exodus 19.18**). This will happen again but more so. Including Heaven. All that is temporal will be removed. (**2 Corinthians 4.16-18**).
- (**2 Peter 3.10-14**) The heavens will pass away. Earth burned with fervent heat (after the Millennium).

4. The Armies (at His Coming)

- (**v14**) The Lord's army. Clothed in white. Cross reference (**1 Thessalonians 3.13**) Saints, believers. You and me.
- (**v19**) The Beast (Anti Christ) and his opposing army.
- (**Exodus 15.3-4**) The Lord is "a man of war" and Christians should not be pacifists. We should speak about things we believe.
- (**Zechariah 14.3**) Fight against all nations. Cross reference (**v15**) Rule with a rod or iron.

5. The Almighty (at His Coming)

- (**v15**) Smite the nations. God is almighty.
- (**2 Kings 19.35**) One angel smote 185,000 in one night. How much more could God do (even with a word!).
- (**Isaiah 40.17-18 and 21-23**) God is almighty. He is also a loving father. Humble respect and reverential fear bring us into a father-child relationship (**Romans 8.15**).

6. The Announcement (at His Coming)

- (**vv17-18**) An announcement to the birds to come to feed. There is no reason to doubt that this is literal (**v21**).
- (**2 Kings 17.25-27**) Babylonians taken to live in Samaria. God sent lions (= leopards) among them. They would not fear God. A priest taught them to fear (worship) God (defectively).
- (**1 Kings 17.1-6**) Ravens feed Elijah. God controls ravens.
- (**Joel 2.25**) Locusts = my great army. God controls insects.

7. The Aftermath (of His Coming)

- (**Numbers 16.29-35**) God opened the earth and they were swallowed up. Down into the pit (**v35** came out a fire).

- (**v20**) The beast (Anti Christ) and false prophet will also be cast alive into lake of fire. Hell. Tormented forever (**20.10**).
- (**v21**) No escape.

CHAPTER 20

THE MILLENNIUM AND THE FINAL JUDGEMENT

General Notes

Verses 1-6 deal with the Millennium while **vv7-15** deal with the judgement of Satan and the final judgement of all of humanity. Many other Scriptures give details of conditions and happenings during the Millennial reign.

This chapter is, to some people, very contentious. It relates to uses for the centre of the earth, the nature of spirit beings, God's plans for the Millennium etc.

It becomes a testing ground for faith. I am convinced however that those who are unswerving in their faith and who do not manipulate God's Word, will find no difficulties.

Satan is bound 1000 years unable to influence people, yet after 1000 years of perfect rule he can still gather an army of amazing size (**v8**). He is thrown into the lake of fire (**v10**) (Permanent Hell). The Beast and the False Prophet are already there. Cross reference (**19.20**).

There are two BIRTHS (natural birth and spiritual birth – **John 3.3-8**). There are two DEATHS (natural death and spiritual death – **20.13-14**). And there are two RESURRECTIONS (that of the saved – **20.5** and that of the lost – **20.13** – see also **John 5.28-29**).

The 1000 years of the Millennial Reign of Jesus Christ on earth is mentioned six times in this chapter. No doubt this highlights the folly of those who deny it.

Just a few points arising from some of the Scriptures dealing with life, death and resurrection:

- Life, death and resurrection are no longer mysteries to the believer (**1 Corinthians 15.19-55**).
- The word "sleep" in **1 Corinthians 15.51** or **1 Thessalonians 4.14** does not mean soul sleep. It refers to the death of the body. The soul lives on (refer to **Luke 16.19-31**, **Matthew 10.28** and **6.9-11** etc).
- A great deal was known about resurrection in Old Testament times – refer to **Job 19.25-26** and Tregelles translation of **Daniel 12.1-2**, "And many from among the sleepers of the dust of the earth shall awake, these shall be unto everlasting life, but those (the rest of the sleepers, those who do not awake at the time) shall be shame and everlasting contempt".
- "The sea gave up the dead that were in it" (**v13**). Some 300,000 people per year were killed at sea, on average, over recent years.

Now to the content of the chapter. Once again seven points can be made. The chapter speaks of:

1. Restriction
2. Resurrection
3. Reigning
4. Release
5. Rebellion
6. Records
7. Retribution

1. Restriction (vv1-3)

- (vv1-3) Satan is restricted during the millennium. Some protest that one cannot bind a spirit but that is not true. It is already happening (**Jude 6**). They have solidity and substance in their own sphere (**1 Corinthians 15.44**) and spiritual chains will hold spiritual bodies.
- There are several instances of restriction during the Millennium (e.g. restriction of war – **Micah 4.1-4**), restriction of the power of the nations entering the Millennium – **Daniel 7.11-12**).

2. Resurrection (vv4-6 and 12-15)

- The FIRST general resurrection occurs as the Lord returns to set up His Millennial Kingdom (vv4-6). This is referred to in such Scriptures as **Luke 14.12-14**, **Matthew 24.29-31**, **1 Thessalonians 4.13-18** and **1 Corinthians 15.20-23, 51-54** etc).
- The SECOND general resurrection occurs 1000 years later when the Millennial Kingdom is over and Satan (after making his final war against the saints) is judged (vv7-10). This resurrection is for the final judgement of humanity (vv11-15).

3. Reigning (vv4-6)

- Many Scriptures refer to the time future when the saints will share with Christ's rule on earth.
- (**Matthew 19.27-30**) Apostles, 12 thrones, judging Israel.
- (**Matthew 25.20-21**) Faithful servants, rulers over many things.
- (**2 Timothy 2.11-12**) Those who suffer will reign.
- (2.26-27) They that overcome will rule over the nations.
- (3.21) They that overcome share His reign.
- (5.9-10) Redeemed to reign as Kings and Priests. On earth.
- (**Daniel 7.10-27**) The saints will rule with and under Jesus Christ.

4. Release (vv7-8)

- (vv7-8) Satan is released for a while. His restriction is temporary – for the period of the Millennium.
- (**Matthew 18.1-6 and 14**) Children are often like lambs among wolves. They are ill-treated in many ways by adults. God permits things (to us this can be hard to understand).

- (1 Peter 5.8) Satan, as always, when released, will look for those he can deceive. We can't understand why God allows many things which happen, but ultimately everyone will be judged and God's ways will be seen to be right.
- (v8) Satan, even after 1000 years of peaceful rule, can still muster a great army.
- (2 Peter 3.9) The Lord doesn't want anyone to perish. The 1000 years is the last chance to accept or reject Christ. Everyone in that 1000 years will have heard the gospel. It is an "everlasting gospel" (14.6-7).

5. Rebellion (vv7-10)

- (vv7-9) Satan, after his release, will gather a large army of people from the whole world, willing to rebel.
- (Isaiah 65.18) Earthly Jerusalem recreated. Cross reference (Isaiah 62.7 and 61.4-11) and even though the earthly situation is perfect (Isaiah 65.21) sinners still rebel and reject the Lord (Isaiah 65.20).
- (Zechariah 14.16) All nations will go to Jerusalem to worship but there are those who rebel (Zechariah 14.17).
- (Psalm 2) Rebellion amidst prosperity. The heathen rage against God (Psalm 2.1-2) and those under rule want to cast off authority (Psalm 2.3). Psalm 2 has partially been fulfilled (Acts 4.24-28).

6. Records (vv12-15)

- (v12) The books were opened. Our deeds are recorded.
- (Ecclesiastes 12.13-14) Every good and evil deed done by every person is recorded. The sins of the repentant who accept Jesus as Saviour and Lord are, of course, forgiven (Acts 3.18-19).
- On judgement day, when the books are opened, those who mistakenly claim that they do not deserve to be condemned, will have the case against them proved beyond doubt (Jude 14-15). We have discovered that every word ever spoken is still held within the atmosphere. God could play it back if He wished (Matthew 12.36-37). Also note Matthew 7.21-23.

7. Retribution (vv11-15)

- (vv11-15) The final judgements.
- (v14) Second death. (Cross reference v5).
- (v11) Heaven and earth are gone. Everyone is standing before God.
- (v12) There is no escape. Small and great are there.
- (v13) There are no exceptions. Every man judged according to what he has done. There is no injustice.
- (v15) The only way of salvation is to have your name written in the The Lamb's Book of Life. (Cross reference 12.8, 17.8, 21.27 and Luke 10.19.20).

CHAPTERS 21 AND 22

THE NEW HEAVENS AND THE NEW EARTH

General Notes

- **(21.7)** Each saved individual has his or her part in the New Jerusalem. God does not judge in groups or in families. Cross reference (**Jeremiah 31.29-30**) Everyone shall die for his own iniquity. (**Ezekiel 18.4**).
- **(21.9-10)** The saints, the Lamb's bride, are there in eternity. Cross reference (**Ephesians 1.1-10**) The fullness of time, all things in Christ. Cross reference (**Ephesians 5.21-23**) Christ head of the Church. Saviour of the body.
- **(21.10-21)** Shows that God is a God of order and symmetry.

The place where the redeemed will live, the "New Jerusalem" is Planned, Perfect and Permanent.

Planned

- **(21.2)** Prepared by God, as Jesus has promised (**John 14.1-3**) A place with many mansions.
- (**Hebrews 11.8-10**) Abraham looked for a city whose builder and maker (or architect) is God.
- (**Hebrews 11.14-16**) A better place. A city prepared by God.
- **(21.16-21)** The dimensions, layout, materials and entrance gates are all specified. It has certainly been planned.
- (**2 Peter 3.13**) It always was planned, even before the creation of the world we now live in (**Ephesians 1.4-5** and **9-10**).
- **(21.16)** Using population statistics a city of this plan size could accommodate every person who has ever lived on earth (using Biblical time and population data). Everyone could have a good sized block. (And, of course, not everyone who has ever lived will be there!).
- **(21.18-21** and **23**) The materials although very beautiful, are not the glory of the city. God is! How can we understand God's glory?
- **(21.3)** It is planned for fellowship. God Himself shall be with His people.
- **(21.12-14)** It is planned to represent its residents. The Old Testament Saints (the tribes of Israel) and the New Testament Saints (the apostles) – those whose names are written in The Lamb's Book of Life (**21.27**).
- **(21.24-26)** It is planned for use. God's servants will be occupied with God's service (**22.3**).

Perfect

- **(21.2)** As a bride adorned for her husband. Compare (**Jeremiah 2.32**) All that can be done is done to make it perfect.
- (**Isaiah 61.10**) Clothed in garments of salvation (white) also a robe of righteousness, decked with jewels.
- **(21.4)** Perfect because of what it excludes. No tears, death, sorrow, crying or pain.
- **(21.22)** No Temple because no need of sacrifice or reminder to worship.
- **(21.23)** No sun or moon. God's glory is the light (**21.11**).
- **(21.27)** Nothing that defiles, abomination, lies etc. Cross reference (**21.8**).

- (22.3) No more curse (death, the result of sin).
- (21.3) Perfect because of what is there. God Himself is there.
- (22.3) The throne of God and the Lamb is there.
- (21.5) God will make all things new (complete newness and renewal).
- (21.6) The fountain of the water of life is there.
- (21.24) All the people there will be saved.
- (1 Corinthians 13.9-10) Now we know in part, but the things that are coming are perfect.

Permanent – The New Jerusalem

- (Hebrews 12.28-29) The city and the Kingdom cannot be moved. They are here to stay.
- (21.4) There is no death. Life is permanent.
- (22.5) The reign is forever and ever.
- (Hebrews 13.14) Here no continuing city. Seek one to come.
- (Matthew 24.35) The present Heaven and earth will pass away for they are not permanent.
- (Isaiah 51.6) Present Heavens vanish, earth becomes old. Not permanent.
- (2 Peter 3.10-14) The day of the Lord will come as a thief. The Heavens will pass away with a loud noise. Elements melt with fervent heat. Earth and works therein burned up. Result – how should we behave? Holy conversation, godliness. Look for new Heaven and earth, and ourselves at peace.

CONCLUSION (22.6-21)

We have, in this book, a **Reliable Revelation** that demands a **Responsible Reaction**.

1. WE HAVE A RELIABLE REVELATION

- (v6) The Revelation is straight from God and is, therefore, reliable. Cross reference (1.1). It was revealed to John for all God's servants and should not be ignored, especially as we see the signs of Christ's return being fulfilled.
- (v8) It is told just as John had seen it and as a witness he is dependable.

As mentioned in Overview 3 on page 7 the book can be summarised as the subject matter relates to Jesus Christ as the Lamb (mentioned 28 times). Jesus Christ is CENTRAL to God's plans.

Having been through these notes we can now understand the sevenfold division given earlier.

And in every detail it is RELIABLE. It reveals, among other things, activities to occur on earth and in Heaven in the future. Revealed events need to overlaid as many are happening at the same time.

2. WE SHOULD REACT RESPONSIBLY

Acting responsibly involves a range of things, for example”:

- Not tampering with its contents (vv18-19).
- Being obedient to God’s commands including those contained in this prophecy (v14).
- Repenting and changing where required (2.4-5).
- Not fearing suffering or death in being faithful (2.10 and 12.11).
- Being willing to serve the Lord (10.9-11).
- Showing patience and faith (12.6 and 13.10).
- Proclaiming the truths contained in this prophecy (v10).

There are some verses in Scripture which people interpret as suggesting Christians will be taken from the earth before the time of Tribulation. Be that as it may, we can draw upon the promises which the Lord has given us. He will be our all sufficiency at all times, if we have to face trouble of any kind. The conclusion of the one who gave these talks is that Scriptures clearly teaches that the Church goes through the Great Tribulation.

As note-taker, I add my own conclusions.

In as far as possible we should keep ourselves from evil (15.2), knowing where our strength lie (12.10-11) (in the Lord alone – **Ephesians 6.10**).

We will know who the “man of sin” is when he appears (13.18) and we must not follow the crowd who worship him (13.5-8). We must be prepared to work (14.6-7), as was John (10.9-11) who wrote this valuable book (1.10-11).

We must worship God alone (19.10 and 22.8-9) with reverential fear and praise in our hearts.

The rewards of knowing and serving the Lord are immeasurable:

- Blessing (1.3 and 22.7).
- Sharing in His earthly reign (20.4).
- Enjoying His presence for eternity (21.3-6 and 22.3-5).

We should long for the Lord’s return.

“EVEN SO, COME, LORD JESUS” (22.20).

Kath McMurray

KATH’S REFERENCES

(i) Unless otherwise indicated Kath has quoted from and referred to the King James (or Authorised) Version of the Scriptures.

(ii) At times, however, Kath paraphrases the Scriptures in her own words.

APPENDIX

1. MY VIEW

It is probably fair to state my view on eschatology. Knowing my view will help readers to better understand the notes.

Years of study of the Scriptures have led me to the conclusion that Jesus Christ will return only once (as **Hebrews 9.24-28** says, ONE first coming and ONE second coming). That return will be "glorious" (**Titus 2.13**) and will occur at the end of The Great Tribulation (**Matthew 24.29-30**) when He comes to "destroy" the Beast (**2 Thessalonians 2.8**) and set up the Millennial Kingdom (**20.4**).

When the Millennial Kingdom on earth comes to an end the final judgement will occur (**20.7.15**) and we will enter eternity (**21.1-5**).